

## **IMO SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN ELEMENT, TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING (HTW 10) 5 – 9 FEBRUARY 2024**

The IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping held its 10<sup>th</sup> Session (HTW 10) in hybrid format (physical/virtual) from Monday 5 through Friday 9 February 2024 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Haakon Storhaug (Norway) and his Vice-chair, Mr. Rafael Cigaruista (Panama). The session was attended by delegations from Member States, Associate Members of IMO, representatives from United Nations and specialised agencies, and Observers from inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations in consultative status.

### **OPENING REMARKS BY THE IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL.**

IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Arsenio Dominguez, welcomed delegates and observers to the tenth session of the Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping Sub-Committee.

He announced, with great sadness, the news of the sudden passing away of Mrs Andrea Subercaseaux-Bateman, one of IMO's esteemed English/Spanish booth interpreters, following which a minute of silence was observed by the Sub-Committee as a tribute to her dedicated service over a number of years.

Expressing his profound sense of duty and commitment to the safety and well-being of seafarers, he said that HTW's mandate and focus on the wide notion of the human element, underscores its pivotal role in ensuring the preparedness of seafarers to navigate through an evolving landscape of maritime challenges, marked by emerging technologies, alternative energy sources and other risks and threats at sea. Indeed, safeguarding seafarers takes on particular significance against the backdrop of the Red Sea situation, emphasising an imperative for collective action to fortify their safety. The entire world depends on international shipping and seafarers, therefore ships and cargoes, should not be the subject of attack, whilst reiterating his firm belief that the exercise of navigational rights and freedom by merchant vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected. In this context, he particularly urged the immediate release of the **Galaxy Leader** and its crew.

Mr Domingues reminded delegates that this year's World Maritime theme is: "Navigating the future: safety first!", a pledge to uphold the highest standards of safety, whilst facing the challenges of a fast-changing world, in particular, those such as climate change; developments in technology, artificial intelligence; and, new threats faced by the shipping industry.

Turning to the most important items on the agenda for this session, he stated that following the approval of the aims and principles to guide the work of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code by MSC 107, HTW 10 will finalise a road map and specific areas for comprehensive review. Such work will pave the way for the next essential steps in revising the Convention in order to address needs emanating from ongoing developments in technology; digitalisation; and, alternative fuels. Re-skilling and

re-educating seafarers and other marine personnel will also be necessary in order to ensure a competent workforce and a smooth transition into a new era of maritime transport. The model course training programme will ensure global uniformity and he particularly encouraged further progress on Model Course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities, to incorporate the competence on response to bullying and harassment, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, which is expected to be adopted at MSC 108. In this regard, a second joint tripartite meeting focussing on bullying and harassment in the maritime sector will be held jointly with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 27 to 29 February 2024 at the IMO Headquarters.

The Secretary-General concluded his address by wishing the Sub-Committee every success in its deliberations and acknowledged the upcoming celebrations of the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Dragon.

### **PROVISIONAL AGENDA .**

- 1 Adoption of the agenda p 2/3
- 2 Decisions of other IMO bodies p 3-5
- 3 Validated model training courses (6.2) p 3-7
- 4 Role of the human element (6.1) p 7
- 5 Reports on unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency (6.3) p 7-10
- 6 Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code (6.17) p 10-17
- 7 Biennial status report and provisional agenda for HTW 11 p 17
- 8 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025 p 17
- 9 Any other business p 17
- 10 Closing remarks by SG-IMO p 18
- 11 WG Annex 1 p 18-22

**1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.** Having adopted the agenda, it was decided to form:

A Working Group (WG) and a Drafting Group (DG), to be chaired as follows:

WG Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code,  
Captain Zheng Yi (Singapore).

DG Validated Model Training Courses, Captain V. Mohla (GlobalMET).

## **Statements by delegations with respect to attacks on ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.**

Numerous delegations expressed concerns for the safety of seafarers, freedom of navigation and stability of the global supply chain following the attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and, in this respect, commended the Secretary-General's efforts in bringing this to the attention of the United Nations Security Council at its special session on 3 January 2024 and his dialogue with all relevant parties.

## **2 DECISIONS OF OTHER IMO BODIES.**

**General.** The Sub-Committee, having noted the decisions and comments pertaining to its work made by SDC 9, SSE 9, FAL 47, LEG 110, NCSR 10, MSC 107, MEPC 80, C 129, III 9 and CCC 9, as reported in document HTW 10/2, agreed to take action as appropriate under the relevant agenda items.

**Outcome of FAL 47.** The Sub-Committee noted that FAL 47 had agreed to inform the Sub-Committee about its work on the IMO Compendium and the development of the code list on crew ranks and ratings.

**Outcome of LEG 110.** The Sub-Committee noted that LEG 110 had adopted resolution LEG.6(110) on *Guidelines on how to deal with seafarer abandonment cases*.

**Outcome of MSC 107.** With regard to the decisions of MSC 107, the Sub-Committee noted that the Committee:

- .1 had requested the Sub-Committees under its purview to give due consideration to paragraph 5.4 (Status of footnotes) of MSC.1/Circ.1500/Rev.2 when drafting footnotes for inclusion in mandatory instruments;
- .2 cognisant that the term "manning" and variations thereof were used extensively across many IMO instruments, had acknowledged that the work to address gender-neutral language was a major effort and required a holistic approach;
- .3 having noted that FAL 47 had proposed the development of a joint MSC-FAL circular on guidelines for the use of electronic certificates, had agreed that any guidelines to be developed should address electronic certificates and documents comprehensively;
- .4 had agreed to discontinue the practice of taking decisions by correspondence;
- .5 had approved amendments to the Organisation and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies with respect to the use of the new Meeting Document Submission Portal on IMODOCS; and,

.6 had approved, subsequently endorsed by C 129, the holding of the Joint ILO/IMO Working Group on the Guidelines on the medical examination of fishing vessel personnel, which will take place from 12 to 16 February 2024 at the ILO Headquarters (Geneva, Switzerland).

