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IFSMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice



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Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in the IFSMA Newsletter are those of the various authors and providers of news and are not necessarily in accord with IFSMA policy.

Secretary General's Message

I am pleased to say that the ceasefire agreement in Gaza is holding for the moment and there have been no further incidents in the Red Sea by the Houthis rebels. At a recent Maritime Industry Security Threat meeting, it was agreed by all that it is still too early to resume the normal Suez Canal transits, although a few companies have returned. I will keep you informed on the progress. Events in the Black Sea remain very much as they were and it is relatively benign at the moment.

We have a busy time coming up at the IMO with both the Facilitation of IMO Instruments (FAL 49) and the Legal (LEG 112) Committees happening this month.



Some of the more important elements for us will be MASS and the qualifications of operators in the remote operations centres and guidelines for fair treatment of seafarers under arrest on suspicion of committing a crime. This is starting to get a bit more interesting from some elements of the industry and I hope that the ITF and ICS will be hosting a joint seminar on this later in the year. In the meantime, a few of the NGOs have got together and we have formed a Criminalisation of the Seafarer Working Group to see how we can put pressure on nations to stop the unfair criminalisation as was most recently seen in January with the sentencing to thirty years in prison for a Shipmaster and his Mate for smuggling drugs found in the cargo and no evidence was brought up in court to show their guilt. This is important work for the future of all seafarers so I will keep you informed of the progress we make.

Keep safe

Jim Scorer
Secretary General

Steam Yachts at War:

The Naval Deployment of British & American Armed Yachts 1898–1918

By Steve R Dunn

ISBN: 978 1 3990 5972 5

From the UK's northern town of Barnsley transport, naval and military publisher Seaforth (see here: <https://www.seaforthpublishing.com/>) has produced this fine work on a long-forgotten class of civilian ship which was taken up for war more than a century ago.

Over 240 pages supported by 160 colour and monochrome illustrations the story is told of how the luxurious steam yachts of the Victorian and Edwardian eras were transformed into warships.



The armed yacht Portia (1906) painted by W L Wylie. This watercolour shows Portia as an armed patrol vessel leaving Portsmouth Harbour, with a three stacker 'L' class destroyer on the same course between her and Camper and Nicholson's yard at Gosport on the left. HMS Victory is in stern view on the right at her usual mooring off the Clarence Victualling Yard. Portia, built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead, was hired into Admiralty service on 8 October 1914 and equipped with a 12pdr and a 6pdr gun. She was renamed Portia II in December 1915 and was returned to her pre-war owner on 1 April 1919.

Illustration: © National Maritime Museum. NMM PAF1139.

These beautiful vessels were the ultimate symbols of British and European wealth, from American magnates, the British landed aristocracy and the *nouveau riche*. When war came, in 1898 (the Spanish-America war) and the Great War to End Wars of 1914, the class was rapidly transformed into warships. It was not uncommon for the owners of the yachts to serve in

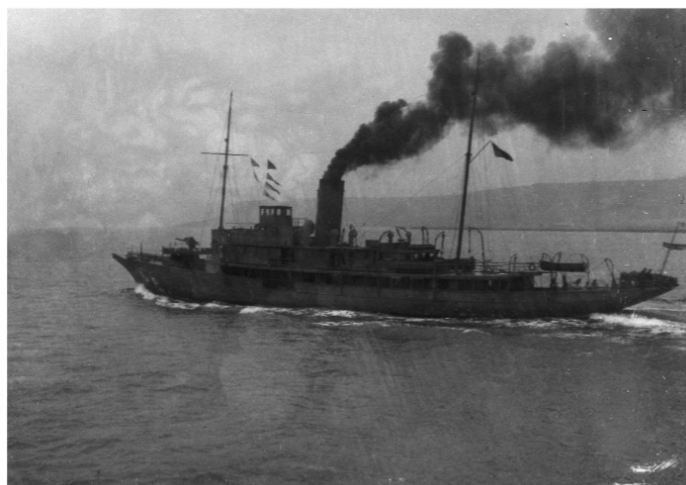
them, or to command them, once they had been taken into naval service. Their crew became naval ratings in some instances.

