

COUNCIL
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Agenda item 3

C 113/3/8
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STRATEGY, PLANNING AND REFORM

Review and reform of the Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document reports on developments in the review and reform process and anticipated future work aiming at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization

Strategic direction: 4

High-level action: 4.0.2, 4.0.3, 4.0.5

Planned output: 4.0.2.1, 4.0.2.5

Action to be taken: Paragraph 15

Related documents: C 112/D, C 112/3/1; C 110/D; C 110/3/2, C 110/3/8; C 109/D, C 109/4(d), C 109/4(e), C 109/3/1; C 108/3/3, C 108/5(e), C 108/5(f); MSC 92/22; MEPC 65/12/3; C 110/3/1, C 110/4(e) and C 110/6

Background

1 The Council, at its 108th, 109th, 110th and 112th sessions, received information on the review and reform initiative established by the Secretary-General. This document provides a brief summary on developments in the five key areas (budget and expenditure; human resources and office structure; meeting support arrangements; technical cooperation; and information technology) and provides information on the areas of focus for future work.

Budget and expenditure

2 A number of both short- and long-term measures were identified under the review and reform initiative, 26 of these relating to budget and expenditure are now completed and in operation addressing issues including staff and post management; overtime and consultancy management; revised rules on travel and procurement; control of general operating expenses including the Headquarters building and maximization of revenue. These and other issues have enabled the Secretary-General to adopt a Mixed Zero Growth budget policy and thus limited the increase in Member States' assessments.

3 Future work on the remaining issues under the budget and expenditure heading also has a cross-organizational effect and will require liaison and coordination across the Secretariat. Indicative items include improvement of the Secretariat's business plans and in their alignment with strategic directions and appropriate levels of human resources; refining of administrative processes to avoid duplication; more effective use of videoconferencing; establishment of long-term plans for capital expenditure; review of ASHI funding policy in the context of harmonized United Nations common system's approaches; outsourcing and market testing of certain services and functions.

Human resources and office structure

4 Since the last update presented to the Council, the major focus of activity on human resources issues has been on matters related to the career development of staff and performance monitoring and recognition. Developments within the United Nations system on these and other related issues have also been reported under agenda item 4(a). A number of new policies have been adopted covering staff mobility and flexible working arrangements to support flexibility within the Secretariat and this is to be complemented by a review of the policy on telecommuting (working from home). Policies on promotion, rewards and recognition have also been adopted. A review of the performance appraisal system and the management of cases of under-performance is under consideration, as is the criteria for a possible agreed separation programme. Looking forward, a possible review of the grade classification process and exploring the possibilities provided by offshoring, outsourcing or automating is in prospect as is further organizational structural review and the development of policies on coaching and mentoring and community service volunteering.

Meeting support arrangements

5 The Council will be aware of the key developments including the streamlining of document formats, processing and reporting procedures, meeting procedures and the major restructuring of the sub-committees, all of which have been successfully implemented. The issue of priority setting for the work of the committees and sub-committees was amongst the original proposals for action but this has not been further progressed. All of the approved recommendations under meeting support arrangements have had a beneficial impact on the efficiency of the Organization, including but not limited to, reduction of translation work during meetings, quicker processing of submissions to subsidiary body meetings, reduced size of Secretariat documents, less time conducting re-elections and a reduction in the number of sub-committees.

6 Notwithstanding the above benefits, some refinement may be necessary in light of the experience gained to date. In particular, matters related to the sub-committee restructuring require further consideration by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). An assessment based on the experience to date on issues falling under the purview of that Committee has been undertaken by the Secretariat and will be reported to MSC 94, which includes a proposal for the Committee to consider transferring, either temporarily or permanently, all outputs and matters related to SOLAS chapter II-2 from the biennial agenda of the SDC Sub-Committee to the SSE Sub-Committee with a view to better balancing their respective workloads and placing all matters related to fire protection under one body.

7 For the future, a review of the Committee's Guidelines with a view to incorporating the best practices used to date to ensure effective and efficient use of plenary time; a review of matters related to mandatory reporting requirements under IMO instruments and other notifications issued by the Secretariat with a view to making full use of IMODOCS facilities; and possible reconsideration of priority setting, are issues to be taken forward.

Technical cooperation

8 The development of Country Maritime Profiles (CMP) has remained a priority since the last update was presented to the Council. The CMPs aim to assist in identifying needs so as to achieve the most effective institutional development in developing countries and, by targeting technical assistance more accurately, to give uniform effect to the implementation of IMO instruments. At the request of the TC Committee at its sixty-fourth session, new fields of information are being added to the CMP to capture a wider range of data.

9 The information on individual Member State requirements as derived from the CMPs, together with the outcomes of the Audit Scheme and the definition, by the technical committees, of prioritized thematic developments, will furnish the key elements for the planning of the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme for 2016-2017, to be considered by the TC Committee at its sixty-fifth session.

10 Other TC measures undertaken include a new mechanism to assist developing countries to establish a national maritime transportation policy and the preparation of a draft generic Maritime Transportation Policy, which will be tested under a pilot scheme to determine its effectiveness as a tool, to be applied on a wider scale by those Member States wishing to develop their national maritime strategies within the context of an integrated approach to transport.

Information technology

11 Information and communications technology has been used to good effect in relation to the Organization's conference and language services producing important reductions in the costs of our meetings, with improvements to the dedicated documents portal, the PaperSmart mode and the audio recording of meetings and online registration of delegates. Future enhancements aiming at enhancing flexibility and reducing costs include an online workspace for correspondence groups, working groups etc.; a virtual online meeting platform and a module for submission of meeting documents. The deployment of various business software solutions has strengthened the process of information exchange between IMO and its various stakeholders and led to a reduction in telephone and communication costs and provided support for staff using various mobile devices. The upgrade of the technology environment and security infrastructure will continue for improved remote working, for example, whilst on mission.

12 GISIS has helped to promote IMO's goal as the primary international source of information and knowledge for issues relating to safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping in cooperation with stakeholders who provide mandatory and non-mandatory information to the Organization. Work will continue to develop the system for the transfer of PSC, casualty and other data as well as integration with geographical map presentations and enhanced search and analysis tools. This work is complemented by the development of a web-based module on CMPs in support of capacity building and implementation of systems to support the mandatory Audit Scheme.

13 In the area of outreach, work continues on enhancement of the public website supported by social media tools. Enhancements to support the delivery of IMO publications through multiple media adaptable to customers' needs are planned to assist in the provision of a smooth and efficient publishing process with improved quality control, eliminating potential errors and reducing the need to issue errata and corrigenda. The move towards a multilingual public website will continue.

14 Internally, the full implementation of new Intranet, e-Forms, correspondence management and the electronic document management system (e-Docs) will improve efficiency within the Secretariat. E-Docs has been trialled for the processing of meeting documentation and produced a significant reduction of manual processes and carbon footprint as well as providing a huge reduction in paper usage and related costs. The Organization is also advancing work to modernize the translation practices and provide new computer assisted tools to the translators through machine translation as part of an interagency cooperation with WIPO.

Action requested of the Council

15 The Council is invited to consider the information provided and decide as appropriate.
