**IMO MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

**(MEPC 81), 18-22 March 2024**

The Eighty-first session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 81), was held in hybrid mode from 18-22 March 2024. It was chaired by Dr. H. Conway (Liberia) and Vice-Chair, Mr. H. Tan (Singapore). A total of 133 delegations submitted their credentials for the meeting (having also contributed to 136 submissions for consideration), supplemented by Associate Member States, UN and Special Agencies, also IGOs and NGOs. The meeting was attended by a number of delegates in excess of 1,400 comprising mostly in person, with the balance remote. Four participants from InterManager Associate member SGS, also attended, three on-line, and a further one physically, together with a representative from Elabor8.

**ADDRESS BY THE IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL.**

Welcoming delegates to the 81st session of the MEPC, the IMO Secretary-General, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, regretted the need to start the session by describing continued unacceptable attacks by the Houtis against seafarers in the Red Sea. This included the attack on the vessel **True Confidence,** the pollution caused by the sinking of the **MV Rubymar** and the holding of innocent seafarers as hostages on board the **Galaxy Leader,**

which is further complicated by 23 crew members aboard the **MV Abdullah** being held hostage by Somali pirates on 11 March 2024. Following such negative news, Mr Dominguez congratulated the Indian Navy very positively for their success in releasing the crew of the **MV Ruen,** who had been held by pirates since December 2023.

Alluding to this year’s World Maritime theme of “Navigating the future: safety first!”, he felt that it underscores the IMO’s unwavering commitment to upholding the highest safety standards while facing the challenges posed by developments in technology, also artificial and new threats challenging the shipping industry.

He recalled that MEPC 80 in July 2023, adopted the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, setting an ambitious goal of achieving net-zero GHG emissions by or around, i.e. close to, 2050. In pursuit of this goal, MEPC will further consider proposals on candidate mid-term measures; a progress report to the Steering Committee on the conduct of the comprehensive impact assessment of the measures; and, further development of the life cycle GHG intensity assessment framework. Last week’s ISWG-GHG meeting clearly demonstrates commitment to advance developments of the measures, thus ensuring delivery on the levels of ambition in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy.

Changing tack, Mr Domingues spoke of decarbonising the maritime industry, a big challenge but one he felt presented an opportunity to align the international shipping sector with global commitments on climate change and sustainability.

Turning to ballast water management, he stated that the Committee has a very significant task in finalising and approving the list of provisions and instruments to be revised or developed under the Experience-building phase, in order to provide the basis for developing a package of amendments to the BWM Convention. In addition, consideration will be given to the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water conditions; the temporary storage of treated sewage and grey water in ballast tanks; and, approval of BWM system modifications after type approval.

Concerning marine plastic litter, the urgency of taking action to prevent ship-source spills of plastic pellets was underscored by the pellet spill and resulting pollution event along the coast of north-western Spain last December. In this regard, there will be a need to approve recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers, as recommended by IMO Sub-Committee PPR 11.

Mr Domingues reminded the Committee that they will be invited to consider and adopt at this session, a number of amendments to mandatory instruments, including those to the BWM Convention concerning the use of electronic record books; to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL concerning revised reporting procedures for the loss of containers; and to MARPOL Annex VI concerning a number of air pollution prevention related issues, together with the adoption of associated guidelines.

Finally, two proposals for the designation of Emission Control Areas, one in Canadian Arctic Waters; and the other in the Norwegian Sea will be considered.

The Secretary-General then extended his best wishes to the Committee, wishing delegates every success in their deliberations.

**Specialist Groups.** The following groups were formed during the meeting, where (H) = Hybrid and (R) = Remote:

WG1(H) Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency, Mr. K. Iwaki (Japan).

WG2(H) Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, Mr. S. Oftedal

(Norway).

DG(R) Drafting Group on Mandatory Instrument Amendments, Mr. C. Aissaoui

(Morocco).

TG(R) Technical Group on Designation of PSSA and Special Areas, Mr. N. Aldarac

(Mexico).

RG(H) Review Group on Ballast Water Management, Ms. L. Page (UK).

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**1.** **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.** The Agenda was duly adopted and a lengthy discussion took place concerning the attacks on merchant ships in the Red sea and the Gulf of Aden.

**2. DECISIONS OF OTHER IMO BODIES.** The Committee noted the decisions and outcome of MSC 107 (MEPC 81/2), C 129 (MEPC 81/2/1), TC 73 (MEPC 81/2/2), LC 45/LP 18 (MEPC 81/2/3) and C 130 and A 33 (MEPC 81/2/6) with regard to its work, and took action as indicated below.

**Remaining outcome of MSC 107.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80 had considered the outcome of MSC 107 concerning urgent matters related to the review of the parts of the Strategic Plan under its purview; the draft recommended associated protective measures (APMs) within a particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA) in the North-Western Mediterranean Sea; the application of the Committees' method of work and the work programme.

**Draft MSC-MEPC guidelines for oil fuel sampling procedures.** This item was considered by WG 1, following which the Committee noted the Group’s discussion on the outcome of MSC 107 in respect of fuel sampling and;

.1 approved the draft MSC-MEPC circular on guidelines for the sampling of fuel oil for determination of compliance with MARPOL Annex VI and SOLAS chapter II-2, subject to concurrent approval by the Maritime Safety Committee;

2 referred the draft MSC-MEPC Circular, as amended, to MSC 108 (15 to 24 May 2024), for consideration, with a view to approval, as an urgent matter; and,

.3 revoked resolution MEPC.182(59) on the *2009 Guidelines for the Sampling of Fuel Oil for Determination of Compliance with the Revised MARPOL Annex VI* when the joint MSC-MEPC circular is issued.

**Mutual understanding on flashpoint documentation**. The Committee noted that MSC 107 had endorsed a mutual understanding concerning flashpoint documentation, subject to the entry into force of SOLAS regulation II-2/4.2.1.6, and had invited MEPC to note the mutual understanding, taking action as appropriate. Information to be included in the bunker delivery note (BDN)) of MARPOL Annex VI included the following provision:

"The flashpoint (°C) specified in accordance with standards acceptable to the Organisation, or a statement that the flashpoint has been measured at or above 70ºC".

Subsequently, the Committee noted the decision by MSC 107 and agreed that the mutual understanding endorsed by MSC 107 was consistent with Appendix V of MARPOL Annex VI regarding information to be included in the bunker delivery note and that no further action was necessary.

***Joint MSC-FAL circular on Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates.*** Following consideration, the Committee agreed that the guidance to be developed should be issued as a joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC circular. Having noted that the use of electronic record books under MARPOL, electronic record books under the BWM Convention, and electronic bunker delivery notes (eBDNs) are covered by separate guidance, the Committee also agreed that, with regard to instruments under its purview, the joint circular should only address certificates at this stage, namely those listed in the List of certificates and documents required to be carried on board ships.

**Outcome of C 129.** The Committee agreed to consider the outcome of C 129 concerning the continuation of hybrid meetings (MEPC 81/2/1, and digitisation of all certifications required under all IMO conventions under agenda items 13.

**Outcome of A33.**

**Assembly resolution A.1192(33) concerning dark fleet operations.** The Committee recalled that A 33 had adopted resolution A.1192(33) on Urging Member States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the "*dark fleet*" or "*shadow fleet*" and noted concerns expressed regarding the clarity of, and legal rigour in, the use of the term "sanctions" in the first operative paragraph of the resolution. Following consideration of document MEPC 81/2/5 (India), proposing the inclusion of an additional operative paragraph in the resolution concerning the prevention of criminalisation of seafarers inadvertently encountering illegal operations, MSC and LEG were invited to note the discussion and views expressed, whilst acknowledging that amendments to resolution A.1192(33) would require adoption by the Assembly.

