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“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment”

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Introduction

It is a pleasure, and honour for me, to represent International Maritime Organization (IMO) on behalf of the IMO Secretary-General at this important Forum, today. It is particularly satisfying to be here, on my first visit to your city, a city renowned for its beauty, music and history.

The IMO, as most of you know, is the specialized agency of the United Nations with a global mandate for the protection of the marine environment from pollution caused by shipping, among other key functions such as maritime safety and security and, generally, the safeguarding of life at sea. Over the years, it has developed an extensive range of international conventions, supported by codes, guidelines and recommendations that govern every facet of the shipping industry.

However, IMO depends entirely on governments to implement and enforce the regulatory regime. It also depends heavily on the shipping industry to apply the standards to their ships and ultimately on shipboard personnel to put the standards into operation. At every step during and after adoption of the regulatory framework, IMO needs partners and champions. This is where OSCE comes into perspective in a critical fashion.

Since a large component of IMO’s work is geared towards sensitizing member governments to the need for implementing the regulatory framework through targeted capacity building activities and awareness raising, I will delve a little deeper into several

environmental issues illustrating how IMO uses co-operation with a large number of actors, and where OSCE could participate. This approach would help to achieve the ultimate goal of protecting the marine environment for generations to come – a goal more important than ever to avert future conflict, given the growing pressures of populations on limited resources.

IMO and Maritime Security Issues

Before I discuss environmental examples of co-operation, let me remind you of the first preconference, held last year in Helsinki, in which several elements of IMO's work were highlighted, particularly in relation to safety and security issues. The speed at which amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention were developed and adopted in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York demonstrated, in my mind, the power of international frameworks and co-operation. These amendments, produced sweeping changes to maritime and port security into the future and are now still being implemented through follow-up training, capacity building and the use of guidance documents.

As implementation of these important issues and of other security related matters will be dealt with later today in other sessions, I refer you for further in-depth details to an IMO Security Policy Background document made available by the Forum Secretariat. This was prepared by the Maritime Security Section of IMO – much of which can also be found on our website (www.imo.org).

Environmental Protection

Generally speaking, IMO discharges its commitment to protecting the marine environment from pollution at the global level along three different but mutually supporting paths: prevention, preparedness and response, and technical co-operation. By developing and adopting international treaties such as MARPOL and its mandatory Codes, which apply to, amongst other things, the prevention of accidental and operational discharges of oil from ships, and the OPRC Convention 1990, which addresses preparedness, response and co-operation for oil pollution incidents, Flag, Coastal and Port States are provided with the necessary tools to limit the introduction of oil and other unwanted pollutants into the marine environment and, where this is not possible, to effectively manage the consequences.

The International Convention for the Prevention of pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocols of 1978 and 1997 relating thereto, otherwise known as MARPOL, is the main international convention aimed at protecting the marine environment from operational and accidental pollution by ships. Its six Annexes regulate the prevention of marine pollution by oil; noxious liquid substances in bulk; harmful substances carried by sea in packaged form; sewage; and garbage, as well as the prevention of air pollution.

According to the provisions of MARPOL, vessels should be designed, constructed and operated in an integrated manner, with the objective of preventing and, ultimately, eliminating all harmful discharges and emissions throughout their working life. This holistic philosophy encompasses all vessel operations and their possible impact on the environment, and provides increased opportunities for transport managers to choose environmentally-sound sea-transport options.

I will now discuss several topics to provide for lessons learned and possible options for OSCE co-operation into the future – namely Invasive species transfer (Globallast partnerships), Regional oil spill response regimes, and the Marine Electronic Highway concept (MEH for short). I will aim to close by summing up specific areas in which OSCE could focus its attention.

More details about IMO's work on environmental issues are also provided in another background document circulated separately by the Forum Secretariat before the meeting. This was prepared by the Marine Environment Division of IMO – much of which can also be found on our website (www.imo.org).

Invasive species transfer

As was mentioned last year, at Helsinki, the transport of invasive aquatic species around the world in ships' ballast water is considered by IMO as one of the most serious environmental issues threatening countries and regions across the globe. At this very moment we are witnessing whole ecosystems changing. For example it was pointed that the European Zebra Mussel has infested over 40% of internal waterways in the United States and in the Black Sea, the North American jellyfish has, on occasion, reached such densities that it has depleted native plankton stocks in the Black Sea to the extent that it contributed to the collapse of commercial fisheries. This problem is exasperated by transfers of species via inland waterways.

IMO's work on ballast water management to tackle this global problem led to the adoption, in February 2004, of the Ballast Water Management Convention.

However, in a unique approach used before the new Convention was adopted, IMO joined forces with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement the Global Ballast Water Management Programme (GloBallast), with a view to assisting developing countries to reduce the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water, implement existing IMO Guidelines, and prepare for the implementation of the new Convention.

The project, which originally operated from 2000 to 2003/2004, has recently begun a new phase, entitled **GloBallast Partnerships**, the main objective of which is to assist particularly vulnerable countries and/or regions to enact legal and policy reforms to reduce the risk of aquatic bio-invasions mediated by ships' ballast water and sediments. Again, in a new innovative approach, IMO is harnessing in-kind contributions from

participating countries, regional co-ordinating organizations and strategic partners, including the private sector.

As part of this approach, IMO's has produced a documentary film, in conjunction with the BBC, to increase awareness and introduces the broad range of partners. This film, which will be available for viewing during the lunch-break, won a top award at a major documentary film festival in New York. Entitled *Invaders from the Sea*, it won the gold award in the category of "Best United Nations Feature" at this year's "Stories from the Field", the third annual United Nations Documentary Film Festival.

Ballast water species transfers continues to have a high profile in the work of the Organization as well as other vectors, such as via hull fouling, are being discussed in the upcoming IMO meeting in March 2008. OSCE is therefore invited to take an active role in further tackling this problem in the OSCE area through its political influence on governments to work together and support IMO in resolving this issue.

Oil Spill Response Regimes and International Co-operation

The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 (OPRC 90) is the international instrument that provides a framework designed to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing for, and responding to, major oil pollution incidents and to encourage States to plan and prepare by developing emergency response structures in their respective countries, and by maintaining adequate capacity and resources to address oil pollution emergencies.

Of interest to us here, and possibly the most important aspect of the OPRC 90 Convention, is the international co-operation dimension, which enables a Party to request international assistance from other State Parties and, at the same time, to facilitate the receipt of such assistance in-country by expediting the processing of incoming personnel and equipment through customs and immigration during an emergency.

The need for this has been, unfortunately, demonstrated in a drastic way late last year when a severe storm caused the sinking of several tankers and cargo vessels to sink in the Sea of Azov, causing an oil disaster to which the Black Sea Region had to respond. Not only was there loss of life, but a large area was affected by the oil spill which will take a long time to recover, placing an unnecessary additional burden on the communities in that area.

Through the provisions concerning regional arrangements, States are urged to develop bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements for preparedness and response. I draw attention to good examples in the OSCE region: the North and Baltic Seas, which I am sure we will hear more about later today. The countries bordering these seas have agreed to assist each other in the event of a major oil spill under regional arrangements in their respective regions and the associated regional contingency plan. There are, however, other areas that could benefit from an integrated regional response approach, particularly now that oil transports are increasing in these areas.

IMO strongly advocates and lends its support to such regional initiatives, often supplemented by the existence of regional centers, have proven to be highly effective in coordinating activities and efforts aimed at building capacity for and reducing the risk of major pollution incidents, in these areas.

It is noted that the OSCE can do more in this regard, in promoting ratification of the OPRC and its sister protocol the OPRC-HNS Protocol in the OSCE area, thereby giving you the maximum knowledge and capability to deal with future spills of oil or of hazardous and noxious substances in a coordinated and prepared way.

Marine Electronic Highway (MEH) Demonstration Project in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore

Implementation of the Marine Electronic Highway (MEH) Demonstration Project in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore was given the go ahead in June 2006 following the signing of a grant agreement between the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/World Bank and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The four-year regional demonstration project aims to link shore-based marine information and communication infrastructure with the corresponding navigational and communication facilities aboard transiting ships, while being also capable of incorporating marine environmental management systems. The overall objectives are to enhance maritime services, improve navigational safety and security and promote marine environment protection and the sustainable development and use of the coastal and marine resources of the Straits' coastal States, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

The MEH is being built upon a network of electronic navigational charts using electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) and real-time environmental management tools, all combining in an integrated platform covering the region that allows the maximum of information to be made available both to ships and shipmasters as well as to shore-based users, such as vessel traffic services.

In this project we see a co-operative approach involving the three coastal States, IMO, the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

The OSCE may wish to engage with the MEH project management team to explore options for possible use of this innovative use of technologies to improve environmental protection and security in it's area of influence.

Specific Recommendations for OSCE

Based on the foregoing, I suggest some specific areas of OSCE focus could include:

- Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) Status at the IMO to better engage in the meetings of the IMO;
- Engender, amongst political decision makers, the importance of environmental protection in marine waters and on their flagged vessels plying the oceans;
- Actively participate in delivery of capacity building of IMO regulations by identifying needs and providing delivery mechanisms through field presences;
- Co-fund on-ground training initiatives (ports, maritime management, contingency planning etc), remembering that some IMO Integrated Technical Co-operation Program funds are already earmarked for activities in the CIS/Eastern Europe region;
- Link into and benefit from the Globallast partnership program by facilitating the attendance of training events;
- Investigate instigating or least support the establishment of regional oil spill and HNS spill response arrangements/expertise in all semi-enclosed or closed seas in the OSCE area;
- Facilitate or encourage uptake of best management practices developed by IMO and others in OSCE countries and harmonize regulations and environmental standards;
- Use unique network of field presences to deliver IMO message and programmes; and
- Investigate if a marine electronic highway might be useful in the OSCE sea areas.

Finally, I am sure this Forum will provide us with an excellent platform to consider these and other new and interesting issues in greater detail and I look forward to fully engaging in that dialogue with you. I trust that this will provide food for thought on increased IMO and OSCE co-operation opportunities with a view to achieve mutual environmental and security outcomes.

So I shall stop here and take the opportunity to thank, once again, our kind hosts and to wish us all the very best for a fruitful Forum and a successful outcome.

Thank you
