In 2001, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) continued to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevent marine pollution from ships.

The IMO Assembly, the organization’s governing body, at its twenty-second session (London, 19-30 November), adopted 34 resolutions on measures and procedures to strengthen maritime security. It also elected a new Council for the 2002-2003 biennium.

In 2001, IMO membership increased to 160 with the admission of Comoros, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Activities in 2001

The IMO Council awarded the International Maritime Prize for 2000 to Heikki Juhani Valkonen, Director of the Maritime Safety Department of the Finnish Maritime Administration.

On 27 September, IMO observed World Maritime Day under the theme “Globalization and the role of the seafarer” and, at its London headquarters, unveiled an international memorial to the world’s seafarers.

Prevention of pollution

At its forty-sixth session (London, 23-27 April), IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee agreed to a timetable for the elimination of single-hull oil tankers by 2015 or earlier. The new phase-out timetable would enter into force in September 2002 and would be enshrined in a revised regulation of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78). New draft guidelines for designating environmentally important areas as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas were also adopted.

A diplomatic conference (London, 19-23 March) adopted the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, which would establish a liability and compensation regime for spills of oil carried as fuel in ships’ bunkers. The Convention applied to ships over 1,000 gross tonnage.

The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships was adopted in October. The Convention would prohibit the use of harmful organotins in anti-fouling paints used on ships and would establish a mechanism to prevent the potential future use of other harmful substances in anti-fouling systems.

Ship security and safety at sea

The IMO Assembly agreed to hold a conference on maritime security in December 2002 to adopt new regulations to enhance ship and port security and to reduce the possibility of shipping becoming a target for international terrorism. The Assembly also agreed to a significant boost to the organization’s technical cooperation programme of 1.5 million pounds sterling to help developing countries address maritime security issues, adopted a resolution dealing with the plight of asylum-seekers shipwrecked at sea, and recommended a comprehensive review of safety measures and procedures for the treatment of rescued persons. IMO began work on guidelines for cases where damaged or disabled ships required a place of refuge.

As at December 2001, parties to the revised Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers had risen to 102 States and one IMO associate member.

Secretariat

As at 31 December, IMO had 272 staff members, of whom 114 were in the Professional and higher categories and 158 were in the General Service category.

Budget