**Outcome of C 129.** The Sub-Committee noted that C 129 had noted the financial report and audited financial statements for the financial period ended 31 December 2022, and the report of the External Auditor, including the recommendation of ILO liaison with a view to including training on seafarer general rights, including rights relevant to the abandonment issue, as part of the considerations in the process of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. In this context, the Sub-Committee also noted the following views expressed:

- .1 training on seafarers' general rights, including rights relevant to the abandonment issue, is a crucial component of the well-being of seafarers. Not only does it address the current challenges, it also strengthens the Sub-Committee's approach to future considerations;
- .2 raising of awareness on seafarers' rights would require a campaign led by ILO, rather than including training requirements in the STCW Convention;
- .3 seafarers' rights should be addressed under the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) at the tripartite level where several free resources are available, such as the ILO's guidance and FAQs on MLC, the ITF guidance to seafarers on their rights, and, several Member States' guidance;
- .4 that no evidence of a compelling need for the suggestion to include seafarers' rights as training requirements has been provided;
- .5 training on seafarers' rights is linked to safety of life and ships, hence seafarers need to be trained appropriately and IMO would be the competent body to consider and address the matter in cooperation with ILO, within its corresponding remit;
- .6 the matter should be referred to relevant Committees for consideration, and possible referral to the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element (JTWG), before the Sub-Committee considers the matter within the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention; and,
- .7 if the JTWG is tasked to consider this matter, its current scope of work and time may need to be expanded and the limited representations in the form of Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group need to be borne in mind.

Following this discussion, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 noted that the report of the External Auditor would generally be addressed by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat; and the relevant outcomes reported to the Council, as appropriate; and,

.2 agreed that it was for Member States to decide on the inclusion of training on seafarers' general rights, including rights relevant to the abandonment issue, as part of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, by means of the submission of relevant proposals, taking into account the Committees' method of work.

### **3 VALIDATED MODEL TRAINING COURSES.**

**General.** The Sub-Committee noted that MSC 107 and MEPC 80, having noted the Sub-Committee's consideration regarding the implications of converting model courses into e-learning model courses, had agreed that model courses should generally not be converted into e-learning training material.

**Report on the model courses programme under the Model Course Guidelines.** The Sub-Committee considered document HTW 10/3 (Secretariat), providing a report on the model courses revised and submitted to this session for validation; a summary of the arrangements agreed for the validation of model courses by HTW 11 and proposed arrangements for the validation of model courses by HTW 12; and, an overview of the complete set of IMO model courses.

**Model courses planned to be validated at this session.** It was recalled that HTW 8 had endorsed the revision of the following two model courses with a view to validation at this session:

- .1 1.32 on Operational Use of Integrated Bridge Systems including Integrated Navigational Systems; and,
- .2 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator.

***Draft revised Model Course 1.32 on Operational Use of Integrated Bridge Systems (IBS) including Integrated Navigational Systems (INS).*** Draft revised Model Course 1.32 was developed by a hired expert and reviewed by a review group coordinated by Mr. J. Verhoeff (Netherlands). Having considered documents HTW 10/3/1 and Add.1 (Secretariat), containing the report of the review group and the draft revised model course, respectively, the Sub-Committee noted the views expressed that the revised model course provided added value to achieve the standards of competence set out in table A-II/1 of the STCW Code, in particular that it helped demonstrate competency in the operation and use of an IBS or INS in a bridge simulator environment during routine, unusual and emergency situations. Subsequently, the Sub-Committee referred both documents to the Drafting Group, for finalisation with a view to validation.

***Draft revised Model Course 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator.*** The Sub-Committee noted that draft revised Model Course 1.35 was developed by a hired expert and reviewed by a review group coordinated by Captain V. Mohla (GlobalMET). Having considered documents HTW 10/3/2 and Add.1 (Secretariat), containing the report of the review group and the draft revised model course, respectively, the Sub-Committee noted the views expressed that the revised model course provides guidance to achieve the applicable competences for cargo operations of liquefied

petroleum gas tankers as set out in table A-V/1-2-2 of the STCW Code. Subsequently, the Sub-Committee referred both documents to the Drafting Group, for finalisation with a view to validation.

**Model courses planned for validation by HTW 11.** The Sub-Committee recalled that HTW 9 had endorsed the revision of the following model courses with a view to validation at HTW 11:

- .1 1.25 on General Operator's Certificates for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- .2 1.26 on Restricted Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- .3 3.20 on Company Security Officer;
- .4 3.21 on Port Facility Security Officer; and,
- .5 3.23 on Actions to Be Taken to Prevent Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery.

**Arrangements for the validation of model courses by HTW 12.** Two model courses were selected for revision and subsequent validation by HTW 12:

- .1 1.37 on Chemical Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator; and,
- .2 2.06 on Oil Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator;

The Secretariat will take the necessary action to hire a developer for the revision of the model course 1.37, whilst China will be the course developer for 2.06.

