

IMO COUNCIL, 129th Session, 17- 21 July 2023.

The IMO Council held its 129th Meeting in-person complemented by hybrid on-line capability, from Monday 17 to Friday 21 July 2023, chaired by Mr Victor Jimenez of Spain and his Vice-Chair, Mrs Amane Fethallah of Morocco. All 40 Member States elected to the Council presented their credentials correctly.

Two Working Groups were formed and chaired as follows:

WG 1 Strategy and Planning, Ms A Sly (Australia)

WG 2 Council Reform, Mrs A Fethallah (Morocco).

OPENING REMARKS BY Mr KITACK-LIM, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF IMO.

Mr Kitack Lim welcomed delegates to the 129th session of the Council, and also welcomed those joining remotely. He stated that the first half of 2023 has been marked by incredible progress and productivity, achieving significant milestones and setting the stage for a new era in maritime decarbonisation as witnessed a week ago by the MEPS's adoption of the 2023 Strategy on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Shipping.

With regard to Council's agenda, the meeting will select the next IMO Secretary-General; the Strategic Plan for the period from 2024 to 2029 developed; and, Budgetary matters will also be discussed against a backdrop of inflation.

At this juncture, he stated that we are now more than halfway through the trial period of hybrid meetings complementing physical attendance for which comments and recommendations are sought. In addition, multilingualism is of utmost importance and a Policy Framework for it has already been initiated.

In conclusion, Mr Lim extended his sincere thanks and appreciation to all Member States, IGOs, and NGOs for their unwavering support and wished all delegates a highly productive and successful meeting.

MEETING AGENDA.

1 Adoption of the agenda

2 Report of the Secretary-General on credentials

3 Rules of Procedure

4 Strategy, planning and reform

(a) Strategy and planning

(b) Reform

(c) Internal Oversight, Ethics and Joint Inspection Unit

5 Resource management

- (a) Human resources matters, including amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules
- (b) Financial report and audited financial statements for the financial period ended 31 December 2022, and the report of the External Auditor
- (c) Report on investments for 2022
- (d) Report on the status of Member States' contributions to the General Fund and the Working Capital Fund, and Member States falling under the provision of Article 61 of the IMO Convention
- (e) Budget considerations for 2023
- (f) Amendments to the Organisation's Financial Regulations and Financial Rules

6 Results-based budget for 2024-2025

7 Consolidated text of the IMO Convention

8 IMO Member State Audit Scheme

- (a) Progress report on the implementation of the Scheme
- (b) Update on the GISIS review

9 Reports of the Maritime Safety Committee

10 Report of the Marine Environment Protection Committee

11 Report of the Legal Committee

12 Report of the Facilitation Committee

13 Protection of vital shipping lanes

14 Assembly matters

- (a) Provisional agenda for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly
- (b) Preparations for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly
- (c) Draft report of the Council to the Assembly on the work of the Organisation since the thirty-second regular session of the Assembly

(d) Appointment of the External Auditor

15 External relations

(a) Relations with the United Nations and the specialised agencies

(b) Relations with intergovernmental organisations

(c) Relations with non-governmental organisations

(d) World Maritime Day

(e) Day of the Seafarer

(f) International Day for Women in Maritime

(g) IMO Gender Equality Award

(h) International Maritime Prize

(i) IMO Honours for Exceptional Bravery at Sea

(j) IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador Scheme

16 Report on the status of the Convention and membership of the Organisation

17 Report on the status of conventions and other multilateral instruments in respect of which the Organisation performs functions

18 Hybrid meeting capabilities

19 Matters arising from C/ES.35

20 Appointment of the Secretary-General

21 Place, date and duration of the next session of the Council (C 130) and substantive items for inclusion in the provisional agendas for the next two sessions of the Council (C 130 and C 131)

22 Supplementary agenda items, if any

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.** The Council adopted the agenda and noted the statements by India, Bangladesh and ITF on the criminalisation of seafarers; the remarks by the Secretary-General addressing the work of the Legal Committee on the matter; and, the efforts of IMO in collaboration with ILO related to the safety and welfare of seafarers.

2. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CREDENTIALS. Credentials of all Members of the Council were received and in order.

3. RULES OF PROCEDURE. The Council noted the information set out in document C 129/3 (United Arab Emirates), as well as that provided orally, proposing the formation of a group of experts to analyse the current rules of procedure of all IMO organs. This was not agreed and instead, Council:

.1 requested the committees to inform the Council, at its 132nd session, of the outcome of the task undertaken with regard to the review of their respective rules of procedure;

.2 also requested the Secretariat to provide information at C 132, on the possible areas of convergence and/or divergence among the existing rules of procedures; and,

.3 agreed that at its 132nd session, the Council would instruct the Working Group on Council Reform to proceed with the review and harmonisation of the rules of procedure, if necessary.

4. STRATEGY, PLANNING AND REFORM.

(a) Strategy and planning. Council noted the information set out in a number of documents, particularly that by the Intersessional Working Group on the Strategic Plan (ISWG-SP), as well as that provided orally by the Chair of the latter.

Following discussion, a Working Group of the Council was established having acknowledged its terms of reference. Upon consideration of the report of the Working Group, the Council, approved the report in general, and in particular:

.1 agreed, in principle, on the draft Strategic Plan for the six-year period 2024 to 2029 consisting of the mission statement, vision statement, overarching principles and strategic directions 1 to 8;

.2 also agreed, in principle, on the inclusion of the performance indicators (PIs), as reflected in the table of performance indicators, taking into account that the Working Group did not finalise their consideration on PIs under strategic directions 1, 7 & 8;

.3 requested TC 73 to review, comment and provide information on PIs 1.7 and 1.8, as well as the proposal for two additional PIs, as specified;

4 invited the Joint ILO-IMO Tripartite Working Group to explore potential ways to facilitate the collection of data on bullying and harassment, including SASH;

.5 encouraged Member States to actively complete and submit information reports to GISIS;

.6 agreed a revised timetable; and,

.7 approved the establishment of a Working Group on the Strategic Plan to meet during C 130.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Assembly, inclusion on its biennial list of outputs for the 2024-2025 biennium, a continuous output on "Consideration of the review of the rules and guidelines for consultative status of non-governmental international organisations with the International Maritime Organisation" under strategic direction 7 and assigned the Council as the associated organ. It also agreed to recommend to the Assembly, inclusion on its biennial list of outputs for the 2024-2025 biennium, a continuous output on "Consideration of applications for consultative status and/or periodic review of organisations in consultative status" under strategic direction 7. It also decided to delete the current output 7.9 under strategic direction 7 on "Agreements of cooperation with IGOs and approved consultative status for NGOs".

(b) Reform Following discussion of live streaming of IMO meetings to the public, Council referred the detailed consideration of this matter to the Working Group on Council Reform. On the subject of geographical regions used at IMO and the United Nations, the Secretariat undertook to carry out a review of the information previously provided on the criteria and regions used and policies applied in the United Nations and provide any additional information to a future session of the Council.

The Council re-established the Working Group on Council Reform and upon consideration of its report, approved it in general, and in particular:

1 endorsed the recommendation of the Group to recommend to the Assembly, a decision to live-stream to the public its public plenary meetings with the following exceptions:

.1 any time a vote is cast (not limited to voting by secret ballot);

.2 any matter related to the appointment of the Secretary-General; and,

.3 any other discussion the Assembly may decide should be in a private meeting;

.2 recommend that live streaming to the public should commence at the beginning of the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly;

.3 noted the discussion of the Group on criteria and procedures for the selection of meetings, or parts thereof, that should be live-streamed to the public and that further information is required for the development of those criteria and procedures;

.4 requested the Secretariat to provide to C 132 further information on the rules and practices in other UN system organisations with regard to the publicity and live streaming of their meetings;

.5 encouraged delegations to liaise with the representatives of their countries to other UN system organisations to better understand their rules and practices with regard to the publicity and live streaming of the meetings, or parts thereof;

.6 approved the updated work plan of the Working Group on Council Reform; and,

.7 endorsed the re-establishment of the Working Group on Council Reform at a future session of the Council.

Internal Oversight, Ethics and Joint Inspection Unit. Council noted the information set out in documents C 129/4(c), C 129/4(c)/1 and C 129/4(c)/2 (Argentina et al), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General and the delegation of France, on matters relating to the Internal Oversight, Ethics and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), as well as multilingualism. In particular, the cost implications for further enhancement of translation and interpretation services at IMO, as well as the current status of the six JIU recommendations on multilingualism were noted. Council welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment towards the development of IMO's Strategic Policy Framework for Multilingualism as well as the plan to provide regular updates on these efforts to the Council under the newly approved output "Consideration for the enhancement and improvement of multilingualism and the language services at IMO".

5. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

(a) Human resources matters, including amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. Council noted the information provided in documents C 129/5(a), C 129/5(a)/1, C 129/5(a)/2 and C 129/5(a)/3 (India), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General on Human resources matters, including amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. Following discussion, the Secretariat was requested to continue exploring mechanisms to support developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs, in participating in the JPO and SPO Programme and provide updates at a future session of the Council.

(b) Financial report and audited financial statements for the financial period ended 31 December 2022, and the report of the External Auditor. Council welcomed the unqualified positive opinion of the External Auditor and thanked him; welcomed the Secretary-General's stewardship of the Organisation's Funds; and, decided to forward the Organisation's audited financial statements for the financial year ended 2022, and the report and opinion thereon of the External Auditor, to the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly.

(c) Report on investments for 2022. Council noted the information contained in document C 129/5(c), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General reporting on investments in 2022.

(d) Report on the status of Member States' contributions to the General Fund and the Working Capital Fund, and Member States falling under the provision of Article 61 of the IMO Convention. Council noted the information provided in document

C 129/5(d), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General on the status of Member States' contributions to the General Fund and Working Capital Fund, and Member States falling under the provision of Article 61 of the IMO Convention. In particular, Member States that have not yet met full their financial obligations to the Organisation, were urged to do so as soon as possible.

(e) Budget considerations for 2023. Council welcomed the Secretary-General's careful stewardship of the Organisation's funds in difficult times, and, in particular noted that the forecast level of the regular budget expenditure for 2023 was expected to be kept within the approved appropriation and that as a whole, expenditure for 2023 could be contained within the budgets approved for all funds having taken account of transfers made.

(f) Amendments to the Organisation's Financial Regulations and Financial Rules. Council noted the information provided in document C 129/5(f), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General on the amendments to the Organisation's Financial Regulations and Financial Rules.

6. RESULTS-BASED BUDGET FOR 2024-2025. Council noted the information provided in document C 129/5(f), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General on the amendments to the Organisation's Financial Regulations and Financial Rules and, in particular:

.1 endorsed the Organisation's regular budget staff complement for the 2024-2025 biennium, which remains unchanged at 267 from the current biennium;

.2 approved in principle the regular budget outline for the 2024-2025 biennium of £83,583,000, comprising an appropriation of £40,908,000 for 2024 and an appropriation of £42,675,000 for 2025;

6 agreed to financing of the biennial appropriation by assessments upon Member States of £73,182,000, comprising an assessment of £35,597,000 for 2024 and £37,585,000 for 2025, while endorsing the proposal to use, for the reduction of the assessment, offsetting income and savings from the current biennium; and,

.8 noted that the Secretary-General would provide to the next session of the Council, for its consideration, his detailed results-based budget reflecting the conclusions and decisions of the Council, together with a related draft Assembly resolution.

7. CONSOLIDATED TEXT OF THE IMO CONVENTION.

Item postponed to C 132, owing to time constraints.

8. IMO MEMBER STATE AUDIT SCHEME.

Item postponed to C 130, owing to time constraints.

9. REPORTS OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE.

Council noted the information set out in documents C 129/9 and C 129/9/1, as well as that provided orally by the Chair of the Committee and the Secretary-General on the outcome of the 106th and 107th sessions, respectively, of the Maritime Safety Committee. With regard to document C 129/9, the Council, in particular, noted the information on decisions or progress made on relevant agenda items of the Committee as contained in paragraph 27 of the document; and endorsed the new outputs approved by the Committee for the 2022-2023 biennium.

Reports on both of these MSC meetings have already been circulated to InterManager members and do not need repeating, but with regard to document C 129/9/1 on the outcome of MSC 107, Council, in particular:

.1 noted the information on decisions or progress made on relevant agenda items of the Committee;

.2 noted the conclusion of the Committee that any work to address gender neutral language in IMO instruments required a holistic approach beyond the instruments under the remit of the Committee;

.3 endorsed the new outputs approved by the Committee, in accordance with resolution A.1149(32) on the revised Strategic Plan for the Organisation for the six-year period 2018 to 2023;

.4 endorsed the proposed biennial agenda of MSC for the 2024-2025 biennium, and noted that the Secretariat was authorised to submit any further changes emanating from III 9 and CCC 9 directly to C 130, as appropriate; and,

.5 endorsed the approval of intersessional meetings for 2023 and 2024, noting that this action included endorsement of the holding of annual meetings of the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters, as well as the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonisation of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue on a continuous basis, until decided otherwise either by IMO or ITU or ICAO.

Accordingly, Council approved the reports of the 106th and 107th sessions of MSC in general, and transmitted them, with their comments and recommendations, to the Assembly at its thirty third session, in accordance with Article 21(b) of the IMO Convention.

10. REPORT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE.

Item postponed to C 130, owing to time constraints.

11. REPORT OF THE LEGAL COMMITTEE.

Item postponed to C130, owing to time constraints.

12. REPORT OF THE FACILITATION COMMITTEE.

Item postponed to C 130, owing to time constraints.

13. PROTECTION OF VITAL SHIPPING LANES.

Council noted the information set out in document C 129/13 (Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore), as well as that provided orally by the delegation of Malaysia, on recent developments concerning the Cooperative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, and in particular:

.1 expressed appreciation to the littoral States of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for their continuous commitment under the Cooperative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore;

.2 also expressed appreciation to those Member States and organisations which had made contributions to the Cooperative Mechanism and to the Aids to Navigation Fund for the provision and maintenance of critical navigational aids in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore; and,

.3 invited Member States and organisations to further contribute to the Mechanism, and to the Aids to Navigation Fund.

14. ASSEMBLY MATTERS.

(a) Provisional agenda for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly. Council noted the information set out in document C 129/14(a), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, and approved the provisional agenda for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly as contained in the document.

(b) Preparations for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly. Council noted the information set out in document C 129/14(b), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on the preparations for the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly and agreed to the use of hybrid facilities to complement the in-person meeting of A 33, noting that only representatives of the Members attending the meeting in person at the IMO Headquarters would be allowed to vote.

(c) Draft report of the Council to the Assembly on the work of the Organisation since the thirty-second regular session of the Assembly. The Council approved the report, subject to such changes as may be deemed necessary and noted that any developments, which may have occurred since the issue of the document would be reported to the Council for consideration and approval at its 130th session, immediately before the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly.

(d) Appointment of the External Auditor. Council noted the information in document

C 129/14(d), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, setting out the current situation and next steps with respect to the appointment of the Organisation's External Auditor.

15. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

(a) Relations with the United Nations and the specialised agencies. Council noted the information set out in documents C 129/15(a), C 129/15(a)/1 and C 129/INF.5 (Costa Rica and France), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on relations with the United Nations and the specialised agencies and requested the Secretary-General to keep it informed of any relevant developments on these matters.

(b) Relations with intergovernmental organisations. No documents were submitted under this item.

(c) Relations with non-governmental organisations. Council noted the information set out in documents C 129/15(c), C 129/15(c)/1 and C 129/WP.2 (Chair of the Working Group), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Intersessional Working Group on Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations (ISWG-NGO), regarding the applications for consultative status, the periodic review of non-governmental organisations in consultative status, and the recommendations of the second session of the above-mentioned Group (ISWG-NGO 2) on these matters. Having considered the recommendations of the ISWG-NGO in relation to documents C 129/15(c) and C 129/15(c)/1, the Council decided not to grant consultative status to the Clean Shipping Alliance 2020 Limited (CSA) or the Professional Yachting Association (PYA), but to grant consultative status to the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), on a provisional basis, for no more than two years, after which a review will be conducted.

With regard to the application for consultative status submitted last year by the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), and as requested by the Council following consideration of the application by MEPC 80, the Council decided to grant consultative status to IPEN under 'Environment' classification.

With regard to document C 129/15(c)/1, the Council decided to:

- .1 withdraw the International Ocean Institute's (IOI) consultative status;
- .2 send a letter to the International Spill Control Organisation (ISCO) with a final reminder of its obligations and informing it that it should make every effort to participate in relevant IMO meetings for the benefit of the Organisation and that, should there be no improvement in its performance during the next review period, its status would be withdrawn;
- .3 extend the Inuit Circumpolar Council's (ICC) provisional consultative status for an additional period of two years, after which a review will be conducted;
- .4 retain the consultative status of the remaining organisations listed in the document, [which of course includes InterManager], and,

.5 advise the Assembly accordingly.

Council noted the information provided by the Secretary-General with regard to the change of name of EUROMOT to the European Association for Internal Combustion Engine and Alternative Powertrain Manufacturers (EUROMOT) and that the Assembly would be informed accordingly.

(d) World Maritime Day. Council endorsed the proposed theme for 2024, "Navigating the future: safety first!", and authorised that action be taken for the celebration of World Maritime Day in 2024, in accordance with established practice. It was also noted that the 2023 World Maritime Day will be celebrated at IMO Headquarters on Thursday, 28 September, observing the theme "MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on"; and encouraged Member States and organisations to plan their own events to celebrate the Day whilst informing the Secretariat as early as possible of any such activities. Council accepted, with appreciation, the generous offer by the Government of Spain to host the Parallel Event in 2024.

With regard to the proposal contained in document C 129/WP.8, reproduced at Annex, the Council, following a roll-call vote requested by the delegations of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, rescinded the Council's decision to accept the offer made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the World Maritime Day Parallel Event in 2023. The roll-call votes cast were 22 in favour, 2 against and 15 abstentions, thus the World Maritime Parallel Event will not be celebrated in 2023.

(e) Day of the Seafarer. Council noted the information set out in document C 129/15(e), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, reporting on the Day of the Seafarer 2023, and expressed its appreciation to all those who worked to organise the celebrations of the Day to make it such a success.

(f) International Day for Women in Maritime. Council noted the information set out in documents C 129/15(f), C 129/15(f)/1 (Viña del Mar Agreement Secretariat) and C 129/INF.6 (Saudi Arabia), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on the International Day for Women in Maritime, and expressed appreciation to all those who had worked to organise the celebrations of the Day to make it such a success.

(g) IMO Gender Equality Award. Council noted the information set out in document C 129/15(g), as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on the IMO Gender Equality Award, and in particular noted the measures taken and those proposed in respect of the 2024 Award, including an Assessment Panel which will select a winner from among the nominations received, for submission to C 130 for endorsement.

(h) International Maritime Prize. Following a secret ballot conducted in accordance with rule 35 of its rules of procedure, Council determined the recipient of the International Maritime Prize for 2022 to be Ms. Anneliese Jost, nominated by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for her invaluable commitment to the work and objectives of the Organisation. The Council extended warm congratulations to Ms. Jost and expressed its appreciation to the other candidate for the International Maritime Prize for 2022, Captain David J. F. Bruce, nominated by the Government of the Republic of the

Marshall Islands for his long and dedicated service to the Organisation, and who will also be given recognition at the IMO Awards Ceremony in respect of receiving a special certificate to honour his contribution to the work of IMO.

(i) IMO Honours for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. Council endorsed the Selection Panel's recommendation to bestow the 2023 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea on Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Caleb Halle, Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City, United States Coast Guard (USCG), nominated by the United States, for his outstanding courage, endurance and determination displayed in the rescue of seven crew members of the tugboat *Legacy*, which was disabled and adrift, in rough weather and heavy seas. It also endorsed the recommendation of the Panel of Judges that Certificates of Commendation in recognition of their acts of bravery should be awarded to the following nominees (not in any order of merit):

- .1 The crew of the tug vessel **SL Diamantina**, nominated by Australia.
- .2 Mr. José Cardoso Lemos, subsistence fisherman, nominated by Brazil.
- .3 The crew of the fishing vessel **Zhe Long Gang Yu 05668**, nominated by China.
- .4 Aviation Survival Technician Third Class John Walton, rescue swimmer on board helicopter CG-6009, Aviation Training Centre Mobile, Sector North Bend, United States Coast Guard, nominated by the United States.

Letters of Commendation in recognition of their actions were sent to a further thirteen nominees. In addition, Council also endorsed the Panel's recommendation that certificates for Special recognition for merchant vessels and their crew involved in the rescue of mixed migrants at sea (resolution A.1093(29)) should be issued to 14 merchant vessels nominated by Georgia, Marshall Islands, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA). Council further endorsed the Panel's recommendation to consider a revision of resolution A.1093(29) on *Special recognition for merchant vessels and their crew involved in the rescue of mixed migrants at sea*, to allow the submission of nominations by IGOs and NGOs for this recognition; the Secretariat will notify the relevant flag State when such nominations are received by IGOs or NGOs, to avoid duplication or objection.

Council noted and endorsed the arrangements proposed by the Secretary-General in respect of this year's Awards ceremony, which will take place at the IMO Headquarters, on Monday, 27 November 2023, on the first day of the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly.

(j) IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador Scheme. Council noted the information set out in documents C 128/INF.2 and C 129/INF.2/Add.1 on the IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador (IMO-GMA) Scheme.

16. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE CONVENTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANISATION.

Council noted the information set out in document C 129/16, as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on the status of the IMO Convention and membership of the Organisation. It endorsed the S-G's encouragement towards widespread acceptance of the 2021 IMO Convention amendments. Note was taken of the information provided orally by the delegation of Cyprus on the acceptance of amendments to the Convention and that the related instrument would be deposited with the Secretary-General in due course.

17. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF CONVENTIONS AND OTHER MULTILATERAL INSTRUMENTS IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE ORGANIZATION PERFORMS FUNCTIONS.

Item postponed to C 130, owing to time constraints.

18. HYBRID MEETING CAPABILITY.

The Council noted in particular:

- .1 the information provided on the utilisation of hybrid meeting capabilities, including the attendance of Member States;
- .2 the analysis on feedback from committees and sub-committees;
- .3 the update on the implementation enhancements undertaken to improve the provision of hybrid capabilities, including the display of documents and presentation, the single request-to-speak list and multilingual hybrid capability in Committee Room 9; and,
4. the costs associated with the hybrid meeting capabilities and the budget proposal for 2024-2025 at the current service level.

Council agreed to extend the trial period to enable the assessment of the current planned enhancements introduced by the Secretariat, and deferred a final decision on the matter to C 132, scheduled for mid-2024. To this end, the Council invited interested parties to work on developing interim guidance to facilitate the hybrid meeting capabilities of the Council, with particular regard to Council Rules of Procedures, for submission and consideration at C 132. With regard to the potential future enhancement of hybrid capabilities, including the associated costs and implications on human resources, the Council agreed, at present, not to request any further enhancements until those currently planned had been implemented and assessed; and requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report with the assessment of the enhancements for consideration at C 132.

19. MATTERS ARISING FROM C/ES.35.

Council noted the information provided orally by the Secretariat regarding updates on the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and the matter of stranded ships and crew in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, as well as comments made by delegations. In this regard, the Council expressed deep regret about the disruption to the Initiative. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's ongoing support for the UN's efforts to find solutions towards restoring safe navigation in the North-Western part of the Black Sea, which is of critical importance to the global supply chain and food security.

The efforts of Ukraine aimed at safeguarding safety, stability and freedom of international navigation in the North-Western part of the Black Sea and preventing a global food crisis were welcomed; also, demands were reiterated that the Russian Federation cease its unlawful activities in order to ensure the safety and welfare of seafarers, the security of international shipping and the marine environment in all affected areas; and to respect its obligations under relevant international treaties and conventions.

20. APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

Pursuant to the Council's decision, at its 128th session, concerning the appointment of a new Secretary-General to succeed the current incumbent, Mr. Kitack Lim, as of 1 January 2024, seven Member States each nominated a candidate for the post. The nominations received are listed below in alphabetical order by candidates' name:

Mr. Moin Uddin **Ahmed**, People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Suat Hayri **Aka**, Republic of Türkiye

Mr. Arsenio Antonio **Dominguez Velasco**, Republic of Panama

Dr. Cleopatra **Doumbia-Henry**, Commonwealth of Dominica

Mrs. Nancy **Karigithu**, Republic of Kenya

Ms. Minna **Kivimäki**, Republic of Finland

Mr. Xiaojie **Zhang**, People's Republic of China

In the event, Mr Ahmed withdrew his candidacy prior to voting and the Council, having followed its Rules of Procedure governing the election of the Secretary-General, elected Mr. Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco of the Republic of Panama as Secretary-General of the Organisation for the four-year period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2027, and congratulated him on his appointment.

The Council instructed the Secretary-General to forward its recommendation on the appointment of Mr. Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco of the Republic of Panama, as the Organisation's next Secretary-General, to the forthcoming thirty-third regular session of the Assembly, for approval in accordance with rule 52 of the Council's Rules of Procedure and Article 22 of the IMO Convention.

21. PLACE, DATE AND DURATION OF THE NEXT SESSION OF THE COUNCIL (C 130) AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDAS FOR THE NEXT TWO SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL (C 130 AND C 131).

Council noted that its 130th regular session will have two extra days, and that therefore it will be held from Tuesday, 21 to Friday, 24 November 2023, and that the 131st regular session of the Council will be held on Thursday, 7 December 2023, at the conclusion of Assembly meeting A 33. Council also noted the substantive items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda for the 130th session and agreed to include an agenda item on Appreciation for the services of Mr. Kitack Lim to the Organisation. The Council requested the Chair of the Council, in coordination with the Secretariat, to prepare a draft Assembly resolution on appreciation for the services of Mr. Kitack Lim, with designation as Secretary-General Emeritus of the Organisation, with effect from 1 January 2024, for consideration by C 130, with a view to submission and adoption by the thirty-third regular session of the Assembly.

22. SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEMS, IF ANY.

Having noted the information set out in document C 129/22, as well as that provided orally by the Secretary-General, the Council approved a draft Assembly resolution recording the Organisation's appreciation to Dr. Doumbia-Henry's for her services to WMU, and forwarded it to the forthcoming session of the Assembly for consideration and adoption.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight

Annex: World Maritime Day, Parallel Event 2023

ANNEX

Secretary-General,

At its 114th session in 2015, the Council accepted the proposal of Islamic Republic of Iran to host a World Maritime Day Parallel Event, which is due to take place in the autumn of 2023. This offer was accepted in good faith by the Council. However, since that time, the Iran has harassed and attacked commercial vessels on several occasions, placing the safety and welfare of seafarers at risk and threatening commercial vessels engaged in international commerce. In the last two years, Iran has attacked, harassed, or detained more than 20 vessels engaged in commercial activities. Iran has seized or attempted to seize commercial vessels with no pretext, warning, or prior justification. On July 5, 2023, Iran fired on the M/T Richmond Voyager in the Gulf of Oman using live fire, threatening the lives of seafarers onboard. Therefore, this delegation requests that the Council rescind its decision to accept Iran's proposal to host the World Maritime Day Parallel Event in 2023 C114/D 17(e).3.

Spanish and French versions of the above text are attached as Annex A and B respectively [where necessary].

Yours sincerely,

Jared Banks Permanent
Representative of the United States of America to the IMO

On behalf of cosponsors the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland & the United States of America.