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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### (g) IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea

#### Note by the Secretary-General

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This document reports on the Recommendations of the Assessment Panel and the decision of the Panel of Judges on the winner of the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, 2012

*Strategic direction:* 11

*High-level action:* 11.1.1

*Planned output:* 11.1.1.5

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 14

*Related document:* C 108/15(g)

#### Outcome of the Assessment Panel

1 As stated in paragraph 3 of document C 108/15(g), the Assessment Panel met at IMO Headquarters on 10 May 2012, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General's nominee, the Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Legal Affairs and External Relations Division, to scrutinize the nominations (see annex to document C 108/15(g)) which had been received for this year's Awards. The Assessment Panel comprised representatives of the International Shipping Federation Limited (ISF), the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA), the International Salvage Union (ISU), the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

2 The Assessment Panel examined a total of 40 nominations, which had been received from 15 Member States and one non-governmental organization in consultative status with IMO and, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Award, submitted its proposals for the Award; for Certificates of Commendation; and for Letters of Commendation, together with the rationale leading to its recommendations, for consideration by the Panel of Judges.

### **Outcome of the Panel of Judges**

3 The Panel of Judges met at IMO Headquarters on 8 June 2012, under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Council, to consider the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and to select the recipient of the Award. The Chairmen of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Legal Committee and the Facilitation Committee were present at the meeting. The Chairmen of the Marine Environment Protection Committee and the Technical Co-operation Committee could not attend but submitted their recommendations for consideration by the Panel.

4 The Panel of Judges noted, with satisfaction, the large number of nominations received. It highlighted, again, the need for future nominations to provide a full and clear description of the circumstances and events, including sufficient detail, taking into account the factors contained in the Guidelines for the Award, and requested the Secretariat to stress this in the circular letter inviting nominations for next year's Award.

5 As was the case in past years, the Panel agreed with the Assessment Panel on the appropriateness of differentiating between the actions of professional rescuers and those of others who, in the normal course of their duties, would not be expected to risk their lives in rescuing persons in distress at sea. Accordingly, professional rescuers, in order to qualify, would need to display extraordinary courage, going beyond their normal duties, since the Award is about the display of exceptional bravery.

6 Taking the general comments in paragraph 5 above as a framework for its assessment and, after carefully considering the rationale and recommendations of the Assessment Panel, the Panel of Judges decided to select:

#### ***For the Award***

7 The Panel agreed that two nominations were worthy of the highest recognition. The first nomination, submitted by the Government of Canada, designates Sergeant Janick Gilbert (posthumously), Master Corporal Max Lahaye-Lemay and Master Corporal Marco Journeyman, crew members of the 424 (Transport and Rescue) Squadron in Trenton, Royal Canadian Air Force.

8 The crew members of the 424 (Transport and Rescue) Squadron in Trenton, Royal Canadian Air Force, were nominated for saving the lives of two Inuit hunters (a father and a son) stranded in an open boat in icy waters near Igloolik, Nunavut, in freezing temperatures, strong winds and 20-30 ft swells, during an operation that lasted five hours. Four hundred and twenty-four Squadron was deployed to investigate the situation of two hunters in distress; they were found in a life raft which had filled with frigid water and had stopped communicating by radio. Despite the adverse and extremely dangerous conditions, team leader Sergeant Janick Gilbert decided that a parachute jump was required. The sun had set, leaving 30 minutes until full darkness. Sergeant Gilbert, Master Corporal Max Lahaye-Lemay and Master Corporal Marco Journeyman were parachuted from an aircraft from a distance of 2000' (around 600 metres) above their calculated release point. Master Corporal Lahaye-Lemay was able to swim to the raft where he provided assistance to the men until recovery by helicopter, approximately five hours later. Master Corporal Journeyman swam to exhaustion, but realizing he could not close the distance to the raft, finally deployed his personal one-man liferaft, until he too was recovered by helicopter. Sergeant Janick Gilbert landed furthest from the raft and was later found floating in the sea; upon arrival ashore, he was pronounced dead.

9 The second nomination, submitted by the Government of Chile, designates Mr. Jaime Roman Muñoz, pilot and helicopter commander, Mr. Andrés De La Torre Chamy, co-pilot, Mr. Carlos Muñoz González, mechanic, and Mr. César Flores Flores, rescue swimmer, aerial detachment from Puerto Montt, Fifth Naval Zone, Chilean Navy.

10 The helicopter crew of the aerial detachment from Puerto Montt, Fifth Naval Zone, Chile, was nominated for having rescued the crew of the motor launch **Rosita V** at Locos islet in extremely dangerous stormy weather conditions. With a northerly wind of 55 knots with gusts of 75 knots, low cloud, high waves and reduced visibility owing to heavy rain, the rescue helicopter located a launch stranded between two rocks. Large waves passed over the half-sunken launch, battering it against the rocks and causing it to shift abruptly. Despite the severe turbulence, the aircraft managed to position itself over the launch, at a safe height to avoid the engines being cut off by the breaking waves, and lowered the rescue swimmer using the winch. The swimmer relentlessly rescued seven survivors, wounded and suffering from hypothermia. As the swimmer began raising the last one from the deck, a wave caused the vessel to lurch and the winch cable became entangled with the HF antenna and the signal mast, endangering both the swimmer and the helicopter. Fortunately the swimmer was able to disentangle the cable and bring the last survivor up safely. After disembarking the crew members, the helicopter returned to the scene, to resume the search immediately using the last of the fuel. After recovering one lifeless body, the helicopter returned to refuel, took off again and recovered another body from the sea.

11 After careful consideration, the Panel decided to bestow the Award on the three crew members of the 424 (Transport and Rescue) Squadron in Trenton, Royal Canadian Air Force, and on Mr. Cesar Flores Flores, rescue swimmer, aerial detachment from Puerto Montt, Fifth Naval Zone, Chilean Navy. With regard to the latter, the Panel was of the view that, although the rescue operation was extremely difficult and required great skill, professionalism and courage from the whole crew, it was Mr. Flores' actions that really stood out for the Award.

#### ***For Certificates of Commendation***

12 The Panel of Judges agreed that the following nominees (not in any order of merit) should receive **Certificates of Commendation** citing their acts of bravery:

- **Mr. Wang Haijie**, diver of the rescue vessel **Bei Hai Jiu 116**, Beihai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for rescuing four fishermen trapped under water in the cabin of the capsized fishing vessel **Liao Dan Yu 26628**;
- **The crew** of the rescue ship **Dong Hai Jiu 116**, Donghai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for saving the 12 crew members of the stranded containership **Jade** in very difficult weather conditions, capsizing in the process; and
- **Coxswain Adrian Johannes Gunter, Crewman Leon Pretorius and Crewman Quentin Diener**, volunteer crewmen of the rescue boat **Queenie Paine**, Station 33, Witsand, National Sea Rescue Institute of South Africa, nominated by South Africa, for the risky search and rescue operation of the four crew members of the catamaran yacht "**Gulliver**", in dangerous weather conditions.

#### ***For Letters of Commendation***

13 The Panel further recommended that the following nominees (not in any order of merit) should receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their actions:

- **The crew** of the **SAR helicopter B-7137**, Nanhai No.1 Rescue Flying Service, nominated by China, for rescuing, in difficult weather conditions, the 12 crew members of the cargo ship **Fang Zhou 6**, which was sinking;
- **The crew** of the M/T **Chang Hang Hong Tu**, nominated by China, for rescuing the nine fishermen on board the fishing vessel **Liao Wa Yu 55131**, which was sinking in icy weather conditions;
- **The crew** of the M/V **Jin Guang Ling**, nominated by China, for rescuing 10 crew members of the M/V **Bright Ruby**, manoeuvring in dire weather conditions;
- **The crew** of the fishing boat **Min Ping Yu 61597**, nominated by China, for rescuing 15 crew members from the sunken vessel M/V **Jin Shan Ling**, in bad weather conditions;
- **Warrant Officer Samuel Fourel** of the Lezardrieux naval unit, Brittany Regional Gendarmerie, nominated by France, for rescuing, by jumping from a helicopter, two persons in distress found in a sunken small pleasure yacht, in bad weather conditions and at nightfall;
- **Captain José Eric González Ramos** of the vessel **Bourbon Artabaze**, **Captain Rubén Daniel Vargas Cobos** of the vessel **Isla del Toro** and **Captain Manuel Ares Gondell** of the vessel **Árbol Grande**, nominated by Mexico, for the coordinated rescue operation during a tropical storm of the 10 crew members of the Trinity II platform;
- **The crew** of the containership **MOL Summer**, **the crew** of the containership **MSC Carole**, **the crew** of the bulk carrier **Violet**, **the crew** of the containership **Zhong He** and **the crew** of the containership **Cap Scott**, nominated by Papua New Guinea, for the coordinated rescue of the passengers on board the sunken passenger ship M/V **Rabaul Queen**, in difficult weather conditions, saving 246 passengers out of 500; **the crew** of the containership **Zhong He** was also nominated by China; and the master, chief engineer and boatsman of the **MOL Summer** were nominated by Bulgaria;
- **Captain Ely C. Sinoy** and **the crew** of the M/V **Daio Azalea**, nominated by the Philippines, for rescuing the two crew members of the pleasure craft **Stella Cometa** from a liferaft in bad weather conditions; and
- **LCDR Brian P. Hopkins**, **LTJG Andrew P. Lund**, **ASTC Randall J. Rice** and **AMT2 Alejandro M. Delgado**, crew of the US Coast Guard helicopter CG 6004, Air Station Cape Cod, nominated by the United States of America, for rescuing the two crew members of the pleasure craft S.V **Eva**, in very bad weather conditions.

#### **Action requested of the Council**

14 The Council is invited to take note of the information provided in this document and to endorse the outcome of the Panel of Judges with respect to its recommendations for the Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, the Certificates of Commendation and the Letters of Commendation.