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EXTERNAL RELATIONS

(e) World Maritime Day

Submitted by Singapore

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document reports on the Inaugural Maritime Administrators' Forum organized by Singapore in support of IMO's World Maritime Day 2016 theme "Shipping: indispensable to the world"

Strategic direction: 11.1

High-level action: 11.1.1

Output: No related provisions

Action to be taken: Paragraph 10

Related documents: None

Introduction

1 Organized in support of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) World Maritime Day theme for 2016, "Shipping: indispensable to the world", the Inaugural Maritime Administrators' Forum (the "Forum") was a first-of-its-kind event held in Singapore. The Forum aimed to highlight the importance of shipping and raise awareness of the critical role of shipping in supporting and sustaining the world economy. The Forum was also part of Singapore's ongoing efforts to promote global maritime leadership training. Senior maritime officials from different regions of the world had the opportunity to exchange views and ideas with their peers on challenges and issues in the maritime world. Participants found the Forum timely as several were formulating or reviewing their own national maritime policies.

Event highlights

2 The Forum, held in conjunction with the eleventh Singapore Maritime Week, was attended by leaders of maritime administrations from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Oceania. In the first session, "Indispensable Shipping: Country Maritime Initiatives", speakers from Latvia, Malaysia, Peru and the Republic of Korea shared their respective countries' maritime strategy, the importance of shipping to their respective economies and the challenges faced when formulating good maritime initiatives. The challenges highlighted comprised external conditions, like market conditions, and internal constraints, like the difficulties in securing support from other governmental agencies and funding.

3 On the other hand, the discussion highlighted some important tools which could help in formulating strategy and decision-making. The better use of technology and data collection could be used to identify trends and increase knowledge about the industry, which would help decision-makers to make more informed decisions. Similarly, technology could also be used for monitoring, for example, traffic flow and emissions. Not only would this contribute to enhancing safety and security, technology could also assist in the planning towards greener and more sustainable shipping.

4 In the second session, "Indispensable Shipping: Meeting the Regulatory Requirements", speakers from Ghana, Jamaica and Nigeria, as well as from IMO, spoke on the current regulatory environment and capacity building, highlighting the complexity of implementing legislations as well as the need for capacity building to assist countries to meet their obligations.

5 The participants agreed that international conventions are important in setting uniform standards as shipping is an international business. However, some administrations have been limited by their financial and technical resources to effectively adopt and enforce international regulations. They would require qualified and skilled manpower coupled with good legal and administrative framework to achieve that. It was further noted that budgetary constraints also limited these countries from attending IMO meetings, where their concerns could be more adequately represented when formulating international regulations. As such, more technical assistance would be needed.

6 Nevertheless, the discussions at the Forum underscored the fact that maritime administrations across the globe faced common challenges. The current economic slowdown and market uncertainty has affected the whole maritime industry. Administrators acknowledged that it was important to keep abreast with the changing shipping landscape, as these changes impact other sectors and affect wider national plans. At the same time, administrations are confronted with the task of formulating and implementing maritime legislations to meet an increasing volume of international regulations. There would be a greater need for capacity building as it is essential that maritime administrations build up new capabilities to take on larger roles and responsibilities to implement IMO instruments.

Learning points

7 There were discussions on common considerations when developing new measures and capabilities to tackle the evolving challenges more effectively, while ensuring effective implementation of IMO regulations. Five key areas were identified as important elements. These included:

- .1 A more integrated approach towards the development of maritime policies;
- .2 Better engagement with stakeholders and forging stronger partnerships with the industry, regional and international organizations;
- .3 Greater capacity building at all levels as the demand for manpower, new skills and expertise is immense;
- .4 Addressing emerging concepts such as the Blue Economy and sustainable ocean governance; and
- .5 Leveraging more on technology to enhance the operations of maritime authorities.

Conclusion

8 Administrations are faced with multi-faceted challenges from economic volatility, rapid technological change and new international regulations on safety and the environment. As such, the participating maritime administrations recognized the usefulness of such platform for leaders to meet, discuss and brainstorm on critical maritime issues.

9 Singapore intends to organize the Maritime Administrators' Forum every biennium as part of its contribution to IMO's work in promoting safe, secure and sustainable international shipping. Further information on this Forum and other events organized by the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) Academy may be found on the following site: <http://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/mpa-academy>.

Action requested of the Council

10 The Council is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and to comment as appropriate.
