

ICONS Meeting Vancouver 5 September 2000

The International Commission on Shipping held a public forum in Vancouver, Canada on 5 September 2000, hosted by Transport Canada. Chairman Peter Morris and commissioners Captain Barry McKay and Professor Moritaka Hayashi met with representatives of shipping lines, port and bulk terminal operators, the Canadian Chamber of Shipping, employee organisations, ship surveyors, Transport Canada and the US Coastguard.

Discussions canvassed a range of concerns about substandard shipping operations, including:

- Lack of uniform enforcement of regulations
- The role of class societies in establishing and implementing standards
- Compatibility and effectiveness of information sharing systems
- The need to penalise poorly performing ship operators and to reward good operators, particularly through commercial relationships
- Recognition for flag states that are trying to improve standards of ships on their registers
- The need to reduce regulatory burdens and multiple inspections while a ship is in port, which contributes to fatigue of officers
- Improvements required to ISM certification and audit to address managerial issues
- Awareness of the economic impact of ship detentions on ports and other parties
- Accountability of ship brokers, charterers and insurers
- Quality assurance for seafarer training and certification.

Possible means of addressing these issues included:

- Better information and sharing of information on substandard ships, owners, flags, charterers and class societies
- Banning of high risk ships and/or flags from ports, national waters, class societies or P&I clubs
- Financial incentives for good ships, such as reduced insurance premiums, port state inspections or port fees
- An IMO standing committee with powers of enforcement to assess complaints about substandard ships
- Extending liabilities to class societies, and cargo interests
- A centralised data base to share information on substandard ships including remedial actions required by port states, flag states and class societies
- Simplification of ISM paperwork and targeting it to individual ships, and improving crew ownership
- Expanded opportunities for arrest of sister ships
- Rigorous enforcement of standards by class societies
- Class societies should be paid by flag states not owners
- Persuade flag states that actions against substandard operators should be actionable in any country
- An international agency to enforce education standards and certification for seafarers and commercial incentives to obey standards
- An "international" ship register that rigorously applies established standards
- Greater use of media and education to expose bad practitioners.