



AD HOC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON
THE ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIC PLAN
10th session
Agenda item 6

CWGSP 10/6(b)/1
14 August 2009
ENGLISH ONLY

OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL'S 102ND SESSION

(b) Review of working arrangements and associated budgetary factors

Submitted by Denmark

SUMMARY

Executive summary:	This document presents some ideas in relation to possible ways of conducting IMO meetings differently, with the aim of achieving budget savings, in order to stimulate a thorough discussion in the Council Working Group
Strategic direction:	4
High-level action:	4.1.1
Planned output:	Not applicable
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 16
Related documents:	C 102/D (paragraph 3(a).2(iv), C 102/3(a) (annex 2), C 102/8/1, C 102/WP.4, C 102/SR.1 and SR.4 to SR.6

Introduction

1 During the 102nd session of the Council, Denmark suggested that a continuous process be initiated in order to identify ways of working more efficiently in IMO with the aim of ensuring budget savings. It is important not to leave any stone unturned. We need to look at all of the possibilities – have all the facts and, indeed, facts about costs, on the table, and then make the necessary decisions to ensure that this Organization remains the primary regulator of shipping.

2 The membership also has to realize that if any real cost reductions are to be made, we need to look at the areas that affect ourselves as Member States, meaning that we might not in the future receive the service we have become used to, because we need to find other ways of conducting our meetings.

3 Looking at the budget, staff costs are its biggest component and a large part of these costs are related to meetings. We therefore need to look much closer at the need for meetings, the length of meetings, and possible ways to conduct our meetings differently.

4 This document is primarily aimed at providing some food for thought in the further process, as the issues involved need to be considered carefully in order to ensure changes that, even though they are cost effective in the short term, also work in the long term.

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Length of meetings

5 Looking at the length of meetings will be a way to ensure cost savings – that is, if the number of meeting days is reduced.

6 One possibility is to reduce the number of Maritime Safety Committee meeting days. Currently, the MSC meets three times during a biennium for 10 days each time. Denmark would suggest that, at a minimum, in the years with two sessions, the number of days could be reduced, for one of the two meetings, to only one week.

7 In recent years, the Legal Committee has coped with only one yearly meeting and will do the same again in the 2010-2011 biennium, as it has agreed to hold only one session in 2010 (the usual second one being substituted by a Diplomatic Conference) and also only one in 2011 (the second session not being held in order to generate savings). This meeting cycle could be made permanent. Another possibility would be to have LEG meet three times during a biennium as the MSC and MEPC do.

8 To reduce the number of sub-committee meetings is not as simple. It would need an in-depth look at the tasks of each one, their areas of responsibility and how they are effectively using their time.

9 In order to make any decisions on this issue it would be necessary to identify tasks that could be dealt with in a different way. In some instances, issues that are mainly information points take up time in plenary – and in some other instances, perhaps this information could only be provided in writing, and then be taken as noted by the sub-committee(s) in question.

10 Some sort of evaluation process of the tasks of the sub-committees would have to be established to carry out the assessment proposed above. Such a thorough examination of each sub-committee's tasks might also lead to identification of topics that could be moved to other sub-committees, thereby reducing the number of meetings.

Reports of meetings

11 Translation costs amount to a very large part of the budget and, in order to make any progress on cost savings, it is necessary to look at the amount of information that is translated within the Organization.

12 Currently, even though working groups are working only in English, their final reports to plenary are translated. This uses time and resources during a meeting. Without translation, the groups might be able to work half-a-day longer, at least.

13 Denmark is aware that this topic is sensitive – however, in order to find cost savings it would be pertinent to take this issue under consideration as well, especially as other UN organizations seem to have abolished the translation of working group reports.

14 Another way – or a complementary way – to reduce translation costs is to consider the way reports are structured at the moment. Although the current reports hold much valuable information, at the same time we need to identify savings. So perhaps it is a question of “nice to have” versus “need to have”.

15 It would be beneficial to have information detailing how much the production (including staff costs) of the reports from sub-committees and committees costs – and how that would compare, if, for example, only a ‘summary of decisions’ were to be produced. Further, such information should also detail the staff implications of such a change.

Action requested of the Working Group

16 The Working Group is requested to take the above views into consideration.