

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION TO THE
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA
(UNGA resolution 78/69)**

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Pursuant to the request made by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the United Nations Legal Counsel, in a letter dated 19 March 2024, this contribution focuses on main developments on ocean issues and the law of the sea within the areas of competence of IMO between September 2023 to August 2024.

In particular, this report highlights the way in which the General Assembly Resolution 78/69 on Oceans and the Law of the Sea has been implemented by the Organization, with the relevant paragraphs referred to below.

IMO agrees to having this contribution made available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. This contribution will likewise be made available on the Organization's IMODOCS platform.

**MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY AND FLAG STATE
IMPLEMENTATION**

Safety of navigation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

(refer to paragraphs 111-113, 123-124, 156-157 of A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Secretariat and the different organs of the Organization condemn deliberate attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since the end of 2023 and call for Member States' faithful implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024). As constantly highlighted by the Secretary-General, the safety and well-being of seafarers are of utmost importance, and they should not be collateral victims to geopolitical conflicts. In particular, IMO has repeatedly condemned attacks against the *MV True Confidence*, *MV Rubymar*, and *MV Galaxy Leader*, and called for the release of the *latter ship* and its crew, which had been hijacked and held captive since November 2023. IMO also continues to raise awareness and concern on the impacts of the attacks on the marine environment and the stability of the global supply chains.

Most recently, IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) adopted a resolution on the *Security situation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden resulting from Houthi attacks on commercial ships and seafarers*, in which it underscored the paramount importance of preserving the safety and welfare of seafarers and stressed the critical importance of maintaining the freedom of navigation of commercial ships.

Safety and security in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov

(refer to paragraphs 111-113, 123-124, 156-157 of A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted resolution A.1183(33) on *The impact of the Russian armed invasion of Ukraine on international shipping*, in which it stressed the critical importance of maintaining the freedom of navigation of civilian vessels and the functioning of navigational aids, maritime communication, SAR and hydrographic services during armed conflicts, among others.

Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

(refer to paragraph 186, A/RES/78/69)

Work in the MSC continued with respect to the development of a non-mandatory goal-based MASS Code, which is expected to take effect in 2025 and form the basis for a mandatory goal-based MASS Code, with January 2032 as the earliest possible date for entry into force. The Legal (LEG) and Facilitation (FAL) Committees, meanwhile, adopted and updated, respectively, road maps on their work on MASS, to consider the implications of MASS operations to the legal instruments under their purview, following the completion of the MASS Code.

Safety of fishing vessels and IUU Fishing

(refer to paragraphs 117-120, A/RES/78/69)

IMO continued to take steps to promote the 2012 Cape Town Agreement on the safety of fishing vessels, following the attainment in October 2023 of the first entry into force requirement of 22 States expressing consent to be bound thereby. The second requirement of a total of 3600 fishing vessels of 24 m in length and over and operating on the high seas, from among the contracting States, is yet to be met. Several Member States have informed IMO of their efforts towards acceptance of the Agreement.

Through fora such as the UN and its specialized agencies IMO, FAO and ILO, a range of international instruments covering flag, coastal, and port State responsibilities, which together comprise a powerful suite of tools to combat IUU fishing, have been developed, and cooperative work, particularly through a Joint FAO/IMO/ILO ad hoc Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters (JWG), has been undertaken within the context of each organization's mandate. JWG 5, held in January 2024, adopted more than 50 recommendations for consideration by the governing bodies/organs of the three organizations. These covered interagency cooperation at the national, regional and international levels; international processes and measures to combat IUU fishing; safety and working conditions in the fisheries sector; protection of the marine environment; and operational tools to tackle IUU fishing.

Safety of ships in polar waters

(refer to paragraph 184, A/RES/78/69)

Recognizing the importance of establishing a robust regime for all vessels entering polar waters, MSC remains seized of this matter while also encouraging the collection of relevant data and information on vessels in polar waters, particularly data on smaller vessels.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

(refer to paragraphs 124, 128-144, A/RES/78/69)

MSC and LEG continued to consider the latest updates on piracy and armed robbery against ships in the period under review. At LEG's 111th session in April 2024, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to combatting piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Guinea region, through mechanisms set out in national legislation and under regional legal frameworks, including the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment.

Serious concerns have also been expressed regarding recent incidents of piracy off the coast of Somalia, as an offshoot of the security situation in the Red Sea. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to report incidents in accordance with the *Recommendations to Governments for preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships* (MSC.1/Circ.1333/Rev.1).

Measures to address maritime security

(refer to paragraphs 145-146 of A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted a resolution on *Enhancing the framework on the fight against organized crime in the maritime sector* (resolution A. 1190(33)), highlighting the role of all stakeholders in addressing organized crime in international maritime traffic and port facilities, and stressing the importance of utilizing the International Code for the Security of Ships and of Port Facilities (ISPS) Code as a tool to prevent illegal use of ships and port facilities. Contracting States of SOLAS are also encouraged to effectively implement IMO security measures provided in SOLAS and the ISPS Code in partnership with industry, and to review and update information in the Maritime Security Module of GISIS.

Places of refuge

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted a resolution on *Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance* (resolution A.1184(33)), replacing an earlier version of guidelines. The Guidelines aim to provide the basis for an operational framework for coastal States, ships' masters, operators and/or salvors, and other parties involved in the handling or decision-making when a ship is in need of assistance and seeks a place of refuge, to enable such ship to stabilize its condition and reduce risks to navigation, and to protect human life and the environment. The Guidelines do not address the issue of operations for the rescue of persons at sea, which is governed by the relevant conventions on search and rescue.

Search and rescue, marine casualty investigations

(refer to paragraphs 168-171, A/RES/78/69)

MSC continued to consider the dissemination of maritime safety information and search and rescue related information over recognized mobile satellite services. In this context, MSC also recognized the importance of completing the implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System to ensure the appropriate reception of maritime safety information and search and rescue information by ships. MSC, through the NCSR Sub-Committee, will be considering draft amendments to the SOLAS Convention stating the requirement for dissemination of maritime safety information and search and rescue related information through all operational recognized mobile satellite services. MSC also invited Member States, international organizations, and interested parties to make contributions towards the International SAR Trust Fund.

Stowaways

(refer to paragraph 173, A/RES/78/69)

FAL 48 encouraged Member States and international organizations to provide timely and accurate information on stowaway cases to the Organization through the GISIS module. The number of incidents and the number of stowaways involved has decreased in the last years (i.e. in the period of 2007/2008 there were 842 incidents and 1955 stowaways, and in the period 2021/2022, 345 incidents and 892 stowaways). The total cost of these incidents was US\$ 14.3 million in 2007/2008, and US\$ 5.9 million in 2021/2022.

Passenger ship safety

(refer to paragraph 185, A/RES/78/69)

MSC 108 adopted amendments to chapter II-2 of the SOLAS Convention and chapters 7 and 8 of the Fire Safety Systems (FSS) Code involving oil fuel parameters and the fire safety of ro-ro passenger ships with 1 January 2026 as the date of entry into force.

Fraudulent registration and fraudulent registries of ships

(refer to paragraphs 123, 179-181, A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted a resolution on *Urging member States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the “dark fleet” or “shadow fleet”* (resolution A. 1192(33)). The Assembly noted with grave concern that ships in the so-called “dark fleet” or “shadow fleet” pose a real and high risk of incidents, particularly when engaging in ship-to-ship (STS) transfers, as they disguise the cargoes’ destinations or origins, or otherwise avoid oversight or regulation by flag or coastal States. The Assembly also acknowledged that the fraudulent registration of ships, the existence of fraudulent registries and related deceptive shipping practices are serious threats to the safety and security of international shipping, and can facilitate illegal maritime trafficking and the evasion of sanctions and other illegal activities.

LEG 111 continued its work on addressing the fraudulent registration of ships and the fraudulent use of the IMO identification number schemes. The Committee considered the Final Report of the Study Group established at LEG 109 to initiate a comprehensive study to address all issues arising in connection with fraudulent registration and fraudulent registries of ships, and possible measures to prevent and combat them (submitted by the World Maritime University, the IMO International Maritime Law Institute and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). Following an extensive discussion on the issue in connection with the information presented in the report, the Committee agreed that work on a proposal for a new output under its work programme, on the development of guidelines or best practices on the registration of ships, should be undertaken.

Fair treatment of seafarers

(refer to paragraphs 115, 117, 121-122, A/RES/78/69)

IMO continues to address the need for fair treatment of seafarers in line with its sixth strategic direction on addressing the human element.

LEG 111 finalized guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained on suspicion of committing crimes. These guidelines are to be applied when seafarers may be detained in a jurisdiction other than that of their nationality, on suspicion of committing a crime during the course of their employment on board a ship. The guidelines are intended to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly during any investigation and detention by public authorities, and that detention is for no longer than necessary, in accordance with the laws of the port or coastal States. The guidelines contain guidance for port States, flag States, coastal States, the States of which the seafarer is a national, shipowners and seafarers. The finalized guidelines will be submitted as a base document to the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers’ issues and the human element (JTWG) for further refinement.

Meanwhile, MSC 108 agreed to adopt amendments to the STCW Code on prevention and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, with a date of entry into force of 1 January 2026. MSC 108 also requested the ILO and IMO Secretariats to coordinate the launching of an international campaign to raise awareness on addressing violence and harassment in the maritime sector. In conjunction with this, all stakeholders were invited to provide support to both Secretariats in arrangements for the campaign, while Member States were encouraged to launch their own national campaigns. A comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code is also underway before MSC and the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW), with MSC 108 having recently approved the list of specific areas, methodology and roadmap for the comprehensive review.

Measures to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for international shipping

(refer to paragraphs 121-122 of A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted resolution A.1189(33) on *Recommendations emanating from the joint action group to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's transport workers and the global supply chain (JAG-TSC)*. At its 48th session, the FAL Committee also agreed to include an output in its agenda to consider the review of provisions relating to "key workers" in the context of public health emergencies of international concern.

Unsafe mixed migration by sea

(refer to paragraphs 153-155, 172 of A/RES/78/69)

IMO continues to consider the impact of unsafe mixed migration by sea on shipping and the need for cooperative arrangements amongst Member States and relevant organizations. IMO participates in the Inter-Agency Group (IAG) under the coordination of UNHCR and the MSC continues to update itself of IAG's work and IMO's participation in the Group.

A joint MSC-FAL Circular on *Guidelines concerning non-survivors in migrant boats* is also set to be approved to complement the resolution on *Recommended cooperation to ensure the safety of life at sea, the rescue of persons in distress at sea and the safe disembarkation of survivors* (MSC.528(106)). Member States are also encouraged to provide updated information on incidents of migrant smuggling by sea through the GISIS platform in accordance with the *Interim measures for combating unsafe practices associated with the trafficking, smuggling or transport of migrants by sea* (MSC.1/Circ.996/Rev.2).

Implementation of IMO instruments

(refer to paragraphs 183, 187-188, A/RES/78/69)

The IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, adopted the following updated texts in connection with the Organization's work on ensuring proper implementation of its instruments: *Procedures for Port State Control, 2023* (resolution A.1185(33)); the *Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC), 2023* (resolution A.1186(33)); the *Non-exhaustive list of obligations under instruments relevant to the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code)* (resolution A.1187(33)); the *Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety Management Code by Administrations* (resolution A.1188(33)), among others.

Audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) became mandatory on 1 January 2016. Since then, 128 audits have been conducted, with finalized reports made available to the Member States. Following the guidelines adopted by the Organization (resolution A.1067(28) on the *Framework and Procedures for IMSAS*), the Audit Scheme utilizes resolution A.1070(28) on *IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code)* as its audit standard. The first audit cycle is expected to be completed in 2025.

Facilitation of maritime trade

IMO continues to work towards a better implementation of the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention). From 1 January 2024 all ports have the obligation to establish maritime single windows, in accordance with the amendments to the FAL Convention adopted by resolution FAL.14(46). This new obligation is a significant step towards accelerating digitalization in maritime trade.

A new free-to-access e-learning course on "Implementation of the maritime single window" on IMO's e-learning platform was launched in September 2023, to support public authorities and administrations responsible for trade and ship facilitation. The e-learning course covers the concepts of electronic data exchange and the MSW in the context of ship reporting related to

ships arrival, stay and departure. The course also elaborates on key aspects for the planning, implementation and operation of an MSW and provides an overview of available resources as well as case studies.

Prevention and suppression of the smuggling of wildlife on ships

The FAL Committee adopted resolution FAL.17(48), containing the revised Guidelines for the Prevention and Suppression of the Smuggling of Wildlife on Ships Engaged in International Maritime Traffic. The revision includes minor modifications and editorial changes, with links to new joint industry guidelines added as a useful resource.

The new e-learning course, “Introduction to counter wildlife trafficking in the maritime supply chains”, developed jointly by IMO, the World Maritime University (WMU) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), also aims to equip Government Agencies and maritime supply chain operators with actionable insights to effectively combat wildlife trafficking at sea, empowering them to proactively prevent and suppress such illicit activities. The e-learning course on illegal wildlife trafficking will be officially launched by July 2024.

Containers lost at sea

In the context of freight containers, MSC 108 adopted amendments to SOLAS chapter V, that are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2026 and require the master of every ship involved in the loss of freight container(s) to communicate the particulars of such an incident to ships in the vicinity, to the nearest coastal State, and also to the flag State which in turn will be required to report the incident to IMO. The amendments also specify the information to be reported, including position and number of containers. Related draft amendments to MARPOL Article V (Reporting procedures) were also adopted by MEPC 81.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships

(refer to paragraphs 237, A/RES/78/69)

IMO is steadfast in its efforts to reduce GHG emissions from international shipping, in line with its third strategic direction (SD 3): “Responding to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping”. A revised GHG Strategy was adopted in July 2023 by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its 80th session, setting out an enhanced common ambition to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping by or around, i.e., close to, 2050, a commitment to ensure an uptake of alternative zero and near-zero GHG emitting fuels by 2030, as well as indicative check-points for 2030 and 2040. Following the adoption of the revised Strategy, MEPC continues to work on the comprehensive impact assessment and further development of the basket of candidate mid-term GHG reduction measures.

MEPC 81, in March 2024, adopted, through resolution MEPC.391(81), the *2024 Guidelines on life-cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels* (2024 LCA Guidelines), providing a calculation methodology for well-to-wake GHG emissions of marine fuels and encouraged the further development of the Life Cycle GHG Assessment (LCA) framework. At the same time, the Committee engaged in work on developing a regulatory framework for onboard CO₂ capture.

In conjunction with MEPC’s work, MSC is working on the development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels by assessing and addressing technical obstacles and regulatory gaps to be covered to enable their safe use on board ships. Safety guidelines relating to onboard CO₂ capture and storage will also be a part of that framework. MSC is also working on the development of training provisions for seafarers on the use of alternative fuels.

Alternative fuels for maritime decarbonisation

Under the IMO Future Fuels and Technology project (FFT), an IMO Future Fuels Portal (<https://futurefuels.imo.org/>) was launched in March 2024 to provide user-friendly access to up-to-date information and data on shipping decarbonization, such as latest insights on alternative fuels’ readiness and availability; latest developments in bunkering infrastructure for alternative fuels; relevant information on fuel prices; and information on ongoing R&D projects. The project also aims to function as a capacity building tool for developing States by providing training and educational materials and accelerating access to information on the latest developments in decarbonization of shipping and how to get involved in a just and equitable transition.

New Emission Control Areas

(refer to paragraph 236, A/RES/78/69)

Following the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area (ECA) for sulphur oxides and particulate matter in December 2022, MEPC 81 approved proposals to designate the Canadian Arctic waters and the Norwegian Sea as ECAs for the control of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides and particulate matter, as appropriate, together with relevant draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI to establish the ECAs, with a view to adoption at MEPC 82 (October 2024).

Energy efficiency of shipping

MEPC 81 adopted updated *2024 Guidelines for the development of a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP)* and *2024 Guidelines for Administration verification of ship fuel*

oil consumption data and operational carbon intensity. Furthermore, in accordance with the *Review plan of the short-term GHG reduction measure*, in particular the IMO carbon intensity indicator (CII) approved by MEPC 80, MEPC 81 noted various documents submitted as part of the 'data gathering stage' which will be concluded at MEPC 82, following which the 'data analysis stage' to address some of shortcomings and unintended consequences of the CII mechanism will commence. MEPC 81 also adopted amendments to appendix IX of MARPOL Annex VI concerning additional reporting parameters on data on transport work and further granularity in the IMO Ship Fuel Consumption Database which will facilitate future reporting on the carbon intensity of the global fleet.

Marine plastic litter from ships

(refer to paragraphs 218-219, A/RES/78/69)

MEPC 81 approved *Recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers* (MEPC.1/Circ.909). The Committee is also set to review the *Action Plan on Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* (resolution MEPC.310(73)) at its 82nd session, and to consider whether the Action Plan can accommodate proposals for amendments to mandatory instruments relating to the carriage of plastic pellets.

MSC 108 also adopted the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel Code (STCW-F Code), which contains a dedicated section containing guidance on basic sustainable fisheries training for all fishing vessel personnel. The associated competencies under that section include understanding the importance of healthy oceans for the fishing industry and preventing plastic pollution to the marine environment. The STCW-F Code will take effect on 1 January 2026.

Invasive aquatic species

(refer to paragraphs 230-232 of A/RES/78/69)

MEPC is engaged in an on-going comprehensive review of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention and is now proceeding to the development of a package of amendments to the Convention and associated instruments in a holistic, evidence-based and systematic approach. The list of provisions and instruments to be amended and/or developed was finalized and endorsed by MEPC 81 and work on developing the above amendments is currently ongoing, in line with an approved Convention Review Plan, with a view to adoption by MEPC 85 in autumn 2026.

The development of guidelines and amendments addressing urgent operational matters which cannot wait until the aforementioned package of amendments is completed, is continuing in parallel with the Convention review. Amendments to regulations A-1 and B-2 of the BWM Convention, relating to the use of electronic record books, were adopted by MEPC 81 and are expected to enter into force on 1 October 2025. MEPC 81 also adopted *Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions* (resolution MEPC.387(81)) and approved *Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks* (BWM.2/Circ.82).

Following the finalization of the review of the *2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (Biofouling Guidelines) and the adoption of the *2023 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (2023 Biofouling Guidelines) (resolution MEPC.378(80)), MEPC agreed to the development of separate complementary guidance on matters relating to in-water cleaning, which is currently being developed with a view to approval by MEPC 83 in 2025.

Anti-fouling systems on ships

The London Convention and Protocol, at LC 45/LP 18 approved *Revised guidance on best management practices for removal of anti-fouling coatings from ships* (LC-LP.1/Circ.108). The revision updates previous guidance (LC-LP.1/Circ.31/Rev.1) to reflect new controls on cybutryne introduced by means of amendments to the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS) Convention, which entered into force on 1 January 2023, and introduces references to the Biofouling Guidelines mentioned above.

Ship recycling

(refer to paragraph 239 of A/RES/78/69)

The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (Hong Kong Convention) will enter into force on 26 June 2025. In line with this, the IMO Assembly, at its 33rd session, on 6 December 2023, adopted resolution A.1191(33) on *Implementation of the Hong Kong International Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships, 2009*.

MEPC 81 approved the *Formats for the mandatory reporting under article 12 of the Hong Kong Convention* (MEPC.1/Circ.910) and requested the IMO Secretariat to develop a new GISIS module on ship recycling to assist the Parties in fulfilling their obligations regarding the communication of information specified in article 12 of the Convention; and to continue and strengthen its cooperation with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to cater for any information and assistance needed to ensure the clear and robust implementation of the Hong Kong Convention.

Dumping of wastes at sea

(refer to paragraphs 252-254, 256, A/RES/78/69)

The forty-fifth Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention) and the eighteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention, 1972 (London Protocol) (LC 45/LP 18) were held concurrently from 2 to 6 October 2023. The governing bodies considered the report of the forty-sixth meeting of the London Convention Scientific Group and the seventeenth meeting of the London Protocol Scientific Group, held from 13 to 17 March 2023, in Casablanca, Morocco. The report of the joint session of the Scientific Groups has been issued as document LC/SG 46/16. They also reviewed and approved the report of the fifteenth session of the London Protocol Compliance Group, held from 28 to 29 October 2023 (LC 45/17, annex 5) and approved the *Revised guidance on best management practices for removal of anti-fouling coatings from ships* (LC 44/17, annex 2).

Marine geoengineering

(refer to paragraphs 252-254, A/RES/78/69)

The LC/LP governing bodies also endorsed a statement urging that marine geoengineering activities, other than legitimate scientific research, should be deferred. Work is underway in the governing bodies and Scientific Groups to evaluate four marine geoengineering techniques, namely: ocean alkalinity enhancement; biomass cultivation for carbon removal; marine cloud brightening; and surface albedo enhancement involving reflective particles and/or other materials. The statement underlined, in particular, that each of the four techniques has the potential for deleterious effects that are widespread, long-lasting or severe; and that there is considerable uncertainty regarding their effects on the marine environment, human health and on other uses of the ocean.

CO₂ sequestration in sub-seabed geological formations

(refer to paragraph 215, A/RES/78/69)

With respect to carbon dioxide sequestration in sub-seabed geological formations, as regulated under the London Protocol, the governing bodies endorsed the Scientific Groups' decision to establish a Correspondence Group on Experiences with the Carbon Dioxide Streams Assessment Guidelines, and encouraged Contracting Parties to share relevant and up-to-date information on all scientific, technical as well as legal aspects of CO₂ sequestration projects through submissions to the next joint session of the Scientific Groups in 2024.

Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)

The Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), for which IMO provides the secretariat services through a dedicated GESAMP Office, held its 50th annual session from 18 to 22 September 2023, hosted by ISA at its Headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica. GESAMP reviewed progress by its currently active nine working groups and agreed on its future work programme.

Underwater noise

(refer to paragraphs 282-287 of A/RES/78/69)

MEPC 80 approved revised *Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life* (MEPC.1/Circ.907). MEPC 81 endorsed a draft Action plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping and included an item on "Reduction of underwater radiated noise from commercial shipping" in the agenda for MEPC 82.

Liability and compensation regime

(refer to paragraphs 166-167, 242-245, A/RES/78/69)

The Legal Committee continued to encourage Member States to consider becoming parties to the 2010 Protocol to the 1996 International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention). Recalling that the HNS Convention was the remaining gap in the global framework of liability and compensation conventions, the Committee noted that the 2010 HNS Protocol needed only four more ratifications with the required contributing cargo to enter into force. In May 2024, the IMO and the IOPC Funds Secretariats jointly hosted a workshop focused on the finalization of the required improvements of the HNS reporting Guidelines.

In line with the Committee's continuing work to enhance the legal regime for its liability and compensation conventions, LEG 111 approved methodologies for the collection and reporting of experiences of incidents and resulting damage therefrom; and for assessing changes in monetary value. LEG 111 also approved the revised guidelines for accepting insurance certificates and insurance companies, financial security providers, and protection and indemnity clubs (P&I Clubs).

CAPACITY-BUILDING and REGIONAL COOPERATION

(refer to paragraphs 4, 12-13, 16-18, 20-22, 29-30, 33, 36-37, A/RES/78/69)

IMO continues to provide technical assistance to its Member States, particularly developing countries, to assist them in ratification, implementation, enforcement of, and compliance with IMO Conventions through *inter alia* building their human and institutional capacities. IMO's technical cooperation work, which operates within a framework of the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) regional and global programmes, as well as thematic long-term projects, is funded through both the Technical Cooperation (TC) Fund and extra-budgetary resources and enhanced through formal partnership agreements with Member States and various international and regional organizations. The period under review marked a gradual but steady return to pre-COVID-19 technical cooperation implementation levels for IMO, albeit with a strong focus on e-Learning in lieu of "traditional" in-person training.

World Maritime University and IMO International Maritime Law Institute

(refer to paragraphs 29-30, A/RES/78/69)

Utilizing the capacity of its two global maritime training institutions, the World Maritime University (WMU) located in Malmö, Sweden and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) based in Malta, IMO continued to offer access to high level postgraduate maritime education and training. The great majority of WMU and IMLI students are granted fellowships not only from the IMO but a variety of donors.

IMO also extends its utmost appreciation to the Government of Sweden and the Government of Malta for hosting the above academic institutions. IMO recognizes the importance of both institutions as cornerstones of IMO's capacity-building mission. In 2023, Member States were encouraged to enact national legislation for the recognition of degrees conferred by the World Maritime University (WMU) and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) and to keep the IMO and both institutions informed of such developments. In June 2024, IMLI celebrated its 35th anniversary.

Women in Maritime

(refer to paragraph 116, A/RES/78/69)

IMO held a series of activities for the celebration of the International Day for Women in Maritime (held annually on 18 May 2024), including a symposium on "Safe Horizons: Women Shaping the Future of Maritime Safety"; a wide-ranging social media campaign; and the awarding of the IMO Gender Equality Award. In 2022, the IMO Council approved a proposal to establish the Award to accord international recognition to those individuals, irrespective of their gender, who, either in their personal capacity or as representatives of their respective institutions, have made significant contributions to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the maritime sector. The Gender Equality Award, which was given for the first time in 2024, was conferred to Ms. Despina Panayiotou (Cyprus) for her work with the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA).

The Technical Cooperation Committee (TCC) approved, during its 73rd session, the *Global Strategy for IMO Women in Maritime Associations 2024-2029* which aims to align the work and objectives of regional associations under the IMO umbrella and address Sustainable Development Goal 5 to attain the further incorporation of women into the maritime industry, support the development of their careers and growth into leadership roles, and create a more diverse and inclusive work culture in the maritime sector. TC 73 also endorsed the development of a new Regional Strategy for Pacific Women in Maritime 2025-2030.

Technical Cooperation Projects

IMO continues to progress the delivery of capacity-building and facilitate technical cooperation through several thematic projects supported by Member States and other stakeholders, including, among others: the Global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres Network (GMN); IMO-UNEP-Norway Innovation Forum; Blue Solutions project; IMO CARES (Coordinated Actions to Reduce Emissions from Shipping); IMO-Republic of Korea SMART-C Programme; GreenVoyage2050; GloFouling, GloLitter and GloNoise Partnerships, PRO-SEAS (Plastic Reduction in the Oceans: Sustaining and Enhancing Actions on Sea-based Sources); and the Future Fuels and Technology for Low- and Zero-carbon Shipping project (FTT project).

Regional Cooperation

(refer to paragraphs 333-334, A/RES/78/69)

In March 2024, the Secretary-General and the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport of the Republic of Fiji, signed an MoU confirming the establishment of IMO's seventh Regional Presence Office, in Suva, Fiji, to support the maritime needs and priorities in the Pacific Islands region. Of the 14 Member States in the region, twelve are small island developing States (SIDS), of which three are also categorized as least developed countries (LDCs). The establishment of the Office will facilitate better engagement with the region for the delivery of technical cooperation activities, and for the alignment of national legislation and policies with global standards on ship safety and energy efficiency set at the IMO. The office in Fiji will complement other Regional Presence Offices in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as another new office in Egypt which is also set to open soon.
