

## **IMO COUNCIL, 137<sup>th</sup> Session, 6 - 10 July 2026.**

The IMO Council held its 137th Meeting in-person supported by hybrid facilities for remote participation, from Monday 6 through Friday 10 June 2026, chaired by Mr Victor Jimenez of Spain and his Vice-Chair, Mrs Amane Fethallah of Morocco. The session was live-streamed to the public in the six official IMO languages.

**COMPOSITION OF THE IMO COUNCIL** A reminder that the IMO Assembly, comprising all 176 member States, elects 40 States as the IMO Council to whom it delegates work between bi-annual sessions. The Council comprises three categories:

- **Category (a)** 10 States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services;
- **Category (b)** 10 other States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade; and,
- **Category (c)** 20 States not elected under (a) or (b) which have special interest in maritime transport or navigation and, importantly, whose election to the Council ensures the representation of all major geographic interests of the world.

**MATTERS OF INTEREST FOR INTERMANAGER MEMBERS.** Item 7, Enhancement of GISIS will be of interest in that although phase 1 of the update is near completion, phase 2 is currently unfunded. Item 16, Protection of vital shipping lanes was hotly debated for one and a half working days and deserves attention. Finally, for the record, H.E. the United States Permanent Representative to IMO, made a statement regarding China's systemic effort to use maritime power to control critical port infrastructure and assist its strategic reach. He asserted that the G7 Foreign Ministers have spoken clearly, committing to protect critical maritime ports against hybrid threats and to secure undersea infrastructure from sabotage. A recent and deeply troubling example is that of Panama's Supreme Court which ruled that CK Hutchinson's port concessions at the Balboa and Cristobal terminals, two of the most strategically significant ports of the Panama Canal were unconstitutional, a decision reflecting Panama's commitment to transparency, rule of law, and public accountability.

China's response was swift and punishing, Beijing took direct action against Panama-flagged vessels, actions the United States characterised as a deliberate attempt to undermine Panama's sovereignty, disrupt global supply chains, and erode confidence in International trade. The United States, joined by Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Paraguay and Trinidad & Tobago issued a joint statement condemning these actions as an attempt to politicise maritime trade and infringe on sovereignty, a warning to every nation.

Panama took the floor to address an issue that directly affects the integrity of a register, which is the largest in the world today and which has been a leader in the area of policy. In July this year, the register joined the white list of the Paris MOU after years of sustained efforts to purify the fleet; part of the Tokyo MOU, Panama remains a low-risk register. As a deliberate and costly policy by Panama's government to combat sub-standard ship registers and to avoid the phenomenon of the shadow fleet, including suspending

classification societies, withdrawing registered vessels and implementing a rigorous prior-verification process. However, in recent months, an abrupt and statistically anomalous increase of detentions of Panamanian-flagged vessels has appeared, disproportionately focussed on ports of one single member of the Tokyo MOU and coincidentally, in the period of a trade dispute which is totally separate from technical conditions. In a single month, more than half of all of the registered detentions in the region corresponded to Panamanian vessels and a significantly lower number of flags operating on the same routes and under the same inspection regime. This disproportionate ratio is not in line with the Tokyo MOU recognising Panama as a low-risk register nor is it in line with the spirit of the procedures of port-state control 2025 Resolution A206/34 which requires that inspections are based on objective criteria that are transparent and non-discriminatory and not on issues unrelated to maritime safety. Selective or politicised views of port-state control powers undermines trust in the harmonised inspection system IMO has built carefully over decades and it unfairly penalises a flag that has invested in being exemplary.

Panama requested Council to instruct the III Sub-Committee to consider the harmonised and non-discriminatory application of the port-state control powers in the region of the Tokyo MOU and ensure that the exercising of these functions is exclusively and solely based on technical criteria, safety, security and risk profile in accordance with the inspection regime and resolution A286/34 and not political or trade circumstances which are separate from the condition of the vessels themselves.

Taking the floor, China stated its strong objections to the USA statement citing that since 1973, it has been active in assisting the governance of world shipping. As to the statement by Panama, China has clarified its position at different forums. A major shipping country, China attaches high importance to the life of safety of shipping at sea. Since 2026, Panama flagged ships encountered several cases of collisions with fishing vessels in Chinese waters causing many people to die or go missing. Chinese authorities carried out inspections on ships according to law and port-state control inspections according to the provisions of law and in full compliance with same, not aimed at specific countries or specific ships.

Taking the floor again, Panama drew attention in respect of the comments made by China, that all delegations can check GISIS investigation into the accidents which do not coincide with Panama's registers. There are just 2 cases, in which one death was due to natural causes and the other by homicide. Thus, Panama does not share the understanding of the details mentioned by the delegate of China.

**WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL.** H.E. Mr. Arsenio Domingues extended sincere condolences to those in particular, who lost their lives in the devastating earthquake that struck Venezuela. He also reflected on the human cost to the maritime sector due to the ongoing tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, where Seafarers have tragically lost their lives in connection with the conflict, and the impact has been felt well beyond the region, with real consequences for global trade, energy and food security. He was encouraged that the situation now shows signs of improvement, and hoped that affected crew members will be brought to safety and for shipping trade in the area to be restored.

The SG also flagged a wider area of concern: the growing threat of piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia and Yemen and in the Gulf of Aden, where in the past three months there have been 24 incidents of piracy and attempted piracy. He also reiterated deep concern for the crewmembers currently being held captive by pirates and armed robbers onboard the **MT Honour 25, Eureka**, and **Sward**, whose situation remains dire. Also, a Palau-flagged vessel **Lady Naeima**, a bulk carrier, was attacked during the preceding day in the Red Sea by pirates, but happily, is navigating towards the next destination and the crew is safe.

Referring to the major agenda items of C 137, he listed these as follows:

- Consideration of proposed amendments on the Rules and Procedures of the Organisation, arising from a review of practices in the United Nations;
- To approve the updated Risk Management Policy, together with a new Strategic Fraud Risk Management Annex, providing clearer guidance;
- On human resource matters, the outcome of the decennial International Civil Service Commission's Local Salary Survey for the London duty station, will be updated;
- Regarding the status of IMO conventions, both the 2012 Cape Town Agreement and the 2010 HNS Protocol have now met the requirements for entry into force;
- Council will also be updated on the enhancement of GISIS, in which Phase 2 is progressing well, thanks to the continued support of the Republic of Korea through the Voyage Together Trust Fund; and finally,
- Consideration will be given to a Council resolution proposing the protection of vital shipping lanes, reaffirming the Organisation's commitment to upholding and respecting navigational rights and freedoms for commercial ships transiting straits used for international navigation.

In closing, the S.G. wished delegates a productive and successful session.

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**1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** The agenda was duly adopted, following which Council joined the Secretary-General in expressing its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the tragic loss of life and extensive damage caused by the earthquakes that struck the country on 24 June 2026.

**2 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CREDENTIALS** Members of the Council presented their credentials, all of which were found to be in order.

**3 RULES OF PROCEDURE** The information set out in document C 137/3 on the practice of the United Nations with regard to the explanation of the rules of procedure of the UN General Assembly and other bodies and providing recommendations for further clarity of the IMO rules of procedure, was noted. Council instructed the Secretariat to draft proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Council and invited Member States also to submit proposals for amendments to the next session, at which a working group will be established for their detailed consideration.

#### **4 STRATEGY AND PLANNING**

**(a) Strategy and planning.** Council noted the information set out in documents C 137/4(a), C 137/4(a)/1 and C 137/4(a)/2, also that provided orally by the Secretary-General. It approved the updated Risk Management Policy and the new annex on Strategic Fraud Risk Management, set out in document C 137/4(a). With regard to document C 137/4(a)/1, Council approved the 2025 Annual Report and noted the information set out in document C 137/4(a)/2 on the work of the cross-divisional Working Group on Racial Equality and Equity (REE Working Group), including the IMO Secretariat's Racial Equality and Equity Strategy.

**(b) Internal Oversight, Ethics and Joint Inspection Unit.** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/4(b) on matters relating to the Internal Oversight, Ethics and Joint Inspection Unit. Note was taken of the 2025 Internal Oversight and Ethics Annual Activity Report, also the IOEO 2026 Annual Work Plan. Further, it agreed with the action plan presented in the Secretary-General's Notes with regard to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations addressed to the Council.

#### **5 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**(a) Human resources matters.** Council noted the information contained in documents C 137/5(a) and C 137/5(a)/1, on the implementation by the Secretariat of UN General Assembly decisions with respect to recommendations by the ICSC, and on updates on human resource matters, respectively.

**(b) Financial reports.** Council noted the information contained in documents C 137/5(b), C 137/5(b)/1, C 137/5(b)/2 and C 137/5(b)/3 on the financial reports of the Organisation, and that provided orally by the Director of the International Organisations Auditing Board of the Republic of Indonesia. Note was taken of the Secretary-General's conclusion that, as a whole, expenditure for 2026 could be contained within the budgets approved for all funds

and of his intention to present an updated review of budgetary prospects to the next session of the Council; accordingly, he was authorised to make, as and when necessary, timely transfers between strategic directions (including "Other work").

With regard to document C 137/5(b)/2, the Council, in particular: noted the information contained in its annexes 1 and 2, namely, the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 with the External Auditor's Opinion and the Long-form Report; welcomed the unqualified opinion of the External Auditor; expressed its appreciation to the External Auditor; welcomed the Secretary-General's stewardship of the Organisation's Funds and his report to the Council; and, decided to forward the Organisation's audited financial statements for the financial year ended 2025 and the report and opinion thereon of the External Auditor to the thirty-fifth regular session of the Assembly.

**(c) Report on Member State contributions.** Noting the information set out in documents C 137/5(c) and C 137/5(c)/Add.1 reporting on the status of Member States' contributions, Council reiterated its firm stance on the strict enforcement of Article 61 of the IMO Convention, and urged all Member States that had not yet done so to meet their financial obligations to the Organisation in full and as early as possible.

**6 ENHANCEMENT OF MULTILINGUALISM** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/6, and that provided orally by the Secretary-General, on recent developments and ongoing work related to the enhancement of multilingualism at IMO.

**7 ENHANCEMENT OF GISIS** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/7, and that orally provided by the Secretary-General, reporting on progress in the implementation of the GISIS enhancement project. In particular, it noted the progress of part 1 and the scope of part 2 of the GISIS enhancement project, whilst recognising that part 2, covering the modernisation and standardisation of the user interface, had no [budgeted] confirmed funding. Member States were therefore invited to consider making voluntary contributions to fund part 2, as requested in Circular Letter No.5204.

**8 IMO MEMBER STATE AUDIT SCHEME** Council noted the information set out in documents C 137/8, C 137/8/1 and C 137/8/2 (United Arab Emirates) on the IMO Member State Audit Scheme and welcomed the successful completion of the first audit cycle of the Scheme, noting that 168 audits in respect of 165 Member States and 3 Associate Members had been conducted. Audited Member States were invited to provide the Secretariat with their comments on the progress of the implementation of their corrective action plans; and for those audited Member States that are undergoing the audit follow-up process to provide information and documentary evidence requested through the draft audit follow-up reports in a timely manner.

**9 REPORT OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC)** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/9 on the outcome of the 111th session of MSC. The report was approved in general for transmission to Assembly A 35, and in particular, Council:

- .1 approved the revision of the Committee's method of work, subject to concurrent approval by MEPC 85;
- .2 endorsed the new outputs agreed by the Committee and noted those in which the Committee became an associated organ, in accordance with resolution A.1196(34) on *Revised Strategic Plan for the Organisation for the six-year period 2024 to 2029*;
- .3 endorsed the approval of intersessional meetings; and,
- .4 approved the inclusion of budget provisions for an IMO observer to the International Quality Assessment Review Body (IQARB) in the regular budget of the Organisation for the 2028-2029 biennium.

### **10 REPORT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE (MEPC)**

Council noted the information set out in document C 137/10 on the outcome of the eighty-fourth session of MEPC. Approving the report in general for transmission to Assembly 35, the Council, in particular, endorsed:

- .1 the new outputs on "Amendments to regulation 12 of MARPOL Annex VI to prohibit the reintroduction of ozone-depleting substances on ships" and "Measures to address maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS) in the instruments under the purview of MEPC" for inclusion in the post-biennial agenda of the Committee, assigning the PPR Sub-Committee as the associated organ; and,
- .2 the holding of the twenty-second and twenty-third meetings of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 22 and 23), and an intersessional meeting of the ESPH Technical Group in 2027.

**11 REPORT OF THE LEGAL COMMITTEE (LEG)** Council noted in particular, the information on decisions or progress made on relevant agenda items, as set out in paragraph 25 of document C 137/11, and endorsed:

- .1 the inclusion of substantive items in the Committee's agenda for LEG 114, set out in annex 5 to the document; and,
- .2 the decision of the Committee to hold LEG 114 over five meeting days with eight full sessions of interpretation.

The report of the 113th session of the Legal Committee was approved in general and, in accordance with Article 21(b) of the IMO Convention, it was transmitted, with its comments and recommendations, to the thirty-fifth session of the Assembly. Council requested the Secretary-General to provide information on current practice with regard to IMO publications and on the financial and resource implications, including the impact on revenue supporting technical cooperation activities, of wider access to IMO e-publications, for consideration at its 139th session.

**12 REPORT OF THE FACILITATION COMMITTEE (FAL)** Council noted the information in documents C 137/12 and C 137/12/1, reporting the outcome of FAL at its fiftieth session, and providing information on the IMO Compendium, respectively. It endorsed the new outputs approved by the Committee for the 2026-2027 biennium; the holding of one meeting during 2028 and one meeting during 2029 (five days with eight associated interpretation sessions for each meeting); and, the intersessional meetings of the Experts Group on Data Harmonisation (EGDH) approved by the Committee for 2027.

Council also approved an intersessional joint FAL-MSC Expert Group on a Non-mandatory Maritime Cyber Code, concurrently approved by MSC 111, that would meet in 2027. It also approved an intersessional joint FAL-MSC Expert Group on a Non-mandatory Maritime Cyber Code, concurrently approved by MSC 111, that would also meet in 2027.

It was agreed to include the costs of the IMO Compendium in the biennial regular budget of the Organisation for the 2028-2029 biennium, and noted, with appreciation, the generous offers made by the Governments of Denmark and Germany towards funding of the IMO Compendium project.

Finally, Council approved the report of the fiftieth session of the Facilitation Committee in general and transmitted it, with its comments and recommendations, to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, in accordance with Article 21(b) of the IMO Convention.

### **13 REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION COMMITTEE TCC)**

Council noted the information set out in document C 137/13 on the outcome of the seventy-sixth session of the TCC, and in particular the information on decisions and progress made with regard to items on the agenda of the Committee, as listed in paragraph 40 of the document. It approved the report of the seventy-sixth session of TCC in general and transmitted it, with its comments and recommendations, to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, in accordance with Article 21(b) of the IMO Convention.

### **14 GLOBAL MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

**(a) World Maritime University (WMU).** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/14(a) on the WMU and that provided orally by its President. In particular, Council:

- .1 noted the report on key elements of the 2025 operations of the University and financial performance, as presented in the document and the Annual Report;
- .2 expressed its appreciation to the Government of Sweden and all the donors who contributed through financial and in-kind support to the University;
- .3 urged, Member States once more, to take action so as to enable recognition, under their national legislation, of the degrees conferred by the University; and,

.4 strongly urged Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and industry to continue to support the University, either by direct contributions to its operating budget, scholarship financing, equipment donation or through any other assistance, pursuant to resolution A.933(22) on Sustainable Financial Support for the World Maritime University.

Council noted, with appreciation, generous offers made by the Governments of Germany, Malaysia and the United Kingdom to finance fellowships for the next academic year.

**(b) IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI).** Council noted the information set out in documents C 137/14(b) and C 137/14(b)/1, reporting on key elements of the Institute's operations during 2025 and on the review of the IMLI Statute, respectively, and that provided orally by its Director.

With regard to document C 137/14(b), the Council, in particular:

.1 noted the report on key elements of the 2025 operations of the Institute and financial performance, as presented in the document and the Annual Report;

.2 expressed its appreciation to the Government of Malta and all donors who contributed through financial and in-kind support to the Institute;

.3 urged, once more, Member States to take action to enable recognition, under their national legislation, of the degrees conferred by the Institute and, to keep the IMO and IMLI informed of developments; and,

.4 strongly urged Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and industry to continue to support the Institute either by direct contributions to its operating budget, scholarship financing, equipment donation or through any other assistance, pursuant to resolution A.934(22) on Sustainable financial support for the IMO International Maritime Law Institute.

It was noted, with appreciation, the generous offers made by the Governments of Belgium and Malaysia to finance fellowships for the next academic year, following which approval was given to the revised Statute of IMLI, with effect from 1 September 2026.

## **15 EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

**(a) Relations with the United Nations and the specialised agencies.** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/15(a) on relations with the United Nations and the specialised agencies and requested the Secretary-General to continue informing the Council about the Secretariat's participation in ocean-related intergovernmental processes.

**(b) Relations with intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations.** Council noted the information set out in documents C 137/3/1 (UAE), C 137/15(b), C 137/15(b)/1 (UAE), C 137/15(b)/2 (Australia et al.) and C 137/WP.2 (Chair of the Intersessional Working Group on Relations with Non-Governmental Organisations (ISWG-NGO)), on

relations with intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. The report of the ISWG-NGO was approved in general and, with regard to the Group's recommendation on 12 new applications for consultative status, contained in document C 137/15(b), Council decided to grant consultative status to the International Electric Marine Association (IEMA), the Fonden Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping (MMMCZCS) and SEA-LNG and, regarding the classification of these organisations by interests/activity, to place IEMA under "Standards" and MMMCZCS and SEA-LNG under "Cargo and Ports". The Ocean Foundation (TOF) was granted consultative status (under "Environment"), on a provisional basis, for no more than two years, after which a review will be conducted.

**(c) International Days established by IMO.** Council recalled that this year's World Maritime Day will be celebrated at IMO Headquarters on Thursday, 24 September, observing the theme: "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence", and that the 2026 World Maritime Day Parallel Event will take place in Busan, the Republic of Korea, on 26 and 27 October. Council accepted, with appreciation, a generous offer by the Government of Qatar to host the World Maritime Day Parallel Event in 2028.

**(d) IMO Awards.** With regard to document C 137/15(d)/Add.1, Council endorsed the recommendation by the Panel of Judges to award the 2025 International Maritime Prize to Mr. Jeffrey G. Lantz in recognition of his distinguished career, technical expertise and sustained commitment to international cooperation in leading the delegation of the United States of America at IMO for over a decade and as former Chair of the IMO Council, as well as his significant contributions to the development of global maritime policy.

Council further endorsed the recommendation of the Panel of Judges to grant a Letter of Commendation to Rear Admiral Peter Brady, nominated by Jamaica, in recognition of his long and distinguished career, his significant contributions to the development of the maritime sector in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, for his sustained commitment to capacity-building, regional cooperation and the work of the Organisation.

With regard to document C 137/15(d)/Add.2 on the outcome of the judging Panels for the 2026 IMO Honours for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, the Council endorsed the Panel of Judges' recommendations to bestow the 2026 Award, posthumously, on Mr. Adrian Willyson Brask, Chief Mate and diver of the rescue vessel RS 125 Det Norske Veritas, Norwegian Society for Sea Rescue, nominated by Norway and, separately, by the International Federation of Shipmasters' Association (IFSMA), in recognition of his exceptional courage, selflessness and self-sacrifice during an underwater attempt to rescue a young girl missing in the waters of Nappstraumen, in the Lofoten archipelago of northern Norway. Council conveyed deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the family of Mr. Brask for their great loss, along with profound admiration for his remarkable and selfless effort, of which they can rightly be proud.

Certificates of Commendation, in recognition of their acts of bravery, were awarded to:

.1 SN2 Nick-Nick S. Udasan and SN2 Ian Glenn B. Morfe, members of the Coast Guard Sea Marshal Force, Philippine Coast Guard, nominated by the Philippines; and,

.2 Captain Thomas Michael Leaf and the crew of the M/T Stena Immaculate, nominated by the United States.

The Council further endorsed the recommendation of the Panel of Judges that Letters of Commendation in recognition of their actions be sent to:

1 Captain Asif Ahmed, Assistant Harbour Master, Chittagong Port Authority, nominated by Bangladesh;

.2 Captain Swadesh Tripathi and the crew of the M/V Maersk Karachi, nominated by China;

.3 Petty Officer Elise Massin, diver of the Dauphin rescue helicopter detachment of Flotilla 35F, Tahiti, French Navy, nominated by France;

.4 Crew members of the helicopter detachment of Flotilla 32F, Maupertus, Lanvéoc Poulmic Naval Air Base, French Navy, nominated by France;

.5 Captain Ioannis-Eleftherios Alexiou and the crew of the M/V Akti, nominated by Greece;

.6 Captain Sachin Kulkarni and the crew of the INS Trikand, Indian Navy, nominated by India;

.7 Captain Atla Mohan and the crew of the INS Tabar, Indian Navy, nominated by India;

.8 P/Adh Preetam Singh Yadav, diver of the ICGS C-147, Coast Guard Station Mayabunder, Indian Coast Guard, nominated by India;

.9 The crew of helicopter Rescue 115, Irish Coast Guard, nominated by Ireland;

.10 Captain Fumitaka Okamura and the crew of the LNG carrier LNG Saturn; and,

.11 Captain Mandeep Singh Bakhshi and the crew of the M/T Horten, nominated by Liberia.

The Council also endorsed the Panel's recommendation that certificates for Special recognition for merchant vessels and their crew involved in the rescue of mixed migrants at sea (resolution A.1195(33)) be issued to four merchant vessels nominated by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait and Poland. In addition, all forces involved in the rescue of migrants at sea will be mentioned by the Secretary-General at the IMO Awards Ceremony, for their continuous outstanding humanitarian effort.

Council noted and endorsed the arrangements proposed by the Secretary-General in respect of this year's IMO Awards ceremony, to take place at IMO Headquarters on Monday, 14 December 2026, on the first day of the 112th session of the Maritime Safety Committee, with further details to be disseminated in due course.

**16 PROTECTION OF VITAL SHIPPING LANES** Council noted the information set out in documents C 137/16 (Australia et al.), C 137/16/1 (Egypt), C 137/16/2 (Islamic Republic of Iran), C 137/16/3 (Indonesia et al.), C 137/16/4 (Bahrain et al.) and C 137/16/5 (Islamic Republic of Iran) on the protection of vital shipping lanes, as well as the information provided orally by the Secretary-General on developments related to the outcome of the thirty-sixth extraordinary session of the Council.

With regard to document C 137/16, Council:

.1 reaffirmed its commitment to protecting vital shipping lanes, in particular to uphold the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation to ensure open, safe and secure access through vital shipping lanes, while guaranteeing the safety and well-being of seafarers; and,

.2 adopted a Council resolution on *Protection of vital shipping lanes, including by upholding and respecting navigational rights and freedoms for commercial ships when transiting through straits used for international navigation.*

With regard to document C 137/16/1, Council noted the information provided, and invited interested Member States to submit to the relevant IMO bodies, concrete proposals for a new output concerning the enhancement of the operational resilience of strategic maritime corridors and international maritime supply chains.

Council noted the information set out in document C 137/16/3 and, in particular:

.1 expressed appreciation to the littoral States of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for their continued commitment under the Co-operative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (Co-operative Mechanism);

.2 also expressed appreciation to those Member States and organisations that had made contributions to the Co-operative Mechanism and to the Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF) for the provision and maintenance of critical navigational aids in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore; and,

.3 invited interested Member States and other stakeholders to consider making financial and in-kind contributions to the ANF and the IMO Straits of Malacca and Singapore Trust Fund to support the sustainability of the Co-operative Mechanism.

Council reaffirmed its mandate to the Secretary-General to continue work relating to the protection of shipping lanes of strategic importance and significance, also, the declaration

made at its thirty-sixth extraordinary session on the Impacts on Shipping and Seafarers of the situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz. It once again called for the de-escalation of tensions and the exercise of restraint, urging all parties to engage in constructive diplomacy and to refrain from acts that hinder navigation.

Council noted document C 137/16/4 and approved the actions proposed in paragraph 16 by which the Council:

.1 noted the outcomes of the fiftieth session of the Facilitation Committee (FAL 50), the 113th session of the Legal Committee (LEG 113), the eighty-fourth session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 84), the 111th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 111) and the seventy-sixth session of the Technical Committee (TC 76);

.2 strongly condemned the Islamic Republic of Iran for not respecting the Council declaration of 19 March 2026, as well as the outcomes of FAL 50, LEG 113, MEPC 84, MSC 111 and TC 76, through its continued threats and attacks against the territories, including the territorial waters, of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, and against vessels in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz, as well as through the restrictions to navigation it imposed, which amounted to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz;

.3 reiterated that such threats, attacks and actions are contrary to the purposes of IMO, as set forth in Article 1 of the Convention, and constitute a breach of international law, including of UN Security Council resolution 2817 (2026);

.4 welcomed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 19 June 2026;

.5 welcomed the start of implementation of the evacuation plan established under the auspices of IMO in the Strait of Hormuz for seafarers stranded in the region, calling for its prompt resumption as soon as safety conditions are met; also, expressed deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in this regard;

.6 expressed deep concern regarding the attack on a merchant ship during the implementation of the evacuation plan in the Strait of Hormuz for seafarers stranded in the region;

.7 recalled the existing Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Strait of Hormuz, which was adopted by all Member States of IMO in 1968, in full compliance with international law;

.8 strongly condemned any laying of mines by the Islamic Republic of Iran in and around the Strait of Hormuz, in particular in the TSS, further adversely affecting merchant and commercial vessels and threatening the safety and welfare of

seafarers, and causing a grave danger to life and serious risk to the safety of navigation and the marine environment;

.9 demanded that the Islamic Republic of Iran promptly remove all the mines in and around the Strait of Hormuz and facilitate all de-mining operations conducted by other Member States and parties, subject to the consent of the relevant Member States, as necessary;

10 strongly condemned the Islamic Republic of Iran's unilateral decision to establish an entity purporting to control traffic through the Strait and its attempt to divert the TSS, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran's claims of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz and assertions of jurisdiction over the maritime zones of third States in and around the Strait, in blatant violation of international law;

.11 further condemned the imposition of tolls and charges of any kind, as well as of any discriminatory measures on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, as contrary to the purposes of IMO set forth in Article 1 of the Convention, and the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation;

.12 called upon Member States not to recognise the Islamic Republic of Iran's claim of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, its assertions of jurisdiction over the maritime zones of third States in and around the Strait, which violated the sovereignty, sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction of these States, and not to recognise the decisions of the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at closing, obstructing, hampering or otherwise interfering with international navigation and the right of transit passage in the Strait of Hormuz;

.13 called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully respect the sovereignty, sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction of littoral States in and around the Strait of Hormuz;

.14 declared that the Islamic Republic of Iran must bear the consequences of the damage it caused through its attacks and other unlawful actions in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and in and around the Strait of Hormuz, including against vessels;

.15 demanded that the Islamic Republic of Iran refrain from any attacks or threats against the territories, including the territorial waters, of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, and against vessels in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2817 (2026), as well as from any actions or threats against the sovereignty, sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction of coastal States in the Gulf region over their maritime zones;

.16 further demanded that the Islamic Republic of Iran immediately withdraw the unlawful restrictions to navigation it had imposed, and ensure the right of transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz, in accordance with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and

refrain from any actions or threats aimed at closing, obstructing or otherwise interfering with international navigation in the region;

.17 stressed that any arrangement between the littoral States of the Gulf region shall guarantee the non-discriminatory and unimpeded right of transit passage of all ships in the Strait of Hormuz, through the TSS;

.18 reaffirmed that passage through the Strait of Hormuz shall remain free of any tolls and charges, in accordance with international law, including the IMO Convention;

.19 requested the Secretary-General to explore options that advance safe maritime traffic and to work with littoral States in the Gulf region, other Member States and the industry to ensure a coordinated and sustainable return to unhindered navigation through the TSS, at pre-28 February 2026 levels;

.20 recalled that States may take strictly defensive measures to protect their vessels and contribute to the restoration of freedom of navigation in accordance with international law; and,

.21 further requested the Secretary-General to continue monitoring the situation closely and provide updates to the Council and Member States.

Council noted concerns expressed that certain elements of the actions proposed in document C 137/16/4, in their present form, are not considered to be balanced, inclusive or constructive and also took note of the information contained in document C 137/16/5 submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**17 REPORT ON THE STATUS OF CONVENTIONS.** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/17 reporting on the status of the IMO Convention and the membership of the Organisation, also, the status of conventions and other multilateral instruments in respect of which the Organisation performs functions. In particular, it:

1 welcomed the entry into force of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement on 24 February 2027 and of the 2010 HNS Protocol on 29 November 2027;

.2 noted the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to encourage Governments in considering accession to those IMO treaties to which they are not yet Parties; and,

.3 supported ongoing efforts by Member States and the Secretariat to bring into force the 2021 amendments to the IMO Convention at the earliest possible opportunity.

**18 PLACE, DATE AND DURATION OF THE NEXT COUNCIL SESSION (C 138).** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/18, on the proposed venue, dates and duration of the 138th regular session of the Council, to be held at IMO from

Monday 2 to Friday 6 November 2026, with associated budgetary provisions being made for 10 plenary meetings and full interpretation services.

**19 SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEMS.** Council noted the information set out in document C 137/19 providing an update on the Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund (VMDTF). In particular, it:

.1 expressed appreciation to the donors that have generously contributed to the VMDTF to date, noting that their support has facilitated broad participation by developing countries in particular SIDS and LDCs, in GHG-related meetings; and strongly encouraged further contributions to ensure the future sustainability of the Fund through predictable contributions, thereby enabling the continued facilitation of additional meeting participants; particularly in light of increased travel costs and logistical complexities.

.2 noted the Secretariat's efforts to advance gender equality in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 5, and encouraged Member States to give due consideration to gender balance when submitting nominations for VMDTF-funded participation; and,

.3 noted the operational matters observed by the Secretariat and the steps taken to address issues related to the administration of the VMDTF.

Council noted, with appreciation, the generous offers made by the Governments of Denmark, France, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Philippines and Singapore to finance the VMDTF.

**Availability of GMDSS services on barred terminals.** Following discussions at meetings of the Council and Assembly, IMSO conducted technical verifications with the recognised mobile satellite service providers to confirm that the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) services remained operational on barred terminals. The IMSO delegate reported that the technical verifications carried out, confirmed that notwithstanding limitations affecting non-GMDSS services, the GMDSS functions, including distress alerting, distress communications and search and rescue (SAR) coordination messaging, remain operational and accessible in accordance with the applicable IMO regulatory framework.

**20 CLOSING REMARKS BY SECRETARY-GENERAL.** In closing, the S-G stated that a number of outcomes had been delivered by the meeting:

- approval of the updated Risk Management Policy and its new Strategic Fraud Risk Management Annex, giving the Secretariat clearer tools to manage risk, whilst reinforcing a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption;
- adoption of a Council resolution reaffirming IMO's commitment to the protection of vital shipping lanes and the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation;

- the deserved recognition of Jeffrey Lantz and Peter Brady for outstanding service to the maritime industry; and,
- the posthumous award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea to Mr. Adrian Willyson Brask, whose courage and sacrifice will be remembered with the greatest respect.

The S-G thanked a total of seven representatives for their invaluable contributions to IMO's work, all of whom are concluding their time with the Council. He also expressed gratitude to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, together with every part of the IMO Secretariat, all of whom contributed towards the success of the meeting, including the interpreters whose skill made discussion possible across all six official languages.

End

Captain Paddy McKnight