**Ongoing military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and its effects on international shipping and the marine environment.** The delegation of Ukraine made a statement describing the negative environmental consequences on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov after more than two years of continuous military conflict, calling on the international community to unequivocally condemn the actions of the Russian Federation and, after making a number of specific points, demanded the immediate cessation of hostilities.Very many delegates spoke in support of Ukraine and following discussion, the RF delegate [once again] argued that the matter went well beyond IMO’s mandate, refuted all unfounded accusations made against it, and accused the Ukrainian Armed Forces of shelling civilian and other critical infrastructure, including attacks on Russian tankers and civilian transport vessels in the Black Sea, causing civilian losses and negative environmental consequences. Determined [rightly] to have the last word, the Ukraine delegate invited the RFs careful attention to resolution A.1183(33) and informed the Committee that over 4,000 reports had been made in the last year of direct environmental effects as a result of the RF's illegal military actions.

**3 CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO MANDATORY INSTRUMENTS.** The Committee was invited to consider and adopt proposed amendments to:

.1 the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention, concerning the use of electronic record books;

.2 Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL, concerning revised reporting procedures for the loss of containers; and,

.3 MARPOL Annex VI, concerning low-flashpoint fuels and other fuel oil related issues; marine diesel engine replacing a steam system; and accessibility of data and inclusion of data on transport work and enhanced granularity in the IMO Ship Fuel Consumption Database,

and to adopt the draft MEPC resolution on Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit, in conjunction with the adoption of amendments to regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI on a marine diesel engine replacing a steam system.

**Draft amendments to the Ballast Water Management Convention.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80 had approved draft amendments to the BWM Convention concerning the use of electronic record books, with a view to adoption at this session. The Committee agreed to refer proposed text by Norway to the Drafting Group for consideration when finalising the text of the amendments to this regulation. The Committee confirmed the contents of the requisite MEPC resolution; agreed that the entry-into-force date of the amendments would be 1 October 2025; and instructed the Drafting Group to prepare the final text of the resolution, taking into account the proposal by Norway, together with amendments to the BWM Convention, for the Committee's consideration and adoption.

**Draft amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL**. The Committee recalled that MEPC 80 had approved draft amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL concerning revised reporting procedures for the loss of containers with a view to adoption at this session. No comments on the draft amendments had been submitted but the Committee, having considered a relevant proposal by the delegation of Japan, agreed to change the entry- into-force date set out in the covering resolution to 1 January 2026, to align it with the entry-into-force date of the associated amendments to chapter V of SOLAS, to which the amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL refer. The Drafting Group was instructed to prepare the final text of the resolution, together with the amendments to Protocol I of MARPOL.

**Draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80 had approved draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, concerning low-flashpoint fuels and other fuel oil related issues; marine diesel engine replacing a steam system; and accessibility of data and inclusion of data on transport work and enhanced granularity in the IMO Ship Fuel Consumption Database with a view to adoption at this session. Following discussion, the Committee confirmed the contents of the requisite resolution, agreed that the entry-into-force date of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI would be 1 August 2025 and instructed the Drafting Group to prepare the final text of the requisite MEPC resolution, together with the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI for the Committee's consideration and adoption, taking into account the decisions on the various proposals.

**Draft MEPC resolution on Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80, in approving the draft amendments to regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI on a marine diesel engine replacing a steam system, had deferred consideration of the draft *2023 Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III* limit to this session, with a view to adoption in conjunction with the associated amendments to regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI. Having considered the modifications proposed in document MEPC 81/3/5 (IMarEST) related to the guidelines and covering MEPC resolution, the Committee confirmed that the date in the title of the Guidelines would be changed from 2023 to 2024, and instructed the Drafting Group to prepare the final text of the requisite MEPC resolution, together with the Guidelines, for the Committee's consideration and adoption.

**Establishment of the Drafting Group.** The Committee established the Drafting Group on Amendments to Mandatory Instruments and instructed it accordingly. In considering the report of the Group, the Committee approved it in general, and in particular:

.1 adopted the draft resolution and amendments to the Ballast Water Management Convention concerning the use of electronic record books;

.2 adopted the draft resolution and amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL concerning revised reporting procedures for the loss of containers;

.3 adopted the draft resolution and amendments to MARPOL Annex VI;

.4 adopted the draft MEPC Resolution on 2024 Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit;

.5 noted the views expressed by the Group concerning the assessment of capacity-building implications and technical cooperation and assistance needs related to the draft amendments to mandatory instruments;

.6 Urged Member States and international organisations to propose an alternative mechanism at a future meeting concerning the assessment of capacity-building implications;

.7 noted the identified capacity-building implications related to the implementation of the amendments to appendix IX of MARPOL Annex VI;

.8 noted the outcome of the Group's assessment, informing the Technical Cooperation Committee accordingly, whilst encouraging Member States in need of capacity-building in relation to the aforementioned amendments to contact the Organisation; and,

.9 authorised the Secretariat, when preparing the authentic texts of the amendments, to effect any editorial corrections that may be identified.

**Amendments to the BWM Convention**. The Committee considered the final text of the draft amendments to the BWM Convention concerning the use of electronic record books, and adopted the amendments by an MEPC resolution. These shall be deemed to have been accepted on 1 April 2025 unless, prior to that date, more than one-third of the Parties have notified the Secretary-General that they object to the amendments, and shall enter into force on 1 October 2025.

**Amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL.** The Committee considered the final text of the draft amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL concerning revised reporting procedures for the loss of containers, and adopted the amendments by MEPC resolution which shall be deemed to have been accepted on 1 July 2025 unless prior to that date not less than one-third of the Parties, or Parties the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 50% of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant fleet, have communicated to the Organisation their objection to the amendments and shall enter into force on 1 January 2026, in accordance with article 16(2)(g)(ii) of MARPOL.

**Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI.** The Committee considered the final text of the draft Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning low-flashpoint fuels and other fuel oil related issues; marine diesel engine replacing a steam system; and accessibility of data and inclusion of data on transport work and enhanced granularity in the IMO Ship Fuel Consumption Database, and adopted the amendments by MEPC resolution.

**Draft MEPC resolution on Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit.** The Committee considered the final text of the draft MEPC resolution on *2024 Guidelines as required by regulation 13.2.2 of MARPOL Annex VI in respect of non-identical replacement engines not required to meet the Tier III limit*, and adopted it by MEPC resolution.

**Assessment of capacity building and technical cooperation and assistance implications for the draft amendments.** In considering the Groupʹs recommendation to urge Member States and international organisations to propose an alternative mechanism at a future meeting concerning the assessment of capacity-building implications, the Committee noted that a proposal was expected to be submitted to MSC 108 to amend the relevant section of the *Organisation and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* pertaining to the assessment of capacity-building and technical cooperation and assistance implications for draft amendments, that, if agreed, would then be sent onwards to MEPC for concurrent approval. The Committee therefore agreed that no further action was required, pending the outcome of the discussion on this matter at MSC 108.

**4 HARMFUL AQUATIC ORGANISMS IN BALLAST WATER.** In the interest of time, the Committee agreed to refer all documents it had for consideration under this agenda item to the Ballast Water Review Group for detailed consideration, in accordance with the respective terms of reference, with the exception of documents concerning the following matters:

.1 approval of ballast water management systems (BWMS) that make use of Active Substances; and,

.2 information on the type approval of BWMS and other information relating to ballast water management.