Yacht officers would be commissioned into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR). Steam yacht *Aries*, of 200 gross tons was owned by the Vice Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, George Godolphin Osborne, otherwise known as the Duke of Leeds. Before the Great War of 1914-1918 he had held the honorary rank of Captain in the RNVR and his yacht was one of the first to be taken into service with the duke serving in her in the North Sea.

The US Navy was the first to recognise the potential of these elegant vessels. In the Spanish-American war of 1898, the USN – short of ships to operate a blockade of Spanish-owned Cuba – purchased twenty-eight of them and turned them into patrol craft and bombardment ships.

In Britain in 1914 steam yachts became an improvised naval force making up for the shortage of previous investment in small craft. The USN followed suit in 1917. Yachts' beautiful interiors and furnishings were removed from hulls which were in turn fitted out with armaments, stored, manned, then commissioned.

Around the coasts of the Britain and France, in the Mediterranean and of the US and Canada, these fine vessels took up the offensive role to attack shore targets, fight surface warships and U-boats. They interdicted blockade runners, escorted convoys, were used as depot ships, served as hospital ships and undertook a host of other functions. In all, some 300 yachts were so employed.



Yachts were called up for service in the Second World War. Some had already served in the Great War of 1914-1918. This is Marynthea, renamed Conqueror in 1926, on patrol in 1939,

Illustration © National Maritime Museum N6772)

This new book, lavishly illustrated with photographs and plans of pre-war and wartime steam yachts from a world now lost to view, tells their story and the stories of the men who served in them. It examines their peacetime origins and development, describes their owners and designers, and considers their naval deployment, the conditions under which the crews lived and worked, the many and varied duties assigned to the yachts, and their successes and failures together with the losses sustained.

The steam yachts' story is told in eleven chapters supported by fleet lists and suchlike in six appendices, with lists of sources, titles for further reading and a valuable index. The eight plans provided demonstrate the range of steam yacht design.

Of the class one can but reflect on a few words from the author's preface here: *'Steam yachts became possible because of a concatenation of three factors.*

'Firstly, the development of a relatively small, reliable and powerful marine

steam engine as a result of the invention of the triple-expansion system.

'Secondly, the growth of yachting and the yacht club as places of status and

display, much favoured and patronised by British and European royalty.

'And finally, the very considerable wealth of a small number of landed aristocrats

and nouveau riche businessmen, especially in the United States of America.'

These vessels were the epitome of wealth and the symbol of standing, the Learjets of their day. Hugely expensive to build and run, fitted out like waterborne palaces, they gave their owners privacy, the ability to travel wherever they pleased without let or hindrance, and membership of an exclusive stratum of society. What better way than to provide a reserve fleet in time of war.

The IMO Digest

A summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

Illustrations per www.imo.org ©

Loss of seafarers in Odesa ship attack

IMO S-G statement

Secretary-General of the IMO Mr Arsenio Dominguez, issued a statement following an attack in Odesa on 11 March: *'I am deeply saddened to hear of the tragic loss of seafarers in the recent attack in Odesa, which has claimed the lives of four seafarers. My thoughts and condolences are with the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives, as well as those who were injured.*



'Seafarers ensure the continuous flow of essential goods that sustain communities worldwide. They must never become targets in conflicts beyond their control. We must reaffirm our collective commitment to their safety and well-being.

'I reiterate my call to all parties involved to work together to ensure that such acts of violence against innocent seafarers and shipping do not continue. International shipping should never become a casualty in the broader geopolitical landscape.

'The IMO remains committed to supporting efforts to improve the safety of all those who work in the global maritime industry.'

Strengthening port facility security

IMO Djibouti workshop

Local authorities in Djibouti have strengthened their port facility security plans (PFSPs) and improved the skills of personnel responsible for their implementation, following a maritime security workshop held in Djibouti City from 26 to 30 January.

Developing strategies

Delivered by IMO, the workshop focused on developing mitigation strategies to address security gaps, identifying necessary investments and costs, and evaluating risks to defend against threats such as smuggling, terrorism, and other criminal activities.

Broad participation

This workshop brought together twenty participants, including port facility security officers, port authorities, recognized security organizations, port security staff, national police officers, and facility managers from Djiboutian ports.

Opened by the European Union Delegation to Djibouti the event, supporting IMO's ongoing efforts to improve maritime safety and security in the region.

Participants discussed their roles in implementing Port Facility Security Plans, as outlined in provisions in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code*.

EU-funded programme

Ultimate goal of PFSPs is to safeguard human life, property, and the environment. Here the workshop was seen as the latest in a series being rolled out by the EU-funded Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area (Red Sea Project)**. The Red Sea Project is jointly implemented by IMO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Considering Africa's 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy

It is important to note that the initiative by these bodies seeks to help countries in the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden bolster maritime security and safety, directly contributing with Africa's 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy***.

Strategic position

Strategically located at the intersection of major international shipping lanes connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, Djibouti's ports play a critical economic role. Enhancing their security framework supports regional stability by reinforcing their role as a key maritime hub for trade and commerce in the Horn of Africa.

* <https://tinyurl.com/266u8c9x>

** <https://tinyurl.com/yt2e2m78>

*** <https://tinyurl.com/ytm53ywj>

and here as a pdf: <https://tinyurl.com/4nydvayu>

IMO and plastic litter:

A revised course of action

The IMO's Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) has agreed on the draft 2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships, with a view to its approval by the Marine Environment Protection Committee at its forthcoming session to be held from 7-11 April 2025 (MEPC 83).

This milestone was achieved along with other key outcomes at the 12th session of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR12), which was convened at IMO HQ in London from 27 to 31 January. The meeting was chaired by Dr Anita Mäkinen of Finland.

A summary of the meeting is provided here:

Revised Action plan to address marine plastic litter from ships agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed on the draft 2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships, with a view to its approval by the Marine Environment Protection Committee at its upcoming session (MEPC 83) on 7 to 11 April 2025.

The 2025 Action Plan* was prepared following a revision of the initial Action Plan approved in 2018, taking into account actions that had been completed since its approval. The actions included in the draft 2025 Action Plan are set for completion by 2030 and aim at the following main outcomes:

- Reduction of the contribution from fishing vessels to marine plastic litter.
- Reduction of shipping's contribution to marine plastic litter.
- Enhanced public awareness, education and seafarer training.
- Improvement of the effectiveness of port reception facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter.
- Improved understanding of the contribution of ships to marine plastic litter.
- Strengthened international cooperation.

The Sub-Committee updated the timeframes for the expected completion of the actions, grouping them according to short-, mid-, long-term and continuous actions.

Carriage of plastic pellets by sea

The draft 2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships includes a dedicated action for the development of mandatory measures to reduce the environmental risks of plastic pellets transported by sea in freight containers.

To inform future discussions on the legal framework for introducing such measures, the Sub-Committee developed a table outlining various considerations, including advantages, limitations and impacts relating to possible amendments to mandatory instruments linked to the carriage of plastic pellets by sea.

Reporting lost or discharged fishing gear

The Sub-Committee continued discussions around setting up a database hosted by IMO, to be used for reporting abandoned or lost fishing gear. The accidental loss or other exceptional discharges or losses of fishing gear from ships are a significant contributor to plastic pollution in the ocean.

The Sub-Committee endorsed the recommendation that data to be reported to IMO to fulfil Objectives 1 to

3 of the IMO database (as agreed at PPR 11) should include: ship particulars (such as name, length and type of vessel), event particulars (such as the position where the fishing gear was lost or discharged, date and time of the incident) and details about the fishing gear in question, noting whether it is mandatory or voluntary information.

Member States and international organizations were invited to submit written proposals on the specifics of the agreed data to be reported to IMO to a future session of the Sub-Committee.

Guidance on in-water cleaning of ships' biofouling agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to draft Guidance on in-water cleaning of ships' biofouling, together with an associated draft MEPC circular, for approval by MEPC 83.



In-water cleaning is the removal of biofouling from a ship's hull and niche areas while in the water. The draft guidance supports the 2023 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (2023 Biofouling Guidelines). It provides guidance for the safe planning and execution of in-water cleaning operations, as well as the design and performance of in-water cleaning systems, while addressing risks to the environment and ship coatings.

