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**REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY
RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

**CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR L'INTERVENTION
D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)**

**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**



7th Meeting of Focal Points of the
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency
Response Centre for the Mediterranean
Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.26/6
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Agenda Item 6

**OUTCOME OF THE 51ST AND 52ND SESSIONS OF THE
MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE (MEPC)**

Submitted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)

General

1 The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee held its fifty-first session (MEPC 51) from 29 March to 2 April 2004 and its fifty-second session (MEPC 52) from 11 to 15 October 2004. The reports of both sessions have been issued under the symbol MEPC 51/22 and MEPC 52/24. The outcome of these two sessions on matters of interest to the 7th Meeting of Focal Points is summarized hereunder.

OPRC-HNS

2 Having considered the reports of the first and second session of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, which meets the week before regular sessions of the Committee, MEPC 51 and MEPC 52, respectively, took action on matters related to preparedness, response and co-operation in cases of marine pollution by oil and hazardous noxious substances, as indicated below.

3 The *Guidelines on Bioremediation* which were developed by the OPRC/OPRC-HNS Technical Group were adopted at MEPC 51. The guidelines provide users with clear criteria to enable them to evaluate the circumstances in which to consider the use of bioremediation for shoreline clean-up. The document includes a summary of the most important bioremediation processes and decision-making criteria. MEPC 51 also adopted the revised Manual on Chemical Pollution - Section 2: Search and Recovery of Packaged Goods Lost at Sea. This Manual is expected to be available in published form by mid 2005.

4 At MEPC 52 the revised OPRC Model Training Courses (Introductory course and Levels 1, 2 and 3) were approved. MEPC 52 also approved draft *Guidelines on facilitation of response to pollution incidents* for submission to the 24th Assembly in November 2005 for adoption.

5 MEPC 52 agreed to the development of a joint IMO/UNEP Manual on Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Following Major Oil Spills, to be submitted for consideration at MEPC 53.

6 Additional items of the work currently being prepared for the upcoming meeting of the Technical Group, to be held in the from 11 to 15 July 2005, includes the development of an IMO Manual on Oil Spill Risk Assessment; a guidance document on contingency planning, hazard evaluation, assessment and response to marine chemical spills; a Training Course for HNS incidents;

and, web-pages providing information and assistance for HNS incidents and research and development information for response to oil spills. More detailed information is also being prepared by the Secretariat regarding the 3rd IMO/UNEP Forum, which is planned for October 2005.

Ballast water management

7 MEPC 51 agreed a plan of action for the development of guidelines, in preparation for implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (adopted in February 2004), including approval of ballast water management systems; sampling of ballast water and analysis for port State control; developing water management plans; ballast water exchange (operational and design and construction); sediments reception facilities; and sediment control on ships.

8 At MEPC 52 the *Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems* were finalized and the *Procedure for approval of active substances* were approved with a view to their consideration for adoption at MEPC 53 by an MEPC resolution. The development of other guidelines will continue at the Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) Sub-Committee and future sessions of the MEPC.

Recycling of ships

9 MEPC 51 considered further work on ship recycling following the adoption by the IMO Assembly, in November 2003, of resolution A.962(23) on IMO Guidelines on Ship Recycling.

10 A framework for inter-agency technical assistance was agreed and terms of reference for a Joint International Labour Organization (ILO)/IMO/Basel Convention Working Group were approved. The Group, which met from 15 to 17 February 2005, has undertaken a comprehensive initial examination of the respective guidelines adopted by the three Organizations, with a view to identifying any possible gap, overlap, or ambiguity.

11 At MEPC 52 it was agreed that certain parts of the IMO Guidelines on Ship Recycling might be given mandatory effect. It was also agreed that a "single list" of the potentially hazardous materials on board should be developed replacing the existing Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the IMO Guidelines and providing guidance on the identification of potentially hazardous materials on board ships and the preparation of the relevant inventories.

12 MEPC 52 approved the *Guidelines for the development of the ship recycling plan*, which provide further technical information and guidance for the preparation of a suitable ship recycling plan (SRP), as recommended in section 8.3.2 of the IMO Guidelines on Ship Recycling.

13 MEPC 52 also considered a proposal to establish an International Ship Recycling Fund with the aim of facilitating the technical co-operation activities for capacity building, training and the necessary funding mechanisms. It also agreed that ship recycling should be included in the future thematic priorities of the Organization's Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) with the aim of assisting developing countries to improve environment and safety level in ship recycling operations and that the Technical Co-operation Committee should consider further arrangements to establish a dedicated fund.

Revised MARPOL Annexes I and II

14 The revised texts of MARPOL Annexes I and II were approved at MEPC 51 and adopted at MEPC 52. The revised annexes are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2007.

15 The revised Annex I incorporates the various amendments adopted since MARPOL entered into force in 1983, including the amended regulation 13G (regulation 20 in the revised Annex) and regulation 13H (regulation 21 in the revised Annex) on the phasing-in of double hull requirements for oil tankers. It also separates, in different chapters, the construction and equipment provisions from the operational requirements and makes clear the distinctions between the requirements for new ships and those for existing ships. The revision provides a more user-friendly, simplified Annex I.

16 The MEPC also approved the revised *Unified Interpretations to the revised MARPOL Annex I* and a Circular on *Cross-reference lists between the "old" and "new" regulations of MARPOL Annex I* which is intended to facilitate familiarisation with the new numbering system of the revised Annex I.

17 The revised Annex II includes a new four-category categorization system for noxious and liquid substances and includes a number of other significant changes. Improvements in ship technology, such as efficient stripping techniques, has made possible significantly lower permitted discharge levels of certain products which have been incorporated into Annex II. For ships constructed on or after 1 January 2007 the maximum permitted residue in the tank and its associated piping left after discharge will be set at a maximum of 75 litres for products in categories X, Y and Z, as compared with previous limits which set a maximum of 100 or 300 litres, depending on the product category.

18 Alongside the revision of Annex II, the marine pollution hazards of thousands of chemicals have been evaluated by the Evaluation of Hazardous Substances Working Group, giving a resultant GESAMP¹ Hazard Profile which indexes the substance according to its bio-accumulation; bio-degradation; acute toxicity; chronic toxicity; long-term health effects; and effects on marine wildlife and on benthic habitats.

19 As a result of the hazard evaluation process and the new categorization system, vegetable oils which were previously categorized as being unrestricted will now be required to be carried in chemical tankers. The revised Annex includes, under regulation 4-Exemptions, provision for the Administration to exempt ships certified to carry individually identified vegetable oils, subject to certain provisions relating to the location of the cargo tanks carrying the identified vegetable oil.

Transport of vegetable oils

20 MEPC 51 adopted a resolution on *Guidelines for the transport of vegetable oils in deep tanks or in independent tanks specially designed for the carriage of such vegetable oils on board dry cargo ships*. The guidelines have been developed to allow general dry cargo ships that are currently certified to carry vegetable oil in bulk to continue to carry these vegetable oils on specific trades. The guidelines will take effect on 1 January 2007.

Consequential amendments to the IBC Code

21 Consequential amendments to the International Bulk Chemical Code (IBC Code) were also adopted at the session, reflecting the changes to MARPOL Annex II. The amendments incorporate revisions to the categorization of certain products relating to their properties as potential marine pollutants as well as revisions to ship type and carriage requirements following their evaluation by the Evaluation of Hazardous Substances Working Group.

22 Ships constructed after 1986 carrying substances identified in chapter 17 of the IBC Code must follow the requirements for design, construction, equipment and operation of ships contained in the Code.

Amendments to MARPOL 73/78 - Annex IV

23 MEPC noted that the revised MARPOL Annex IV containing regulations for the prevention of pollution by sewage from ships was formally adopted and is expected to enter into force on 1 August 2005.

Amendments to MARPOL 73/78 - Annex V

24 Amendments to the Appendix to MARPOL Annex V on Prevention of pollution by garbage from ships were adopted. The amendments relate to the recording of the disposal of cargo residues in the Garbage Record Book.

Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI

25 The MEPC further reviewed the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI that relate to the designation of the North Sea area as a "SOx Emission Control Area" and the introduction of the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification into MARPOL Annex VI.

¹ Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)

26 The MEPC made progress on developing draft *Guidelines on the CO₂ Indexing Scheme* and urged Members to carry out trials using the scheme and to report to the next session. One purpose of developing guidelines on CO₂ emission indexing is to develop a simple system that could be used voluntarily by ship operators during a trial period.

Identification and protection of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

27 MEPC 51 approved in principle the designation of three new Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs):

- The Baltic Sea area, except Russian waters;
- The Galapagos Archipelago (Ecuador); and
- The waters of the Canary Isles archipelago (Spain).

28 The proponents of the three PSSAs stated that they would submit detailed proposals for Associated Protective Measures (APMs) linked to the PSSAs to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) in 2005 for subsequent consideration by the MEPC.

29 MEPC 52 agreed to designate of the Western European Waters as a new PSSA.

30 Following MEPC 51 approval to review the current PSSA Guidelines, MEPC 52 agreed to establish a correspondence group, with the objective of clarifying, and, where appropriate, strengthening the current PSSA Guidelines (contained in resolution A.927(22)) with a view to adoption by the 24th session of the Assembly in late 2005.