Documents concerning the following were referred to the Ballast Water Review Group:

* BWM Convention Review;
* Application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality;
* Temporary storage of grey water or treated sewage in ballast tanks; and,
* Modifications to BWMS with existing type approval.

**Establishment of the Ballast Water Review Group.** The Committee established the Ballast Water Review Group, instructing it accordingly. Having considered the report of the Group, the Committee approved it in general and took action as follows:

.1 endorsed the list of provisions and instruments for revision and/or development under the Convention review stage of the experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention to guide the further work of the Correspondence Group on Review of the BWM Convention;

.2 re-established the Correspondence Group on Review of the BWM Convention with given draft terms of reference;

.3 adopted the draft MEPC resolution on Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions;

.4 approved the draft BWM.2 circular on Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks;

.5 endorsed the Group's view that the draft amendments to regulations A-2 and B-2 of the BWM Convention, concerning the discharge of grey water or treated sewage temporarily stored in ballast tanks, are not necessary, while the corresponding draft amendment to regulation B-1 can be considered under the Convention review;

.6 invited interested Member States and international organisations to work intersessionally with the broadest possible participation and submit further concrete proposals to the next session with a view to finalisation of guidance on modifications to ballast water management systems with existing type approval; and,

.7 re-established the Ballast Water Review Group at MEPC 82, in accordance with the provisions of regulation D-5 of the BWM Convention.

**5 AIR POLLUTION PREVENTION** . In the interest of time, the Committee referred documents concerning the proposed draft amendments to the 2021 Guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems (EGCSs) (resolution MEPC 340(77)), re-issuance of the Engine International Air Pollution Prevention (EIAPP) Certificate, and biofuels and biofuel blends and their carriage by bunkering vessels directly to the Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency for detailed consideration. The draft MSC-MEPC *Guidelines for fuel sampling procedures* were also referred.

**Implementation of the global 0.50% sulphur limit and the use of EGCSs.** The Committee had for its consideration a number of documents on this topic. These were duly discussed, following which the Committee, having recalled that MEPC 80 had re-instated the agenda item on "Evaluation and harmonisation of rules and guidance on the discharge of discharge water from EGCS into the aquatic environment, including conditions and areas" on the agenda of PPR 11 and that, due to the close proximity of PPR 11 and MEPC 81, the outcome of PPR 11 concerning EGCS matters would be reported to MEPC 82, deferring the relevant documents for consideration in conjunction with those submitted to PPR 11.

**Effectiveness of regulation 13 of MARPOL Annex VI.** The Committee had three documents for consideration. In the discussion that followed, several delegations expressed concerns that the expected NOx reductions in ECAs had not been achieved and invited the Committee to consider ways to ensure that the NOx control programme delivered on the objective to reduce harmful emissions and their negative impact on human health; and identified the following possible shortcomings of NOx regulations: keel laying dates used to circumvent regulation; the combination of ship operating profiles and engine certification duty cycles resulting in much higher emissions than originally expected; and the NOx compliance and enforcement provisions in MARPOL Annex VI making it difficult to detect and enforce against ships that exceed the NOx limits. In the view of these delegations, such issues apply not only to Tier III NOx standards but also to Tier II standards. Regarding the specific concern of regulatory avoidance relating to keel laying dates, one delegation expressed support for the approach proposed in documents MEPC 81/11/1 and MEPC 81/11/2 to consider reflecting the ship's delivery date in addition to the keel laying date concerning future NOx ECAs and suggested the further consideration of the implications of the three dates criteria within this agenda item. One delegation underlined the importance of addressing these issues, as many zero- and near-zero carbon fuels were likely to have significant NOx emissions. Other delegations noted that the measurement studies referred to in document MEPC 81/5/3 had been carried out using various methods and under different circumstances that might lead to inaccuracies, e.g. measurement sensor accuracy, calculation methods, assumptions on engine power, fuel used and its consumption, and suggested that the Committee's priority at this stage should be to ensure uniform and effective implementation of the NOx regulations and conduct further research.

The Committee noted the information and concerns expressed regarding the effectiveness of regulation 13 of MARPOL Annex VI, including the NOx Tier III standards, in regulating NOx emissions, including those in NOx ECAs and invited interested Member States and international organisations to continue conducting research on the matter and to consider submitting proposals for a new output on the review of the effectiveness of regulation 13 of MARPOL Annex VI, including the NOx Tier III standard contained therein, to a future session of the Committee.

**Reduction of the impact of Black Carbon emissions from international shipping on the Arctic.** Two documents were submitted by FOEI et al. but the Committee, having recalled that due to the close proximity of PPR 11 and MEPC 81, the outcome of PPR 11 concerning Black Carbon matters would be reported to MEPC 82, deferring both documents, for consideration in conjunction with the relevant outcome of PPR 11.

**Relevant information on air pollution from ships.** The Committee noted updated information on the treatment of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) used by ships provided by the Secretariat (MEPC 81/5), and requested them to continue submitting relevant updates to future sessions of the Committee, whilst also noting the information on air pollution from ships set out in a further three documents submitted by IBIA, Singapore and Canada.

**Report of the Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency.** Having considered the relevant part of the report of the Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency, the Committee approved it in general and took action as follows:

.1 noted that there was insufficient support in the Group for the proposed amendments to the 2021 Guidelines for exhaust gas cleaning systems (resolution MEPC.340(77)), and invited interested Member States and international organisations to submit proposals with appropriate justifications to a future session of the Committee;

.2 noted that there was insufficient support within the Group for the proposed interpretation regarding Engine International Air Pollution Prevention (EIAPP) Certificate re-issuance at the time of change of flag of a ship as provided in document MEPC 81/5/1;

.3 requested the Secretariat to correct the editorial mistake in regulation 9.9.3 of MARPOL Annex VI in a future revision of MARPOL Annex VI;

.4 noted that there was insufficient support in the Group for approving the interim guidance on the carriage of biofuels and biofuel blends by bunker vessels as set out in document MEPC 81/6/10, and referred documents MEPC 81/6/10 and MEPC 81/INF.4 to ESPH 30 (14 to 18 October 2024) for further consideration in respect of supply of fuel oil to ships by bunker vessels, with a view to advising the Committee on the way forward;

.5 noted that there was insufficient support in the Group for the interim guidance for the use of biofuels and biofuel blends as set out in document MEPC 80/5/2, and invited interested Member States and international organisations to submit relevant proposals with regard to the safe use of biofuels and biofuel blends to a future session of the Committee;

.6 noted the discussion on the measurement and verification of tank-to-wake emissions of methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O) and other GHGs;

.7 noted the discussion on the development of a work plan for the use of onboard carbon capture; and,

.8 established a correspondence group on measurement and verification of non-CO2 GHG emissions and onboard carbon capture, using the terms of reference as specified.

**Consideration of the outcome of MSC 107 in respect of fuel sampling.** The Committee noted that the Group had considered the outcome of MSC 107 regarding the draft MSC-MEPC *Guidelines for fuel sampling procedures* and approved the draft MSC-MEPC circular on *Guidelines for the sampling of fuel oil for determination of compliance with MARPOL Annex VI and SOLAS chapter II-2*, subject to concurrent approval by MSC 108.

