



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STABILITY AND
LOAD LINES AND ON FISHING VESSELS
SAFETY
50th session
Agenda item 6

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**DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS TO IMPROVE EFFECT ON SHIP DESIGN AND
SAFETY OF THE 1969 TM CONVENTION**

Safety, training and welfare of seafarers

Submitted by ICFTU

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document identifies the need for a long term solution to rectify negative aspects of the 1969 Tonnage Measurement Convention with respect to safety and the training and welfare of seafarers

Action to be taken: Paragraph 17

Related documents: SLF 48/12, SLF 48/INF.4, SLF 48/21, MSC 81/23/7, MSC 81/23/18, MSC 81/25 and resolutions A.947(23) and MSC.234(82)

General

1 The adoption of the 1969 Tonnage Measurement Convention was intended to inhibit practices where the design of vessels was determined by tonnage measurement rules and reflect the true earning capacity, however, in some types of vessels this has not been the case. The problem has been, in respect to open top container vessels, addressed in resolution MSC.234(82) however other safety aspects and limitations on accommodation for crew, in particular for training, remain.

2 Documents SLF 48/12 and SLF 48/INF.4 (Australia) introduced the concept of a registered tonnage to address perceived negative effects of the current 1969 Tonnage Convention. At the forty-eighth session of SLF, the Sub-Committee supported the need for consideration of this matter and, subsequently, at the eighty-first session of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Committee agreed to a new work item for the SLF Sub-Committee (MSC 81/25, paragraph 23.53).

3 The Australian documents propose an additional cost neutral system introducing a 'registered tonnage' based on 'maritime real estate' to be used by ports when determining harbour fees etc., and this may be a fairly simple solution. Although this would not be legally binding on ports when determining fees, should it obtain wide acceptance, it will ultimately reverse the negative aspects to some current vessel designs.

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4 At the 29th session of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Joint Maritime Commission, a resolution was adopted inviting the International Maritime Organization to review the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships (1969), to mitigate any adverse effects on crew welfare and accommodation.

Background

5 Since the adoption of the Convention the desire has been to minimize the interior volume, particularly on container vessels. This is extremely significant on small feeder container vessels and fishing vessels. The naval architects and shipbuilders tend to build relatively short narrow ships with no forecastle, cut off stern, small engine rooms and tight crew spaces.

6 Many of these designs offer little protection to the hatches or cargo, particularly where there are deck containers with:

- .1 problems securing containers;
- .2 low freeboard and reduced stability;
- .3 difficulty in fighting fires; and
- .4 poor visibility from the bridge.

7 Similar concerns were raised in the consideration of Bulk Carrier Safety where vessels were built with reduced freeboard and no forecastle, giving little protection to the hatches.

8 Accommodation space for crew has been decreased drastically since the Conventions adoption and additional cabins for training are the exception rather than the rule. At a time when we are trying to address a shortfall in well trained crew it is a sad comment that we cannot offer comfortable conditions with proper areas for quality social time and are unable to facilitate training.

9 Many container ships build the superstructure primarily to facilitate bridge visibility, covering the least deck area, giving no deck space for the recreation of the crew and minimal quality social areas.

10 The introduction of inducements to ship owners to facilitate training, such as the United Kingdom Tonnage Tax, has identified the failure in recent years for shipowners and shipbuilders to make provision for training berths on board new vessels. It is assessed that it requires just one training berth on each vessel to address the shortfall in officers; however, the current situation is that there is, in fact, an inability for many within the industry to take on trainees.

11 In discussions regarding the ILO Consolidated Fishing Convention owners and flag States are pursuing, based on the requirements of the Tonnage Measurement Convention and subsequent dues, not only reduced floor areas, but also a reduction in the height of accommodation.

Situation

12 There is no legally binding requirement for ports to use gross tonnage or any amended 'registered tonnage' system when applying dues. It is a fact however, that harbour dues and many of the associated fees such as mooring and pilotage are normally based on the gross tonnage of the vessel.

13 The shipping industry generally over recent years reduced crew numbers and built ships with only the essential accommodation, i.e. no training berths, and limited social areas, to ensure port dues are kept to a minimum.

14 According to the 2005 BIMCO/ISF Manpower Update the industry will be short of 27,000 officers by 2015 and, considering the age group of many senior European officers, this figure may be conservative.

15 Despite the best intentions when adopting the 1969 Tonnage Measurement Convention we are still building ships dictated by maximizing the earning capacity within gross tonnage and not based primarily on safety and facilitating an environment that will attract, give the ability to train and retain young people at sea.

Proposal

16 In considering the negative effects of the 1969 Tonnage Measurement Convention with respect to ship safety, accommodation and crew safety, health and welfare, the following need to be taken into account:

- .1 resolution A.947(23), Human Element Vision, Principles and Goals for the Organization;
- .2 the industry problems in regenerating an acceptable level of training at sea;
- .3 the adverse impact on stability, freeboard and the protection and securing of cargo;
- .4 the limitations on accommodation of small vessels particularly container feeder ships and fishing vessels; and
- .5 to address these problems and investigate the proposed approach of an additional 'registered tonnage', based on true 'earning capacity' as outlined in documents SLF 48/12 and SLF 48/INF.4 by Australia.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

17 The Sub-Committee is requested to take into account the issues outlined in the document, consider the proposals contained in paragraph 16, and take action as appropriate.
