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Agenda item 3

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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 20

Related documents: C 113/D, C 113/3/8; 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, 112th and 113th 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 Previous updates identified measures that have been put into operation 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, all of which enabled the Secretary-General to adopt a Mixed Zero Growth budget policy and thus limit the increase in Member States' assessments.

3 Ongoing work includes the identification of posts for redeployment to newly-defined strategic and priority areas and improved alignment of staff resources with the Secretariat Business Plan and results-based budget. On a related issue, further consideration is being given to the direct charging to Funds of all or a proportion of project implementation costs currently borne by the regular budget in respect of officers implementing technical cooperation activities. The recent establishment of a career development officer post in HR Services will provide the opportunity for a more systematic approach to human resource planning and improved coordination across the Organization and is expected to assist in the refining of administrative arrangements through potentially shared and centralized services. In the context of general operating and meeting expenses, consideration is being given to a revision of current policies on the provisions related to the use of local transport by staff; the further harmonization of travel rules with other United Nations organizations' standards and the development of guidelines to encourage greater use of videoconferencing to further reduce expenditure on travel and the Organization's carbon footprint. In this regard, it is anticipated that the Organization will be "climate neutral" by the beginning of the next biennium.

4 The establishment of a long-term capital plan for the provision of IT infrastructure and information systems including the Organization's ERP system, SAP, and other equipment and assets will inform budget planning for the next biennium and the next six years. A review of the Organization's position with respect to unfunded long-term employee liabilities is expected to develop an appropriate mechanism to address them and, in addition, a plan will be developed, after consultation with donors, for the use of any surplus funds lying dormant after completion of projects.

5 Looking to the future, the Organization's support costs rates and policy will be reviewed and discussion opened with the host government on certain provisions of the HQ lease aimed at clarifying responsibilities for income and expenditure. As major contracts come up for renewal (security, catering, publishing, SAP system hosting and support, etc.), the Secretariat will take the opportunity to explore possible cost savings through outsourcing, offshoring, etc.

6 As part of the Organization's review and reform programme, a decision was taken to establish the Management Accounting and ERP Services (MAES) through the merger of the Management Accounting Services and the SAP Unit as of 1 January 2015 in order to manage and lead the Organization's planning, results-based budgeting and the SAP business within a unified management structure.

Human resources and office structure

7 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 or extended covering staff mobility and flexible working arrangements to support flexibility within the Secretariat. Policies on promotion, rewards and recognition of long service have also been adopted. A review of the performance appraisal system and the management of cases of under-performance is under consideration. Criteria are being established for a possible agreed separation programme. Looking forward, a possible review of the internal procedures on job classification and the exploration of the possibilities provided by outsourcing or automating are in prospect. The potential advantages of offshoring are also being considered as is a further organizational structural review and the development of policies on coaching and mentoring.

Meeting support arrangements

8 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. Where the restructuring resulted in heavy agendas for the first sessions, the additional workload has generally been successfully managed and the second sessions of all but two of the new sub-committees have been held without undue strain on resources as they settle into the new arrangements. Some concerns remain with respect to the loading between the SSE and SDC Sub-Committees with respect to SOLAS chapter II-1 matters, which the Committee is expected to consider at MSC 95. Other benefits from the review and reform include a reduction in the need for staff to work during unsocial hours and in support costs relating to overtime and transport, quicker processing of submissions to subsidiary body meetings, a reduction in the size of Secretariat documents, and less time conducting re-elections of officers. The new arrangement of interpretation services for plenary sessions which covers eight instead of 10 sessions in five days for most meetings has not had an adverse effect, so far, thanks to good prioritization of discussions.

9 For the future, a review of the committee's Guidelines may be timely with a view to incorporating the best practices used to date to ensure effective and efficient use of plenary time based on the methodologies adopted to address the heavy workloads for the first sessions of some of the sub-committees.