**EIAPP Certificate re-issuance at the time of change of flag of a ship.** The Committee noted that there had not been sufficient support in the Group for the proposed interpretation regarding EIAPP Certificate re-issuance at the time of change of flag of a ship, as proposed in document MEPC 81/5/1.

**6 ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF SHIPS.** Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to refer documents concerning the proposed draft amendments to the *2021Guidelines on the Shaft/engine power limitation system to comply with the EEXI requirements and use of a power reserve*; the *2022 Guidelines for the development of a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP)*; the *2022 Guidelines for Administration verification of ship fuel oil consumption data and operational carbon intensity* and the unified interpretations of regulations 2.2.15 and 2.2.18 of MARPOL Annex VI, as well as proposals for the consistent reporting of fuel consumption by LNG carriers and gas carriers and of VLSFO, ULSFO, biofuels and e-fuels to the IMO DCS, directly to WG 1 for detailed consideration.

**Reports on 2022 fuel oil consumption data submitted to IMO DCS in GISIS and on annual carbon intensity.** The Committee noted document MEPC 81/6 (Secretariat), providing the report of the fuel oil consumption data for the period 1 January to 31 December 2022. Following consideration, the Committee: approved, in principle, the summary of the fuel oil consumption data submitted by almost 29,000 ships to the IMO DCS for 2022; noted improvements to the IMO DCS GISIS module made by the Secretariat; and, noted that following the adoption of the CII Guidelines (G1), the CII metric to be used for the ship type category "ro-ro cargo ships" should be cgDIST, instead of AER, to be reflected in future reports.

**Review of suitability of IMO DCS for implementation and enforcement of current and future measures.** The Committee had for its consideration document MEPC 81/6/5 (Austria et al.), outlining the main stakes related to data quality, integrity and the verification process of IMO DCS, while underlining potential risks and vulnerabilities of the current system, for further analysis and actions that could be investigated to address them; and proposing a review of suitability of IMO DCS for implementation and enforcement of current and future regulatory GHG measures regarding data quality and integrity, focusing, inter alia, on identification and assessment of risks and vulnerabilities before addressing them. Following discussion, the Committee noted broad support for the proposal set out in document MEPC 81/6/5 and, consequently, requested the Secretariat to conduct a review of the suitability of IMO DCS for the implementation and enforcement of current and future IMO GHG reduction measures, taking into account document MEPC 81/6/5 and comments made at this session, and report back to a future session.

**Review of the short-term GHG reduction measure.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80 had approved the *Review plan of the short-term GHG reduction measures* and had noted that the proposals contained in relevant documents submitted to previous sessions would be considered in accordance with the Review plan. A timeline for the review of the short-term GHG reduction measure was included as follows:

.1 Data gathering stage: from MEPC 80 to MEPC 82 (September 2024);

.2 Data analysis stage: by the working group at MEPC 82, to be continued by a correspondence group; and,

.3 Convention and Guidelines review stage: an intersessional working group between MEPC 82 and MEPC 83 (spring 2025) as well as a working group at MEPC 83.

The Committee had twelve documents submitted for its consideration with a view to facilitating the data gathering stage, all of which were forwarded to a working group which was established to conduct the review of the short-term measure.

Following consideration, the Committee:

1 noted the commitment of all delegations to the CII review process in accordance with the Review plan approved by MEPC 80;

.2 noted the concerns expressed regarding the shortcomings and unintended consequences of the CII mechanism and the general agreement that these concerns should be addressed;

.3 noted that there was insufficient support for the adoption of the resolution proposed in document MEPC 81/6/6;

.4 deferred further consideration of document MEPC 81/6/17 to MEPC 82 so that the scope of the study could be further defined; and,

.5 invited interested Member States and international organisations to collect data and submit information and proposals to MEPC 82 with a view to be taken into account during the data analysis stage.

**Report of the Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency (WG 1).** Having considered the relevant part of WG 1’s report, the Committee:

.1 noted the discussion on draft amendments to the 2022 Guidelines for the development of a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP), and adopted the proposed draft MEPC resolution;

.2 noted the discussion on draft amendments to the 2022 Guidelines for Administration verification of ship fuel oil consumption data and operational carbon intensity, and adopted a draft MEPC resolution;

.3 noted the discussion on the consistent reporting of LNG carriers and gas carriers to the IMO DCS and that the Group agreed that all LNG carriers currently categorised as gas carriers should be recategorised as LNG carriers for the purpose of DCS reporting and CII, and requested the Secretariat to recalculate the AER of the LNG and gas carrier fleet for 2021 and 2022 once the recategorisation has been completed;

.4 noted the discussion on consistent reporting of VLSFO, ULSFO, biofuels and e-fuels in the IMO DCS and invited interested Member States and international organisations to submit proposals for a unified interpretation of the consistent reporting of VLSFO and ULSFO to a future session of the Committee;

.5 noted the discussion on draft amendments to the 2021 Guidelines on the shaft/engine power limitation system to comply with the EEXI requirements and use of a power reserve, and adopted the draft MEPC resolution;

.6 invited interested Member States and international organisations to submit concrete proposals on cases where specific measures for EPL/ShaPoLi reactivation are not required;

.7 approved the draft MEPC Circular on procedure for reporting to the Organisation of uses of a power reserve; and,

.8 approved the unified interpretations to regulations 2.2.15 and 2.2.18 of MARPOL Annex VI, and instructed the Secretariat to disseminate the amended consolidated UIs to MARPOL Annex VI.

**Draft amendments to resolutions MEPC.346(78) and MEPC.348(78).** Following discussion, the Committee adopted:

.1 resolution MEPC.[…](81) on *Amendments to the 2022 Guidelines for the development of a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP)* and,

.2 resolution MEPC.[…](81) on *Amendments to the 2022 Guidelines for Administration verification of ship fuel oil consumption data and operational carbon intensity*.

**Use of shaft/engine power limitation system to comply with the EEXI requirements and use of a power reserve.** Following discussion, the Committee adopted two resolutions, one on *Amendments to the 2021 Guidelines on the shaft/engine power limitation system to comply with the EEXI requirements and use of a power reserve*; the other, on *Procedure for reporting to the Organisation of uses of a power reserve.*

**Measurement and verification of TtW emissions of CH4, N2O and other GHGs and development of a work plan for the use of onboard CO2 capture.** The Committee noted that, as per the additional instructions given to it during the consideration of agenda item 7, the Group had considered how to develop a framework for the measurement and verification of tank-to-wake emissions of methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O) and other GHGs along with associated engine certification issues. Development of a work plan on the development of a regulatory framework for the use of onboard CO2 capture, was also considered in the context of the further development of the LCA Guidelines.

Having noted the discussions of the Group on these issues, a Correspondence Group was established on measurement and verification of non-CO2 GHG emissions and onboard carbon capture with terms of reference as specified, reporting to MEPC 83.

**7 REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS.**

**Update on UNFCC matters.** The Committee noted a statement by the UNFCCC Secretariat, providing a summary of their recent work and its relevance to IMOʹs GHG discussions, including the outcome of the twenty-eighth United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in December 2023.

**Outcome of ISWG-GHG 16.** The Committee noted that the sixteenth Intersessional Working Group on Green House Gases (ISWG-GHG 16) had been held last week from 11 to 15 March 2024 and that its report had been submitted as document MEPC 81/WP.4, together with additional information provided orally by the Chair of the Working Group,

Mr. Sveinung Oftedal (Norway). Having considered the outcome and action requested by ISWG-GHG 16, the Committee approved the report of the Group in general, and took action as described below.

