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MSC/Circ.900
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FRAUDULENT CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventieth session (7 to 11 December 1998), noted with great concern reports from Member Governments on a proliferation of fraudulent STCW certificates of competency and endorsements, or authentic certificates reportedly issued on the basis of forged foreign certificates, which had been found during port State control inspections and applications for recognition of certificates.

2 It was brought to the Committee's attention that a significant number of certificates of competency or endorsements have been issued by some Parties on the basis of certificates issued by another Party without sufficient verification of the validity of the original certificate or of the right of the individual concerned to hold the certificate. The Committee was concerned that such a development would undermine the objectives of the STCW Convention.

3 Recognizing the potential hazards and the consequences for the safety of life at sea and the protection of the marine environment posed by seafarers with fraudulent certificates and endorsements, the Committee invites Member Governments and STCW Parties to:

- .1 consider the matter and provide the Organization and the authority identified on the certificate or endorsement as the issuing authority with any relevant information on fraudulent certificates and endorsements which they encounter in the course of their work as flag States, port States or both;
- .2 act as provided in STCW article X and regulation I/4 in cases where there are clear grounds for believing that a certificate or endorsement has been fraudulently obtained or that the holder of a certificate or endorsement is not the person to whom that certificate or endorsement was originally issued;
- .3 take all possible steps in accordance with regulation I/5 to investigate cases and prosecute, or assist in the investigation and prosecution of, those found to be involved in the processing or obtaining of fraudulent certificates or endorsements, including the holders of such certificates or endorsements;
- .4 make available information on the status of certificates and endorsements as provided in STCW regulation I/9; and
- .5 intensify their efforts to eliminate the unlawful practices referred to above.