

International Maritime Organisation**INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS REPORT ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION COMMITTEE 72ND SESSION****1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

MEPC 72 was held at IMO Headquarters from 9 to 13 April 2018, chaired by Mr. H. Saito (Japan). The Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. H. Conway (Liberia), was also present.

The Secretary-General welcomed participants and delivered his opening address, the full text of which is available at the IMO website at the following link:

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Secretary-GeneralsSpeechesToMeetings/Pages/MEPC-72-opening.aspx>

MEPC 72 adopted the agenda for the session (MEPC 72/1).

A number of delegations made general statements urging MEPC72 to make every effort to finalize and adopt the IMO Initial Strategy on the reduction of GHG emissions from ships at this session.

2. DECISIONS OF OTHER BODIES

MEPC noted the decisions of other IMO Committees and sub-committees with regard to its work, agreed to take action as appropriate.

MEPC72 invited Member Governments and international organizations to forward any information concerning disposal of fibreglass vessels that could be of assistance to the London Convention/London Protocol Parties to its Secretariat.

3. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO MANDATORY INSTRUMENTS

This item dealt mainly with amendments to the Ballast Water Management Convention and bulk chemical codes and as such was of no further interest to World Sailing.

4. HARMFUL AQUATIC ORGANISMS IN BALLAST WATER

MEPC again noted that the BWM Convention entered into force on 8 September 2017 and that the current number of Contracting Governments was now 69, representing 75.11% of the world's merchant fleet tonnage. The remainder of this item concerned type approved convention shipping ballast water management systems, proposed amendments to the BWM Convention and a review of procedure for approval of ballast water management systems that make use of active substances; as such there was little of concern for World Sailing.

5. AIR POLLUTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

This item included amendments to MARPOL Annex VI for a prohibition on the carriage of non-compliant fuel oil; guidance on best practice for fuel oil purchasers/users and suppliers and amendments to MARPOL Annex VI on the application of the EEDI regulations for ice class ships. There is little of interest to World Sailing.

6. FURTHER TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL MEASURES FOR ENHANCING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING

There is little of interest to World Sailing.

7. REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS

This item dealt with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for international shipping and the outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017 which had on its agenda an item on "Emissions from fuel used for international aviation and maritime transport".

MEPC72 also considered the draft Initial IMO Strategy and having noted the overwhelming support for its adoption, adopted resolution MEPC.304 (72) on an Initial IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships. The Strategy represents the continuation of work of IMO as the appropriate international body to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping. IMO remains committed to reducing GHG emissions from international shipping and, as a matter of urgency, aims to phase them out as soon as possible in this century.

Otherwise there was little of interest for World Sailing under this item

8. IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF SPECIAL AREAS, ECAs AND PSSAs

This was a standing item on the agenda, which was considered at every session. However, since no documents had been submitted under the agenda item, no further action was taken.

Brazil informed MEPC 72 of the establishment of two major protected areas: the Environmental Protection Area and natural monument of the Archipelago of Trindade and Martim Vaz and Monte Columbia; and the São Pedro and São Paulo Archipelago, both located in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Brazil. Together, these two areas would increase the coastal and marine areas under protection in Brazil from 1.5% to 26.3%.

Brazil is to host the sixty-seventh meeting of the International Whaling Commission, in September 2018, where Brazil, together with other countries, would be proposing the creation of the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary and its related management programme.

The Philippines provided an update on the establishment of the Tubbataha Reefs National Park PSSA and informed MEPC 72 that the area to be avoided (ATBA) had come into effect on 1 January 2018. To further assist ships operating in the area, additional guidelines and procedures were currently being prepared by relevant authorities in the Philippines.

9. POLLUTION PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (URGENT MATTERS EMANATING FROM THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE)

This item dealt with urgent matters emanating from the fifth session of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR). There were no matters of concern for World Sailing.

10. REPORTS OF OTHER SUB-COMMITTEES

Much of this item dealt with fishing activity which included the outcome of the third session of the Joint FAO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters on the issue of marking of fishing gear.

A UN Fisheries and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) technical consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear, which took place from 5 to 9 February 2018 adopted the text of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear, for submission to the thirty-third session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 33) for consideration, with a view to endorsement and further guidance. Once endorsed, the voluntary guidelines would assist States in developing and applying a system for the marking of fishing gear that would, inter alia, provide a means for identifying the ownership of fishing gear, which would, in turn, deter discarding of fishing gear.

MSC72 invited Member Governments and international organizations to submit their experiences on best practices for the effective marking of fishing gear to future sessions of the Committee under a new output on marine plastic litter approved under agenda item 15.

11. DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES TO REDUCE RISKS OF USE AND CARRIAGE OF HEAVY FUEL OIL AS FUEL BY SHIPS IN ARCTIC WATERS

MEPC 72 had agreed to include a new output on "Development of measures to reduce risks of use and carriage of heavy fuel oil (HFO) as fuel by ships in Arctic waters" in the 2018-2019 biennial agenda of the Committee. In discussion a ban was widely supported. This item is of little interest for World Sailing.

12. TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

IMO technical cooperation activities relate to the protection of the marine environment under the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP). Technical cooperation activities implemented by the Secretariat under the ITCP are an important part of improving implementation of IMO environment-related conventions.

MEPC 72 noted the essential contributions that properly trained seafarers could make in ensuring energy-efficient operation of ships. Also, in view of the significant amendments introduced in MARPOL Annex VI in recent years, including the regulations on energy efficiency for ships, MEPC noted the benefits of expanding the standard of competence on environmental aspects contained in the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code.

The Chair recalled that the constituent programmes of the ITCP could only be delivered if the required funding was secured from internal resources and/or external donor contributions. He expressed appreciation for all financial and in-kind contributions to the ITCP and invited Member States and international organizations to continue and, if possible, increase their support for the Organization's technical cooperation activities so that successful delivery of the programme could be achieved.

13. CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW MEASURES

There was nothing of concern for World Sailing under this agenda item.

14. APPLICATION OF THE COMMITTEES' METHOD OF WORK

MEPC 72 considered its method of work under this item and there is nothing of concern for World Sailing.

15. WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Marine plastic litter

MEPC 72 recognised the ongoing problem of marine plastic pollution, as addressed in MARPOL Annex V, which required further consideration as part of a global solution within the framework of ocean governance, in pursuance the sustainable development goal target to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025.

MEPC 72 overwhelmingly supported the proposal, in particular to enhance the work of IMO in further addressing marine plastic litter, and agreed to include a new task to for the "Development of an action plan to address marine plastic litter from ships" in its 2018-2019 biennial agenda with target completion year of 2020; the new task is to be an agenda item for MEPC 73.

Review of the 2011 guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (resolution MEPC.207)

Australia, Netherlands and New Zealand proposed that the 2011 guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (resolution MEPC.207) should be reviewed and amended if required. Following discussion and having noted support for the proposal, MEPC 72 agreed to include the proposal as a new output in the post-biennial agenda, assigning the task to the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (formerly BLG) with two sessions needed to complete the work.

Next dates for MEPC

MEPC 73 is to take place from 22 to 26 Oct 18 and MEPC 74 has been tentatively scheduled to take place from 13 to 17 May 2019.

MEPC 72 anticipated that the following groups might be established at MEPC 73:

- 1 Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency;
- 2 Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships;
- 3 Working Group on Marine Plastic Litter;
- 4 Drafting Group on Amendments to Mandatory Instruments; and
- 5 Ballast Water Review Group.

Plastic litter and the Ballast Water review will be of possible interest to World Sailing.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TOC

The Ocean Clean-up (TOC), which aimed to develop technological solutions to remove plastics from the ocean gyres, was discussed. Several delegations expressed support for the initiative, but highlighted the need for due consideration to safety of shipping, such that the position of any systems deployed at sea should be clearly visible to ships and their location clearly marked. A number of delegations also highlighted that land-based sources were a major contributor to plastics at sea, and that preventative measures were an important component towards the overall goal of ridding the seas and oceans of plastics. Following discussion, MEPC 72 invited interested delegations to submit any future documents on this issue to the new output on marine plastic litter, as approved under agenda item 15.

Reducing underwater noise from marine shipping

Several delegations expressed their support to the initiative from Canada to share their experiences in underwater noise from marine shipping in order to enhance the understanding of ship noise and the measures to mitigate it. In discussion, the need for further research to better understand the impact of underwater noise from shipping as opposed to underwater noise from other sources was raised by a number of delegations. In conclusion, MEPC 72 encouraged Member States to continue to share their experiences in dealing with the reduction of underwater noise from shipping and indicate their interest in collaborating with Canada on its proposal for a new output on this issue to a future session of MEPC.

17. ACTION REQUESTED OF OTHER IMO ORGANS

A summary of request to other IMO committees is made under this agenda item.

Stuart Carruthers

IR Commission Chair