Chapter XIII

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

In 2003, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) continued to improve the safety and security of international shipping and protect the marine environment from pollution by ships.


In 2003, IMO membership increased to 163 with three associate members.

Activities in 2003

Prevention of pollution

In December, IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee adopted a revised, accelerated phase-out scheme for single hull oil tankers, along with other measures, including a new regulation banning the carriage of heavy grade oil in single-hull tankers. Those amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78), were expected to enter into force in April 2005.

IMO designated Paracas National Reserve, Peru, as a particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA). MARPOL 73/78 defined certain areas as PSSAs in which, for technical reasons relating to their sea traffic, the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of sea pollution was required. Other PSSAs included the Great Barrier Reef, Australia; the Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago, Cuba; Malpelo Island, Colombia; the area around the Florida Keys, United States; and the Wadden Sea, Northern Europe.

In May, a diplomatic conference held in London adopted a Protocol to the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971, establishing an International Oil Pollution Compensation Supplementary Fund, designed to increase levels of compensation to victims of oil pollution from oil tanker accidents. Total compensation payable for any one incident was limited to 750 million special drawing rights, just over $1.15 billion.

Ship security and safety at sea

During 2003, model courses and guidelines on maritime security were approved and an International Ship and Port Facility Security Code Database was established. IMO’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme assisted developing countries to contribute to the global effort to protect shipping from terrorist attacks.

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and subsidiary bodies continued to work on technical safety issues. In June, MSC adopted a revised annex to the 1988 Protocol to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966, which was expected to have a beneficial impact on the safety of bulk carriers in particular.

Secretariat

As at 31 December, IMO employed 276 staff members, of whom 123 were in the Professional and higher categories and 153 were in the General Service category.

Budget


NOTE: For further information, see the organization’s quarterly magazine, IMO News.

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