

FACILITATION COMMITTEE (FAL 48), 8 – 12 APRIL 2024

The forty-eighth session of the Facilitation Committee, held in hybrid format from 8 to 12 April 2024, was chaired by Mr Watchara Chiemankulkit (Thailand) for his first time whilst Mr Mohamed Al Kaabi (UAE) was re-elected as Vice-Chair. The session was attended by Member States and Associate Members; representatives from specialised agencies; observers from intergovernmental organisations with agreements of cooperation; and, observers from non-governmental organisations in consultative status.

WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL. The IMO Secretary-General, Mr Arsenio Dominguez welcomed delegates to the 48th session of the Facilitation Committee. He took the opportunity to call for the release of the **Galaxy Leader** and its crew as well as the 23 crew members of Bangladesh nationality on board the **MV Abdullah**, who remain hijacked since November 2023 and March 2024 respectively. He also expressed his deepest sympathy to the families and all those impacted by the recent accident when the container ship **Dali** collided with a pier on the Francis Scott bridge, Baltimore, causing it to collapse. The loss of more than 90 people who died after the sinking of an overloaded fishing boat that was not licensed to transport people off the coast of Mozambique was also noted with great sadness.

Reflecting on this year's World Maritime theme of "Navigating the future: safety first!", he saw the pledge as one upholding the highest standards of safety in the IMO's regulatory work while facing the challenges of a fast-changing world, such as climate change, developments in technology, artificial intelligence and new threats faced by the industry.

In journeying towards digitalisation, a decision to make mandatory, the implementation of maritime single windows in ports worldwide from 1 January 2024 signified a major stride for the maritime community. This has simplified the clearance processes for ships, cargo, and people, reducing the administrative burden on crews and stakeholders, thereby increasing the efficiency of our ports. IMO technical cooperation activities have assisted countries in deploying maritime single windows, often in collaboration with commendable donors such as Norway and Singapore who contributed to projects in Antigua and Barbuda, also Angola in recent years.

Among other things, FAL 48 is expected to finalise the new version of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business, with the inclusion of new data sets, it being a critical instrument to accelerate digitalisation in shipping business and in the ship/port interface. Also for finalisation is the Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention which will have its contents updated to reflect the amendments adopted by the Committee at its last two sessions, and the Guidelines on Port Community Systems.

Regarding digitalisation, the recently published report of the industry survey, which was conducted to obtain a better understanding of how ships perceive the current state of digitalisation within ports, will be considered, as also will a new output to develop an overarching IMO Strategy on digitalisation to ensure standardisation and harmonisation.

The Secretary-General extended his best wishes to all delegates and wished them every success in their deliberations.

AGENDA FOR THE MEETING (Page numbers in red)

- 1 Adoption of the agenda; report on credentials 2-4
- 2 Decisions of other IMO bodies 4-8
- 3 Consideration and adoption of proposed amendments to the Convention 8
- 4 Review and update of the Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention 8/9
- 5 Application of single window concept 9-11
- 6 Review and revision of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business, including additional e-business solutions 11-14
- 7 Development of guidelines on Port Community Systems 14/15
- 8 Measures to address Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) in the instruments under the purview of the Facilitation Committee 15-19
- 9 Development of guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of wildlife on ships engaged in international maritime traffic 19/20
- 10 Introduction of the API/PNR concept in maritime transport 20
- 11 Analysis of possible means of auditing compliance with the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic 20
- 12 Unsafe mixed migration by sea 20/21
- 13 Consideration and analysis of reports and information on persons rescued at sea and stowaways 21
- 14 Technical cooperation activities related to facilitation of maritime traffic 22
- 15 Relations with other organisations 22
- 16 Application of the Committee's procedures on organisation and method of work 23
- 17 Work programme 23/24
- 18 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025 24

19 Any other business **24/25**

20 Meeting Achievements by Secretary-General **25**

Working Groups. Three Working Groups were formed and Chaired as follows:

WG1 Facilitation Instruments, Mr. F. Joret (France), item 4.

WG2 Electronic Business, Mr. M Renz (Sweden), items 5, 6 and 7.

WG2 Other Facilitation Subjects, Mr M. Al Kaabi (United Arab Emirates), items 8, 9 and 19 (Virtually only).

1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: The Agenda was duly adopted.

Attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. A large number of delegations expressed concern over the safety and welfare of seafarers, freedom of navigation, threats to the marine environment and stability of the global supply chain resulting from the attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, in particular in the attacks on:

.1 the Belize-flagged general cargo ship **MV Rubymar**, which sustained severe damage following a missile attack by Houthi rebels on 18 February 2024 during its transit through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, had almost fully sunk and posed a sub-surface impact risk to other ships transiting or operating in the area, as the bow of the ship was still above the sea surface while the stern rested on the seabed; and,

.2 the Barbados registered dry bulk carrier **True Confidence**, where three seafarers – two from the Philippines and one from Vietnam – had been killed in an assault involving anti-ship missiles launched by Houthi rebels on 6 March 2024, and other crew members had been injured, some of them seriously.

Delegations that took the floor offered their condolences to the families of the lost seafarers, extended their support to those injured and impacted by the incident, and conveyed their sympathy to the delegations directly affected, in particular those of the Philippines and Vietnam. These delegations strongly condemned the heinous acts against commercial ships which threatened the lives and livelihoods of seafarers, maritime security and the marine environment, and called for immediate cessation.

Many delegations highlighted the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 2722 (2024), underscoring the importance of the exercise of navigational rights and freedom of vessels of all States in the Red Sea in accordance with international law, condemning the attacks on commercial ships, and demanding their cessation, and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), on the arms embargo on the Houthis. In the context of negative consequences to the environment, many delegations also noted that, due to the security situation in the Red Sea, many ships were being forced

to navigate significantly longer routes in order to guarantee the safety of seafarers and to maintain the global distribution of essential goods, thereby increasing fuel consumption and harmful emissions.