**Comprehensive impact assessment (CIA) of the basket of candidate mid-term GHG reduction measures.** The Committee recalled that the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy states that a basket of candidate measures, delivering on the reduction targets, should be developed and finalised, comprising both a technical element, namely a goal-based marine fuel standard regulating the phased reduction of the fuel's GHG intensity, and an economic element, on the basis of a maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism. It was also recalled that the timeline envisaged in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy includes the initiation of a comprehensive impact assessment (CIA) of the basket of candidate mid-term measures by MEPC 80 in July 2023, with an interim and a final report to be submitted to MEPC 81 and MEPC 82, respectively; the approval of measures during MEPC 83 (spring 2025); and their adoption during an extraordinary session of MEPC (autumn 2025). The Committee further recalled that MEPC 80 had invited the Secretary-General to establish a Steering Committee to act as a focal point during the conduct of the CIA, and the terms of reference approved at MEPC 80. This was achieved in August 2023, comprising 32 Member States, the reports of which first three meetings were reported in document MEPC 81/7 and MEPC 81/7/Add.1 together with an oral update provided by the moderator Mr. Hanqiang Tan (Singapore) on the outcome of the fourth and fifth meetings during ISWG-GHG 16, presenting the interim report submitted to this session.

The Committee also noted that the Steering Committee had agreed that the CIA would comprise five distinct, but interrelated tasks, as follows:

.1 Task 1: Literature review, carried out by WMU;

.2 Task 2: Assessment of impacts of the basket of candidate mid-term measures on the fleet, carried out by DNV;

.3 Task 3: Assessment of impacts of the basket of candidate mid-term measures on States, carried out by UNCTAD;

.4 Task 4: Complementary qualitative/quantitative stakeholdersʹ analysis, including relevant illustrative case studies, carried out by Starcrest Consulting; and,

.5 Task 5: Identification of areas of missing data, quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC), uncertainty and sensitivity analyses and integration between various tasks.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Steering Committee and all task leaders for their updates, acknowledging that the CIA was work in progress, recalling that the CIA of the basket of candidate mid-term measures was an important element of the implementation of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy and would inform the further consideration of the proposed measures.

**Further consideration of the development of the basket of candidate mid-term measures.** The Committee noted that ISWG-GHG 16 had focused its consideration regarding the development of the basket of candidate mid-term measures on the following main proposals, for which relevant updates and revisions, including draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and proposed draft guidelines, had been submitted:

1 ʺGHG Fuel Standard (GFS) with its Flexibility Compliance Mechanismʺ as the technical element, in combination with a ʺGHG pricing mechanismʺ;

2 ʺInternational Maritime Sustainable Fuels and Fund (IMSF&F) mechanismʺ, with technical elements and economic elements integrated into a single measure;

.3 ʺfeebate mechanismʺ, developed as an economic element separately from a technical element and comprising a mandatory contribution on GHG emissions and reward for zero emission vessels by the Zero Emission Shipping Fund (ZESF), to be complemented by the ʹGHG Fuel Standardʹ as technical element;

.4 ʺuniversal mandatory GHG levyʺ as economic measure, acting in combination with a ʺsimplified global GHG fuel standardʺ, as technical measure;

.5 ʺSimplified Global (GHG) Fuel Standard with an energy pooling compliance mechanismʺ, to be developed as a separate technical measure on the basis of an absolute fuel standard similar to the regulatory approach used for the global 0.50% sulphur limit (ʺIMO 2020ʺ) together with a separate maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism;

.6 ʺZero Emission Shipping Fund (ZESF)ʺ and ʺFund and Reward (Feebate) Mechanismʺ, to be adopted as a separate maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism as economic measure, in addition to a Global GHG Fuel Standard as technical measure; and;

7 ʺGreen Balance Mechanismʺ, designed to work as part of an integrated measure or incorporated into complementary, but separate, technical and economic measures.

The Committee also noted that ISWG-GHG 16 had considered a further four documents submitted to MEPC 81 regarding the basket of candidate mid-term measures and following consideration, the Committee endorsed the way forward proposed by ISWG-GHG 16 on the further development of the basket of candidate mid-term GHG reduction measures, noting in particular, that:

.1 Regarding the ongoing CIA of the basket of mid-term measures, ISWG-GHG 16 had noted the progress made and the interim results obtained;

.2 with regard to proposals for a goal-based marine fuel standard regulating the phased reduction of marine fuel's GHG intensity, ISWG-GHG 16 had committed to further develop such a standard as part of the basket of mid-term measures, taking into account the well-to-wake GHG emissions of marine fuels as addressed in the LCA Guidelines. It also agreed that further work remained to frame the GHG fuel intensity baseline and reduction trajectory in line with the levels of ambition;

.3 with regard to proposals for flexible compliance strategies and relevant reporting and verification requirements in support of the goal-based marine fuel standard, ISWG-GHG 16 had noted:

.1 the considerable convergence within the Group to include flexible compliance strategies as elements in support of the implementation of the goal-based marine fuel standard;

.2 the increasing convergence within the Group on the development of flexible compliance strategies, based on the transaction of over-compliance units, the cancellation of remedial units and pooling;

.3 that several delegations could not agree to the proposed flexibility mechanisms, being of the view that these were not necessary and would lead to possibly unintended consequences and unequal access to such flexible compliance options, in particular in countries without the experience and scale to operate in complex trading markets and which are served by older shipping tonnage, and where, therefore, this would result in an economic transfer from least developed economies to the most developed economies;

.4 that there were remaining divergences within the Group on methodological issues relating to flexible compliance strategies as well as on how to set the price of remedial/surplus units and how to incentivise the transition to zero- and near-zero emission fuels and technologies whilst not over-penalising non-compliant ships and maintaining a level playing field; and,

.5 the broad support within the Group for the use of existing IMO instruments for reporting and verification requirements, while also noting the need to further consider development of additional tools such as a central registry;

.4 with regard to the proposals on (other) maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanisms, revenue collection and distribution, ISWG-GHG 16:

.1 had reiterated its commitment to the development, as part of the basket of mid-term measures, of an economic element, on the basis of a maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism as agreed in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, which aims to ʺpromote the energy transition of shipping and provide the world fleet a needed incentive while contributing to a level playing field and a just and equitable transitionʺ, which may or may not include complementary elements;

2 in recognising that all delegations saw merit in the development of a global fuel standard alongside a GHG pricing mechanism, had noted that there were still divergent views on several issues relating to the further development of a complementary maritime GHG pricing mechanism as part of the basket of mid-term measures. In particular, different views were expressed over an integral approach where technical and economic elements would be integrated into the goal-based marine fuel standard; and,

.3 had noted that the candidate economic elements would be assessed observing specific criteria to be considered in the ongoing CIA, with a view to facilitating the finalisation of the basket of mid-term measures; and,

.5 with regard to further work on the development of the basket of mid-term measures, ISWG-GHG 16 had remained committed, in accordance with the timelines set out in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy.

Following suggestions by ISWG-GHG 16 on how to advance further work on the development of the basket of mid-term measures, the Committee:

.1 requested the Secretariat to organise a two-day expert workshop (GHG-EW 5) on the further development of the basket; and,

.2 instructed the Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships

(WG 2) to develop terms of reference for the above-mentioned expert workshop; and for ISWG-GHG 17, to preferably be held back-to-back with MEPC 82, subject to the endorsement by the Council.