**Review groups and coordinators.** In accordance with section 5 of the Guidelines for the development, review and validation of model courses, the Sub-Committee established review groups, to work intersessionally by correspondence to review the model courses planned for validation by HTW 12 and encouraged interested Member States, international organisations and other experts to participate as members of the groups and notify their contact details to [ModelCourses@imo.org](mailto:ModelCourses@imo.org) within one month of the closure of this session. In this context, the Sub-Committee selected Mr. J. Verhoeff (Netherlands) as the coordinator for the review groups established for the revision of model courses 1.37 and 2.06.

**Information on Training for deck officers in the IALA Maritime Buoyage System.** The Sub-Committee noted the information provided by IALA in document HTW 10/INF.6 on training of deck officers in the IALA Maritime Buoyage System.

**Establishment of the Drafting Group on Model Courses.** The Sub-Committee established the Drafting Group on Model Courses, chaired by Capt. V. Mohla (GlobalMET) and instructed it accordingly.



**Report of the Drafting Group on Model Courses.** The Sub-Committee approved the DG report in general and, in particular:

- .1 validated draft revised model courses:
  - .1 1.32 on Operational use of integrated bridge systems including integrated navigational systems; and,
  - .2 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator.
- .2 endorsed the Group's recommendation to update the existing Guidance on the implementation of IMO model courses and requested the Secretariat to prepare draft Guidance for consideration at the next session of the Sub-Committee;
- .3 recommended that the Secretariat cross-check with the coordinator of the Review Group for future model courses before submitting to the Sub-Committee;
- .4 encouraged the active participation of current review group members for future model courses; and,
- .5 approved the draft terms of reference for the revision of model course 1.37 on Chemical tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator and 2.06 on Oil tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator.

#### **4 ROLE OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT.**

**Holistic approach on the human element.** The Sub-Committee recalled that HTW 8 had considered the ongoing work on the human element and, having recognised that it is not the only body responsible for human element matters in the Organisation, requested MSC 105 to invite all other relevant IMO bodies to assess their respective involvement. MSC 105 then invited all relevant IMO bodies accordingly, with a view to devising an outline for a holistic approach on the human element. Recognising that it plays a leading role on the human element, the Sub-Committee invited interested Member States and international organisations to submit proposals to a future session of the Sub-Committee, outlining a holistic approach on the human element within the scope of work of the Organisation based on the instructions by the Committee, and the information to be reported by other IMO bodies.

#### **5 REPORTS ON UNLAWFUL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY.**

**General.** The Sub-Committee recalled that following the proposals of STW 30, MSC 71 had decided to include an agenda item on unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency in the Sub-Committee's agenda. Great concern was raised on reports by Member States regarding the proliferation of fraudulent certificates of competency and endorsements. MSC 71 approved a circular on *Fraudulent certificates of competency*

(MSC/Circ.900) and A 21 adopted resolution A.892(21) on *Unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency and endorsements*.

In accordance with STCW regulation I/5 (National provisions) citing that 'Parties shall take and enforce appropriate measures to prevent fraud and other unlawful practices involving certificates and endorsements issued', STW 43, STW 44 and HTW 1, noting the large number of reported fraudulent certificates, urged Member States and international organisations to submit proposals on a strategy to address the problems associated with fraudulent certificates of competency.

**Importance of the recognition by endorsement of certificates of competency (CoC).**

The Sub-Committee considered document HTW 10/5 (Japan, Panama and Philippines), proposing confirming that the recognition of certificates by endorsement, as provided for in STCW regulation I/10 (Recognition of certificates) and in MSC.1/Circ.1450 on *Guidance on arrangements between Parties to allow for recognition of certificates under regulation I/10 of the STCW Convention*, was extremely important for the safety of seafarers and ships; and endorsements not in accordance with STCW regulation I/10 should be invalid, which could be subject to disposition under the port State control (PSC) regimes.

During the ensuing discussion, the most important views expressed were;

- .1 the actions in document HTW 10/6/5 should be supported and STCW Parties should take a broad range of actions to tackle fraudulent practices with certificates;
- .2 it is imperative that CoC endorsements are carried out in accordance with STCW regulation I/10 and that STCW Parties communicate with the Secretariat as necessary on the update on the information search page regarding "Parties whose certificates are recognised in compliance with regulation I/10";
- .3 the Secretariat should be invited to consider inclusion of the information related to STCW regulation I/10 in the new STCW GISIS module to avoid duplication of tools for reporting;
- .4 whilst some delegations were of the view that provisions in STCW regulation I/10 and MSC.1/Circ.1450 should be reviewed under the ongoing work of the comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code, other delegations highlighted that issues concerning the recognition of certificates were rather linked with the implementation of existing provisions;
- .5 upgraded qualification by endorsement issued to seafarers are not consistent with STCW regulation I/10 and section A-I/10 of the STCW Code;
- .6 a multilateral undertaking should be concluded between the Party which is to recognise the certificates and the Party issuing the certificates to be recognised;
- .7 the recognition of certification should mirror the qualifications in the original certificates and seafarers must carry on board both the endorsements and the original certificates;



- .8 according to the Convention, each Party shall maintain a register of certification and make information on the status of these certificates available, by electronic means, on request by the other Parties and companies;
- .9 detected fraudulent certificates should be reported to issuing Administrations; and,
- .10 information on Parties, the certificates of which were recognised in accordance with regulation I/10 and the certificate verification facility, should be incorporated into the new STCW GISIS module.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee noted that all information on the existing two models on the IMO website, i.e. "Parties whose Certificates are recognized in compliance with regulation I/10" (<https://wwwapps.imo.org/RecognizedCertificates/default.asp>) and "certificate verification facility" (<https://wwwapps.imo.org/CertificateVerification/countryRequest.asp>), was managed and updated by the Secretariat, based on the requests from Member States. The Sub-Committee also noted that the functions included in the new STCW GISIS module did not entail a transfer of obligations in the Convention from STCW Parties to the Secretariat, e.g. STCW regulation I/2.15.

Subsequently, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 noted that the issue of fraudulent endorsements raised in the document is a serious problem that affects the safety of seafarers and ships;
- .2 reiterated the necessity to issue CoC endorsements in accordance with STCW regulation I/10;
- .3 recognized that invalid endorsements could be subject to disposition under port State control (PSC) regimes, and urged STCW Parties to actively disclose and communicate information on seafarers' qualifications, such as publishing the list of undertakings, as provided in STCW regulation I/10, to the Parties concerned;
- .4 encouraged STCW Parties to take a broader range of actions to tackle the issue of fraudulent endorsements; and,
- .5 taking into account the decisions made under agenda item 6 with regard to the launch of the new STCW GISIS module for a trial period of two years, noted that the information provided on the site "Parties whose Certificates are recognised in compliance with regulation I/10" and the "Certificate Verification facility" would be consolidated into the new module, with a view to allowing Parties to manage and update relevant information.

**Reports on fraudulent certificates.** The Sub-Committee noted the information provided by the Secretariat in document HTW 10/INF.2/Rev.1, containing a summary of reports received by them on fraudulent certificates detected in 2022 and 2023. In this context, the Sub-Committee invited Parties to anonymise the information when submitting reports on

fraudulent certificates; and agreed that, if names were included in such reports, the Secretariat should anonymise them when publishing the corresponding document.

**Certificate verification facility.** The Sub-Committee invited Member States to provide the Secretariat with updated information, which would be included in the "certificate verification facility" accessible on the IMO website, in order to facilitate and respond in a timely manner to requests for verification of certificates, until the new functions of the GISIS module are finalised.

**Colombia's experiences in issuing maritime certificates through technological innovations.** The Sub-Committee noted the information provided by Colombia in document HTW 10/INF.9, relating to their experiences in issuing maritime certificates through technological innovations.

## **6 COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE.**

**General.** The Sub-Committee noted that MSC 105 had:

- .1 agreed to include in the biennial agenda of the HTW Sub-Committee for 2022-2023 and the provisional agenda for HTW 9 an output on "Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code", with a target completion year of 2026;
- .2 instructed the Sub-Committee to start with a preliminary assessment of the scope of the work to be conducted, identifying specific areas to be reviewed, and to prepare a road map for approval by the Committee before initiating the development of draft amendments; and,
- .3 instructed the Sub-Committee to consider ongoing areas of work in the context of the STCW Convention separately from the work on the comprehensive review.

The Sub-Committee also noted that MSC 107 and MEPC 80 had agreed to the proposed integration of the work under outputs:

- .1 1.32 (Implementation of the STCW Convention);
- .2 6.5 (Development of measures to facilitate mandatory seagoing service required under the STCW Convention);
- .3 6.6 (Development of measures to ensure quality of onboard training as part of the mandatory seagoing service required by the STCW Convention); and,
- .4 6.11 (Development of training provisions for seafarers related to the BWM Convention).

The Sub-Committee further noted that MSC 107:

- .1 having recalled the instructions given at MSC 105, had approved the draft aims and principles to guide the work on the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, prepared at HTW 9;
- 2 following consideration of a relevant proposal, agreed that the Sub-Committee would eventually have to develop competencies relating to Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) operations but that it was premature to consider the matter, given the early stage of the MASS Code development; and,
- .3 had invited the Sub-Committee to note the considerations regarding the continuity of paper charts or equivalent printable digital arrangements, and to take them into account when undertaking the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention in relation to the training of seafarers.

**Report of the Correspondence Group and related documents.** The Sub-Committee had for its consideration documents:

- .1 HTW 10/6 (Sweden), providing the report of the Correspondence Group on the Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code established at HTW 9, in particular:
  - .1 a preliminary list of 22 specific areas to be reviewed for the comprehensive review;
  - .2 draft road map for the comprehensive review with a target completion year of 2027 for the adoption of the whole set of amendments; and,
  - .3 draft terms of reference for the revision of model course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities.
- .2 HTW 10/6/3 (Islamic Republic of Iran), raising potential issues that will require consideration concerning the inclusion of the articles of the STCW Convention in the scope of the comprehensive review due to the different amendment procedures of the articles of the Convention (explicit acceptance) and the annex to the Convention and part A of the STCW Code (tacit acceptance);
- 3 HTW 10/6/11 (ICS), providing comments on the preliminary list of specific areas identified for the comprehensive review, in particular, concerning the need to amend the articles of the Convention; and regarding the road map for the comprehensive review, distinguishing between the review and revision stages; and,
- .4 HTW 10/6/12 (Japan), proposing that the preliminary list of specific areas be categorised and addressed as urgent matters and non-urgent matters and that the road map be modified accordingly.

**Preliminary list of specific areas identified for the comprehensive review.** In considering a draft preliminary list of specific areas identified for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code set out in annex 1 to document HTW 10/6, as

prepared by the Correspondence Group, and the relevant parts of the above-mentioned documents, the Sub-Committee held a general discussion, exploring a number of views expressed. Following this, the Sub-Committee agreed to refer document HTW 10/6, in particular annex 1, to the Working Group, when established, to finalise the list of specific areas for the comprehensive review, including the articles of the Convention, taking into account document HTW 10/6/3, and relevant parts of documents HTW 10/6/8, HTW 10/6/11 and HTW 10/6/12. In addition, the Sub-Committee instructed the Working Group to prepare the draft methodology, including the prioritisation of the areas discussed above, with a view to approval by the Committee.

**Road map for the comprehensive review.** In considering the draft road map for the comprehensive review set out in the annex 2 to document HTW 10/6, as prepared by the Correspondence Group, and the relevant parts of the above-mentioned documents, the Sub-Committee noted the following views:

- .1 the road map should foresee the review and revision stages which had been utilised when developing the 2010 Manila amendments;
- .2 the methodology for proposing and considering amendments should be developed before the finalisation of the road map;
- .3 holding of an intersessional working group (ISWG) or a virtual meeting of a correspondence group should be decided after considering the progress made at this session; and,
- 4 it might not be feasible to hold an ISWG between HTW 10 and HTW 11 as it should be approved by MSC 108 and endorsed by C 132 and practical arrangements for holding the ISWG, e.g. submission of documents to the ISWG and report to HTW 11, should be made in advance.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed to refer document HTW 10/6, in particular annex 2, to the Working Group, when established in order to prepare the draft methodology, finalise the road map for the comprehensive review, with a view to approval by the Committee and consider whether, at this early stage of the review process, the holding of an intersessional working group (ISWG) or a virtual meeting of same would be necessary, including preparation of draft terms of reference for the group, as appropriate.

**Revision of Model Course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities.** The Sub-Committee agreed to instruct the Working Group, when established, to finalise the draft terms of reference for the revision of Model Course 1.21, which should take into account the outcome of the JTWG meeting from 27 to 29 February 2024 and the decisions made by MSC 108, including the adoption of the draft amendments to table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code, based on annex 3 to document HTW 10/6, with a view to endorsement by the Sub-Committee for validation by HTW 12. Chile agreed to take on the role as course developer whilst Mr. Jan Willem Verhoeff (Netherlands) was selected as the coordinator. A review group was also established to work intersessionally by correspondence to review Model Course 1.21.

**Proposals for new amendments to the STCW Convention and Code.** The Sub-Committee noted that three documents in relation to proposals for amendments to the STCW Convention and Code had been submitted for the Sub-Committee's consideration. These comprised inclusion of a footnote referring to the use of an industry-developed medical guide for ships; a new competence on navigation in a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) environment impacted by external interference; and, the development of guidelines for mandatory onboard training containing specific training time and methods of approved seagoing service.

Following further discussion, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 agreed that only non-mandatory provisions consequential to amendments to be developed in the context of the comprehensive review should be considered within the scope of this output;
- .2 deferred consideration of the proposals for amendments to the STCW Convention and Code in documents HTW 10/6/5, HTW 10/6/6, HTW 10/6/10 and HTW 10/6/14 until after the scope of the work, including specific areas to be reviewed, and a road map for the comprehensive review had been approved by the Committee; and,
- .3 agreed to instruct the Working Group, when established, to prepare a list of documents on proposals for amendments to the STCW Convention and Code, including those from previous sessions, with a view to being further considered after the scope of the work, including specific areas to be reviewed, and a road map for the comprehensive review had been approved by the Committee.

Following a lengthy statement made by the delegation of Ukraine, the Sub-Committee agreed with the Chair's advice to focus on the proposal in document HTW 10/6/9 only, and that other interventions, if any, in response to Ukraine's statement would be considered at a later stage of the meeting. Having noted general support for the proposals in HTW 10/6/9, the Sub-Committee agreed to instruct the Working Group to further consider the draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention set out in its annex, for advice to the Sub-Committee.

In response to the statements made by the delegation of Ukraine, the Sub-Committee noted the statements by the delegations of Australia, Belgium (supported by Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the European Commission), Canada, Japan, United Kingdom and United States, expressing solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The majority of the delegations that spoke condemned the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. In this connection, the Sub-Committee also noted a statement made by the delegation of the Russian Federation, underlining that the matters raised above, and the statements made, lay outside of the mandate not only of this technical Sub-Committee, but also of the Organisation as a whole.

**Development of interim guidance on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels.** The Sub-Committee had for its consideration, documents:

- .1 HTW 10/6/4 (ICS), presenting a rationale for initiating the development of interim guidance on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and seeking Member States' support for submitting a proposal for a new relevant output;
- .2 HTW 10/6/7 (China), providing initial draft amendments to part B of the STCW Code concerning guidance on training and qualification for seafarers on battery-powered ships; and,
- .3 HTW 10/6/13 (India), providing comments on document HTW 10/6/4 and proposing revision of tables A-V/3-1 and A-V/3-2 of the STCW Code, and corresponding Model Courses 7.13 and 7.14.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed that:

- .1 the work related to the development of training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels should be separate from the work on the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code;
- .2 the existing output of the Committee on "Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels" could be utilised to develop training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels, taking into account the ongoing work by MSC, the CCC Sub-Committee and any other relevant bodies and invited the Committee to include this output in the provisional agenda for HTW 11; and,
- .3 documents HTW 10/6/4, HTW 10/6/7 and HTW 10/6/13 should be considered for any further work.

**Recommendations on Polar Code training programmes.** The Sub-Committee, in considering documents HTW 10/6/8 (Argentina et al.) and HTW 10/INF.10 (Secretariat), providing recommendations from, and the full report of, the Lessons Learned workshop for Polar Code training programmes, which took place in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 31 October to 3 November 2023, in the context of training of personnel engaged on ships operating in polar waters, took note of the views expressed. Having noted general support for the recommendations set out in the annex to document HTW 10/6/8, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 invited the Committee to note relevant recommendations set out in paragraph 4.2 of the document, with regard to the evaluation and implementation of the Polar Code;
- .2 agreed to take into account the relevant recommendations set out in paragraph 4.4 of the document when revising Model Courses 7.11 and 7.12 in the future;
- .3 invited interested Member States and international organisations to consider arrangements for additional train-the-trainer workshops in coordination with the Secretariat, as appropriate; and,



.4 agreed to instruct the Working Group, when established, to take into account document HTW 10/6/8, in particular the elements contained in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3, in the list of areas to be reviewed as part of the comprehensive review, for subsequent approval by the Committee.

**Development of the STCW GISIS module.** The Sub-Committee considered document HTW 10/6/1 (Secretariat), providing the background of the development of an STCW GISIS module and a proposal for its finalisation and launching of a trial operation, during which the following views expressed:

- .1 the launch of this module would be beneficial and some new functions should be added, e.g. CoC endorsements issued in accordance with STCW regulation I/10 and verification of authenticity of certificates to help address fraudulent practices;
- .2 the administration of the communication of information obligations required by the STCW Convention and Code would be facilitated and administrative burden reduced with the new module, which should be used by Parties;
- .3 the experience gained on the use of the new module would be important for the comprehensive review of the Convention and Code, in particular with regard to the enhancement of the communication of information provisions; and,
- .4 the new module should also cover information related to the register of medical practitioners, responsible for assessing the medical fitness of seafarers (STCW regulation I/9) and information on internet resources for checking the validity of seafarers medical certificates (STCW regulation I/9 and section A-I/9 of the Code).

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 requested the Secretariat to launch the new STCW GISIS module for a trial period of two years and inform STCW Parties and other Member States when the new module becomes operative;
- .2 encouraged STCW Parties to use the new module once it becomes operative, provide the necessary information for its correct and reliable operation in general and, in particular, to discharge the obligations emanating from the provisions on communication of information;
- .3 invited Member States and international organisations to submit feedback on the use of the STCW GISIS module, with a view to improvement during the trial; and,
- .4 requested the Secretariat to provide information on experience gained during the trial period to a future session of the Sub-Committee, if possible, with a view to providing relevant input to the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, in particular with regard to the enhancement of the communication of information provisions.

**Establishment of the Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code.** The Sub-Committee established the Working Group on the Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code, chaired by Capt. Zheng Yi (Singapore), and, taking into account the comments made and decisions taken in plenary, issued it with terms of reference appropriate to its tasking.

**Report of the Working Group.** Having considered the report of the Working Group, which it approved in general, the Sub-Committee took action as follows:

- .1 endorsed the list of specific areas for the comprehensive review, with a view to approval by the Committee;
- .2 endorsed the draft methodology for the comprehensive review, with a view to approval by the Committee;
- .3 endorsed the Group's recommendation to convene an ISWG before HTW 11 and the associated draft terms of reference, subject to the decision by MSC and the Council;
- .4 endorsed the Group's agreement on the approach for Phase 1 (review);
- .5 endorsed the draft road map for the comprehensive review, with a view to approval by the Committee;
- .6 endorsed the draft terms of reference for the revision of model course 1.21;
- .7 noted the Group's decision to defer consideration of document HTW 10/6/2 to a future stage;
- .8 endorsed the lists of documents on proposals for amendments to the STCW Convention and Code and the topics for consideration, noting that the lists are non-exhaustive and should not preclude future additions; and,
- .9 noted that the Group was not able to consider the draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention set out in the annex to document HTW 10/6/9, due to time constraints, and that the ISWG, if established, should be tasked to consider said document.

**Annexes to the Working Group Report.** There are six Annexes to the WG report as follows:

A1: Preliminary List of Specific Areas identified for the comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention and Code.

A2: Draft Methodology for the Comprehensive Review.

A3: Road Map for the Comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention and Code.

A4: Terms of Reference for the Revision of Model Course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities.

A5: Non-exhaustive List of the Documents on proposals for Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code and non-exhaustive list of the topics for consideration for the comprehensive review.

A6: Draft Terms of reference for the Intersessional working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention and Code.

Annex 1, is reproduced at Annex to this report, whilst the remaining five Annexes are available on request to the author at: [paddy@intermanager.org](mailto:paddy@intermanager.org)

## **7 BIENNIAL STATUS REPORT AND PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR HTW 11.**

**Biennial status report for the 2024-2025 biennium.** Taking into account the progress made at this session, the Sub-Committee prepared its biennial status report for the 2024-2025 biennium.

**Proposed provisional agenda for HTW 11.** Having recalled the decision made under agenda item 6, that the existing output of the Committee on "Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels" could be utilised to develop training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels, taking into account the ongoing work by MSC, the CCC Sub-Committee and any other relevant bodies, the Sub-Committee agreed to invite the Committee to include this output in the provisional agenda for HTW 11.

**Intersessional working group.** The Sub-Committee invited MSC 108 to approve the establishment of an intersessional working group on the Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code to take place in the third quarter of 2024 to further progress the work under agenda item 6, subject to endorsement by C 132.

**Date of the next session.** The eleventh session of the Sub-Committee has been tentatively scheduled to take place from 10 to 14 February 2025.

## **8 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025.**

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Sub-Committee unanimously re-elected Mr. Haakon Storhaug (Norway) as Chair and Mr. Rafael Cigarruista (Panama) as Vice-Chair, both for 2025.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

**Design of an efficient virtual reality-based training system and verification of its effectiveness.** The Sub-Committee noted the information provided by the Republic of Korea in document HTW 10/INF.5, relating to the design of an efficient virtual reality-based training system and verification of its effectiveness.

## **CLOSING REMARKS BY SECRETARY GENERAL.**

In summing up the achievements of HTW 10, the Secretary General reflected that once again, we have come to the end of a very busy and demanding session of the Sub-Committee. He felt that accomplishments had been achieved in paving the way for future work, and in the interest of time, chose to highlight those of most importance. First among these was the agreement on the list of special areas for comprehensive review of the STCW Convention which together with the associated draft methodology and road map will lay the foundations for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. Secondly, we have the finalisation of the draft terms of reference for the revision of Model Course 1.21 which will help to prevent and address all forms of bullying and harassment in the maritime sector. Thirdly, the agreement which will launch the new GISIS module to address globally the obligations that stem from the STCW Convention all around the world and in this way, we will be helping to complete that work. Also, we have the validation of two model courses.

Mr Domingues went on to thank the Chair, the Vice-Chair, Chairmen of the Drafting and Working Groups, the Coordinator of the Correspondence Group, the staff of the Maritime Safety Division plus other dedicated IMO staff for their tireless support and the Interpreters for helping us all to communicate. He closed his address by wishing everyone present, a very pleasant and well-deserved week-end.

## **ANNEX 1: PRELIMINARY LIST OF SPECIFIC AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE STCW CONVENTION AND CODE**

The below areas in the STCW Convention and Code are identified for the comprehensive review. The scope of work specified for each area is based on preliminary assessment of the relevant issues however, to be comprehensive, the scope should include all pertinent issues and provisions of the STCW Convention and Code, including the articles.

- 1 Emerging technologies on ships and ship operations.** Technological developments in shipping, as well as environmental challenges, have provided the industry with new types of vessels, equipment, propulsion, energy sources and manoeuvring and operations, which may require new standards of competence, functions, and levels of responsibility.

Action: Review existing standards and determine the need for a new requirement to address provisions established by IMO and other relevant instruments, taking into account current and future work.

- 2 Digitalisation of documentation, including certificates issued under STCW.**

The utilisation of electronic documents in the maritime industry will demand modifications in the traditional issuance and processing of documentation issued under STCW. This also includes validation and authentication of certificates.

Action: Review provisions in the Convention and Code concerning documentation issued under STCW to facilitate the utilisation of electronic documentation. (Reference to MSC.1/Circ.1665)

**3 Emerging technologies in education and training.** With the experience already gained in using digitalisation and emerging technologies in education and training, it is envisaged that further use of those technologies will continue. Therefore, a review of the existing provisions in the STCW Convention and Code would allow for the expansion of teaching and teaching aids to supplement and support shore-based training, methods for assessment of competence, and approval and monitoring of training programmes including those outside the jurisdiction of the Party.

Action: Review and determine the need to amend existing standards and guidance to incorporate emerging instructional and assessment techniques such as distance learning, and improve the quality and flexibility of onboard training, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators.

**4 Facilitation, flexibility and quality of onboard, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators.** It is important to focus on facilitating and improving the quality of onboard and workshop skills training and seagoing service required in different chapters of the Convention, also taking into account up-to-date learning technologies, including additional use of simulators.

Action: Review and determine the need to amend existing standards and guidance to incorporate emerging instructional and assessment techniques, and improve the quality and flexibility of onboard training, distance learning, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators.

**5 Flexibility and efficiency in implementation of new training requirements and reduction of administrative burdens.** It is important that amendments related to new training standards, particularly those emanating from amendments to other IMO instruments, enter into force in the shortest possible time.

Action: Review the current text of the STCW Convention and Code and identify the provisions that should be addressed in order to provide a viable and efficient amendment process. This would allow any changes in standards of education and training, including KUPs stemming from the introduction of new technologies in ships and shipping operations, to be incorporated seamlessly and swiftly.

**6 Requirements for sea time or practical experience in relation to new and emerging technologies including the use of simulation.** New and emerging technologies may support training and certification of seafarers. This could include the use of simulations as an alternative to a portion of a requirement for seagoing service. In addition, considering the initial phase, the training and certification of seafarers often precede the implementation or installation of these new technologies on ships.

Action: Review the STCW Convention and Code to determine the appropriateness of seagoing service requirements for training and certification and the feasibility of meeting requirements using new and emerging technologies, considering that in an initial phase, the training and certification of seafarers often precede the implementation or installation

of these new technologies on ships. This may include consideration of the use of simulation as an alternative to a portion of a requirement for seagoing service.

**7 Psychological safety, bullying and harassment, including SASH, gender diversity and gender sensitisation.** The review and revision of the STCW Convention and Code should be done in parallel with the work already initiated on the development and finalisation of training provisions on psychological safety, bullying and harassment in the maritime sector, including sexual assault and sexual harassment. Furthermore, the responsibilities of companies should be reviewed to consider responsibility for psychologically safe working environments including the prevention of bullying and harassment.

Action: Review the STCW Convention to consider incorporating psychological safety, bullying and harassment, including SASH, gender diversity and gender sensitisation into the training requirements for seafarers.

**8 Mental health.** In order to reduce the stigma of mental health issues, it should be considered to require appropriate competence so that seafarers understand the impact of living and working at sea and can recognise and triage a mental health challenge that may arise while on board a ship. The comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code should identify tools and methods to allow seafarers to recognise risk factors and know how and when to search for appropriate help. Furthermore, the responsibilities of companies should be reviewed to consider responsibility for the promotion of mental health and well-being on board ship.

Action: Review the STCW Convention to consider incorporating mental health concepts into the training requirements for seafarers.

## **9 Twenty-first century and interpersonal skills.**

Action: Review the STCW Convention and Code for the need to address twenty-first century competence and interpersonal skills, such as digital skills, communications, information management and the ability to adapt to a changing work environment.

**10 Addressing inconsistencies.** A significant number of inconsistencies were identified in the text of the annex to the STCW Convention and Code. Many of those are a consequence of amendments that were adopted at different times. The above may lead to ineffective implementation of the STCW Convention. Thus, the Parties to the STCW Convention and those involved in implementing, applying or enforcing its measures may not always give to the STCW Convention in a uniform manner.

Action: Review STCW provisions to address inconsistencies, duplications, and different interpretations.

**11 Addressing different interpretations.** Different interpretations of the requirements have been identified which result in inconsistency in implementation and possible confusion. The comprehensive review would give the opportunity to clarify issues arising from inconsistent interpretations of the various standards, including those



related to near-coastal voyages, in particular, the entering of an undertaking among Parties. It is also important to review and identify new and existing definitions for a more unison interpretation of the STCW Convention and Code.

Action: Review STCW provisions to address inconsistencies, duplications, and different interpretations.

**12 Addressing taxonomy and terminologies.** The newly developed action verb taxonomy in appendices 4 and 5 of the Guidelines for the development, review and validation of model courses (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.15/Rev.2) should be considered when reviewing the STCW Convention and Code in order to ensure the consistency of the wording used in the STCW Convention and Code defining the standards of competence with the action verbs used in modern educational systems.

Action: Review STCW provisions to address taxonomy and terminologies

**13 Flexibility in revalidation of certificates and endorsements.** A comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code would allow for the identification of provisions that could be amended or new provisions that would need to be added to provide flexibility in revalidation and renewal of certificates, endorsements, and medical certificates, including whenever exceptional circumstances may occur.

Action: Review STCW provisions to consider incorporating flexibility and provisions for revalidation of certificates and endorsements in normal and exceptional circumstances.

**14 Overview of the implementation of the Convention, in particular the need to update the STCW "White List".** Following the ongoing work of the HTW and III Sub-Committees, the review of the STCW Convention and Code should consider the need for clarification on the provisions related to quality standard systems, independent evaluation, and the preparation, reporting and consideration of information and identification of STCW compliance Parties for common understanding and uniform implementation.

Action: Review the Convention oversight infrastructure to clarify the process to identify parties that are giving the convention full and complete effect.

## **15 Lessons learned.**

Action: Review the STCW Convention and Code to take into account issues based on experience, including experience implementing previous amendments, casualty investigations and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, inter alia, extension of the validity of the certificates, in extraordinary circumstances/cases of force majeure.

## **16 Flexibility.**

Action: Review STCW Convention and Code to consider facilitating to the possible extent the mobility of seafarers across different ship types and trades and conventions.

**17 Alternative certification under chapter VII.** Review chapter VII of the STCW Convention and Code to determine whether a revision is needed for more effective utilisation of alternative certification as part of the flexibility needed to accommodate new and emerging technologies and organisational innovations, as well as the option for certifying different functions on board and different types of ships and taking a more goal-based approach.

Action: Review STCW provisions to use alternative certification in support of emerging technologies and other organisational changes.

**18 Watchkeeping arrangements and principles to be observed (chapter VIII).** Review regulation VIII/2 of the Convention and sections A-VIII/2 and B-VIII/2 of the Code with a view to formulating these provisions in a goal-based manner to enable the accommodation of new and emerging technologies and organisational innovations.

Action: Review STCW provisions related to watchkeeping to support the use of emerging technologies and other organisational changes.

**19 Alignment of STCW with requirements placed on ships, seafarers, and shipowners by other IMO and relevant international instruments.**

Action: Review the STCW Convention and Code to ensure, where necessary, that both are fully aligned with requirements placed on ships, seafarers, and shipowners by IMO and other relevant international instruments.

**20 Cybersecurity.**

Action: Review the STCW Convention and Code to consider an approach to addressing the need for cybersecurity awareness for seafarers, especially as maritime operations become more reliant on digitally integrated and automated systems.

**21 Implementation and transitional provisions.** The implementation of any amendments developed under this review must be reasonable and achievable for all Parties. Previous difficulties in meeting requirements by established effective dates due to the lengthy process associated with the multiple steps that must be taken to fully implement any new requirements should be considered.

Action: Review transitional provisions to ensure efficient implementation of respective amendments

**22 Addressing outdated training requirements.**

Action: Review the tables of competence in the STCW Code to identify the need to update competences, KUPs, and training requirements that are outdated and no longer relevant.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight