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THE BENEFICIAL IMPACT OF THE ISM CODE AND ITS ROLE AS AN INDICATOR OF SAFE OPERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Introduction

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-third session (27 November to 6 December 2000) and the Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its forty-sixth session (23 to 27 April 2001), being firmly convinced of the beneficial impact the ISM Code would have on enhanced safety and environmental protection, recalled the action taken by the Assembly and the two Committees to promote the Code's timely and effective implementation.

2 The Committees also recalled that the purpose of the Code is to provide an international standard for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention; and that it is the commitment, competence, attitudes and motivation of individuals at all levels that determines the end result in accomplishing the Code's objectives.

Safety-management system

3 The Committees further recalled that the safety management objectives of a Company complying with the ISM Code should, in addition to providing for safe practices in ship operation and a safe working environment, include a safety management system (SMS) which ensures:

- .1 compliance with mandatory rules and regulations adopted by the Organization;
- .2 that applicable codes, guidelines and standards recommended by the Organization, Administrations, classification societies and maritime industry organizations are taken into account; and furthermore
- .3 that procedures are in place for internal audits and management reviews.

Safety management audits

4 In recalling the ISM Code certification process relevant for the issuance of a Document of Compliance (DOC) for a Company, and Safety Management Certificate (SMC) for a ship, the Committees noted that safety management audits are required for initial, periodical or intermediate, and renewal verifications to demonstrate that the Company's safety management system meets the standard required by the Code.

5 The Committees further noted that the issue of the DOC and the SMC involves SMS audits by external organizations and, in addition, a Company's own internal audits which should be at least as thorough as the external SMS audit process.

Multiple inspection

6 The Committees, on being informed of the Secretary-General's initiative to address the problem of the proliferation of ship inspections by various interests representing flag and port States, insurers, cargo owners, charterers etc., agreed that one of the beneficial impacts of the effective implementation of the ISM Code would also be the reduction of the need for the number and scope of non-statutory inspections. In this connection, the Committees noted with satisfaction the improvement in safety and environmental protection derived from the implementation of the Code, as reported by insurers and others.

7 In order to limit, as far as possible, operational difficulties and the inconvenience caused to shipmasters and officers, as well as to the smooth running of their ships in port, due to the proliferation of inspections, the Committees urged the various interests engaged in ships' inspections to give greater recognition to the role of the ISM Code in ensuring a sound approach to the maintenance of safety and environmental protection.
