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**CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE
MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Support for intersessional work on finalizing a data collection system

Submitted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands

SUMMARY

Executive summary: In this submission, the Republic of the Marshall Islands strongly supports the suggestion arising from the draft report of MEPC 68 to Council for intersessional work to be undertaken in regards to data collection and energy efficiency for shipping and requests that this be advanced with urgency. This intersessional work should also be undertaken with a view to progressing discussions, in due sequence, on formulating a strong public signal on international maritime transport emissions, including the achievement of an overall emissions goal for the sector. This is important in light of the evolving impacts of climate change on particularly vulnerable nations, including Pacific Small Island Developing States, and on the world in general.

Strategic directions: 7.3

High-level actions: 7.3.2

Planned outputs: 7.3.2.1

Action to be taken: Paragraph 12

Related documents: MEPC 68/21 and MEPC 68/5/1

Introduction

1 At MEPC 68 the Republic of the Marshall Islands provided a submission (document MEPC 68/5/1) requesting the Committee to undertake the work necessary to establish a GHG emission reduction target for international shipping consistent with keeping global warming below 1.5°C and to agree to the measures necessary to reach that target.

Discussion

2 We recall the discussion of our point at MEPC and the decision of the Committee that the issues raised by the Republic of the Marshall Islands could be further addressed at a future session of the Committee. In the interim, the Committee was of the opinion that current work should continue to focus on further reduction of emissions from ships, particularly through the finalization of a data collection system.

3 We recall also the findings of the Committee in regard to the other points regarding data collection and in particular MEPC 68 report paragraph 4.15.2 where the Committee agreed to the establishment of either an intersessional working group or correspondence group to advance the finalization of a data collection system. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, in this exceptional case, supports the call for intersessional work to advance and finalize, if possible, the data gathering elements under discussion, as the data gathering initiatives are an important step towards coherent engagement with the climate challenge and would clearly illustrate the resolve that IMO has in approaching this issue within its own mandate.

4 We draw the Council's attention to the rationale for urgency given by the Republic of the Marshall Islands in document MEPC 68/5/1, namely that recent developments, not only in the Pacific but across the world, highlight that our climate system affects the entire global community, and none more so than the most vulnerable and in particular low-lying Pacific Islands nations. Our view, that effective measures to reduce global emissions be advanced as quickly as possible in light of the evolving impacts of climate change, received broad support in the discussion on our submission.

5 In 2013, Pacific leaders launched the Majuro Declaration at the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum at Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Majuro Declaration represents the position of Pacific Islands leaders. It finds that climate change has arrived and is the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific and one of the greatest challenges for the entire world. In adopting the Majuro Declaration, the Pacific Islands leaders underlined the need for urgent action at all levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions commensurate with the science and on the basis of equity and to respond urgently and sufficiently to the social, economic and security impacts of climate change. The urgency is required to ensure the survival and viability of all Pacific Small Island Developing States, in particular low-lying atoll States, and other vulnerable countries and regions worldwide.

6 The latest cyclone season in the Pacific has been an extraordinary one and bears out the repeated warnings from global scientists that accelerating climate change will be accompanied by increasing incidence of extreme weather events. Not only did we experience Mega-cyclone Pam which destroyed a significant proportion of the infrastructure of the Republic of Vanuatu in a single day, but the storm surges created entirely inundated several of the atolls of Tuvalu and destroyed essential infrastructure in Kiribati, more than 1,000 kilometres from the storm centre and not even in the cyclone path. As Cyclone Pam was devastating Vanuatu, not less than three other cyclones formed in different locations throughout the Pacific. The island of Chuuk, part of the Federated States of Micronesia, received a direct hit from Super-Typhoon Maysak and the Yap group was next in its path. Chuuk was to be hit by two more major typhoons in the next six weeks, the last of which required the unprecedented evacuation of entire atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, again over 1,000 kilometres away and not in the storm path. With climate-driven impacts already visible, the range of projected future impacts poses serious threats not only to island nations, but to all vulnerable sectors and geographies – including maritime infrastructure.

7 While extremely cognizant of the devastating impacts of climate change on our islands and our planet, Pacific Islands leaders also recognize that the necessary energy revolution and economic transformation to low-carbon development is an unprecedented opportunity to enhance our security, protect and ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and environment, and to improve our people's health. These views are also shared by a powerful and growing international consensus.

8 Current emissions from the shipping sector total some 2% to 3% of global emissions. The Republic of the Marshall Islands is highly cognizant of the gains that have been made in individual ship efficiency by the industry under the strong leadership of IMO and has also sought to play a role in advancing these initiatives. It also acknowledges the genuine commitment of IMO and the industry, as expressed by the Secretary-General in his intervention in the discussion on our submission, to be part of the global team seeking effective solutions to the crisis of climate change. However, we also note that the Third IMO GHG Study 2014 states that, under current policy, shipping emissions are expected to rise by 50% to 250% by 2050 with not one of the international shipping business as usual (BAU) scenarios anticipating a peak in shipping carbon dioxide emissions before 2050. Science says that applying an emissions trajectory for all sectors in line with existing national action and the current negotiating text for the Paris Climate Agreement (IPCC AR5 RCP 2.6), shipping is forecast to constitute between 6% to 14% of total anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions in 2050. Furthermore, under the IPCC AR5 RCP 2.6 scenario, total GHG emissions peak in 2020 and decline for the next 30 years. According to the Third IMO GHG Study, this would be against a backdrop of steadily rising shipping emissions.

9 In 2010, all nations agreed on a global goal to limit temperature rise to below 2°C above preindustrial levels – with the world already realizing a temperature increase of nearly 1°C. Discussions are continuing to further elaborate this global goal, including strong sentiments for signals on deep decarbonization. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, joined by over 100 other vulnerable nations, have also called for emissions trajectories consistent with temperature rises in 2100 no greater than 1.5°C. The Third IMO GHG Study 2014 therefore makes a clear case that not only are all the currently defined BAU scenarios inconsistent with any proportional response by shipping to assist in avoiding dangerous climate change, they are also wholly inconsistent with pre-2020 national action already underway, let alone post-2020 action now being planned.

10 Shipping represents a fast growing source of emissions that must be addressed if we are to have a chance of limiting global warming. The need to limit that warming to 1.5°C makes the obligation unavoidable. Many nations, including every G20 member, together with key sectors and actors are now preparing strong and fair contributions – and international maritime transport should not be an exception. Realizing the need to further address different perspectives, international maritime transport should join nations, sectors and the private sector in sending a strong public signal on better addressing its emissions, including achievement of a global sectorial emissions goal. Establishing a clear signal and sectorial goal now is in the best interests of the industry as it provides public confidence, certainty and establishes the necessary level playing field across the industry from which to progress a measured progressive and strong contribution towards meeting an already agreed global goal, in the context of wider international action.

11 In the decision of the Committee at its sixty-eighth session, the Committee preferred to continue its work on establishing a data collection system prior to reopening discussion on the issues raised by the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Given the urgency of this matter to our and other large ocean States, we therefore make this submission to support the establishment of an intersessional working group on finalizing a data collection system and urge that this group be instructed to work with all possible urgency.

Action requested of the Council

12 The Council is invited to consider the information in this document and specifically to note the view of the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

- .1 that an MEPC intersessional working group be convened to finalize a data collection system;
- .2 that this working group complete its task with urgency; and
- .3 once the working group report has been accepted by MEPC that discussion on the issues raised in the Republic of the Marshall Islands' submission (MEPC 68/5/1) be further addressed by the Committee as a matter of urgency.
