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SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
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Agenda Item 13

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REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR ESTABLISHING THE SAFE MANNING LEVELS OF SHIPS

Trainee to be included as a mandatory requirement with the safe manning requirements

Submitted by India

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document proposes a mandatory requirement of trainee/s to be placed on board all ships under safe manning requirements
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 16
<i>Related documents:</i>	STW 37/18; MSC 81/25; resolution A.947(23) on Human Element Vision, Principles and Goals for the Organization

Background

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), endorsed the proposal of STW 37 and added a new item to its work programme and agenda for STW 38 “**Comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and the STCW Code**” with a target completion date of 2008.

2 MSC 81 also agreed to add a new item on the work programme and agenda for STW 38 “**Review of the principle for establishing the safe manning levels of ships**” with a target completion date of 2008.

3 BIMCO/ISF Manpower update indicates a worldwide shortfall of 10,000 officers or a 2% of the total workforce. Furthermore, even a modest increase in the number of ships in the future will require an additional demand for seafarers, which can only be met by increased recruitment and training. OCED countries have indicated difficulties being faced in developing suitable manpower for present and future ship manning. There is also evidence that demand for going to sea for new entrants from the developed world and in some cases from metropolitan cities of Asia, is diminishing.

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4 Within the STCW Convention there is a requirement that a candidate requires a minimum period of sea service before he/she can be assessed for a certificate of competency. This requires that he/she be accommodated in a ship as a “Trainee”.

5 It is interesting to note that in all the documents of the Organization there is very little mention of “Trainee”. Indeed, a search of the IMO Web site for the word Trainee returns just nine reference and these are not connected with any major Convention. Similarly IMO Resolution on Principles of Safe Manning does not address anything on Trainee. All the work of the Organization has been with respect to training requirements, its delivery and certification. Therefore, as a first step, the term “Trainee” itself has to be defined.

6 SOLAS regulation V/13 on Safe Manning Documents (SMD) requires the administration, on receipt of ship owner’s proposal, to arrive at a safe manning figure sufficient to make a proposed voyage safely. It is company’s responsibility to add extra manpower for specialized jobs such as repairs, maintenance, tank cleaning, etc.

7 Furthermore, SMD does not have the same importance as the Certificates issued under SOLAS Chapter I nor is there any consensus on number of minimum crew required to execute a safe voyage bearing in mind rest period requirements in force, extra work load due to radio communication and security concerns.

8 Other professions have a definite requirement for “Trainee” (under study) e.g. in civil aviation there are prescribed rules for “Trainee pilot”; in medicine it is almost mandatory for every doctor to be trainee – trainer throughout their working life, hospitals are obliged to have a certain number of trainees; practicing chartered accountants must induct interns to satisfy applicable licensing rules of accountancy practice.

Considerations

9 Notwithstanding Council’s decision in 1996 and supported by many Administrations in slowing down on new requirements coming from IMO, while a comprehensive review of STCW 1978 Convention (as amended) is inevitable to address the future needs of the industry, it is equally important is to address the issue of safe manning both qualitatively and quantitatively.

10 To ensure continued supply of new seafarers, the industry has been taking various steps and initiatives such as providing for long-term employment, career path, and higher studies often leading to degrees from University so that a seafarer could switch later to a new life ashore. It is also accepted that there is wide disparity in manning scales and wages prevailing.

11 While some administrations have been giving tax breaks to promote recruitment of new seafarers but this is not a uniform practice and does not help most of the merchant shipping in today’s multicultural crewing arrangements. Therefore mandating/recommending placement of “Trainee” within the SMD will be a step in the right direction.

12 The concepts of structured ship board training, ship board training officer, company training officer, trainee record book, trainer, assessor, etc. within the STCW Convention would have no meaning if there is no provision to have the trainees on board.

13 During the implementation of the 1995 amendments to the STCW Convention was to provide competent seafarers. This basic issue of Safe Manning and “Trainee” was not addressed as such.

Recommendations

14 While the Organization is undertaking a review of resolution A.890 (21), along with the review of the STCW Convention and the Code the definition of the term ‘trainee’ should be included.

15 Furthermore, India proposes that there should be a mandatory requirement for “Trainee” to be placed on board based on some agreed criteria such as number of crew approved in SMD, size/bhp of vessel, trade, length of voyage with a proviso that responsibility for placing trainees on board both in deck and engine department rests solely with the Company (linking STCW regulation I/14, SOLAS regulation V/13 and the ISM Code). However, various control provisions should provide that failure to place “Trainee” on board or shortage is not ground for detention *prima facie*. Continual failure could be dealt with in ISM audit.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

16 The Sub-Committee is invited to note the above information and decide as appropriate.
