CONTRIBUTION

News from IMO

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The paper presents current work of selected IMO bodies in the period preceding the publication of this issue of ToMs. The outcome of IMO bodies responsible for safety and environment protection has been covered, aiming at informing seafarers and shipping industry at large on the decisions taken, as well as on the IMO instruments and/or their amendments that have entered into force.

KEY WORDS
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INTRODUCTION

IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu has launched this year's World Maritime Day theme, "Maritime education and training", emphasizing that "effective standards of training remain the bedrock of a safe and secure shipping industry, which needs to preserve the quality, practical skills and competence of qualified human resources," and adding that the 2015 World Maritime Day theme provided the opportunity to highlight the importance to everybody, not just within the shipping industry, of there being sufficient quantity and quality maritime education and training available to meet the sector's needs, now and into the future.

Since the last issue of ToMS, the Maritime Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 67th session from 13 to 17 October 2014, and the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held its 94th session from 17 to 21 November 2014. Selected decisions and outcome of discussions of both Committees have been presented in this review. Complete information on the outcome of various IMO bodies is available to the public in their reports, which can be found on the Organization's IMODOCS website (http://docs.imo.org/).

66th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 67)

BWM resolutions adopted

The MEPC adopted resolutions aimed at facilitating the entry into force and implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), 2004.

Third IMO GHG Study 2014 approved

The MEPC approved the Third IMO GHG Study 2014 providing updated estimates for greenhouse gas emissions from ships. The Third IMO GHG Study 2014 estimates that international shipping emitted 796 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) in 2012, against 885 million tonnes in 2007. This represented 2.2 % of the global emissions of CO2 in 2012, against 2.8 % in 2007. However, the "business as usual" scenarios continue to indicate that those emissions are likely to grow by between 50 % and 250 % in the period to 2050, depending on future economic and energy developments.

Energy-efficiency measures for ships considered

IMO in 2011 adopted mandatory measures to address energy efficiency of international shipping, which entered into force on 1 January 2013 under Chapter 4 of MARPOL Annex VI. These Regulations on energy efficiency for ships make mandatory the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), for new ships, and the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) for all ships.

The MEPC continued its work on further developing guidelines to support the uniform implementation of the regulations on energy-efficiency for ships. During the session, the MEPC adopted the 2014 Guidelines on survey and certification of the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), updating the previous version, as well as amendments to the 2013 Interim Guidelines for determining minimum propulsion power to maintain the manoeuvrability of ships in adverse conditions, to make the guidelines applicable to phase 1 (starting 1 January 2015) of the EEDI requirements.

Data collection system for fuel consumption of ships

The MEPC agreed, in principle, to develop a data collection system for ships, with the core elements including data collection by ships, flag State functions in relation to data collection and establishment of a centralized database by the Organization. The first input for the next MEPC session will be developed by an intersessional correspondence group.

Correspondence group instructed to continue with sulphur review methodology

The MEPC reviewed a progress report from the correspondence group which had been instructed to develop a draft framework for a methodology to examine whether sufficient fuel meeting the requirements set out in regulation 14 (Sulphur Oxides (SOx) and Particulate Matter) of MARPOL Annex VI is likely to be available by the effective date of those requirements, taking into account the global market supply and demand for fuel oil, trends in fuel oil markets, and any other relevant issues.

The group had developed a preliminary draft methodology framework and was instructed to continue its work and submit a final report to MEPC 68.

The sulphur content (expressed in terms of % m/m – that is, by weight) of fuel oil used on board ships is required to be a maximum of 3.50 % m/m (outside an Emission Control Area (ECA)), falling to 0.50 % m/m on and after 1 January 2020. Depending on the outcome of the review, to be completed by 2018, as to the availability of compliant fuel oil, this requirement could be deferred to 1 January 2025.

Within ECAs, the sulphur content of fuel oil (expressed in terms of % m/m: that is, by weight) must be no more than 1.00 % m/m; falling to 0.10 % m/m on and after 1 January 2015.

Amendments to MARPOL adopted

The MEPC adopted amendments to:

- MARPOL Annex I regulation 43 concerning special requirements for the use or carriage of oils in the Antarctic area, to prohibit ships from carrying heavy grade oil on board as ballast;
- MARPOL Annex III, concerning the appendix on criteria for the identification of harmful substances in packaged form; and
- MARPOL Annex VI, concerning regulation 2 (Definitions), regulation 13 (Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and the Supplement to the International Air Pollution Prevention Certificate (IAPP Certificate), in order to include reference to gas as fuel and to gas-fuelled engines.

94th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 94)

Polar Code adopted

The MSC adopted the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code), and related amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to make it mandatory, marking an historic milestone in the Organization's work to protect ships and people aboard them, both seafarers and passengers, in the harsh environment of the waters surrounding the two poles.

The Polar Code covers the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in waters surrounding the two poles.

Ships trading in the polar regions already have to comply with all relevant international standards adopted by IMO, but the newly adopted SOLAS chapter XIV "Safety measures for ships

operating in polar waters", adds additional requirements, by making mandatory the Polar Code (Preamble, Introduction and Part I-A (Safety measures)).

The expected date of entry into force of the SOLAS amendments is 1 January 2017, under the tacit acceptance procedure. It will apply to new ships constructed after that date. Ships constructed before 1 January 2017 will be required to meet the relevant requirements of the Polar Code by the first intermediate or renewal survey, whichever occurs first, after 1 January 2018.

Because it contains both safety and environment related provisions, the Polar Code will be mandatory under both SOLAS and MARPOL. Following the approval of the necessary draft amendments to make the environmental provisions in the Polar Code mandatory under MARPOL, MEPC is expected to adopt the Code and associated MARPOL amendments at its next session in May 2015, with an entry-into-force date to be aligned with the SOLAS amendments.

SOLAS amendments to make IGF code mandatory approved

The MSC approved, in principle, the draft International Code of Safety for Ships using Gases or other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code), and also approved proposed amendments to make the Code mandatory under SOLAS, with a view to adopting both the IGF Code and SOLAS amendments at the next session, MSC 95, scheduled to meet in June 2015. Associated draft amendments to the 1978 and 1988 Protocols were also approved.

The IGF Code will provide mandatory provisions for the arrangement, installation, control and monitoring of machinery, equipment and systems using low-flashpoint fuels, to minimize the risk to the ship, its crew and the environment, having regard to the nature of the fuels involved.

Adoption of SOLAS amendments

The MSC adopted the following amendments, with an expected entry into force date of 1 July 2016:

- Amendments to SOLAS chapter VI to require mandatory verification of the gross mass of containers;
- Amendments to add a new SOLAS regulation XI-1/7 on Atmosphere testing instrument for enclosed spaces, to require ships to carry an appropriate portable atmosphere testing instrument or instruments. Consequential amendments to the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (1979, 1989 and 2009 MODU Codes) were also adopted and a related MSC Circular on Early implementation of SOLAS regulation XI-1/7 on Atmosphere testing instrument for enclosed spaces was approved; and
- Amendments to update the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections During Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers (2011 ESP Code), including revisions to the minimum requirements for cargo tank testing at renewal survey and addition of a new paragraph on rescue and emergency response equipment in relation to breathing apparatus.

E-navigation strategy approved

The MSC approved the e-navigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP), which provides a framework and a road map of tasks that would need to be implemented or conducted in the future to give effect to five prioritized e navigation solutions:

- improved, harmonized and user-friendly bridge design;
- means for standardized and automated reporting;
- improved reliability, resilience and integrity of bridge equipment and navigation information;
- integration and presentation of available information in graphical displays received via communication equipment; and
- improved communication of vessel traffic services (VTS) Service Portfolio (not limited to VTS stations).

Work on passenger ships safety continued

The MSC continued its ongoing work related to passenger ship safety and updated its long-term action plan on passenger ship safety, following consideration of the outcome of the Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III) on the casualty report on the Costa Concordia and other proposals received. The updated long-term action plan includes, among others, a new item on the possible extension, to existing passenger ships, of the SOLAS requirement relating to computerized stability support for the master in case of flooding and a new item on watertight doors maintenance.

Other issues

In connection with other issues arising from the reports of IMO sub-committees and other bodies, the MSC, inter alia:

- Adopted amendments to the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units, 2009 (2009 MODU Code), to allow an alternative procedure for lifeboat launching and manoeuvring drills;
- Adopted an amendment to the recommendation on conditions for the approval of servicing stations for inflatable liferafts (resolution A.761(18)), in relation to checking date-expired items in the contents of packed inflatable liferafts; and
- Approved Interim guidance for in-service testing of automatic sprinkler systems.

Amendments to IMO instruments that have entered into force on 1 January 2015

- 2013 amendments to SOLAS 1974, 1988 Load Lines Protocol and MARPOL to make the Code for Recognized Organizations (RO Code) (resolutions MSC.349(92) and (MEPC.237(65)) mandatory.
- 2013 amendments to SOLAS 1974 relating to the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft, 1994 (1994 HSC Code) (resolution MSC.351(92)); the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft, 2000 (2000 HSC Code) (resolution MSC.352(92)); International Safety Management (ISM) Code (resolution MSC.353(92)); and the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code (resolution MSC.354(92)).
- 2013 amendments to the Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 (resolution MSC.356(92)).

Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007, enters into force on 14 April 2015

- On 14 April 2014, the entry into force requirement of the Convention was met and, in accordance with article 18 thereof, the Convention will enter into force on 14 April 2015.