2023 Guidelines for the development of the Inventory of Hazardous Materials – amendments approved

The Sub-Committee approved draft amendments to the 2023 Guidelines for the development of the Inventory of Hazardous Materials and the associated draft MEPC resolution, with a view to adoption by MEPC 83 and implementation prior to the entry into force of the Hong Kong Convention on 26 June 2025.

The draft amendments to the 2023 Guidelines clarify the relevant threshold values in respect to cybutryne when samples are directly taken from the hull or when samples are taken from wet paint containers.

Black Carbon emissions in the Arctic

The Sub-Committee discussed the concept of 'polar fuels' as a category of fuels aimed at contributing to a

reduction of the impact on the Arctic of Black Carbon emissions from international shipping. A proposal for, including characteristics that would address challenges faced during oil spill response in cold water conditions, was also considered.

The Sub-Committee invited Member States and international organizations to submit concrete proposals on the 'polar fuels' concept to its next session (PPR 13), which could be supported by scientific studies and findings from Black Carbon measurement campaigns using the measurement reporting protocol set out in the Guidelines on recommendatory Black Carbon emission measurement, monitoring and reporting (resolution MEPC.394(82)).

Development of regulatory measures and instruments concerning the discharge of discharge water from Exhaust Cleaning Gas Systems (EGCS)

The Sub-Committee continued discussions on developing possible regulatory provisions on limitations/restrictions of the discharge of discharge water from EGCS, also known as scrubbers, having noted that the consideration of a global total ban on the use of EGCS was outside the scope of this output.

The Sub-Committee invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit new concrete proposals on regulatory measures addressing discharges of EGCS discharge water to PPR 13, reflecting latest available data and taking into account work conducted so far.

Emission factors for use in the environmental risk assessment of the discharge water from EGCS

The Sub-Committee finalized terms of reference for the GESAMP Task Team on Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS), for approval by MEPC 83, and invited MEPC 83 to reestablish the GESAMP Task Team to carry out the following activities:

- Compare various methods for achieving a representative set of emission factors with universal geographic application. Emission factors enable ports and port States to complete a key step in developing EGCS-related environmental risk assessments.
- Evaluate best practices for developing the data sets and methods.
- Evaluate considerations for calculating emission factors.
- Propose a standard methodology for development of the data sets and calculation of the emission factors for a representative and universal set of emission factors, including best practices.
- Report on any sets of emission factors determined using the methodology developed by the GESAMP Task Team on EGCS.
- Submit a report on its findings to PPR 13.

The Sub-Committee requested MEPC 83 to extend the target completion year of this output (1.23) to 2026.

Guidelines on Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) systems approved**

The Sub-Committee approved the draft 2025 Guidelines on Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) Systems and the associated draft MEPC resolution, for adoption by MEPC 83. SCR systems are a type of device used to reduce NOx emissions, in line with section 2.2.5 of the NOx Technical Code 2008 (NTC 2008).



The draft 2025 SCR Guidelines update the 2017 SCR Guidelines to remove ambiguities and ensure consistent application, while reflecting the latest developments in the industry.

The approved draft MEPC resolution further states that the Guidelines will be kept under review in light of experience gained with their application, with a view to incorporating them into the NOx Technical Code 2008.

Interim guidance on the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes by conventional bunker ships agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to draft Interim guidance on the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes by conventional bunker ships, along with the accompanying draft MEPC circular. These will be submitted to MEPC 83, with a view to approval.

The guidance allows conventional bunker ships certified for carriage of oil fuels under MARPOL Annex I to transport blends of not more than 30% by volume of biofuel, as long as all residues or tank washings are discharged ashore, unless the oil discharge monitoring equipment (ODME) is approved for the biofuel blend(s) being shipped.

Revision of MARPOL Annex IV to improve the lifetime performance of sewage treatment plants

The Sub-Committee re-established the Correspondence Group on Revision of MARPOL Annex IV and Associated Guidelines, to progress the work intersessionally and report back to PPR 13.

Key tasks in the Correspondence Group's terms of reference include:

- Further develop the draft revised MARPOL Annex IV with regard to the Sewage Record Book (SRB) and Sewage Management Plan (SMP), with a view to finalization at PPR 13.
- Continue the development of the draft revised MARPOL Annex IV apart from the work above, as appropriate.
- Further develop draft amendments to the 2012 Guidelines on implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants (Type Approval Guidelines).
- Further develop the draft guidelines on the implementation of MARPOL Annex IV for sewage treatment plants (Implementation Guidelines).
- Develop draft guidance on obtaining data with regard to the quality of treated sewage effluent.

IMO S-G's opening and closing remarks at PPR12

The Secretary-General's opening remarks at PPR 12 on 27 January are to be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/3cpdvc5u>

His closing remarks of 31 January are available with the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3auusp3r>

* <https://tinyurl.com/ydkedjh4>

** <https://tinyurl.com/2p9uazhv>

HTW 11

IMO S-G's welcome and farewell comments

At the eleventh meeting of the IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 11) held from 10-14 February Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez delivered an address at the commencement and closure of the session and here we publish highlights.

WMD theme

At the opening of the meeting on 10 February he referred to the World Maritime Day theme for 2025, ***Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity***. The theme contributes directly to the development and implementation of IMO's robust global regulatory framework to ensure cleaner seas.

He emphasised that the Organization, its Member States and the maritime industry have a central role in ensuring that the marine environment is protected and that ocean resources remain sustainable. He commented: *'In order to achieve all this, we must not forget to enhance training and education, as these are fundamental to achieving these goals.'*

Net-zero GHG emissions target

Secretary-General Dominguez drew attention to the fact that IMO had set an ambition to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping by, or around, 2050. He added: *'This ambition must be taken*

as a commitment that highlights the urgency of developing training provisions for seafarers. And I am pleased to note that MSC 108 agreed to fast-track the development of training provisions for seafarers on ships which use alternative fuels and new technologies.



This Sub-Committee, he pointed out, was in a position to lay the groundwork for any future developments as the whole GHG strategy progresses. At the same time it would see a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code in view of the extensive list of gaps identified during the Intersessional Working Group held in October last year demonstrating the commitment of the maritime community to ensuring a thorough and robust process.

On 14 February at the closure of the session the Secretary-General highlighted some of the most important results of the Sub-Committee's work.

Successful completion

The Sub-Committee had completed phase 1 (review/identification of gaps) of the comprehensive review, in particular, it finalized the list of gaps identified in the STCW Convention and Code. In addition, arrangements for the conduct of phase 2 (revision) of the comprehensive review had been agreed.

Concerning the development of training provisions for seafarers using alternative fuels and new technologies, the Sub-Committee finalized draft Generic Interim Guidelines, and progressed development of draft fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines, in particular on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel.

Concerning the continuous work on model courses, five model courses have been validated at this session.

Tributes

The Secretary-General thanked the Chair, Mr Haakon Storhaug of Norway for his successful week with the Sub-Committee in which he demonstrated excellent diplomacy and leadership skills to steer its affairs.

He also thanked the Chairs of the Working and Drafting Groups convened during this session for their commitment and cooperation to progress the Sub-Committee's work. He also paid tribute to the delegates and observers for their valuable contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee and IMO.

NextWave Seafarers Project

Bridging the global seafarer gap

IMO and Saudi Arabia accord

A groundbreaking initiative led by the IMO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) aims to address the global seafarer shortage while creating career opportunities for aspiring seafarers from developing nations.

The NextWave Seafarers Project was formally launched with the signing of a Letter of Agreement between Mr Kamal M Al Junaidi, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the IMO and Mr Jose Matheickal, Director of the Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division (TCID) of IMO.

The signing (reported by IMO on 13 February) was witnessed by IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, with senior representatives from the Transport General Authority (TGA) of KSA and Bahri Shipping Line (www.bahri.sa) in attendance.

A game-changer for global seafarer training and recruitment

Running from 2025 to 2026, the NextWave Seafarers Project will provide twenty cadets from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with one year of onboard training through Bahri Shipping Line, one of Saudi Arabia's leading maritime companies.



The goal is to develop a scalable training model that can be adopted globally, encouraging more countries and shipping lines to participate.

The Project aims to:

- Establish a sustainable, onboard cadet-training framework to develop, upskill, and retain future seafarers.
- Address key barriers preventing LDCs and SIDS cadets from entering the industry, including access to training placements and financial support.
- Promote gender diversity by actively encouraging women cadets to join the programme.
- Showcase the initiative as a pilot model that can be expanded and replicated worldwide.

Tackling a global workforce challenge

With 1.9 million seafarers ensuring the movement of over 80% of global trade, the maritime industry faces an urgent workforce challenge, particularly a shortage of officers, as demands on maritime transport grow.

Through its cooperative framework between IMO, Member States and shipping companies, the NextWave Seafarers initiative provides a proactive solution by creating a structured talent pipeline and a steady influx of skilled professionals into the sector.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez stressed the importance of strengthening the maritime workforce: *'The future of the global shipping industry depends on its people, and this initiative has the potential to transform maritime careers for young seafarers worldwide.'*



IMO Secretary-General Mr. Arsenio Dominguez (right) welcomed the NextWave Seafarers pilot project and encouraged other countries to join.

Mr Kamal M Al Junaidi, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the IMO, highlighted the Project's broader vision adding: *'Through this initiative, we aim not only to train the next generation of seafarers but also to lead and inspire other nations and shipping companies to adopt similar programmes.'*

A call to action: Expanding global participation

The NextWave Seafarers Project invites IMO Member States, training institutions, and shipping companies to collaborate in expanding this initiative and building a skilled, diverse, and resilient maritime workforce.

Designed as a proof of concept, the project's outcomes will be shared with IMO Member States to shape future policy recommendations, enhance global seafarer training frameworks, and contribute to long-term maritime workforce planning.

IMO will issue a circular letter to Member States in due course requesting nominations of cadets from LDCs and SIDS through their respective maritime administrations. The circular letter will explain the criteria for selection and mode of participation in the training programme.

For more information on this initiative readers are invited to contact the Director of the Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division (TCID) at the IMO Secretariat with this e-mail link: tcid@imo.org

Ghana: Greener shipping National Action Plan

On 14 February IMO reported that Ghana had commenced work to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping, in line with IMO's GHG Strategy*.

Spearheaded by the Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) in collaboration with the IMO's GreenVoyage2050 Programme, the initiative was kickstarted at a national workshop in week commencing 9 February in Accra, bringing together government officials, industry leaders, and academics.

GMA D-G

GMA Director-General Dr. Kamal-Deen Ali hailed the event as a defining moment for Ghana's maritime sector, stating: *'By developing a National Action Plan, we are laying a clear path towards sustainable shipping. We are taking this exercise seriously and will work closely with stakeholders to ensure it is comprehensive and inclusive.'*

He added: *'With engagement of our national stakeholders and the continuous technical support from IMO and our development partners, we are poised to make meaningful progress in reducing emissions and enhancing our maritime industry's resilience.'*

Extensive range of topics

More than 50 participants engaged in interactive sessions exploring key policy actions across shipping, ports, and energy sectors. Discussions focused on securing financing, strengthening regulations, and boosting capacity-building initiatives to support seafarers and maritime administrators in implementing the NAP and transitioning to low- and zero-carbon shipping.



Dr Ali emphasized the importance of strong partnerships for Ghana to tap into the expanding maritime job space: *'As our population grows, so do opportunities in the maritime sector. The green revolution is happening, and we must join it – not only to reduce emissions but also to unlock economic opportunities and drive sustainable growth.'*

Ghana's leadership

Astrid Dispert, GreenVoyage2050 Programme Manager at IMO, underlined Ghana's leadership in the region: *'Ghana's commitment to a National Action Plan demonstrates strong leadership in embracing this transition and leveraging economic opportunities. Through collaboration and strategic investments, Ghana can bridge the gap in meeting future demands for green jobs and skilled seafarers.'*

Of the next generation

Beyond policymaking, the GreenVoyage2050 team took its message to the next generation, engaging over 600 students at Accra High School and 75 university students at the Regional Maritime University. Sessions highlighted the growing demand for maritime decarbonisation professionals, encouraging students to consider careers in this evolving field.

During a visit to Tema Port, discussions centred on regional cooperation to optimize port operations, reduce congestion, and thereby cut emissions from ships.

GreenVoyage2050 Programme

GreenVoyage2050 is a major technical cooperation programme initiated by the IMO to assist developing countries in reducing GHG emissions from shipping, aligning with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy.

