

Report of MEPC 74

Marine Environment Protection Committee

13th – 17th May 2019

International Maritime Organization (IMO), London headquarters

ITF delegation

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Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) undertakes all environment related issues in shipping. The severity of global pollution and the impact of climate change had already been the common worldwide concerns. At the opening of this session, in addition to Secretary – general’s opening remarks, Prince of Morocco delivered strong urging messages. Resuming from the last session, more pragmatic means were on the table to endeavour in tackling the negative impact of climate change, also in protecting marine environment proactively. High level officials of member States with international organisations had painstaking discussions to consider effective solutions for the whole maritime sectors. At this session the main issues considered were:

- Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships and ports;
- EEDI¹ rate reduction and EEDI phase 2, 1 Jan. 2020 – 31 Dec. 2024;
- Tackling air pollution from shipping and effective implementation of new Sulphur limit entry into force on 1 January 2020;
- Development of an action plan to address marine plastic litter from ships;
- Review of BWM Convention and commissioning BWM systems;
- Ratification update of Hong Kong Convention

Three WGs, one DG and one RG were established at this session. Outcomes of each Group that the ITF participated, approved by plenary, are elaborated.

¹EEDI: Energy Efficiency Design Index for new and existing ships is the most effective technical measure. It aims at promoting the use of more energy efficient (less polluting) equipment and engines.



Working Group on AIR POLLUTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Ship's energy efficiency plan is considered an effective technical measure to tackle marine air pollution. At the end of 2019, EEDI phase 1 is going to be finished. Thus, the importance of this session was on the preparation for the next phases and further. As there were 80 plus papers to address at this session, the two overall issues being Air Pollution of Ships and Energy Efficiency of Ships were divided into two parts.

Outcomes of the Group

Air pollution from ships

1. The consistent implementation of 2020 0.5% Sulphur limit (refer to *the 2019 Guidelines on consistent implementation of 0.50% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI*):
For 2 years starting from 1 Jan. 2020, stage 2 of the Sulphur limit implementation, ships with non-compliant fuel oil should verify compliant measures such as scrubber onboard the ship. There was consideration on deleting verification of fuel at stage 2, however, it would remove some security for the seafarer and companies. In short, without scrubbers during this period, you will not be allowed to leave the port and consequently, you will have to debunker.
2. Guidelines for the PSC:
It was included in the Guidance detailing how to follow up any discrepancies between the sulphur content of the bunker delivery note and results from different labs of independent tests.
There has also been included a template where a non-availability of compliant fuel is claimed, *Fuel Oil Non-Availability Report (FONAR)*.
3. Sampling for verification:
There were long discussions on the verification procedures of fuel samples and the provision of a duplicate samples for the ship. New requirements on sampling and testing fuel oil on board by the competent authority were approved. As of 1 Jan 2020, PSC will sample and test the sulphur content.
4. Review of Guidance for exhaust gas cleaning systems:
There was concern as to the situation when the exhaust gas monitor fails for a short period or non-compliance for a period when plant is being changed over.
5. In the draft Guidance on best practice for member States/Coastal States, a voluntary licensing scheme for bunker suppliers is included for representing best practice.

Energy Efficiency for Ships

1. Draft amendments to *the guidelines for the method of calculations of EEDI*. With the end of the phase 1 by 2019, more stringent reduction rates will apply by ship specifications.

Future work

1. Reduction factors for EEDI:
There are still differences particularly with regard to container ships with regard to proposed reduced EEDI in stage 3. The feeling is that ambitions are not based on available data. Interested parties to submit a paper.
2. The ITF has been actively contributing on the discussions in order to prevent any compromise that will result in threats to seafarers and criminalisation. The ITF delegation will continue endeavouring the regulations to consider effective measures.



Working Group on REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSION FROM SHIPS

In accordance to the roadmap aligning with *the IMO Initial strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships* (Resolution MEPC.304(72)), short term measures are going to be finalised by 2023 or before as well as some mid- and long- term ones along with IMO 4th GHG Study². When submitting the proposals member States will be required to submit the results of *impact assessment on State*³.

The draft impact assessment (Annex 4 of MEPC 74 WP.6) consists of four steps⁴. The period for the whole impact assessment will be one or four meetings. The importance of this period is in line with how promptly the IMO as all could take action against climate change.

Many concrete proposals for the measures were submitted. Those proposals are categorised by 14 approaches. During the discussion, how to streamline the approaches was undertaken.

Outcomes of the Group

1. In the report of the Group, a statement on urging member States' conscientious actions throughout the implementation of measures are in. The statement alludes adverse impact on shipowners and seafarers should be thoroughly considered.
2. IMO 4th GHG Study will commence its work.
3. A draft MEPC circular on *invitation to member states to encourage voluntary cooperation between the port and shipping sectors to contribute to reducing GHG emissions from ships* was approved.
4. The 14 approaches were categorised by three streams. Hence the urgency of this matter, all measures will be considered in parallel with impact assessment on State.

ISWG-GHG 6 and Further work

1. This framework provides the ITF to intervene during the enacting process. We will persistently watch what negative impacts could lay on global seafarers in every step before any measure to be approved.
2. The ITF welcomes the IMO's initiative and the commitment on this issue. Besides, the ITF also shares serious concerns for what SIDS⁵ encounter. However, any incentive schemes such as carbon tax or fuel tax, and who are going to pay, the standards for exemption should strongly avoid inequality. Such imbalance could cause immense flag changes, in the light, radical proliferations of FOCs. Consequently, the measure would not work suitable.
3. Port sector will be also invited with another MEPC resolution, encouraging participation of port sector.
4. Adoption and implementation of measures will be goal-based approaches.

²The Fourth IMO GHG Study: The third study was in 2014. This Study aims to project the factual data on GHG emissions from ships and will plausibly show effective implementation measures. The Study report will be submitted in autumn 2020.

³Impact on State is a part of the IMO Initial Strategy. All proposed measures will have to conduct assessment on various scopes, such as socio-economic progress and development or cargo value and type, etc. with special focus on SIDS and LDCs.

⁴Step 1, a candidate measure with initial assessment are proposed to the Committee. In step 2 and 3, any interested parties should comment in the following meeting, if wish to oppose or seek for clarification. A proponent member should be able to substantiate those comments which may deter their original views by providing a comprehensive response. In step 4, if MEPC so decides, a comprehensive impact assessment should be carried out.

⁵Small Island Developing States
LDCs: Least Developing Countries



5. 6th session of Intersessional Working Group on Reduction on GHG Emissions from ships (ISWG-GHG 6) will be held from 11th – 15th November 2019 to consider detailed matters regarding impact assessment on State. The following ISWG-GHG 7 is going to be held back to back MEPC 75.

Working Group on MARINE PLASTIC LITTER

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS

Raising concerns on marine environment pollution by plastic littering, IMO initiated the first step to prevent entering plastics into the sea from ships and drafted a plan until 2025 to tackle this issue. Such action plans lay under possible short-, mid- and long-term measures including an IMO Study *on marine plastic litter from ships*.

Proposed action plans are:

- the IMO study;
- The availability and adequacy of port reception facilities;
- Marking of fishing gear mandatory, reporting of loss of fishing gear;
- Facilitating the delivery of retrieved fishing gear to shore facilities;
- Training of fishing vessel personnel; and
- Ensuring seafarers' awareness of the impact of marine plastic litter.

Outcomes of the Group

1. The Group agreed that the IMO Study on *Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* should not duplicate work already undertaken or being carried out, but instead build on the reports and analyses of GESAMP⁶.
2. Amongst various consideration, including grey water investigation was considered to be a part of the IMO Study, it was premature to decide.
3. The Committee invited one of its subsidiary bodies, the Sub-committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), to consider reporting mechanisms for accidentally lost or discharged fishing gear, including the challenges and benefits of such systems and existing and potential ways to encourage fishing vessels to report.

Correspondence Group and further work

1. The reporting of discharging or accidental loss of fishing gear could be amendments to MARPOL Annex V, Regulation 10.6 to mandate such reporting via IMO GISIS⁷. Owing to lack of availability of a robust mechanism, FAO will be invited share its knowledge.
2. The ITF participates in the CG. Any unnecessary and additional burden on seafarers due to the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and the reporting system should be thoroughly contemplated. Otherwise, it will not be implemented effectively.

Ballast Water Review Group (BWRG)

The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), as amended will enter into force on 13 Oct. 2019. The issue at this stage is its effective and uniform implementation and on an experience-building phase.

⁶Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection

⁷Global Integrated Shipping Information System. It is an information platform developed by the IMO to share various information in shipping. Depending on your status, – public, member States, IGOs and NGOs - access is limited.



Outcomes

1. BWM.2/Circ.67/Rev.1 on *the revised Data gathering and analysis plan for the experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention* was approved to incorporate a link to standard operating procedures.
2. An interim Guidance on *commissioning testing BWM system on board* will be effect until proper Guidance and amendments to regulation E-1 of the BWM Convention and the BWMS Code are drafted and approved. It was endorsed that commissioning testing should be urgent matter, in accordance with the already approved Guidance for *the commissioning testing of ballast water management systems* (BWM.2/Circ.70).
3. MEPC 74 approved five ballast water management systems that make use of Active Substances.

Action point

For the ITF, all agendas have impact on our members on board and in ports, because they are the end-users. There are two main concerns for us in terms of the IMO decisions:

1. Maritime workers' working and living conditions especially safety are likely to be neglected during the decision making process; and
2. The impact on safety of maritime workers should be taken into account as one of the utmost elements in making decisions.

Shipping is an indispensable part of global supply chain. The ITF, representing global maritime workers, is indeed a big part of the chain. Therefore, our member should have responsible ownership in their hearts and comprehensive knowledge in their minds in acknowledging how essential our action is and how our member could preserve this environment for the current and next generations, at the sea and land.

*Aforementioned IMO documents can be provided if requested.