**Further development of the life cycle GHG assessment (LCA) framework.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80, having adopted the Guidelines on life cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels (LCA Guidelines), had endorsed the recommendations of ISWG-GHG 15 on intersessional follow-up work on the LCA framework, and consequently had established a Correspondence Group on the Further Development of the LCA Framework, under the coordination of Brazil, Japan and EC. Simultaneously, the Secretariat was requested to undertake a review of existing practices on sustainability aspects/certification and third-party verification issues; and also, to organise an expert workshop on the life cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels, using the outcome of the aforementioned review as the basis for discussion. It was also agreed to add to the terms of reference of ISWG-GHG 17, an agenda item on further development of the LCA framework.

The Committee noted the consideration of ISWG-GHG 16 on the further development of the LCA framework, including its consideration of fifteen documents concerning the framework submitted to MEPC 81 and subsequently finalised the draft revised LCA guidelines. The Committee then adopted resolution MEPC.[…](81) on *2024 Guidelines on life cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels* (2024 LCA guidelines).

The recommendations of ISWG-GHG 16 regarding follow-up work on the further development of the LCA framework were endorsed by the Committee and consequently:

.1 agreed, in principle, to the establishment of a GESAMP Working Group on Life Cycle GHG Intensity of Marine Fuels (GESAMP-LCA WG) to review related scientific and technical issues; and,

2 instructed WG 2 to identify the remaining issues on the further development of the LCA framework and propose a way forward to advance those issues intersessionally, including preparing draft terms of reference for the proposed GESAMP-LCA WG and a work plan with details on deadlines, deliverables and funding, using a template to be provided by the Secretariat and the possible tasks identified in documents MEPC 81/7/15 and ISWG-GHG 16/3/1 as the basis.

**Consideration of proposals related to onboard CO2 capture (OCC).** The Committee recalled that MEPC 80, following consideration of various proposals related to onboard CO2 capture (OCC), had instructed ISWG-GHG 16, time permitting, to consider the proposals, using document MEPC 80/7/7 (China et al.) as the basis and in addition, taking into account eleven other submissions. Having considered the recommendations of ISWG-GHG 16 regarding follow-up work on OCC, the Committee instructed the Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency (WG 1) to develop a work plan on the development of a regulatory framework for the use of onboard CO2 capture. Also, to develop draft terms of reference for a correspondence group to advance the consideration of this issue intersessionally.

**Update on the IMO GHG TC Trust Fund.** The Committee noted with appreciation that, since its establishment in 2019, voluntary financial contributions (including pledges made up to the end of December 2023) of approximately $2 million had been received and that the Trust Fund had significantly supported the regulatory work of the Committee, notably by funding the Fourth IMO GHG Study 2020, also the CIAs of the short-term GHG reduction measure and the basket of mid-term measures. The Committee agreed to amend the terms of reference of the IMO GHG TC Trust Fund, to reflect the adoption of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy at MEPC 80.

**Update on the Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund for participation in GHG meetings.** With regard to the Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund to facilitate the participation of developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs, in MEPC and ISWG-GHG meetings, the Committee noted with appreciation the contributions to the Fund since MEPC 80, which had funded the in-person attendance of a total of 41 representatives from 34 countries at ISWG-GHG 16 and MEPC 81.

**Proposals concerning a possible Fifth IMO GHG Study.** Following consideration, the Committee, while having noted the need for further discussion on possible terms of reference and timelines, agreed that there was general support to initiate a Fifth IMO GHG Study, and subsequently instructed the Secretariat to submit a proposal with draft terms of reference, suggested timelines, logistics and administrative arrangements to MEPC 82, taking into account relevant documents submitted to this session and the comments made.

**Report of the Working Group.** Having established the Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (WG 2), the Committee approved its subsequent report in general, and took action as outlined below:

.1 approved the draft terms of reference for ISWG-GHG 17;

.2 approved the draft terms of reference for the Fifth GHG Expert Workshop on the further development of the basket of mid-term measures (GHG‑EW 5); and,

.3 approved the draft terms of reference for the GESAMP Working Group on Life Cycle GHG Intensity of Marine Fuels (GESAMP-LCA WG).

.4 requested the Secretariat to finalise the "Request for the new GESAMP-LCA Working Group", for submission to GESAMP; and to invite interested Member States and international organisations to consider making financial contributions to support the work of the GESAMP-LCA WG; and to submit suggestions for possible experts to the Secretariat for validation by GESAMP, noting that particular consideration should be given to geographic and gender balanced representation;

.5 approved the draft terms of reference for a LCA Correspondence Group to consider "Other social and economic sustainability themes and aspects of marine fuels" for inclusion in the LCA Guidelines, coordinated by the United States;

.6 agreed to the Illustration of a draft possible outline of the "IMO net-zero framework", as set out in annex 3, with the understanding that this outline could be used as a starting point for consolidating the different proposals into a possible common structure, for further development taking into account the deliberations of the Group, while noting that this would not prejudge any possible future changes to it; and,

.7 invited interested Member States and international organisations to work together intersessionally to prepare a consolidated proposal for the basket of mid-term measures for consideration at the next session, using the draft possible outline of the "IMO net-zero framework", as appropriate.

**8 FOLLOW-UP WORK EMANATING FROM THE ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS.**

**Urgent matters emanating from PPR 11.**

**Recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers.** The Committee recalled that MEPC 77 had:

.1 considered document MEPC 77/8/3 (Sri Lanka), discussing the impacts of the MV X-Press Pearl spill of 11,000 tonnes of plastic pellets off the shore of Colombo, Sri Lanka in May 2021, and highlighting the hazardous nature of plastic pellets and the need to establish, inter alia, international guidelines and requirements for loading, unloading, packaging, and emergency response protocols, with clear labelling of containers carrying pellets, and improved stowage instructions; and,

.2 referred document MEPC 77/8/3 to PPR 9 and instructed the Sub-Committee to further consider the proposals, requesting the input of the CCC Sub-Committee as appropriate, with a view to advising the Committee on how best to proceed.

The Committee also recalled that PPR 10 had agreed to a two-stage approach to reduce the environmental risk associated with the maritime transport of plastic pellets, firstly by developing a circular containing recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers, addressing in particular packaging, notification and stowage; and,

at a later stage, developing amendments to appropriate mandatory instruments, subject to concrete proposals by Member States and international organisations.

A draft MEPC circular on Recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers was developed, and the input of the CCC Sub-Committee on the draft Recommendations was requested.

PPR 11, having noted the relevant recommendations of CCC 9, had agreed to a draft MEPC circular on Recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers and had invited MEPC 81 to consider the draft Recommendations as an urgent matter, with a view to approval. In light of the broad support for PPR 11’s work on this matter, the Committee approved the draft MEPC circular on *Recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers.*

**Review of the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships.** The Committee agreed to review the Action Plan in conjunction with the consideration of the relevant outcome of PPR 11 at its next session and in this context, requested the Secretariat to submit an update of the progress made with items in the Action Plan to MEPC 82.

**Other matters related to marine plastic litter from ships.** The Committee noted the information in document MEPC 81/INF.15 (India) concerning an initiative by the Indian Administration on the control and ban of single-use plastics. Subsequently, one delegation expressed the view that compliance with the initiative described in the document was challenging for foreign ships operating in Indian waters and that the corresponding directive issued by the Directorate General of Shipping of India (DGS Order No.5 and addendum) should be adapted and revised to ensure its practicality for foreign ships, while maintaining the Order's commitment to reducing plastic pollution.

**9 POLLUTION PREVENTION AND RESPONSE.** The Committee noted that, due to the close proximity of PPR 11 and MEPC 81, the outcome of PPR 11 would be submitted to MEPC 82 for consideration with the exception of one urgent matter, namely the request to approve the draft MEPC circular on recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers, and which was already addressed under item 8. With regard to document MEPC 81/9 (Secretariat), providing legal advice on the use of exhaust gas cleaning systems (EGCS) as an alternative compliance mechanism under MARPOL Annex VI and its relationship with the legal framework established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Committee noted that the Chair of MEPC and the Chair of the PPR Sub-Committee had agreed that the aforementioned legal advice could already be discussed at PPR 11 in conjunction with the regulatory considerations concerning ECGS discharge water and that, consequently, PPR 11 had considered the advice. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer final consideration of document MEPC 81/9 to MEPC 82, to be taken into account when the relevant outcome of PPR 11 will be considered.

**10 REPORTS OF OTHER SUB-COMMITTEES.**

**Outcome of III 9.** The Committee approved, in general, the report of the ninth session of the Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments, and took action as below.

**GISIS PRF module – prospective data transfer mechanism.** Having noted the information contained in document III 9/3/1 (Secretariat), providing an overview and provisional analysis of the information contained in the Port Reception Facilities Module of GISIS and information that engagement with the European Maritime Safety Agency had commenced on the data transfer mechanism outlined in document MEPC 77/14 (Austria et al.), the Committee recommended that the Secretariat give this matter priority, with a view to reducing the administrative burden for Member States.

**Casualty analysis and derived statistics**. The Committee endorsed, subject to a concurrent decision by MSC 108, the issuance of III.3/Circ.10 on *Casualty Analysis and Statistics containing observations on reports of investigation into casualties.*

**Lessons learned from marine casualties**. The Committee also endorsed, subject to a concurrent decision by MSC 108, the issuance of III.3/Circ.11 on *Development of lessons learned by Marine Safety Investigating State,* having noted that one of the aims of the circular is to promote awareness among Member States that, when a marine safety investigation report is submitted to the Marine Casualty Investigation Module in GISIS, there is an expectation that lessons learned should also be submitted.

**Guidelines and procedures for port State control.** The Committee endorsed the decision of III 9 to embark on a detailed revision of the *Guidelines for port State control (PSC) under the BWM Convention* and in the context of marine biosafety, also endorsed the decision to add the *2022 Guidelines for inspection of anti-fouling systems on ships* (resolution MEPC.357(78)) as a new appendix to the Procedures for PSC, 2023, without alteration.

**Outcome of CCC 9, Development of technical provisions for alternative fuels -**

**work plan**. The Committee endorsed the updated work plan for the development of new alternative fuels prepared by CCC 9.

**Urgent matters emanating from SDC 10.** The Committee noted that SDC 10 had requested it to consider certain outcomes under output 1.16 on "Review of the 2014 Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life and identification of next steps", as an urgent matter at this session. This was agreed by the Chairs of the respective bodies.

In this regard, having recalled that the Revised guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life (Revised URN Guidelines) had been approved at MEPC 80, the Committee noted that SDC 10 had requested it, inter alia, to:

.1 note that the work of the SDC Sub-Committee on output 1.16 had been completed;

.2 agree to continue the work on reducing underwater radiated noise (URN) from ships by introducing an Experience Building Phase (EBP) and changing the title of output 1.16 to "Experience Building Phase for the reduction of underwater radiated noise (MEPC.1/Circ.906)", taking into account and endorsing the draft action plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping;

.3 agree to extend the target completion year of the re-titled output to 2026; and,

.4 place the revised output on the agendas of MEPC 82 through to MEPC 85 to promote greater access to knowledge and research on URN and encourage wider participation in the information sharing stage for the Revised URN Guidelines.

In light of the predicated extension of output 1.16 and the actions proposed in the draft Action plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping, the Secretary-General undertook to conduct an assessment of the technical, administrative and financial implications of the work proposed, in order to ensure that the Secretariat would be in a position to support the work conferred to MEPC; and that the outcome of this assessment would be submitted to MEPC 82. Following this, the Committee:

.1 endorsed, in principle, the draft *Action plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping*, with a view to further consideration and final approval at MEPC 82;

.2 noted that SDC 10 had agreed to the draft Guidance on the EBP for the Revised URN Guidelines;

.3 agreed to include an agenda item on ʺReduction of underwater radiated noise from commercial shippingʺ on the provisional agenda for MEPC 82, with a view to considering all relevant actions requested by SDC 10, including the action items in paragraph 4 of document MEPC 81/WP.10, in conjunction with the assessment agreed to by the Secretary-General; and,

.4 invited Member States and international organisations to start collecting information on lessons learned and best practices concerning the application and uptake of the Revised URN Guidelines, using the draft guidance on the EBP as appropriate, with a view to submitting such information to the Committee.

**11 IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF SPECIAL AREAS, ECAs AND PSSAs.**

**Proposal to designate the Canadian Arctic waters as an ECA for nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides and particulate matter.** The Committee had for its consideration document MEPC 81/11 (Canada), proposing to designate an Emission Control Area (ECA) in Arctic waters under Canadian sovereignty and jurisdiction for nitrogen oxides (NOX), sulphur oxides (SOX) and particulate matter (PM) in accordance with regulations 13 and 14 and appendix III to MARPOL Annex VI. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to establish a technical group on the designation of PSSA and Special Areas to further review the proposed designation as set out.

**Proposal to designate the Norwegian Sea as an ECA for nitrogen oxide and sulphur oxides.** The Committee had for its consideration document MEPC 81/11/1 (Norway), proposing to designate the Norwegian Sea as an ECA for NOX and SOX, pursuant to regulations 13 and 14 and appendix III to MARPOL Annex VI. The Committee noted that the proposal included the use of a ʺthree dates criterionʺ (building contract, keel laid and delivery date) as part of the keel-laying date requirement in the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI for the designation of the new NOx ECA in the Norwegian Sea, so that the new requirements would apply to ships delivered on or after 1 January 2030 regardless of the keel-laying date. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to task the Technical Group to further review the proposed designation and the use of the "three dates criterion" as suggested in document MEPC 81/11/1.

**Report of the Technical Group.** The Committee considered the report of the Technical Group, approved it in general and took action as described below:

.1 noted that the Technical Group determined that the ECAs for the control of NOX, SOX and PM, as appropriate, proposed for the Canadian Arctic waters and Norwegian Sea satisfied the criteria set forth in section 3 of appendix III of MARPOL Annex VI;

.2 approved the proposal to designate ECAs for the control of NOX, SOX and PM, as appropriate, for the Canadian Arctic waters and Norwegian Sea and the proposed amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, with a view to adoption at MEPC 82;

.3 invited submissions to a future session on consequential amendments that may be required to the ʺSupplement to International Air Pollution Certificate (IAPP Certificate) Record of Construction and Equipmentʺ in appendix I of MARPOL Annex VI; and,

.4 requested the Secretariat to carry out an editorial review of the proposed amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, in particular of the coordinates used to designate the boundaries of the proposed Canadian Arctic ECA, to ensure consistency with those set out in appendix VII to MARPOL Annex VI, prior to submission to MEPC 82.

The observers from FOEI and the Inuit Circumpolar Council made statements welcoming the approval of the new ECAs in Canadian Arctic waters and the Norwegian Sea and emphasised that they will be important in reducing threats to biodiversity, the climate and communities in the Arctic.

