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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, 2013

Strategic direction: 11

High-level action: 11.1.1

Planned output: 11.1.1.5

Action to be taken: Paragraph 18

Related document: C 110/18(g)

Outcome of the Assessment Panel

1 As stated in paragraph 3 of document C 110/18(g), the Assessment Panel met at IMO Headquarters on 6 June 2013, 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 110/18(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) and the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).

2 The Assessment Panel examined a total of 34 nominations, which had been received from 10 Member States and two non-governmental organizations 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 12 July 2013, 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 Legal Committee and the Facilitation Committee were present at the meeting. The Chairman of the Marine Environment Protection Committee was represented by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The Chairmen of the Maritime Safety 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 the United States of America, designates Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Randy J. Haba and Aviation Survival Technician Third Class Daniel J. Todd of the US Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

8 During the pre-dawn hours of 29 October 2012, two Coast Guard Rescue Helicopters, CG-6012 and CG-6031, were assigned to the rescue of **HMS Bounty**. After flying through the outer bands of Hurricane Sandy, in strong winds and torrential rain, they encountered the ship partially submerged with a large debris field, surrounded by numerous life rafts.

9 Rescue Helicopter CG-6012 was the first to arrive at the scene, and Petty Officer Haba was lowered into the stormy waters. He spent an hour battling against strong currents and 10 metre waves, in the wind and rain, taking survivors from the life rafts to the waiting rescue basket, overcoming exhaustion and fatigue. At one point, Petty Officer Haba was engulfed by a huge wave that knocked his mask off, severely restricting his vision and further hampering his tremendous efforts. Petty Officer Haba demonstrated the utmost determination and perseverance, performing two more rescues without the use of a mask. He exhibited exceptional strength and endurance throughout the entire rescue.

10 Rescue Helicopter CG-6031 arrived 30 minutes after CG-6012, and Petty Officer Todd was immediately deployed into the turbulent sea to begin the task of reaching another life raft. After evaluating the status of the survivors, Petty Officer Todd began retrieving each

of the survivors from the raft and delivering them to the rescue basket. Whilst Petty Officer Todd was assisting the second survivor into the rescue basket, a large wave toppled the life raft containing the four remaining survivors. He immediately realized the severity of the situation and had the foresight to secure a handhold on the sea anchor to stabilize his position. Petty Officer Todd's strength and ingenuity certainly expedited the rescue of the six survivors and ultimately, his action saved valuable time. This enabled him to reposition himself to a second life raft, containing three additional survivors who he also successfully rescued.

11 Both men overcame the effects of cold, fatigue and ingesting salt water to deliver 14 crew members of the **HMS Bounty** to safety.

12 The second nomination, submitted by the Government of China, designates Mr. Jinguo Yang (posthumously), sailor on the ferry **Tong Chang Qi Du 11**.

13 On 15 March 2012, the ferry **Tong Chang Qi Du 11** collided with the M/V **Shun Qiang 28** on the Yangtze river. The ferry's hull was damaged and it started sinking with 33 persons on board, 31 of whom were subsequently saved during the search and rescue operation and transferred to a rescue ship. A passenger, however, was trapped in his truck due to severe damage following the collision.

14 One of those rescued, Mr. Jinguo Yang, a 55 year-old sailor, realizing the situation, jumped back onto the sinking ferry and attempted, unsuccessfully, to prize open the jammed door of the truck in order to rescue the trapped passenger. Unfortunately, the ferry lost its stability and capsized. Mr. Jinguo Yang was exhausted and did not have enough time to save the passenger's life and his own. Although he had the opportunity to escape at the last moment, he chose instead, at the cost of his own life, to stay and attempt to rescue the trapped passenger.

15 After careful consideration, the Panel decided to bestow the Award on Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Randy J. Haba and Aviation Survival Technician Third Class Daniel J. Todd of the US Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina, for saving the lives of 14 civilian mariners from the tall ship **HMS Bounty**, during Hurricane Sandy. The Panel recommended that each nominee should receive his own individual award. The Panel also decided to bestow the Award on Mr. Jinguo Yang (posthumously), sailor on the ferry **Tong Chang Qi Du 11**, for sacrificing his own life whilst trying to rescue a person in distress on the **Tong Chang Qi Du 11**, after it had collided with the M/V **Shun Qiang 28**.

For Certificates of Commendation

16 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:

- **Captain Xinming Ning**, Master of the container vessel **Sheng Da 88**, nominated by China, for rescuing the 2nd officer's seven-month old baby, from the **Sheng Da 88** which was sinking rapidly, having collided with the container vessel **Jiang Xia Xing**;
- **the crew** of the speedboat **Zhongguo Yuzheng 44246**, nominated by China, for rescuing 11 crew members of the fishing boat **Yuedianyu 53018**, which had suffered engine failure, during a typhoon;

- **Mr. Fabian Higgins**, paramedic and rescue diver, Western Cape Emergency Medical Services and **Constable Heino Uhde**, diver, South African Police Services Diving Unit, nominated by South Africa, for rescuing three passengers trapped under the capsized charter sightseeing catamaran **Miroshga**, during darkness and in freezing cold water;
- **Captain Vladimir Safonov** and **the crew** of the M/T **DS Crown**, nominated by the United Kingdom, for rescuing 24 crew members of the container vessel **MSC Flaminia** which had exploded and was ablaze;
- **Lieutenant David A. Middleton**, **Lieutenant David M. Stern** and **AMT3 Andrew J. Witruke**, Air crew of the helicopter CG 6502, Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley, US Cutter Air Station San Francisco, nominated by the United States of America, for rescuing a crew member suffering severe chest pains, from the M/V **Matsuura**, in very demanding weather conditions; and
- **Mr. Damien Bolton**, helmsman, **Mr. Matthew Main**, crew member, and **Ms Nicola-Jane Bradbury**, crew member, Port Isaac Lifeboat Station, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, United Kingdom, nominated by the International Maritime Rescue Federation, for rescuing, at great personal risk, a father and son who had been swept off cliffs into an arc of semi-submerged rocks in very rough waters. The father, sadly, did not survive the ordeal.

For Letters of Commendation

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

- **Mr. Hong Yanchen**, rescue swimmer of the rescue helicopter B-7327, Donghai No.1 Rescue Flying Service, nominated by China, for rescuing 19 crew members of the sinking fishing boat **Zhe Ling Yu Yun 6007**, in high winds and low visibility;
- **the crew** of the rescue vessel **Dong Hai Jiu 111**, Donghai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for rescuing a ship, the **Bet Prince**, which was out of control and drifting, during typhoons Saola and Demrey and, in a separate incident, for rescuing a second ship, the **Ming Yang**, which was on fire;
- **the crew** of the rescue vessel **Bei Hai Jiu 115**, Beihai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for rescuing, in difficult conditions and at severe risk to themselves, three crew members of the capsized fishing boat **Liao Zhuang Yu 65450**;
- **the crew** of the rescue helicopter B-7309, Beihai No.1, Rescue Flying Service, nominated by China, for rescuing six crew members (one of whom, sadly, died of hypothermia during the rescue mission) from the sinking fishing vessel **Xin Chen Guang 18**, in strong winds, rough waves and freezing waters;
- **the crew** of the rescue tugboat **Nan Hai Jiu 111**, Nanhai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for rescuing 14 crew members from the sinking supply tug **Hai Yang Shi You 699**, during Typhoon Vincente;

- **Mr. Charles Fereol-Talbot**, senior technician for sustainable development, **Mr. Sony Bamberg** and **Mr. Charly Luissint**, marine registry representatives, Directorate of the Sea, Guadeloupe, nominated by France, for the rescue of a passenger and the pilot (both severely wounded) from a seaplane which had crashed into the sea. The pilot, sadly, subsequently died without regaining consciousness;
- **Commander (ITCG) Pilot Andrea Vitali**, Commandant of the 2nd Air Base of the Italian Coast Guard of Catania, and Commandant of the AW 139 SAR helicopter "Nemo 11-02", nominated by Italy, for rescuing nine crew members of the oil/chemical tanker **Gelso M**, which had run aground, in adverse weather and sea conditions;
- **Lieutenant (ITCG) Pilot Luca De Ponti**, Commandant of the AB 412 SAR helicopter "Koala 9-05", nominated by Italy, for rescuing 10 crew members of the oil/chemical tanker **Gelso M**, which had run aground, in adverse weather and sea conditions;
- **1st Petty Officer Pedro Gutiérrez Santibañez**, diver of the vessel **ARE 01 Otomi**, Mexican Navy, nominated by Mexico, for rescuing, at severe risk to his own life, five crew members of the sinking shrimper ship **Bolillo Prieto** in bad weather;
- **Captain Jeong-Young Hyun**, Master of the fishing boat **501 Dae-Yang**, **Captain Gyung-Woo Kang**, Master of the fishing boat **2002 Myoung-Sung**, and **Captain Hyun-Sik Shin**, Master of the fishing boat **808 Woo-Jung**, nominated by the Republic of Korea, for rescuing, in poor visibility and dangerous waters, eight crew members of the capsized fishing vessel **2008 Myoung-Sung**;
- **Captain Wing-Bu Lee** and **the crew** of the M/V **Jin Fu**, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), China, nominated by the Republic of Korea, for rescuing, in difficult conditions, the exhausted 17 crew members of the M/V **Han Splendor**, who had abandoned their sinking ship and were found in a life raft; and
- **the Master** and **crew** of the patrol ship **317**, Republic of Korea Coast Guard, nominated by the Republic of Korea, for rescuing two crew members and 14 leisure anglers, from the small fishing boat **Danaka 1**, which was flooding and in danger of sinking.

Action requested of the Council

18 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.