Having condemned the attacks on commercial ships, which constitute unacceptable violations of international law and the IMO Convention, many delegations commended the actions being taken to protect freedom of navigation and the safety of seafarers through an increased number of naval patrols and other assistance to merchant ships. In this connection, several delegations mentioned the EUNAVFOR ASPIDES defensive operation to restore maritime security in the region.

The delegation of the Philippines stated that, following Houthi attacks on ships and the tragic death of two Philippine seafarers, the Philippine authorities and manning agencies were going to further limit the deployment of Philippine seafarers to ships sailing through known global hotspots. Philippine seafarers have the option to refuse to sail in warlike and high-risk areas, with provision for repatriation and compensation at company cost.

In commending the Secretary-General's initiatives in relation to the ongoing threats to commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, in particular, communication with all relevant parties and an emphasis on the well-being of seafarers, the Committee invited him to continue his efforts in this regard.

Statements on the matter were made by the delegations of Australia, Bahamas, Belgium (on behalf of the Member States of the European Union), Finland, France, Germany, Malta, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States. Statements were also made by the delegations of Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ghana, Greece, Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Sweden and by the observer from the EC.

2 DECISIONS OF OTHER IMO BODIES.

The Committee decided to consider the various issues which warranted action by the Committee under the relevant agenda items.

Maritime Service 8 – Vessel shore reporting. The Committee established a Working Group on Electronic Business (WG 2) and instructed it to review the proposed modifications to the description of Maritime Service 8 (Vessel shore reporting) proposed in document NCSR 10/22/Add.1 annex 3. This was subsequently discussed by WG 2 following which the Committee approved the description of Maritime Service 8 as drafted.

Guidelines on the use of electronic certificates. The Committee recalled that FAL 47 agreed that the Organisation would benefit from having one single set of guidelines for all certificates which would be easier to maintain and update, and further agreed to propose to the Maritime Safety Committee the development of a joint MSC-FAL circular on guidelines for the use of electronic certificates, and requested the Secretariat to prepare the draft text of a relevant joint circular, to be considered at FAL 48 and by the Maritime

Safety Committee at a future session, subject to their concurrence. The Committee noted that MSC 107 had approved the *Guidelines on the use of electronic certificates of seafarers* (MSC.1/Circ.1665), and agreed that any guidelines to be developed should address electronic certificates and documents comprehensively. The MEPC and LEG Committees were invited to consider what certificates and documents provided in the instruments under their respective purviews could be addressed in future joint guidelines and requested them to advise MSC and the FAL Committee accordingly.

MEPC 81 agreed that the guidance to be developed should be issued as a joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC circular but having noted that the Secretariat had postponed the submission of the draft text of a joint circular with the decisions of MEPC 81 and LEG 111, the Committee agreed to postpone discussion until FAL 49. Subsequently, the Committee requested WG 2 on Electronic Business to prepare a justification for a new output to develop the joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC guidelines on electronic certificates.

This was duly done and the Committee agreed to include a new output for the "Development of joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC guidelines on electronic certificates" in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, with a target completion year of 2025, and to invite LEG, MSC and MEPC Committees to become associated organs.

Proposal of new output "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". The Committee noted 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. However, whilst noting the proposal in document C 129/4(a)/3, the Committee did not consider it in detail to avoid duplication of work of the Organisation on digitalisation.

Electronic Ballast Water Record Books. The Committee noted that MEPC 80 adopted resolution MEPC.372(80) on *Guidelines for the use of electronic record books under the BWM Convention*.

Ongoing military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and its effects on international shipping and seafarers. The Committee recalled Assembly resolution on *Impact of the Russian armed invasion of Ukraine on international shipping* (resolution A.1183(33)), adopted by A 33.

The delegation of Ukraine made a statement describing the negative consequences on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov after more than two years of continuous military conflict and called on the international community to unequivocally condemn the actions of the Russian Federation, demanding the immediate cessation of hostilities. Specific points made by the delegation of Ukraine included, inter alia:

- .1 the Russian Federation's full-scaled armed invasion of Ukraine which has created a wide range of fundamental challenges to the rules-based international order in

clear violation of international maritime law, and has created additional ferocious threats to the freedom and safety of navigation worldwide;

.2 following the disruption of the Grain initiative by Russia in mid-2023, Ukraine successfully established a special maritime corridor in its sovereign waters in the Black Sea for commercial vessels heading to and from Ukrainian ports. Over the seven months of its 24/7 functioning, the corridor made it possible to export more than 36 million tons of cargo and Ukraine increased the turnover of goods through its seaports to 75% of the pre-war level;

.3 the Russian Federation has launched 1,000 missiles, about 2,800 Shahed drones and almost 7,000 guided bombs since the beginning of 2024 alone, and has applied the tactics of distant mining of sea routes leading to the Danube River and ports of Greater Odesa using guided aviation bombs;

.4 the Russian Federation continues to promulgate navigation warnings about the closures of the marine areas within Ukraine's sovereign waters in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov for shipping under different pretext with a view to create obstacles for free merchant shipping; and,

.5 the Russian Federation still fails to disassemble the illegally built Kerch bridge that, from the time of its construction, has limited the ability of certain types of merchant vessels to reach Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov.

The delegation of Ukraine proposed to replace the heading "Ongoing military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and its effects on international shipping and seafarers" with "Impact of the Russian Federation armed invasion of Ukraine", in accordance with documents adopted under the auspices of the UN system, including IMO.

In supporting the intervention made by the delegation of Ukraine, many delegations expressed the following views:

.1 the Russian Federation's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine should be condemned in the strongest possible terms;

.2 the Russian Federation must cease all military operations in Ukraine and immediately withdraw its military from Ukrainian territory that threatens the safety and welfare of seafarers, the security of international shipping, and the marine environment;

.3 the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine is a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, extending to its territorial waters. It is inconsistent with the principles of the UN Charter as well as the purposes of the Organisation as set forth in Article 1 of the IMO Convention;

.4 Ukraine's exports through the Black Sea ports are crucial to global food security;

.5 the commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and solidarity with its people, whose lives have been affected by Russia's war of aggression, will continue for as long as it takes Ukraine to regain full sovereignty; and,

.6 Assembly resolution A.1183(33), concerning the impact of the Russian armed invasion of Ukraine on international shipping, endorsed similar decisions previously taken by FAL.

Statements were made by the delegation of Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, United Kingdom and United States. An intervention by Belgium speaking on behalf of the EU was also supported by Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and the European Commission.

In response to these statements, the delegation of the Russian Federation dismissed the standard accusations as baseless and misleading to the Member States of IMO, requesting that the following views be reflected in the report:

.1 the issues raised by Ukraine and the Western countries are artificial and political in nature and lie outside of the mandate of the Committee/Organisation as a whole;

.2 being dragged into this political debate, the Russian delegation highlighted the situation with the Ukraine's open and deliberate involvement in terrorist activities on the territory of the Russian Federation. A reference was made available to public statements by Ukraine's higher officials confirming such involvement on many occasions. The most outrageous of them being the despicable terrorist attack on the Crocus City Hall in Krasnogorsk, where more than 550 people were killed or injured;

.3 the Russian delegation indicated that more evidence was emerging in the course of ongoing investigation as to a direct link between this terrorist attack and the Kiev regime, with the curators, organisers and accomplices being located in Kiev; and,

.4. specifically, the Russian side stressed that any attacks on the Kerch bridge, which Ukraine dared to characterise as a legitimate military target, are acts of terrorism and should be condemned.

Following consideration, the Committee:

.1 condemned in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine that started in 2014 and became a full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, which is a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a UN Member State, inconsistent with the principles and purposes of IMO;

.2 expressed grave concerns over the impact of the Russian Federation's armed invasion of Ukraine on the freedom of international navigation in the northern part of

the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Kerch Strait, and on the safety and well-being of seafarers and commercial vessels;

.3 expressed concern that the aforementioned armed invasion by the Russian Federation and its attacks against commercial vessels compromised the implementation of the FAL Convention in the maritime areas of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait;

4 demanded that the Russian Federation immediately cease the use of force against Ukraine, withdraw all of its troops, and abide by its obligations to ensure navigation rights and freedom of vessels in the northern part of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, in accordance with international law;

.5 commended the efforts of Ukraine in restoring free navigation for commercial vessels heading to and from Ukrainian ports via the special maritime corridor, established in its sovereign waters in the Black Sea;

.6 requested the Secretary-General to provide updates on developments and the implementation of resolution A.1183 (33); and,

.7 agreed to keep this matter under review, inviting Member States concerned to provide relevant reports to the Committee.

Condemnation of terrorist attacks. The delegation of the Russian Federation, having reminded delegates of the terrorist attack at Crocus City Hall in Krasnogorsk in the evening of 22 March 2024, in which more than 550 people were killed or injured:

.1 recalled that the UN Security Council had condemned this attack by terrorists, and the UN called on all States to actively cooperate with Russia to bring to justice all those involved in this terrible tragedy; and,

.2 invited the Committee to condemn any actions and manifestations of terrorism in any corner of the world (including those committed in Crocus City Hall and the Kerch Bridge), as well as to condemn all those involved in perpetrating, organising and financing acts of terrorism.

In this regard, the Committee decided to align itself to the United Nations Security Council press statement released on 22 March 2024 concerning the terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall (see <http://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15640.doc.htm>).

3 CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION. It was agreed to defer consideration of the amendments to the FAL Convention to accommodate maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS) to a next session, in accordance with the revised road map for MASS agreed by the Committee.

4 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE EXPLANATORY MANUAL TO THE FAL CONVENTION. The Committee recalled that FAL 43 had approved a new version of the

Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention and that FAL 46 had adopted, by resolution FAL.14(46), amendments to the annex to the Convention. Further, FAL 47 considered the outcome of the Working Group on Facilitation Instruments and endorsed the report of the Working Group (FAL 47/WP.5) as the basis for further work, establishing a Correspondence Group (CG) on the Review of the Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention, under the coordination of France.

Consideration of the report of the Correspondence Group. The Committee noted with appreciation the report of the aforementioned CG (FAL 48/4), acknowledging the work done on reviewing the Explanatory Manual. The Committee agreed on the CG's proposal to include the declarations "Delivery bill for mail consignment as described in the Acts of the Universal Postal Union, the Universal Postal Convention and its Regulations currently in force" and the "Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate or Ship Sanitation Control Certificate or extension as set forth by the International Health Regulations" in the IMO Compendium. Consequently, the Committee instructed the Working Group on Electronic Business to include them in the priority list of data sets and invited Member States and interested organisations to prepare the related submissions to EGDH with the data sets.

Consideration of the report of the Working Group. Having considered the report of WG 1 (FAL 48/WP.6), the Committee approved it in general and in particular:

.1 approved the text of the revision of the Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention, as set out; and,

.2 noted the deliberations of the Group regarding inconsistency of Recommended Practice 4.3.2.6 and Standard 4.7.1 on the reporting process to IMO on stowaway incidents and the need to address this inconsistency at the next revision of the annex to the FAL Convention.

5 APPLICATION OF SINGLE WINDOW CONCEPT.

The Committee recalled that the application of the single window concept to ship reporting in the context of the FAL Convention has been mandatory since January 2024. It was also recalled that FAL 47 had adopted resolution FAL.16(47) on *Recommended actions to accelerate the implementation of a maritime single window*, to assist Contracting Governments to the FAL Convention in fulfilling their obligations to implement mandatory single window systems by 1 January 2024, and approved a revised version of the *Guidelines for setting up a maritime single window* (MSW Guidelines). Having recalled that a GISIS module is available to collect updated information on MSW and other related single windows implemented by Member States, the Committee noted that only 18 countries have completed the information in the module and encouraged Member States to complete the information in the GISIS module.

E-learning course on implementation of the maritime single window. The Committee noted the launch of the new free-to-access e-learning course on implementation of the maritime single window on IMO's e-learning platform as contained in IMO Circular Letter No. 4773 of 11 September 2023.

Implementation of the MSW system under the SWIFT project in Angola. The Committee noted with deep appreciation, document FAL 48/5/1 (Angola and Singapore) describing implementation of the MSW system under the SWIFT Project in the Port of Lobito, Angola. The project was launched in 2021 by Singapore with IMO, seeking to assist IMO Member States in implementing MSW systems in their ports.

Summary report of survey on digitalisation. The Committee considered document FAL 48/5/3 (BIMCO et al.) with information about the outcome of an industry survey on the current state of digitalisation within ports, and with six recommendations outlined in the document based on the outcome of the survey. The following highlights of the survey outcome were noted from 488 valid responses received, coming from shipmasters and agents worldwide:

1. 40% of respondents were unaware of the IMO resolution mandating national port authorities to establish a single window reporting system for data exchange in ports worldwide;
2. in 64% of the port calls made by the respondents, the port authorities were still requiring either paper submissions or a mix of paper and digital submissions; and,
3. the survey also revealed that the process of collecting and submitting port call documentation is laborious and time-consuming. On average, respondents spent more than three hours (191 minutes) preparing and submitting the necessary documents required at every single port call.

Views were expressed that the survey highlighted the diversity of interfaces and national regulations regarding document formats at port calls that create significant problems for the sector, often making smooth data exchange between different stakeholders difficult or even impossible; many ships lack adequate IT infrastructure to facilitate efficient data exchange with ports and optimal information management; and, there were concerns on the proposal of global digital platforms to streamline the process of port call.

Notwithstanding, the Committee supported the outcome of the survey in document FAL 48/5/3 and agreed to refer it to the Working Group on Electronic Business with a view to identify possible actions to be taken by the Committee.

Application programming interfaces (APIs). Following discussion, the Committee supported document FAL 48/5 (ISO) proposing definitions and explanatory text to clarify certain concepts related to application programming interfaces (APIs) in the IMO Compendium and in the Guidelines on authentication, integrity and confidentiality of information exchanges via maritime single windows and related services (FAL.5/Circ.46). The document was referred to WG 2 for detailed consideration and, if deemed appropriate, to prepare a revised version of the Guidelines on authentication, integrity and confidentiality of information exchanges via maritime single windows and related services.

Guidelines on cooperation between customs and port authorities. The Committee welcomed the WCO-IAPH Guidelines on cooperation between customs and port authorities and invited IAPH and WCO to keep the Committee informed on their experience of the implementing the guidelines.

Safeguarding the cybersecurity of the Maritime Single Window. Following consideration, the Committee invited interested Member States and international organisations to contact IAPH to prepare a proposal for a new output to FAL 49 which could include the proposed amendment to the FAL Convention. It could also include the development of a model law on cybersecurity with an explanatory note, to facilitate Contracting Governments in need of such a legal framework, to get their MSW systems managed and operated in a cybersecure way.

Implementation of the maritime single window in Togo. The Committee noted the ongoing activities related to the implementation of the MSW in the Port of Lomé, and the request to the Committee to consider capacity-building initiatives, including knowledge sharing at the regional level on the implementation of the MSW. The Director of the Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division informed the Committee that the demand for technical cooperation activities related to establishing MSW has recently increased and encouraged knowledge sharing at regional levels between interested Member States as suggested by Togo.

Report of the Working Group. Having considered the relevant part of WG 2's report, the Committee approved it in general and took action as indicated below:

- .1 approved the description of Maritime Service 8;
- .2 agreed to include a new output for the "Development of joint FAL-LEG-MEPC- MSC guidelines on electronic certificates" in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, with a target completion year of 2025, and to invite LEG, MSC and MEPC Committees to become associated organs;
- .3 noted that the IMO Compendium includes a data set on ship and company certificates but that crew certificates have not been included and invited Member States and interested organisations to submit a proposal to EGDH; and,
- .4 instructed EGDH to consider including Application Programme Interface information as provided in document FAL 48/5 in the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business under its existing terms of reference, taking into account circular FAL.5/Circ.46.

6 REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE IMO COMPENDIUM ON FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL E-BUSINESS SOLUTIONS .

Funding of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business. Funding for the 2023 and 2024 versions of the IMO compendium were covered mainly by a small

number of EU Member States to support the various costs associated with the maintenance and extension of the IMO Compendium, including the use of specialised software to manage data models, modelling work to update the data model, and the maintenance and update of the HTML and MS Excel versions of the Compendium. Further funds will be required for the period 2025-2026, in order to guarantee sustainability following which, the Compendium would be mature and the Committee will be in a position to assess benefits and decide on the way forward in terms of resources needed.

Reports of the Expert Group on Data Harmonisation (EGDH). The Committee noted that EGDH 8 met from 20 to 23 March 2023 whilst EGDH 9 met from 23 to 27 October 2023. The Committee recalled further that FAL 47 had approved an updated priority list of data sets to prioritise the work of EDGH and had issued Terms of Reference for the Group. Having considered the reports of EGDH (FAL 48/6) and the actions requested, the Committee approved the reports of EGDH 8 and EGDH 9 in general, and agreed on the following actions:

Collaboration between EGDH and IHO.

The Committee, in relation to the ongoing work with IHO in EGDH on the coordination and alignment between IHO and IMO models, noted:

- .1 the way forward agreed with IHO on the coordination and alignment between IHO and IMO models;
- .2 the ongoing collaboration between IMO and IHO to harmonise the overlap between IHO S-100 and the IMO Compendium; and,
- .3 that producing S-100 compliant product specification(s) based on the IMO Compendium would be feasible, but require a substantial amount of work and that questions regarding IMO S-100 domain ownership and production resources would, in such cases, have to be further considered.

Progress on IMO data sets

The Committee noted:

- .1 the progress made in the draft IMO data set on Container Inspection Programme;
- .2 the progress on the API and BRI data sets and the proposals to WCO for further consideration at EGDH 9;
- .3 the work of the Group on the data set on "noon data reporting" to support future reporting needs in the context of GHG emissions reduction in maritime shipping;
- .4 the update of the IMO data set on "ballast water arrival reporting" according to the new guidance BWM.2/Circ.80 approved by MEPC and the code lists; and,

.5 the progress on development of Advance Passenger Information and Booking Reservation Information/Passenger Name Record standards for maritime transport.

Work of the standards organisations.

Regarding the work of the standards organisations, partners of IMO, the Committee:

.1 noted the ongoing work on the implementation of the Compendium based on ISO 28005-1 and ISO 28005-3 Standards Development;

.2 noted the Group's intention to create new business rules to identify the codes to be used in IMO data elements IMO0305 "Message function code" and IMO0192 "Message type, coded"; and,

.3 expressed appreciation to the standards organisations UNECE, WCO and ISO for their contribution to the maintenance and implementation of the IMO Compendium and to digitalisation and interoperability in maritime.

Digitalisation developments

Regarding developments in digitalisation, the Committee noted:

.1 the Group's discussion on the various subjects related to digitalisation being covered within the Organisation and that a specific IMO strategy on maritime digitalisation could be developed which would send a strong signal concerning the priorities of the Organisation and the importance of digitalisation externally, such as for industry stakeholders; and,

.2 the results of the impact assessment of the IMO ship identification number format extension, encouraging Member States and interested organisations to continue providing input and being actively involved in the process.

New version of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business. The Committee noted that a number of data sets had been finalised by EGDH and would be included in the new version of the Compendium if agreed:

.1 an updated IMO data set on "Ballast water report" aligned with the new *Guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting BWM.2/Circ.80*);

.2 an expanded IMO data set on "Advance Passenger Information (API)" with crew and passengers' vehicle information;

.3 a reviewed "Just In Time (JIT) sub-model";

.4 an updated IMO data set on the "Maritime Declaration of Health" with an additional coded data element and related code list;

.5 amendments to the existing data set and data model to improve consistency in the naming and definitions of IMO data elements; and,

.6 a new IMO data set on "noon data reporting".

New data sets identified by the Correspondence Group on the Review of the Explanatory Manual. The Committee recalled its decision when it considered the report of the Correspondence Group on the Review of the Explanatory Manual to include in the priority list of data sets of the IMO Compendium, the declarations "delivery bill for mail consignment as described in the Acts of the Universal Postal Union, the Universal Postal Convention and its Regulations currently in force" and the "Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate or Ship Sanitation Control Certificate or extension as set forth by the International Health Regulations", and the invitation to Member States and interested organisations to prepare the related submissions to EGDH with the data sets.

Report of the Working Group. Having considered the relevant part of WG 2's report, the Committee approved it in general and took action as follows:

.1 approved the new version of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business and its publication;

.2 requested EGDH to continue collaboration with IHO to align the organisations' respective models S-100 and the Compendium;

.3 approved the priority list of data sets of EGDH; and,

.4 approved the EGDH terms of reference for the next two meetings.

7 DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES ON PORT COMMUNITY SYSTEMS.

The Committee recalled that FAL 47 had established a Correspondence Group on the Development of Guidelines on Port Community Systems, under the coordination of Morocco. Three documents were submitted, by Morocco, China, also IAPH and World Bank for discussion and in the ensuing debate, the Committee noted, inter alia, the following views that:

.1 the PCS guidelines should not duplicate IMO's work on MSW but focus on the added value of the implementation of a PCS ;

.2 PCS' are very important for facilitation of trade and transport and for seamless movement of cargo; and,

.3 the data collected from automated terminals can be processed, exchanged, and integrated through PCS, improving the tracking of the status of goods and logistics; data security and cybersecurity play a crucial role in PCS; risks such as cybersecurity brought about by digitalisation and automation should be addressed in a holistic manner by collaborating with all stakeholders, including all the relevant

international organisations, PCS service providers, and terminal operators as well as equipment manufacturers.

The documents were subsequently referred to WG 2 for finalisation of the draft guidelines and having considered the relevant part of the Working Group's report, the proffered Guidelines on Port Community Systems were duly approved.

8 MEASURES TO ADDRESS MARITIME AUTONOMOUS SURFACE SHIPS (MASS) IN THE INSTRUMENTS UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE FACILITATION COMMITTEE.

Progress in the work of other bodies with respect to MASS. The Committee considered document FAL 48/8/2 (Secretariat), providing information relating to the work of different IMO bodies with respect to MASS since FAL 47, i.e. the Joint MSC-LEG-FAL Working Group on MASS, the outcome of LEG 107, the MSC 107 Working Group on MASS and the MSC Intersessional Working Group on MASS.

The Committee noted:

- .1 the action taken on matters related to MASS and the report of the second session of the Joint MSC-LEG-FAL Working Group on MASS (MASS-JWG 2), including the approval of an updated road map;
- .2 the agreement to postpone the third meeting of the Joint MSC-LEG-FAL Working Group on MASS, to take place after LEG 111 and FAL 48, but before MSC 108, and concurrently endorsed the terms of reference approved by MSC 107; and,
- .3 that the planned seminar on implications, challenges and opportunities of MASS operations for ports and public authorities, originally scheduled to take place in September 2023, would be held in conjunction with FAL 48. It actually took place on Thursday 11 April and a description of the seminar has already been posted by InterManager's S-G on our website.

Report of the Joint MSC-LEG-FAL Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS). Having considered the report (FAL 48/8), of the second meeting of the Joint MSC-LEG-FAL Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS-JWG), which was held from 17 to 21 April 2023, together with the comments made, the Committee approved it in general and, in particular:

- .1 noted that a seminar on legal issues relating to MASS, including UNCLOS, had been held on 17 April 2023, prior to MASS-JWG 2;
- .2 concurred, in principle, that:
 - .1 there should be a human master responsible for a MASS, regardless of mode of operation or degree/level of autonomy;

.2 the master may not need to be on board, depending on the technology used in the MASS and the human presence on board, if any; and,

.3 regardless of mode of operation or degree or level of autonomy, the master of a MASS should have the means to intervene when necessary;

.3 noted that the Group had requested the Secretariat to compile a list of the roles and responsibilities of a master in existing IMO instruments and UNCLOS in order to identify which of those roles could be delegated or entrusted to some other party, and invited submissions on related provisions concerning the master, including instruments not under the purview of IMO;

.4 concurred, in principle, that a detailed discussion of the circumstances where a master of a MASS could be responsible for several MASS was needed;

.5 concurred, in principle, that several masters could be responsible for a MASS on a single voyage, under certain conditions;

.6 concurred, in principle, that only a single master should be responsible for a MASS at any one time;

.7 noted information provided on possible ways forward in bringing developments relating to MASS to the attention of the International Labour Organization (ILO);

.8 noted agreement by the Group that it is premature to discuss the roles of the crew of a MASS before considering the role of the master of a MASS in detail, adding this matter to the work plan for MASS-JWG 3;

.9 concurred, in principle, with the term "remote operations centre" (ROC) and its definition;

.10 concurred, in principle, to not exclude the possibility that one or more ROCs may be responsible for a MASS on a single voyage, under certain conditions;

.11 concurred, in principle, that, however, only a single ROC must be responsible for a MASS at any one time;

.12 noted that the Group had agreed to further consider the conditions that may allow for the handover of responsibility for a MASS from one ROC to another ROC, and the issues that would arise if the ROC was located outside of the flag State of a MASS;

.13 concurred, in principle, that a person (a master) at the ROC may be responsible for multiple MASS at the same time, under certain conditions;

.14 noted that the requirements for the ROC are matters to be further discussed by MSC when developing the MASS Code;

- .15 concurred, in principle, with the definition for "remote operator";
- .16 noted that the requirements for a remote operator should be further discussed by MSC when developing the MASS Code;
- .17 noted the discussion on the designation of a master of a MASS in a ROC, but agreed that this was a matter solely for MSC;
- .18 noted that further discussion within the Group and the relevant Committee(s) is required regarding the need for a master to be on board when there are persons or crew on board;
- .19 noted that the Group had agreed that the matter of jurisdiction, including the conditions for having a ROC outside the territorial jurisdiction of the flag State, is a matter for consideration by the Legal Committee;
- .20 noted agreement by the Group that the interpretation of UNCLOS pertained to its States Parties, but did not preclude IMO, as the competent body for global shipping, from facilitating arrival at practical and legally feasible solutions when dealing with MASS;
- .21 noted that the Group had also agreed that relevant proposals, such as to consider a similar framework to that of the ISM Code, should be considered by the relevant Committee(s);
- .22 noted the recommendation for MSC to further consider the application of the ISM Code to MASS;
- .23 noted the recommendation for MSC to take into account, the inclusion of a subsection or paragraph in the introduction section of the MASS Code reflecting on the legal framework of the Code;
- .24 concurred, in principle, to continue to use the acronym MASS as "maritime autonomous surface ships", and its current definition, noting that this may change in the future, and that definitions and terminology regarding MASS should be further discussed by MSC when developing the MASS Code;
- .25 noted that the Group had agreed that the modes of operation or degrees/levels of autonomy should be discussed by MSC;
- .26 endorsed the updated work plan for MASS-JWG 3;
- .27 approved the following revised terms of reference for MASS-JWG 3:

"MASS-JWG 3, following the outcome of the regulatory scoping exercises conducted by the three Committees and the discussions during MASS-JWG 2, is instructed to:

.1 further address the common issues, taking into account the discussions at and outcome of FAL 47, LEG 110 and MSC 107, including:

.1 the role and responsibilities of the MASS master and MASS crew;

.2 certificates and other documents;

.3 sharing of information as part of the obligation to communicate with coastal and port States, port authorities, etc.; and,

.4 issues relating to connectivity, cybersecurity and remotely controlled operations, based on annex 1 to document MASS-JWG 2/WP.1, as appropriate;

.2 consider the following, as and when requested by the Committees:

.1 definitions and terminology regarding MASS; and,

.2 issues associated with the "remote operations centre" and "remote operator", including situations when the ROC is located outside of the flag State;

.3 update the work plan; and,

.4 provide a written report to the Committees".

Documents submitted by Member States under this agenda item. Four documents were submitted for consideration and in the ensuing discussion, the following views were expressed:

.1 the road map should be revised, and harmonised with the MSC and LEG committees;

.2 the work of the FAL Committee should not delay the approval process at MSC 108 of the non-mandatory Code for the Safety of MASS;

.3 some delegations expressed the wish to keep the proposed amendments to the annex to the FAL Convention developed by the Working Group on FAL MASS on hold until FAL 50, whilst others thought that the amendments

should be adopted by FAL 50, with the aim that they would come into force at the same time as the mandatory MASS Code;

.4 connectivity is one of the priority issues for remote operations of MASS and a matter of interest for the FAL Committee, but further discussion at the FAL Committee and the MASS-JWG should be postponed until NCSR and MSC consider it in detail, to avoid duplication of work;

.5 issue of use of MSW communication channels, especially through radio, falls under the purview of the FAL Committee, and should not overlap with MASS operation channels;

.6 certification and authentication of persons involved in mass operations is essential; and,

.7 principles of integrity, confidentiality and authentication are essential within the MASS Code.

Consideration of the report of WG 3. Having considered the relevant part of the Working Group's report, the Committee approved the revised road map on addressing MASS issues related to the FAL Convention.

9 DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF THE SMUGGLING OF WILDLIFE ON SHIPS ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL MARITIME TRAFFIC.

When considering document FAL 48/9/1 (Belgium et al.), with the proposal to amend the *Guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of wildlife on ships engaged in international maritime traffic* by means of a resolution, the Committee noted the following views:

.1 the effective implementation and uptake of the Guidelines will require collaboration among Member States and international maritime stakeholders, hence the need for bilateral or multilateral cooperation;

.2 the Guidelines serve as an additional tool to prevent and combat the smuggling of wildlife by enhancing the awareness and involvement of all stakeholders concerned; and,

.3 the reference to IMO Assembly resolution 1190(33) should be included in the resolution in an additional preambular paragraph.

Consideration of the report of WG 3. The Committee:

.1 noted the discussions on the joint industry guidelines in document FAL 48/9; and,

.2 adopted the resolution on revised *Guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of wildlife on ships engaged in international maritime traffic.*

10 INTRODUCTION OF THE API/PNR CONCEPT IN MARITIME TRANSPORT.

The Committee recalled that FAL 46 had agreed to include the Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data sets proposed by WCO in the priority list of data sets for EGDH. FAL 47 agreed to include the IMO data set on API in the Compendium; noted that EGDH had not finalised the draft BRI/PNR data set; and, agreed that amending the requirements of the FAL Convention regarding crew and passenger information with additional API and BRI/PNR data requires a new output, which will be discussed under item 17.

It was noted that EGDH 8 and EGDH 9 had finalised the additional IMO data elements related to crew information and passengers' vehicle details to be included in the IMO data set on API for review at this session; and, had finalised the BRI data set whilst agreeing to recommend postponing its inclusion in the Compendium until experience has been gained through the pilots currently being carried out by WCO and CLIA and until progress has been made in the discussions on API and BRI as referred to above.

UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme – Maritime Module. The Committee noted the information provided in document FAL 48/10 (UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)) on the recent work of the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, a flagship global initiative of UNOCT regarding collection of traveller data from maritime operators.

11 ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE MEANS OF AUDITING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONVENTION ON FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME TRAFFIC.

Taking into account that no documents had been submitted to this session, it was decided to delete this output of the agenda following an alert as to such a possibility during FAL 47.

12 UNSAFE MIXED MIGRATION BY SEA.

The Committee recalled that in 2021, UNHCR had launched an initiative to reconstitute the Inter-Agency Group on Safety of Life at Sea, to discuss, plan and execute coordinated joint action and advocacy to support the prevention of dangerous journeys at sea, SAR activities, and safe disembarkation. EOSG, ICS, ILO, IMO, IOM, OHCHR, OLA and UNODC have been invited to participate in the Group. The Committee also recalled that this group had been renamed as the "Inter-agency group on protection of refugees and migrants moving by sea", to avoid confusion regarding the SOLAS Convention. Eleven meetings of the inter-agency Group have been convened whilst the last meeting on 11 March 2024 focused on the presentation of the Centre for Humanitarian Action Moving by Sea, where the group was informed of progress on revision of the third version of the joint publication UNHCR-IMO-ICS "Rescue at sea: A guide to principles and practice as applied to refugees and migrants".

The Committee noted that MSC 107 had considered the proposal to develop guidelines to assist shipmasters and regional coordination centres (RCCs) in handling cases of deceased persons found in migrant boats and of death after recovery, to complement the guidance provided in resolution MSC.528(106), and agreed with the proposal to develop such guidance, either as an amendment to resolution MSC.528(106) or as a separate set of guidelines.

13 CONSIDERATION AND ANALYSIS OF REPORTS AND INFORMATION ON PERSONS RESCUED AT SEA AND STOWAWAYS.

Consideration and analysis of reports and information on stowaways. The Committee noted that, in 2023, 53 stowaway cases were reported to the Organisation, and the number of stowaways reported was 148. Cases in preceding years are as follows:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. of incidents	61	28	55	63	48	55	54	50	64	53
No. of stowaways	120	80	163	157	182	138	55	96	131	148

The Committee recalled the information provided by the International Group of P&I Clubs on their statistics on stowaway incidents to previous sessions of the Committee as below:

Analysed data	2007/08	2011/12	2014/15	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
No of incidents	842	774	503	432	364	418	364	345
No of stowaways	1,955	1,640	1,274	1,320	919	1,234	1,050	892
Total cost (US\$ million)	14.3	15.3	9.3	9.5	8.0	7.8	8.9	5.9
Cost/incident (US\$ thousand)	17.0	19.8	18.5	22.0	22.0	18.6	24.4	17.1
Cost/stowaway (US\$ thousand)	7.3	9.3	7.3	6.7	8.7	6.3	8.4	6.6

Resolution A.1074(28) on *Notification and circulation through the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS)* was recalled, urging Member States and international organisations to provide timely and accurate information on stowaway cases to the Organisation, making use of the GISIS module in accordance with Standard 4.7.1 of the FAL Convention.

Consideration and analysis of reports and information on persons rescued at sea.

The Committee noted that, since the date of the launch of the Inter-agency platform for information-sharing on migrant smuggling by sea in GISIS on 6 July 2015, only 34 incidents have been entered in the database. Member States were accordingly encouraged to provide more energetic reporting via the Inter-agency platform for information-sharing on migrant smuggling by sea in GISIS.

14 TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FACILITATION OF MARITIME TRAFFIC. The Committee noted the following activities relevant to the implementation of the FAL Convention, conducted under the ITCP in the period from December 2022 to December 2023:

.1 Four national seminars organised in Albania, Cook Islands, Kazakhstan and Samoa, to promote accession to the FAL Convention and to encourage better implementation of the FAL Convention.

.2 A regional seminar on facilitation of international maritime traffic held in Fiji, with representatives from customs, maritime administrations and port authorities from 13 Pacific Island nations (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

.3 A needs assessment mission in December 2023 to support Togo's efforts to implement a maritime single window in the port of Cotonou.

4 In the Latin American region, IMO conducted a new study in 2023 to assess the level of implementation of measures to facilitate international maritime transport and, in particular, digital solutions to the ship/port interface to facilitate clearance processes and port calls in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

.5 In the Central American region, IMO conducted a follow-up on the consultancy carried out in the region in 2021 in Honduras and Costa Rica.

