

The IMO Assembly held its 32<sup>nd</sup> Session, remotely, from Monday 6 through Wednesday 15 December 2021 under the newly-elected President, H.E. Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to IMO, as recommended by the Heads of Delegation meeting preceding A 32 and subsequently endorsed in Plenary. Ambassador Linda Scott, the Namibian Representative to IMO was elected as first Vice-President whilst H.E. Ambassador Mr Raffaele Trombetta, the Italian Permanent Representative to IMO was voted in as second Vice-President.

The IMO Assembly is the highest Governing body of the organization and meets every second year to approve the work programme, voting in the proposed budget and determining financial arrangements. It also elects the 40-member Council for a two year interim period, charged with supervising the conduct of IMO's work, and provides a forum for the annual Bravery at Sea awards together with the International Maritime Prize.

The meeting was attended by representatives from 163 Member States, plus Associates from the UN and Special Agencies, Inter-Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations. Of the many Delegates who registered for the meeting, approximately 1300 attended.

**PARTICIPANTS.** All Council Members registered on the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS) listed as participants in the remote session, were deemed to be 'present' within the rules of procedure of the Council, and in accordance with the interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions of the IMO Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NOTE.** This short report briefly covers items of most interest to InterManager members; exhaustive details on the meeting are available if requested.

**ADDRESS BY THE IMO SECRETARY GENERAL.** The IMO Secretary-General, Mr Kitack Lim, welcomed delegations to the thirty-second regular session of the Organisation's biennial Assembly, the first time that it has been held remotely. He observed that over the last 20 months the pandemic has had a huge global impact and a profound effect on the maritime sector. On the positive side, shipping has kept trade and transport of essential goods and medicine flowing across continents. However, this has come at a cost to the world's seafarers for whom the crew change crisis is not yet over and

more countries must be encouraged to recognize seafarers as key workers and facilitate their vaccinations.

Assembly 32 (A 32) will consider reports on the work of the Organisation over the past two years, be invited to approve the work programme and a budget for the next biennium, also, elect a new Council to administer IMO until the next Assembly. Reflecting on actions taken as the world went into lockdown, he said that IMO held its first ever remote committee session in September 2020 since when all other IMO meetings have been conducted likewise, despite the inherent limitations of doing so.

The Maritime Safety Committee and its Sub-Committees completed a tremendous amount of work, including: adopting resolutions supporting seafarers and trade by sea; completion of the regulatory scoping exercise on MASS and a decision to develop it as a goal-based instrument; approving the update and modernisation of GMDSS, thus completing a decade of work; and, approving model regulations on domestic ferry safety.

Illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea, including piracy and armed robbery against ships is the subject of a resolution which Assembly will be invited to adopt.

The Marine Environment Protection Committee was commended by Mr Lim for its work on cutting Greenhouse Gas emissions from ships, including: a recognition of the need to strengthen the initial IMO GHG strategy; the adoption in June 2021 of MARPOL amendments to reduce carbon intensity of ships plus the completion of an impact assessment related to those measures; and, the adoption of a work plan for development and assessment of “mid-term” measures aimed at incentivising the uptake of new low- and zero-carbon fuels.

Other highlights of MEPC’s achievements included the successful implementation of the reduced global Sulphur limit from 2020 and the adoption of a Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships.

The Legal Committee continued to address important issues, particularly: the abandonment of seafarers, in concert with both the International Labour Organisation and the Industry; and, issues related to threats posed by fraudulent registries and fraudulent registration of ships.

The need for unhindered sea trade, supporting the wider logistics chain, has focused the work of the Facilitation Committee leading to finalisation of a new version of the IMO compendium for electronic business and the approval of

amendments to the FAL Convention to make the single window mandatory. This will enable straightforward electronic exchange of data through a single portal.

During the pandemic, IMO has also worked hard to continue providing technical assistance and capacity building, delivering more than 80 technical cooperation activities in 2020 alone. IMO's world-class training Institutes, the WMU and IMLI have produced the next batch of future highly qualified maritime professionals, despite the challenges of remote learning.

Rounding off his welcoming speech, the Secretary-General stated that Shipping will continue to drive world trade and that the work of IMO is more relevant than ever. He expressed gratitude for the cooperation and collaboration extended to IMO during this biennium and wished all present a productive Assembly, one which will set the path for the important work ahead in the coming two years.

**ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE IMO COUNCIL.** The current composition of the IMO Council falls into three categories:

- **Category (a)** 10 States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services;
- **Category (b)** 10 other States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade; and,
- **Category (c)** 20 States not elected under (a) or (b) which have special interest in maritime transport or navigation and, importantly, whose election to the Council ensures the representation of all major geographic interests of the world.

In the ensuing election, the 10 sitting States in Category (a) were returned unopposed. In Category (b) however, there were 11 contenders vying for the 10 available places and this resulted in Sweden replacing Argentina on the list, adding to the re-elected 9 others. Finally, in Category (c), there were 27 Member States competing for the 20 available seats noting that Kuwait alone did not stand for re-election. Of the final votes cast in this category by Assembly Members, those not elected, in ascending order, comprised: Colombia, Pakistan, Poland, Bangladesh, Peru, Nigeria and South Africa. The composition of the elected Council, of which four are new members, namely Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Vanuatu and Qatar, consists of the following:

CATEGORY (a)	CATEGORY (b)	CATEGORY (c)	
10 x States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services	10 x States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade	20 x States not elected under (a) or (b) which have special interest in maritime transport or navigation and, importantly, whose election to the Council ensures the representation of all major geographic interests of the world	
CHINA	AUSTRALIA	BAHAMAS	MALTA
GREECE	BRAZIL	BELGIUM	MEXICO
ITALY	CANADA	CHILE	MOROCCO
JAPAN	FRANCE	CYPRUS	PHILIPPINES
NORWAY	GERMANY	DENMARK	QATAR
PANAMA	INDIA	EGYPT	SAUDI ARABIA
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	NETHERLANDS	INDONESIA	SINGAPORE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	SPAIN	JAMAICA	THAILAND
UNITED KINGDOM	SWEDEN	KENYA	TURKEY
UNITED STATES	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	MALAYSIA	VANUATU

**COMMITTEES OF THE ASSEMBLY.** Two Committees were formed in order to focus on specialist knowledge, the first (Committee 1) on Administrative, Financial, Legal and Technical Cooperation; the other (Committee 2) on Technical matters.

**COMMITTEE 1.** In considering the report of Committee 1, the Assembly:

- Noted Committee 1's approval of the revised IMO Strategic Plan for the six-year period 2018 to 2023 and, through Committee 2, approved and adopted the Plan plus associated resolution;
- Noted the progress made by the Council on its reform and endorsed the associated work plan;

- Approved in general terms, the decisions taken by Council concerning enhanced measures on access to information and transparency and endorsed the preparation of consolidated versions of IMO conventions;
- Noted Council's decision regarding access to the different types of documents contained in IMO Docs and the discussion regarding live streaming of IMO meetings to the public;
- Adopted the proposed resolution on Guidance on consistent application of Article 17 of the IMO Convention [this relates to the composition of the Council and the proposal to expand the size from 40 to 52 Member States which will enter into force after Member States have registered their approval, probably in 2025];
- Endorsed the work plan of the Council on its reform, as updated;
- Approved, in general, the reports of the first extraordinary sessions of the Legal and Technical Cooperation Committees, also the Legal Committee at its 107<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> sessions;
- Adopted the proposed resolution on Encouragement of Member States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions for the prevention and suppression of fraudulent registration and fraudulent registries and other fraudulent acts in the maritime sector;
- Noted the information provided by Ukraine on the implementation of IMO instruments in the maritime areas adjacent to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, together with the latter's riposte;
- Approved, in general, the reports and recommendations of the Technical Cooperation Committee on its seventieth and seventy-first sessions;
- Adopted a resolution on Revised financing and partnership arrangements for an effective and sustainable Technical Cooperation Programme;
- Adopted a resolution entitled Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030 Strategy;
- Approved the audited statements for the financial years ending in 2019 and 2020, together with the External Auditor's reports and opinions;
- Adopted a resolution on the Results-based budget for 2022-2023;
- Adopted a resolution on Amendments to the Organisation's Financial Regulations;
- Adopted a resolution on the Procedures and terms for the cooperation between IMO and intergovernmental organisations;

- Adopted a resolution on Relations with non-governmental organisations; and,
- Approved the report of Committee 1 in general.

**COMMITTEE 2.** In consideration of Committee 2's report, the Assembly:

- Adopted the resolution on the IMO Strategic Plan for the six-year period 2018 to 2023, having noted the concurrent decision of Committee 1;
- Took action as recommended by the Committee with regard to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme. In particular, Member States were encouraged to appoint an individual, authorised to access Member State audit reports through the GISIS module as per Circular letter No.3587;
- Approved the report of the first and second extraordinary sessions, as appropriate, of the Maritime Safety, Legal, Marine Environment Protection, Technical Cooperation and Facilitation Committees;
- Adopted resolutions relating to maritime safety, namely; Guidelines for VTS, Prevention/Suppression of piracy in the GoG, and, Seafarers' challenges during Covid-19;
- Approved in general, the reports of MSC on its 102<sup>nd</sup>, 103<sup>rd</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> sessions;
- Invited MSC to consider document A 32/12/2 (IACS) on its role in addressing the multidimensional challenge posed by decarbonisation and how to deliver a safe zero-CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting ship;
- Endorsed three new outputs approved by MEPC 77, namely: Guidance on remote surveys, ISM Code Audits and ISPS Code verifications; revision of regulation 13.2.2 of Marpol Annex VI (marine diesel engine replacing a boiler); and, Standard specification for shipboard incinerators;
- Endorsed the holding of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 11 and 12) in the first half of 2022;
- Following work at MSC 102 on *Revised Use and Fitting of retro-reflective materials on life-saving appliances* to enable new emerging technologies to be used for accelerated weathering tests, a new resolution (MSC.481(16)) was adopted thereby revoking the previous resolution, A.658(16);



- Draft Assembly resolutions related to both MSC and MEPC were duly adopted on the following subjects: Procedures for Port State Control, 2021; Survey Guidelines under the Harmonised System of Survey and Certification (HSSC); and, 2021 Non-exhaustive list of obligations under instruments relevant to the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code);
- Approved in general the reports of MEPC 75, 76, and 77, also FAL 44 and 45;
- Noted the reports of the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Consultative Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the London Convention and the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Meetings to the London Protocol;
- Authorised the Secretariat to effect any necessary corrections to the resolutions considered and their respective annexes, and,
- Approved the report of Committee 2 in general.

**INTERNATIONAL MARITIME PRIZE.** A silver dolphin statuette is awarded annually to the individual or organization by the IMO Council judged to have made the most significant contribution to the work and objectives of IMO. The Prize for 2019 was awarded to Mr Peter Hinchliffe, former Secretary-General of ICS in an IMO Virtual Awards ceremony whilst for 2020, the Council unanimously declared the recipient, nominated by the UK Government and IACS, to be Mr Paul Sadler, a well-deserved choice. The award was made at the end of the first day of Assembly 32 and to wide acclaim.

Nominations for the 2021 Prize will be considered by the Council at its 127<sup>th</sup> session in 2022.

**IMO BRAVERY AWARD.** Established in 2005 and first presented in 2007, the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, provides international recognition for those, who, at the risk of losing their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery, displaying outstanding courage in attempting to save life at sea or in attempting to prevent or mitigate damage to the environment. There are three categories of honour: first: the Award itself; second, Certificates of Commendation for acts of extraordinary bravery; and third, Letters of Commendation for meritorious actions. At its 125<sup>th</sup> session, the Council endorsed the decision of the Panel of Judges to bestow the 2021 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea on Mr Tran Van Khoi, Search and Rescue Officer of the Regional SAR Coordination Centre No.II, Viet Nam Maritime Administration, for his extraordinary courage,

determination and endurance in rescuing four survivors from a sunken vessel, in the midst of extreme weather and heavy seas.

In addition, Certificates of Commendation, in recognition of meritorious conduct displayed in eight separate incidents, were awarded, together with Letters of Commendation to those involved in a further six incidents.

**DAY OF THE SEAFARER.** The 2020 Day of the Seafarer campaign focused on the theme of “Seafarers are key workers” calling on Member States to recognize seafarers as key workers and to provide them with the support, assistance and travel options open to all key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 theme, “a fair future for seafarers” spotlights issues that continue to be relevant to seafarers such as fair treatment, fair working conditions, fair training and fair safety.

**WORLD MARITIME DAY (WMD).** The event for 2020 was celebrated on 24 September, with the theme, “Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet” whilst for 2021, several activities took place throughout the year, promoting the theme “Seafarers: at the core of shipping’s future”. At meeting C 125, the Council endorsed the Secretary-General’s proposed theme for WMD 2022, “New technologies for greener shipping” and authorized all necessary arrangements for the relevant celebrations in accordance with established practice.

**IMO GOODWILL AMBASSADORS SCHEME.** Following the appointment of four additional IMO-GMAs for a two-year term commencing 1 January 2021, there are now 43 GMAs representing 27 nominating authorities comprising 23 Member States and four NGOs. A list of the current IMO-GMAs can be found on the IMO website at the following link:

<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/ERO/Pages/IMO-Goodwill-Maritime-Ambassador.aspx>.

IMO Member States, IGOs and NGOs in observer stratus were invited to participate in the scheme for 2022 to 2023 by nominating suitable candidates. Meanwhile, those IMO-GMAs who were appointed in 2020 and who were particularly active will be invited for re-nomination for a second two-year term commencing in 2022.

**IMO MEMBER STATE AUDIT SCHEME.** This item provided an updated progress report on progress made in the implementation of the audit scheme since the thirty-first regular session of the Assembly.



**GLOBAL MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.** The President of the IMO's World Maritime University (WMU), Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry delivered a comprehensive, glowing biennial report on WMU activities and achievements. In particular, she thanked the Government host, Sweden, for the significant progress made regarding the accreditation of WMU degrees and urged IMO Member States to do likewise.

The Director of the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) also gave a very up-beat report on matters concerning IMO's IMLI over the period September 2019 to July 2021; like the statement made by Dr Doumbia-Henry to the Swedish government for WMU, noted the remarkable progress made regarding the recognition of IMLI degrees by its host-country, Malta, and also urged Member States to make similar strides.

**REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE CONVENTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANISATION.** It was noted that, with the recently deposited credentials of Botswana, current membership of the organization now stands at 175 States as well as three Associate Members.

**RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS.** Since the thirty-first regular session of the Assembly, thirteen applications for consultative status were received and processed. Six of these were not granted whilst four were successful, comprising:

- The Ballastwater Equipment Manufacturers' Association (BEMA);
- Global TestNet;
- The International Windship Association (ISWA); and,
- The Grain and Feed Trade Association (GAFTA).

Additionally, consultative status, on a provisional basis, for no more than two years was granted to the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

The application submitted by the Zero Emissions Ship Technology Association (ZESTAs) was referred for further screening by MEPC 77 and diverted to Council C 127 for further review.

The application by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) was referred to the ISWG on Relations with NGOs whilst requesting EDF to provide the Council with additional information in order to make its decision.

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY.** It was agreed that the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly will be held in the Autumn of 2023 at IMO HQ.

**MEETING OF IMO COUNCIL, C 126.** Following dissolution of Assembly 32, the newly formed Council met for the first time at C 126 with the primary purpose of electing one of their number to Chair the body and another to act as Vice-Chair. Three nominations were proposed for the post of Chair, namely: Mr Mohamad Halim bin Ahmed by Malaysia; Mr Victor Jiminez Fernandez by Spain; and, H.E. Mr Laurent Parenté by Vanuatu. Following the secret ballot by Council Members, Mr Jiminez Fernandez was elected, winning 24 of the 40 eligible votes. The sole nomination for the post of Vice-Chair was secured by the Moroccan candidate (possessing a remarkably suitable CV), Mrs Amane Fethaliah who was duly elected. Following elections, the Secretary-General updated the Council regarding remote meeting capabilities and resumption of in-person meetings in the Headquarters Building. Basically, the Main Hall and Committee Rooms 9 and 10 will be out of bounds for meetings up to, and including LEG 109 from 21 to 25 March 2022 whilst refurbishment takes place. Further, pending a decision on the format of IMO meetings, arrangements have been made to continue holding remote sessions on the Kudo platform for the first six months of 2022. The next session of the Council (C 127) will be held from 11 to 15 July 2022 and budgetary provisions will be made for ten plenary sessions with full interpretation services.

Wishing the readership a very happy Christmas.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight