



COUNCIL
89th session
Agenda item 12

C 89/12/1
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**CONSIDERATION OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY OF THE ORGANIZATION
INCLUDING THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP**

IMO Strategic Plan

Submitted by Bahamas and Greece

SUMMARY

Executive summary: The paper argues that IMO should play a larger role in determining the standards to which new ships are built. This should be incorporated into the IMO Strategic Plan.

Action to be taken: See paragraph 6

Related documents: C 88/13, A.909(22)

Introduction

1 A number of IMO initiatives have been directed towards the enforcement of international Conventions by Flag States. Most of these have been directed towards the State whose flag the ship flies late in its life. It is the opinion of the submitting States that Flag State responsibility is important throughout the ship's life. This responsibility includes ensuring that a ship is built to adequate standards. These should be sufficient to enable a properly maintained ship to continue in service until the end of its economic life. The ship should also be constructed to enable it to be readily inspected and maintained from new; proper maintenance standards from new are very important.

2 Some shipowners buy new ships, often built to minimum scantlings and without regard to ease of maintenance, and sell them after perhaps ten years, having carried out minimal maintenance during that time. Because of their construction many of these ships are difficult to inspect and maintain. This means that ships which have not been properly looked after and which cannot be easily inspected or maintained, are put onto the market. Most owners who buy ships of this age are not able to afford the expense of bringing a neglected ship up to full standard and thus a cycle of decline, that started when the ship began life, continues. This is a particular problem with ships built to minimum scantlings, which require careful maintenance from new if they are to have a long economic life. Although the flag State has responsibility for the condition of ships in its fleet, the difficulty of access makes the forming of a judgement on condition difficult in many instances. Similarly, any new Classification Society to which authority to conduct surveys has been granted will have problems in conducting a thorough survey in some cases.

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3 At first sight, that such a situation can arise might seem to be surprising; Classification Societies exist to set standards both for new ships and for the condition of ships at various stages throughout its life. Unfortunately, Societies could be subject to a number of pressures that would prevent them addressing the situation in a proper manner.

Proposal

4 To remove the possibility of competition between Classification Societies in the quality of the construction of ships, IMO should develop initial standards that will permit innovation in design but ensure that ships are constructed in such a manner that, if properly maintained, they can remain safe for their economic life. The standards must also ensure that all parts of a ship can be easily accessed to permit proper inspection and ease of maintenance. The areas to be covered by IMO standards may include, for example:

1. Structural arrangements, scantlings
2. Materials (steel and welding)
3. Loads and fatigue life
4. Means of access
5. Load bearing fixtures and fittings e.g. winches, fairleads, bitts
6. Closing appliances, watertight and weather tight fittings
7. Coatings and cathodic protection
8. Surveys
9. Inspections and maintenance

5 This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It is believed that full discussion in the Technical Committees, especially MSC, and the relevant Sub-committees is necessary to determine the extent to which standards should be set in the various areas. However, if agreed by Council, the determination of standards in the areas discussed above should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan of the Organisation.

Action requested of the Council

6 The Council is requested to consider the above proposal and, if in agreement with the concept, to forward it to MSC for an in-depth discussion. MSC should report back to the next meeting of Council for decisions on how the matter should be progressed.