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STRATEGY, PLANNING AND REFORM

Work plan of a new strategic framework – general comments on the report on the fundamental review of the Strategic Plan

Submitted by Germany

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides comments on the consultant's report on the fundamental review of the Strategic Plan and the findings and recommendations contained therein

Strategic direction: 4

High-level action: 4.0.3

Planned output: 4.0.3.1

Action to be taken: Paragraph 16

Related documents: C 113/D and C 113/3

Introduction

1 The consultant's report presented in document C 113/3 contains various findings and recommendations regarding the process of the fundamental review of the Strategic Plan and its components. SF-WG has been asked to comment on these findings and recommendations before taking any decisions on the way forward and timeline.

2 In general, Germany is in line with many of the findings and recommendations, as many of the aspects discussed during the last few years are interdependent and need to be reviewed in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan and its components.

3 The work on milestones and a timeline for a review of the Strategic Plan will affect the agenda and work of committees and sub-committees. Therefore, Germany proposes that a uniform approach should first be developed for all committees.

Agendas and timetables for efficient preparation of meetings

4 The various IMO committees (e.g. MEPC and MSC) currently use "Methods of work ... for MSC and MEPC" and "Guidelines for the Application of the Strategic Plan", in different ways when developing their agendas and timetables. In general, the agenda is used to identify (in SMART terms) the topics which are discussed at a given meeting. At the same time, the committee meetings serve to monitor the work of the sub-committees. Advance distribution of a draft timetable which include, as well as the agenda topics, detailed information on the planning of working groups and drafting groups would enhance efficient use of Member State resources. It is therefore recommended that the committee chairmen consult the Secretariat on how this need could best be addressed and decide on a general procedure on the presentation of the timetables.

5 Such a harmonized and transparent process for developing agendas and timetables for all IMO organs will be a crucial basis for further steps towards an effective fundamental review of the Strategic Plan. Some of these milestones would require the committees to include new items for this project in their existing agendas.

Focus on criteria for trends, developments, challenges and risks

6 A second basic step before starting the fundamental review process of the Strategic Plan is, in Germany's view, the definition of general objective criteria for the identification of "Trends, Developments and Challenges" (TD&C) as well as "Risks".

7 For the review process itself, the first decision should clearly define the TD&C of IMO. In view of possibly numerous proposals from Member States and NGOs, IMO needs objective criteria to identify the core issues relevant to TD&C. The definition and background of such criteria should be included transparently in the new Strategic Plan.

8 Once a decision has been taken as to which level of the Strategic Framework is to be analysed in relation to potential risks, it will have to be clarified which criteria should also be used to identify "real" risks (i.e. just TD&C, or also Strategic Directions, Planned Outputs?). Such criteria would then have to be universally applicable.

9 The discussion should also cover the development of criteria to identify when Planned Outputs are in line with Strategic Directions. Further, it remains unclear how to proceed if possible Planned Outputs are not in line with a Strategic Direction but are driven by political interests.

10 When discussing the analysis of trend data, the report assumes a decision on the level at which trend data should be analysed. If the focus should be on the "high-level" of TD&C, objective criteria will be needed for any decision on which trend data should be analysed.

11 Even if trend data are to be analysed at a "lower level", e.g. in relation to Strategic Directions, objective criteria will have to be developed for their selection. As of now, neither the "Guidelines for the Application of the Strategic Plan" nor the "Methods of Work" provide such criteria.

Stakeholders

12 Document C 113/3, annex, refers in various paragraphs (e.g. paragraphs 25 and 26) to the need to involve "stakeholders" and "key stakeholders". These groups will need to be defined.

13 In Germany's view, industry and NGOs are material stakeholders. However, as it is for Member States to define the strategic work of IMO, the Member States must be regarded as the key stakeholders.

14 As IMO is driven by its Member States, the proposal of a "leadership team" (paragraph 25 in the annex to document C 113/3), or "Strategic Leadership Group" (paragraph 81 in the annex to document C 113/3) may be incompatible with the IMO Convention. Any proposals for Strategic Directions, High-level Actions and Planned Outputs must ultimately be decided on by Member States.

15 The role of the Secretariat is to support Member States in fulfilling their tasks. The composition of a "leadership team" or "Strategic Leadership Group" staffed by members of the Secretariat and the chairmen of the committees therefore needs careful consideration to ensure that the interests of all Member States are equally represented. If it is agreed that some kind of "leadership team" should be appointed, it may need to be elected by all Member States and its role and responsibilities will have to be clearly defined.

Action requested of the Council

16 Council is invited to consider the proposals in this document and decide as it deems appropriate.