.6 With respect to the maritime single window project of Fiji implemented with the World Bank, the "Port Logistics Gap Analysis" study prepared by the consultants, the World Bank and IMO, was validated by Fiji stakeholders in August 2023, as a preparatory step to implement an MSW in Fiji.

.7 Finally, the Single Window for Facilitation of Trade (SWiFT) project, with the financial and technical support of Singapore.

The Committee noted the launch of two e-learning courses on Facilitation since FAL 47:

.1 an introductory e-learning course on the implementation of the maritime single window, in September 2023; and,

.2 an e-learning course on countering illicit wildlife trafficking in maritime supply chains, expected to be available on 20 May 2024.

15 RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

In considering document FAL 48/15 (Secretariat), the Committee noted the relevant decisions of C 129 and C 130 with regard to relations with non-governmental organisations, applications for consultative status and related matters.

16 APPLICATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEDURES ON ORGANISATION AND METHOD OF WORK.

Document on Organisation and method of work of the Facilitation Committee. The Committee recalled that FAL 47 approved amendments to the *Organisation and method of work of the Facilitation Committee*:

.1 to include a revised checklist for considering and addressing human element issues;

.2 to include a five working day period for commenting on the draft report by correspondence: and,

.3 not to introduce documents in plenary with the flexibility to allow submitters to introduce additional context and information not included in the submitted document.

With regard to harmonisation of the rules of procedure, including the integration of rules relating to the use of hybrid meeting capabilities, the Committee noted that MEPC 81 had agreed to inform C 132 that no comments had been made at that session on the matter and noted that any comments could be submitted directly to C 132, to be taken into account in the work of the Council Working Group on Council Reform. Member States were therefore invited to submit their comments directly to C 132, to be taken into account in the work of the Council Working Group on Council Reform.

17 WORK PROGRAMME.

Proposals for new outputs.

New output to develop an overarching IMO strategy on digitalisation to ensure standardisation and harmonisation. The Committee agreed to include, in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, an output on "Development of a comprehensive strategy on maritime digitalisation", with a target completion year of 2027, inviting MSC and MEPC Committees to become associated organs.

Proposal to add a new output in the work programme to include Advance Passenger Information (API) and Booking and Reservation Information (BRI)/Passenger Name Record (PNR) declarations in the FAL Convention. The Committee agreed to include, in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, an output on "Amendments to the FAL Convention to introduce mandatory reporting of API and BRI/PNR for maritime transport", with a target completion year of 2025.

Proposal of new output to revise the Revised guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals on ships engaged in international maritime traffic. The Committee agreed to include, in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, this output, with a target completion year of 2027, inviting MSC to become an associated organ.

Proposal for a new output to modify the definition of "key workers" and relevant amendments in the FAL Convention. Following consideration of the proposal, the Committee agreed to include, in the 2024- 2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, an output on "Amendments to the FAL Convention to review the provisions of a key worker during a public health emergency of international concern", with a target completion year of 2026.

Development of joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC guidelines on electronic certificates. Inclusion of a new output was approved under item 19 (AOB).

Revision of the Guidelines on minimum training and education for mooring personnel. Inclusion of a new output was approved under item 19 (AOB).

Revision of the Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management. The Committee, having noted the decision of MSC 107 to include in its biennial agenda an output on "Revision of the Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management and identification of next steps to enhance maritime cybersecurity", agreed to include this output in the 2024-2025 biennial agenda of the FAL Committee and the provisional agenda for FAL 49, as an associated organ, with a target completion year of 2025.

Development of guidelines for harmonising the date format of various certificates issued under IMO instruments. This output will be included in FAL's post-biennial agenda as an associated organ to MSC.

18 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025.

In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Committee unanimously re-elected Mr. Watchara Chiemanukulkit (Thailand) as Chair and Mr. Mohamed AlKaabi (United Arab Emirates) as Vice-Chair, both for 2025.

19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

E-learning module on "Safe Transport of Class 7 by Sea". The Committee noted the favourable support expressed by some delegations for IAEA to work on the preparation of a module on "Safe Transport of Class-7 by Sea". The Committee invited CCC 10 to consider the outcome of the discussions regarding IAEA's request in connection with the preparation of the module on "Safe Transport of Class-7 by Sea", and take action as they deem appropriate. The Committee also invited IAEA to keep the Committee informed about the development and implementation of the new E-Learning Platform.

Addressing unjustified criminalisation of seafarers in the context of drug trafficking on ships. The Committee noted document FAL 48/INF.2 (Dominica et al.) providing information on the outcomes of the "Symposium on Drug smuggling in ships: Fostering law enforcement/trade collaboration" held in Houston on 9 January 2024 with suggestions for future consideration.

COVID-19 related matters. The Committee noted that A 33 had adopted resolution A.1189(33), *Recommendations emanating from the Joint Action Group to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's transport workers and the global supply chain.*

Possible measures to prevent acts of endangering the safety of navigation. The Committee noted that MSC 107, following an invitation by C 128 to consider possible measures to address the threats to maritime safety and the international community caused by repeated missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), had adopted resolution MSC.531(107) on *Strengthening measures for ensuring the safety of international shipping.*

MEETING ACHIEVEMENTS. In his closing remarks, the Secretary General outlined achievements resulting from the meeting. He said that the new version of the Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention will help Member States to implement the Convention in a more effective manner. He also mentioned the finalisation of a new version of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business including new data sets and went on to express his thanks to the Modelling Team and partner organisations as well as all the participants of the EGDH, acknowledging the importance of their contribution to the Compendium.

Mr Domingues also acknowledged approval of the Guidelines on Port Community Systems and the adopted resolution on the revised Guidelines for the suppression of the smuggling of wild-life on ships engaged in International maritime traffic.

Finally, he thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair of the meeting, also the Chairs of the WGs, the leaving delegates, the Maritime Safety Division and the Interpreters for their contributions to such a successful meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING. FAL 49 has been scheduled from 10 to 14 March 2025.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight