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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### (g) IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea

#### Note by the Secretary-General

#### SUMMARY

<b><i>Executive summary:</i></b>	This document reports on the Recommendations of the Assessment Panel and the decision of the Panel of Judges on the winner of the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, 2009
<b><i>Strategic direction:</i></b>	11
<b><i>High-level action:</i></b>	11.1.1
<b><i>Planned output:</i></b>	11.1.1.5
<b><i>Action to be taken:</i></b>	Paragraph 14
<b><i>Related documents:</i></b>	C 102/18(g)

#### Outcome of the Assessment Panel

1 As stated in paragraph 3 of document C 102/18(g), an Assessment Panel met at IMO Headquarters on 22 May 2009, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, to scrutinize the nominations (see annex to document C 102/18(g)), which had been received for the 2009 Exceptional Bravery Award. The Assessment Panel comprised representatives of the International Shipping Federation Limited (ISF), the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA), the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF); the representative of the International Salvage Union (ISU) was unable to participate in the meeting on this occasion.

2 The Assessment Panel examined a total of 30 nominations, which had been received from 12 Member States and from four non-governmental organizations in consultative status.

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3 As last year, the Panel considered it appropriate to differentiate between the actions of professional rescuers and those of others who, in the normal course of their duties, would not be expected to risk their lives in rescuing persons in distress at sea. Accordingly, professional rescuers would need to display extraordinary courage, going beyond their normal duties to qualify for the honour, since the Award is about the display of exceptional bravery.

4 The Panel agreed that the nomination submitted by Algeria might merit some recognition, but lacked sufficient information upon which to make a firm recommendation. The Secretariat was, therefore, requested to seek further information, on the basis of which the Secretary-General was tasked with making a recommendation to the Panel of Judges, as appropriate. This recommendation is contained at paragraph 8(i) below.

5 Taking the general comments in paragraph 3 above as a framework for its assessment and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Award, the Assessment Panel submitted the following proposals for the Award; for Certificates of Commendation; and for Letters of Commendation, together with the rationale leading to its recommendations.

#### *For the Award*

6 The Panel agreed that **two** nominations merited receiving the Award, for the reasons given below.

(i) **Mr. Maurice Conti and Mrs. Sophie Conti**, United States citizens, nominated by New Zealand. The Contis are non-professional sailors who, at the time of the reported incident, were sailing with their young family. They planned and executed, in the middle of the night (12-13 October 2008) and in the absence of marine/aviation rescue assets, the rescue of three crew members in distress of the grounded yacht **Timella**, which had already sunk, off a remote South Pacific coral reef, exposing themselves to considerable risk.

(ii) **AST2 Abram A. Heller** of the United States Coast Guard, nominated by the United States. AST2 Heller is a professional rescue swimmer who, in arctic weather conditions, single-handedly rescued, in the early hours of 23 March 2008, eight crew members of the foundered **F/V Alaska Ranger**, giving up his place in the rescue helicopter to enable five rescuees to be taken to safety and waiting for over one hour for the return of the helicopter on a life raft, with three further rescuees whom he had pulled into it. In so doing, he acted over and above the standard expected of a professional rescuer, particularly on his first deployment.

#### *For Certificates of Commendation*

7 The Panel recommended that the following four nominees should receive Certificates of Commendation in recognition of meritorious services rendered:

- (i) **The Master and crew** of the vessel **Xin Ou Zhou**, nominated by China, for rescuing, in the early morning of 29 September 2008, 15 crew members of the grounded **F/V Zhe ling yu yun 101**, during Typhoon Jangmi;
- (ii) **Lt. César Osvaldo Lara Basto**, Officer in the Propulsion Division of the coastal patrol vessel **ARM Rayon** (PC-206), nominated by Mexico, who, on 4 October 2008, single-handedly put out a fire in the engine-room of the tug **ARM Yaqui**, thereby saving the lives of 34 crew members;

- (iii) **Captain Cha Sang Geun** of the **M/T STX ACE 7**, nominated by the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam, for rescuing, on 8 January 2009, over a period of eight hours, 15 crew members from the sunken vessel **M/V Binh Dinh River**; and
- (iv) **Captain Bobby Noble** and **Mr. Tejay England**, crew members of the sunken vessel **Lynette Marie**, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, nominated by the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), for supporting and keeping alive the remaining two crew members of the vessel in the water, on the night of 16 August 2008, for some 45 minutes.

***For Letters of Commendation***

8 The Panel recommended that the following candidates should receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their actions:

- (i) **Mr. Nabil Abdelaziz**, posthumously, able seaman of the tugboat **Skikda**, nominated by Algeria, for his part in an operation to save the lives of 17 crew members, during the rescue operation, on 6 March 2008, of the vessel **MV Sophia**, losing his own life in the process;
- (ii) **Lt. Cdr. Leonardo Barbosa Corrêa (2nd Pilot), Lt. (Marine Corps) Wagner Pinto Alves (1st Pilot), Lt. Junior Grade (Medical Corps) Mahmud Nayef Mahd Hasan Ihamid (Doctor) and Corporal Ângelo Cesar Suzano Rocha (Flight mechanic/Winch operator)**, of the AS350 Squirrel Helicopter (HU-5 Helicopter Squadron, Brazilian Navy), nominated by Brazil, for rescuing, on 29 August 2008, an injured fisherman from the **F/V Primavera XVII**, in very heavy weather;
- (iii) **Captain Zeng Zuoqing** of the rescue tug **Nanhaijiu 101**, Nanhai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for towing the stricken bulk carrier **Asia East**, with 27 crew members on board, away from oncoming Typhoon Changmi, on 26 September 2008;
- (iv) **Crew of the Hai Xun 1903**, Beihai Maritime Safety Administration, nominated by China, for rescuing, on 7 August 2008, 33 fishermen from fishing rafts during Tropical Storm Kammuri;
- (v) **Seventeen Italian Coast Guard Officers and Personnel**, nominated by Italy, for rescuing, on 10 June 2008, 17 migrants, including children, in heavy weather, following the capsizing of their small vessel;
- (vi) **Lt. Cdr. Vanessa Anne I. Garon and Ensign Maria Alexandra I. Garon**, Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, nominated by the Philippines and IMRF, for participating in several dive operations, on 26 June 2008, to recover bodies from the capsized **M/V Princess of the Stars**;
- (vii) **Captain Kim Shin Ho** of the **M/V KMTC Portkelang**, nominated by the Republic of Korea, for rescuing, on 29 September 2008, four surviving crew members from the vessels **Yinson Power 1** and **Yinson Power 2**, in stormy weather;

- (viii) **Captain Jason T. Bosley**, Associated Branch Pilots (American Pilots' Association), nominated by the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), who, on 19 September 2008, while travelling as a passenger on board the ferry **Cape Point**, took over control of the vessel, at night and in heavy weather, when its Captain collapsed (later dying of a heart attack), thereby saving the lives of the 60 passengers and one further crew member;
- (ix) **Captain Reed Southerland and Captain Matthew Bailey**, Association of Maryland Pilots (American Pilots' Association), nominated by IMPA, for rescuing, on 14 January 2009, four crew members of the **F/V Bass Tracker**, from rough seas, after the vessel had capsized;
- (x) **Mr. Dan Schwall (Project Manager), Mr. Jim Conroy (Salvage Master), Mr. Mike Wood (Salvage Engineer), Mr. Stephen Wood (Assistant Salvage Master), Mr. Terry Barrows (Salvage Foreman) and Mr. Nigel Raithby (Salvage Officer)**, Titan Salvage Team, nominated by ISU, for rescuing, on 11 October 2008, 25 crew members and one rescue swimmer from the grounded **M/V Fedra**, after a helicopter rescue had to be aborted, by mobilizing a shore-crane to a cliff and rigging and operating a man-basket to lift the rescues to safety, over a 12-hour period; and
- (xi) **Mr. Jun Wang**, rescue swimmer of Beihai No.1 Rescue Flying Service, China Rescue and Salvage, nominated by IMRF, for rescuing, on 1 November 2008, four crew members of the container ship **Xing Mingfa 17**, who were left in icy waters after their vessel had capsized.

### **Outcome of the Panel of Judges**

9 The Panel of Judges met at IMO Headquarters on 26 June 2009 under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Council to consider the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and to select the recipient of the Award. The Chairmen of the Legal Committee and the Facilitation Committee were present at the meeting; the other three members of the Panel of Judges, namely, the Chairmen of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee and the Technical Co-operation Committee, could not attend, but submitted their views and recommendations, in advance of the meeting, for consideration by the Panel.

10 The Panel of Judges agreed with the Assessment Panel on the appropriateness of differentiating between professional and non-professional rescuers, stressing that the Award is about the display of exceptional bravery, whether demonstrated by the acts of professional rescuers or non-professional rescuers.

11 The Panel of Judges commended the large number of nominations received and the fact that they cover extensive parts of the world. After carefully considering the rationale and recommendations of the Assessment Panel, the Panel of Judges decided to select **Mr. Maurice Conti** and **Mrs. Sophie Conti**, nominated by New Zealand, and **AST2 Abram A. Heller**, nominated by the United States, as the recipients of the 2009 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

12 The Panel of Judges agreed with the other recommendations of the Assessment Panel with regard to the award of Certificates of Commendation and Letters of Commendation (see paragraphs 7 and 8 above).

***Certificates for Exceptional Services Rendered to Shipping and Mankind***

13 The Panel of Judges endorsed the recommendation of the Assessment Panel to support the Secretary-General's proposal that Certificates for Exceptional Services Rendered to Shipping and Mankind be awarded, on a one-off basis, to the Commanding Officers, Officers, Petty Officers and Crews of all navy ships, which have participated in the international efforts to repress piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

**Action requested of the Council**

14 The Council is invited to take note of the information provided in this document and to endorse the outcome of the Panel of Judges with respect to:

- (i) the recommendations of the Panel of Judges with regard to the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, the Certificates of Commendation and the Letters of Commendation (see paragraphs 11 and 12 above); and
- (ii) the Certificates for Exceptional Services Rendered to Shipping and Mankind to be awarded, on a one-off basis, to the Commanding Officers, Officers, Petty Officers and Crews of all navy ships, which have participated in the international efforts to repress piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

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