**12 TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.** The Committee, having considered relevant information contained in document MEPC 81/12 (Secretariat), noted the update provided on the marine environment activities implemented under IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) for 2023, and expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for the technical assistance provided through the ITCP, notably through training workshops, seminars and e-Learning courses. For its part, the Committee expressed its appreciation to all donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to the ITCP.

**13 APPLICATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S METHOD OF WORK.**

**Review of the Rules of Procedure of MEPC.** The Committee recalled that C 129 had:

.1 requested the committees to inform C 132 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 C 132 would instruct the Working Group on Council Reform to proceed with the review and harmonisation of the rules of procedure, if necessary.

With regard to the harmonisation of the rules of procedure, including the integration of rules relating to the use of hybrid meeting capabilities, the Committee agreed to inform

C 132 that no comments had been made at this session on the matter.

**Committees' method of work.** The Committee noted that the MSC Chair had submitted document MSC 108/18 to MSC 108, containing the outcome of an assessment conducted by the Chair, in consultation with the Secretariat, on the arrangements for the planning, management and delivery of the work of MSC and its subsidiary bodies, along with related recommendations to help manage and control their [heavy] workload.

**14** **WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES.**

**Outcome of C129.** The Committee recalled that C 129, having considered document

C 129/4(a)/3 (India), proposing a new output on "Digitisation of all certifications required under all IMO conventions, as well as all commercial maritime documents in joint collaboration with the relevant international organisations and industry", had invited the committees, in particular MSC, MEPC, LEG and FAL, to consider the proposal.

**Biennial agendas for the III and CCC Sub-Committees and provisional agendas for III 10 and CCC 10.** The committee approved, subject to concurrent decision by MSC 108.

**Dates for MEPC 82.** The Committee noted that MEPC 82 has been scheduled to take place from 30 September to 4 October 2024.

**Correspondence groups.** CGs will be established on Review of the BWM Convention; Measurement and Verification of Non-CO2 GHG Emissions and Onboard Carbon Capture; also, Further Development of the LCA Framework.

**15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

**Implementation of the Hong Kong Convention.** The Committee considered document MEPC 81/15/1 (Secretariat), proposing draft reporting formats under article 12 of the Hong Kong Convention and disclosing that a new GISIS module on ship recycling will be developed for Parties to the Convention to fulfil their obligation of communication of information required by the Convention. In this connection, several delegations welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Convention on 26 June 2025 and commended the endeavours of all stakeholders over the years to enhance safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships.

**Interplay between the Hong Kong and Basel Conventions.** The Committee had for its consideration document MEPC 81/15/5 (Bangladesh et al.) and the potential legal issues identified therein concerning the interplay between the Hong Kong and Basel Conventions. Having noted the views and observations in document MEPC 81/15/5, as well as the comments made at this session, the Committee:

1 requested the Secretariat to continue and strengthen the cooperation with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to cater for any information and assistance needed to ensure clear and robust implementation of the Hong Kong Convention;

.2 requested the Secretariat to report the outcome of MEPC 81 to the COP (Conference of Parties) to the Basel Convention, with a view to the COP considering further action in this regard, as appropriate;

.3 invited interested Member States to bring the issue to the attention of relevant meetings under the Basel Convention and to submit further proposals to MEPC 82 on the interplay between the Hong Kong and Basel Conventions regarding ship recycling; and,

.4 requested the IMO Secretariat to develop draft guidance on this matter, in consultation with the Basel Convention Secretariat, for consideration at MEPC 82.

In addition, the Committee agreed to invite the Secretary-General to inform the Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions of the imminent entry into force of the Hong Kong Convention and convey the Committee's request for the Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention to further consider the interplay between the two Conventions and what further action may be required in this regard.

**Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres for marine emergency response.** The Committee had for its consideration document MEPC 81/15/2 (WMO), proposing the expansion of the meteorological support for marine environmental pollution response through the establishment of WMO Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres for marine emergency response (RSMCs-MER). Following discussion and having noted the information provided by the representative of the WMO Secretariat, the Committee:

1 thanked WMO for providing information concerning the envisaged establishment of WMO RSMCs for marine emergency response (RSMCs-MER);

.2 encouraged national marine emergency response authorities to engage with national meteorological and hydrological services and RSMCs-MER, once designated, to support MARPOL related exercises; and,

.3 invited interested parties and pollution response experts to work with WMO through national administrations/offices to further develop the proposed amendments to the Manual on the Global Data-processing and Forecasting System (WMO-No. 485).

**Expressions of condolence.** The Committee noted with great sadness the recent passing of Mr. Selwyn Bailey of South Africa, whose work was instrumental for the development and promotion of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement. His immense contribution to the work of the Organisation was acknowledged and sincere sympathy extended to the delegation of South Africa, Mr. Bailey's family, and colleagues.

The Committee, having been informed of the capsizing of the Republic of Korea-flagged chemical tanker **Keoyoung Sun** off the coast of Japan, which had eight crew members from Indonesia, two from the Republic of Korea and one from China on board, noted with sadness that eight crew members had lost their lives in the incident and one remained missing. The Secretary-General, on behalf of the Organisation and the Committee, conveyed sincere condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the delegations of China, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea. The Committee also expressed its appreciation for the rescue and recovery efforts made by the Japan Coast Guard in its response to the incident.

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**. The Secretary-General addressed the Committee regarding the annual observance of the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, stressing the importance of embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity within IMO, also highlighting work acknowledging mainstream diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion throughout the Secretariat.

**16 CLOSING REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.** Mr Domingues praised the Committee for making progress on a number of important issues. In particular, he emphasised the adoption of the 2024 Guidelines on the life-cycle of GHG intensity of Marine Fuel and the agreement in principle to establish a GESAMP Working Group to review related scientific and technical issues. He also approved the Committee’s endorsement of the way forward on the further development of the basket of candidate mid-term GHG reduction measures by agreeing to illustration of a possible outline of the IMO net-zero framework which could be used as a starting point for consolidating the different proposals into a possible common structure for further development.

Referring to the agreement to hold a 2-day Expert workshop to facilitate the understanding of the preliminary findings of the comprehensive assessment, he intimated that the Committee is indeed a forum to consider issues of critical relevance for all parts of the marine environment. Indeed, this week, very important progress has been made on many other issues that will undoubtedly contribute to improving the protection of the Oceans.

The Secretary-General highlighted the following achievements in particular:

* The approved recommendation for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers as prepared by PPR 11;
* The approved proposals to designate ECAs for the Canadian Arctic waters and the Norwegian Sea;
* On Ballast Water Management, endorsement of the list of Provisions and Instruments for revision and/or development under the Convention;
* Approval of the Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water-quality conditions; and,
* Guidance on the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks.

Concluding his address, the Secretary-General expressed his sincere thanks to the chair and Vice-Chair for delivering work of the highest standard. He also acknowledged the contributions made by the Chairs of the Working, Drafting, Technical and Review Groups convened during this session. The quality of the work produced by the Chairs and the participants stood out as was reflected by how quickly, the report was adopted. He was also deeply grateful for the efforts the Marine Environment Division who led the preparations for this meeting, also last week’s meeting, and for the dedication of those on the staff of the Secretariat who worked tirelessly to provide the required professional support to meet expectations. Mr Domingues also took the opportunity to thank the Interpreters who facilitated seamless communication during the meeting.

Finally, he wished all present a very restful and well-deserved week-end; with

MEPC 82 scheduled for late September, he looked forward to seeing everyone present again and expressed optimism that the efficient work can be continued.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight