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Circular Letter No.3945  
4 March 2019

To: All IMO Member States  
United Nations and specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) (2 to 6 September 2019)**

### General

1 Pursuant to the decisions of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 100th session (3 to 7 December 2018), the Secretary-General has the honour to invite representation at the Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), which has been scheduled to take place from 9.30 a.m. on Monday, 2 September, to Friday, 6 September 2019, at IMO Headquarters, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR. The meeting will be conducted in English without interpretation.

### Terms of reference and provisional agenda

2 The terms of reference for the Intersessional Working Group on MASS will be developed by MSC 101 (5 to 14 June 2019), based on the progress made with the regulatory scoping exercise on MASS, which is currently being conducted according to the framework for the scoping exercise, including the plan of work and procedures, approved by MSC 100 (MSC 100/20, annex 2). The provisional agenda and the terms of reference for the Intersessional Working Group will be circulated immediately following MSC 101.

### Submission of documents

3 Documents for the meeting will be issued in English only. In order to allow proper preparation, documents should be received by the Secretariat via email ([mass@imo.org](mailto:mass@imo.org)) in Microsoft Word not later than **Friday, 2 August 2019**. Documents commenting on those documents received by 2 August 2019 may be submitted up to **Friday, 23 August 2019**.

4 Further to the decision taken by the Council, at its 120th regular session (C 120/D, paragraph 4.9), and by MSC at its 100th session (MSC 100/20, paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3), regarding the issue of access to information and transparency, submitters of documents are invited to give their consent for their documents to be released to the public prior to a meeting by checking the "opt-in box" at the top right corner of the new document template provided on IMODOCS (pre-session public release). In the absence of explicit consent, submissions will not be released to the public prior to a meeting.

**Distribution of documents**

5 Relevant documentation will be made available on IMODOCS (<https://docs.imo.org>). In order to locate and download the documents on the IMODOCS home page go to "IMO Documents", "Meeting Documents", "MSC – Maritime Safety Committee" and finally "ISWG/MASS".

**Registration at IMO meetings and procedure governing IMO support for visa applications**

6 With a view to facilitating the registration as well as visa applications by those delegates who require United Kingdom entry visas, the instructions on registration at IMO meetings and the procedure governing IMO support for visa applications are set out in the annexes.

**Contact details**

7 For any queries with respect to this meeting, please contact [mass@imo.org](mailto:mass@imo.org)

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## ANNEX 1

### REGISTRATION AT IMO MEETINGS

#### Registration

Member Governments, UN Agencies, IGOs and NGOs are required to provide, prior to the meeting date, the names of all the members of their delegations attending the meeting via the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS), as advised in Circular Letter No.3463 of 14 July 2014. This facilitates both their entry into the building and the production of the list of participants by the Secretariat.

Once they have completed the registration procedure, delegates will be issued at IMO with an electronic access card to pass through the security barrier and access the IMO building. Issue of the access card will require photographic proof of identity, e.g. passport, identity card or driving licence. Delegates may also be required to show proof of identity at any time while they are in the Headquarters building, if requested by IMO Security. In view of the significant costs incurred in producing access cards, delegates who have previously been issued with one are kindly requested to bring it with them for reactivation.

Any matters relating to the use of the OMRS should be communicated to:

Registration Unit  
Meeting Services and Interpretation Section  
Email: [onlineregistration@imo.org](mailto:onlineregistration@imo.org)

Members of delegations will not be registered to attend the meeting without authorization from their OMRS Delegation Coordinator. New delegates whose names appear in the OMRS will be issued with the above-mentioned access card. Delegates whose names do not appear on the OMRS list, will be requested to contact their OMRS Delegation Coordinator in order to process their authorization to attend the meeting.

Delegates are advised that the Registration Desk will be open from 8.30 a.m. on **Monday, 2 September 2019**, when early arrival would be appreciated.

General information on administrative and housekeeping issues relating to meetings at IMO may be found in an information leaflet for delegates, which can be downloaded from IMODOCS and is also available at the Documents and Meeting Services counters on the ground floor and second floor, respectively. Delegates are kindly requested to familiarize themselves with the contents of the information leaflet.

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## ANNEX 2

### PROCEDURE GOVERNING IMO SUPPORT FOR VISA APPLICATIONS

As established in article 7.2 of part III on Access and communications of the Headquarters agreement, delegates are entitled to have their entry into the United Kingdom authorized without delay and without charge.

Delegates invited by the Organization who require United Kingdom entry visas should, in the first instance, apply online for an "**EXEMPT**" visa, note the reference numbers and follow the online instructions to attend either the nominated Visa Application Centre or the United Kingdom Embassy or High Commission. United Kingdom visa applications should be accompanied by the following documentation:

- i. the relevant IMO official invitation,
- ii. the nomination letter and
- iii. a note verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Delegates must be nominated by their competent Ministry (usually the Ministry of Transport or the National Maritime Administration). The nomination letter should be taken to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for preparation of a note verbale addressed to the British Embassy/High Commission.

If, after following the above-mentioned procedure, delegates still encounter visa problems, either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, the National Maritime Administration or the competent Ministry should request visa assistance in writing to the Head of the IMO External Relations Office, on paper bearing the official letterhead. The letter should state the reasons given by the British Embassy/High Commission as to why visas have been or may be refused and contain the following details:

- i. First name:  
Family name:  
Profession:  
Date of birth:  
Place of birth:  
Type of passport:  
Passport No:  
Place of issue:  
Date of issue:  
Valid until:  
Visa reference number:  
Date and place of visa application:
- ii. Purpose of visit:
- iii. Duration of anticipated stay in the United Kingdom:

This exercise must be undertaken **at least six weeks** before the date on which the session begins, to enable the Organization to support the visa application accordingly and the visa to be issued in good time.

Any requests for visa assistance should be communicated to:

External Relations Office (International Maritime Organization)  
Fax: +44(0)20 7587 3210  
Email: [visa@imo.org](mailto:visa@imo.org)