

COUNCIL
116th session
Agenda item 4

C 116/4/2
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STRATEGY, PLANNING AND REFORM

Transparency and accountability of the Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

*Executive
summary:*

This document provides information on the introduction and publication on the IMO website of a Code of Ethics for the International Maritime Organization; the publication on the IMO website of a summary of internal audit reports for 2015; and the financial disclosure by relevant staff members for 2015. The document also informs the Council of the Secretary-General's intention to introduce a mandatory ethics training programme for IMO personnel and an IMO Policy on Outside Activities for staff members, and reports on the introduction of a Statement on Internal Control

Strategic direction: 4

High-level action: 4.0.1

Output: 4.0.1.1 and 4.0.1.4

Action to be taken: Paragraph 13

Related documents: C112/3/3; C 113/3/9; C 114/3/3; C/ES.28/3/5 and C 116/5(b)

Introduction

1 To enhance the existing culture of ethics, integrity and accountability within IMO, the Secretary-General has introduced a Code of Ethics for the International Maritime Organization, and intends to introduce a programme of mandatory ethics training and a Policy on Outside Activities for IMO staff members in 2016. At its 113th session, the Secretary-General, in document C 113/3/9, reported to the Council that in the first quarter of each year, an annual summary of the previous year's internal audit activities and reports would be published on the IMO website. At its 112th session, the Secretary-General, in document C 112/3/3, reported to the Council that financial disclosures would be made by relevant IMO staff members on an annual basis, in accordance with appendix G to the IMO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. At its 114th session, the Secretary-General, in document C 114/3/3, reported to the Council that the Organization would issue a Statement of Internal Control with the release of the Organization's financial statements.

Code of Ethics for the International Maritime Organization

2 In order to cultivate and nurture the culture of ethics, integrity and accountability and thereby enhance the trust in and the credibility of the Organization, a Code of Ethics for the International Maritime Organization has been developed and introduced at IMO with effect from 21 April 2016.

3 The IMO Code of Ethics is based on the United Nations Ethics Committee's model Code of Ethics text, and sets out the core values and principles IMO personnel, as international civil servants, should attain and adhere to in the course of their duties. The IMO Code of Ethics has been published on the IMO public website home page at <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Documents/Code%20of%20Ethics%20for%20IMO%20Personnel.pdf>.

Online ethics training programme for IMO staff members

4 With a view to further cultivating the culture of ethics, transparency and integrity within the Organization by enhancing IMO staff members' awareness of the ethical standards expected of them, and to strengthen the effectiveness of the workforce, the Secretary-General intends to introduce an online ethics training programme for IMO staff members.

5 The online IMO ethics training programme is in the early stages of development. It is anticipated the training will be rolled out during the third quarter of 2016. The training shall be mandatory for all IMO staff members and will comprise of training on the following areas: professional and personal integrity; avoiding conflicts of interest (including financial disclosure, outside activities and accepting gifts); using information and resources responsibly; awareness of misconduct; reporting misconduct; and protection against retaliation.

IMO Policy on Outside Activities for staff members

6 It is the intention of the Secretary-General to further strengthen the culture of ethics, transparency and integrity at IMO by introducing a Policy on Outside Activities for staff members. The purpose of such a policy is to establish clear procedures for the implementation of staff rules 101.2(q) and 101.2(s) which govern outside activities, and also to provide guidance on other outside activities, such as social or charitable activities; pursuit of studies; and political activities.

7 An IMO Policy on Outside Activities has been drafted based on the United Nations Secretariat policy on outside activities (UN document ref: ST/AI/2000/13). The Policy, currently under consideration by senior management and Staff Association representatives, is expected to enter into effect in June 2016.

Publication of internal audit activities and reports

8 The Summary of Internal Audit Activities and Reports for the reporting year ending 31 December 2015 was published on the IMO public website on 14 April 2016. The Summary is accessible under the Resources section, located on the IMO public website home page, at <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Pages/Summary-of-Internal-Audit-Activities-and-Reports.aspx>.

9 The summary report contains: a brief description of the core internal audit activities (assurance and consulting) undertaken during 2015; a list of internal audit reports issued during the year with a brief synopsis of the audit objective, conclusions and major findings and recommendations for each audit report; the status of implementation of internal audit recommendations based on the regular follow-up audit; and the Secretary-General's comments on reports completed and issued during the year.

Personal financial disclosure programme

10 Forty relevant IMO staff members were required to submit financial disclosure statements to the Internal Oversight and Ethics Office (IOEO), covering the reporting year 2015. The disclosures submitted by staff members will be reviewed and the result will be reported to the Secretary-General before the end of 2016. The financial disclosure programme is an annual process, and staff members to whom appendix G applies will be required to submit financial disclosure statements for the period 1 January to 31 December 2016, on or before 31 March 2017.

Introduction of a Statement on Internal Control

11 In order to further improve transparency and accountability, to enhance existing governance arrangements and to adopt the best practice within the United Nations system, IMO has introduced a Statement of Internal Control (SIC) for the financial period ending 31 December 2015, and submitted it to the Council along with the financial statements in document C 116/5(b). The SIC acknowledges the senior officer's responsibility for internal control, briefly summarizes the means by which internal control is implemented in the Organization, identifies significant internal control issues during the year and describes how these have been addressed, summarizes the Organization's capacity to handle risk, and provides an overall view of the effectiveness of internal controls in the year under review.

12 The SIC will now be prepared and issued for all future financial periods, further embedding the culture of personal responsibility and accountability in the work of the Organization.

Action requested of the Council

13 The Council is invited to note the information provided.