10 The newly established and in-house developed Document Management System (e-Docs) has been successfully rolled out over the last few months. Its implementation has assisted in streamlining the processes, in reducing the usage of paper and related costs in line with the PaperSmart policies, and in particular, in processing meeting documentation which has achieved significant savings. As this is an ongoing project, work continues on introducing additional functionalities in relation to forward planning and reporting.

11 IMODOCS has continued to provide an effective platform for the timely electronic distribution of documents and other notifications issued by the Secretariat. This has supported the prompt distribution of documentation during meetings and contributed to the reduction of its carbon footprint.

12 The Secretariat has concluded plans to upgrade the sound system in the Main Hall and committee rooms 9 and 10, and enhance the wireless system for optimal performance.

Technical cooperation

13 The technical cooperation reform has been directed towards the development of enhanced planning tools and mechanisms, including the formulation of Country Maritime Profiles (CMP). The new Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) for the 2016-2017 biennium, prepared for submission to the Technical Cooperation Committee at its 65th session, is the first to be based, inter alia, on the data extracted from the CMPs. With 76 CMPs currently fully completed, Member States will be encouraged to update their inputs regularly so as to capture, comprehensively and accurately, the data and actuality of their national maritime needs.

14 Measures have also been taken to assist developing countries in formulating and enhancing their National Maritime Transportation Policies (NMTP). Resources have been allocated to a discrete programme which will include:

- (i) the fielding of specific technical advisory missions;

- (ii) ensuring the development of training programmes and material on the development, adoption and updating of national maritime transportation policies; and
- (iii) the subsequent delivery of related training events.

A pilot technical cooperation project will be rolled out in the latter part of 2015 whereby IMO, in close cooperation with the World Maritime University (WMU) and with financial or in-kind support of interested Member States, will ensure the initial development of training packages on the development, adoption and updating of national maritime transportation policies.

Information technology

15 Review and reform initiatives on information and communication technology (ICT) continue to be geared towards improving the management of information, preserving organizational knowledge, reducing carbon footprint and saving cost across the Secretariat and in the running of international meetings. With effect from January 2015, the preparation, approval and translation of meeting documents is largely being done through a newly-launched e-Docs system. Once fully implemented, this PaperSmart system will reduce further the Secretariat's manual processes, paper usage and carbon footprint. In a complementary manner, a new machine translation system, developed through inter-agency cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization, has been successfully rolled-out and is providing an additional computer assisted translation tool for meetings work.

16 A new Intranet has been launched, also with effect from January 2015, enabling internal collaboration, document management and web-based information systems that permit, among other benefits, automation of the Secretariat's other internal working methods, procedures and practices.

17 In respect of other systems, a dashboard overview has been developed within GISIS for Member States to identify at a glance their reporting requirements within the GISIS system. The visual "traffic light" colouring system gives a quick and easy way of identifying those sections with outdated or incomplete information pending for submission to the Organization in accordance with the relevant adopted regulations. The Country Maritime Profile and Member State Audit modules continue to be tailored to further the work of the Organization in serving Member States, while modules such as Survey and Certification, and notifications on non-mandatory instruments aim at reducing the administrative burden of Member States.

18 The introduction of a multilingual public website is at an advanced stage with the development of a new web platform for the dissemination of information to the public in the three official working languages. The static content on the English site has been translated into French and Spanish and their migration into the new multilingual website is complete. Enhancements to support the delivery of IMO publications through multiple media adaptable to customers are ongoing 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.

19 In view of the expiry of the first-term outsource contract for SAP services in May 2015, the Organization launched a competitive tendering process to ensure a timely and cost-effective renewal or replacement of the contract. Currently, the tendering process is at contract negotiation stage with the preferred bidder. The second term contract is aimed at reducing SAP system development and maintenance costs through adoption of cost-saving SAP technologies; and acceleration of the adoption of business intelligence, reporting, analytics and information management practices in the Organization.

Action requested of the Council

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