Phase I of GreenVoyage2050 (2020-2023) supported partnering countries in developing policy frameworks and pilot projects to reduce GHG emissions from ships.

Phase II (2024-2030) continues and expands this support, leveraging funding from the Governments of Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway.

* <https://tinyurl.com/2xcxr2x2>

Ships using alternative fuels

Interim generic guidelines in seafarer training

IMO's Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) has agreed on draft interim generic guidelines for training seafarers working on ships powered by alternative fuels and new technologies. These draft guidelines will be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee for approval in June.

Meeting in London from 10 to 14 February, the Sub-Committee (HTW11) recognized the industry's growing need for such guidance due to the increasing use of alternative fuels and the associated safety risks. The Sub-Committee agreed that such guidance should be provided through both:

- Generic interim guidelines applicable across the whole industry and relevant to all alternative fuels and new technologies.
- Individual sets of fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines, closely aligned with safety provisions developed by other IMO bodies.

With the draft interim generic guidelines finalized, the Sub-Committee has now begun developing specific training guidelines for seafarers working on methyl/ethyl alcohol-fuelled ships.



This effort will continue inter-sessionally under the Correspondence Group on the Development of Training Provisions for Seafarers on Ships using Alternative Fuels and New Technologies.

Development of fuel-specific training guidelines

The Correspondence Group has been tasked with developing interim training guidelines, including individual sets of guidelines for:

- The use of methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel, taking into account MSC.1/Circ.1621 on Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel.
- The use of ammonia as fuel, taking into account MSC.1/Circ.1687 on Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using ammonia as fuel.
- Hydrogen fuel cell powered ships, taking into account MSC.1/Circ.1647 on Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using fuel cell power installations.
- The use of LPG as fuel, taking into account MSC.1/Circ.1666 on Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using LPG as fuel.
- The use of hydrogen as fuel.
- Battery powered ships.

The Correspondence Group will submit a report on its progress to the Sub-Committee at the forthcoming 12th session of the Sub-Committee (HTW 12).

Other key outcomes of the HTW 11 meeting

In addition the development of these interim guidelines for training of seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies, the Sub-Committee addressed several other important matters:

- Completion of Phase 1 of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, with a work plan agreed for Phase 2.
- Draft MSC resolution on the accessibility of information on seafarer medical certificates and recognized medical practitioners.
- Validation of revised model courses for seafarer training.
- Reports on fraudulent certificates.

Readers requiring more details are invited to read the full HTW 11 meeting summary by the link here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2vpb32d4>

Preparing African countries for IMO audits

Regional training

In the third week of February a regional training course designed to strengthen the implementation of IMO treaties in African Member States was concluded in Tunis.

Thirteen States represented

The course, organized by IMO and the Tunisian Ministry of Transport, provided essential training to representatives from thirteen African nations* to prepare for audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS)¹.



This training programme focused on equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct and undergo IMSAS audits. Such audits assess how effectively Member States apply key IMO treaties related to maritime safety, environmental protection, and seafarer training.

Evolution of IMSAS

Participants received comprehensive instruction on the history and evolution of IMSAS, the Framework and Procedures of the Scheme, and the latest guidance for Audit Officers. They were trained in audit methodology, drafting statements of findings and observations, and other preparations to help them qualify for nomination to the IMSAS Auditors' roster.

Seven-year cycle of mandatory audits

All IMO Member States are required to undergo a mandatory audit within the seven-year audit cycle involving up to twenty-five Member State audits per year.



It is reported that since the mandatory phase of the scheme began in January 2016, 140 audits have been completed, covering approximately 80% of IMO Member States.

* Participating countries were: Benin, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/4bawe4kj>

Greenhouse gas reduction from shipping

IMO progress

International efforts to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping took a step forward as the IMO's Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 18) concluded its latest round of discussions on 21 February, having convened on 17 February.

Adoption of mid-term measures

IMO's 2023 GHG Reduction Strategy¹ commits Member States to adopting mid-term measures to reduce GHG emissions from ships in late 2025, including:

- A technical element, namely a goal-based marine fuel standard regulating the phased reduction of a marine fuel's GHG intensity.
- An economic element, on the basis of a maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism.

The Intersessional Working Group continued discussions on proposals for these measures, using the draft text for an IMO net-zero framework² agreed

at the last meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee MEPC 82³, as the basis.

Integrating input and proposals

This draft text integrates inputs and proposals from Member States and international organizations on possible amendments to be made to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL, Annex VI). These amendments, if adopted, would incorporate the proposed mid-term measures into the treaty, which has 107 Parties representing 97% of world merchant shipping tonnage.



The aim of the week's discussions was to further develop and streamline the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI⁴.

Key topics covered

Key topics covered include global marine fuel intensity regulations, the economic mechanism's structure, organizational and operational aspects of the proposed IMO Net-Zero Fund, revenue disbursement, and potential food security impacts.

The Working Group agreed to keep all proposals for an economic element (GHG emissions pricing mechanism) under consideration and acknowledged potential bridging options suggested by some Member States.

To redefine amendments

Efforts will continue toward defining amendments to MARPOL Annex VI that could achieve consensus approval at the next session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83) due to take place from 7 to 11 April 2025.

Delegations reaffirmed their commitment to continue exploring possible ways to converge their positions and find common ground.

Consolidating areas of agreement

After reviewing the draft IMO net-zero framework, the Chair, in consultation with the Secretariat, prepared an

updated version of the proposed MARPOL Annex VI amendments. This version consolidates areas of agreement and introduces new possible bridging options for further discussion. It will be annexed to the Group's report to MEPC 83 as a work-in-progress, without pre-empting future changes, and will be further considered at the 19th meeting of the Intersessional Working Group of 1 to 4 April 2025), ahead of MEPC 83.

1 <https://tinyurl.com/mr2ne2bm>

2 <https://tinyurl.com/2fs3rcux>

3 <https://tinyurl.com/2fs3rcux>

4 <https://tinyurl.com/3xdkuwvpv>

IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment

(SSE 11)

On 24 February at IMO HQ in London IMO Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez delivered an opening address at the commencement of the Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE 11) session.

In welcoming delegates he referred to the 2025 World Maritime Theme ***Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity*** as resonating strongly with the work of the Sub-Committee, which contributes directly to the development and implementation of IMO's robust global regulatory framework to ensure safer seas, thereby contributing to environmental protection.

Of the agenda to which the Sub-Committee would be working the Secretary-General drew attention to several important matters, in particular with regard to life-saving appliances and fire protection.

Containership fire safety

A significant task was the consideration of containership fire safety, which provides an opportunity to address growing concerns coupled with the increasing sizes of containerships.

He noted that this work had been progressing based on the CARGOSAFE* formal safety assessment, focussing not only on ship systems and equipment, such as fixed water monitors and smoke detection on deck, but also on cargo-related issues.

Electric vehicle fires

Another important fire safety matter is the consideration of risks associated with ships carrying new energy vehicles, particularly battery-powered electric vehicles.

Recent reports underscore the urgent need to evaluate and enhance current fire protection, detection, and extinguishing arrangements in vehicle, special category, and ro-ro spaces. The sub-committee would see here a pivotal opportunity to consider goal-based safety approaches, to review scientific studies, and to identify regulatory gaps to

ensure that ships are better equipped to manage these emerging risks.

Free-fall lifeboat release systems

Moving on to life-saving appliances matters the Secretary-General said he was confident that the sub-committee will finalize the work on design and prototype test requirements for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboat release systems. This work is essential to ensure that operational testing can be conducted safely and effectively without launching the lifeboats, thereby reducing the risks exposure of crew, while maintaining the integrity of life-saving equipment.

Testing of LSAs

Further progress was expected to be made on the review of resolution MSC.402(96) on maintenance, testing and repair of survival craft and their appliances. This review is crucial to address the practical challenges encountered in the implementation of these requirements, ensuring the continued safety and reliability of life-saving appliances across the maritime industry.



Progress was anticipated on the revision of SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code,

paramount to modernize and to enhance the standards governing life-saving appliances and procedures. This revision, guided by a goal based standards approach, aims to ensure that functional

requirements and expected performances are clearly defined to address identified hazards, at every phase of emergencies requiring the abandonment of a ship, from the alert to the rescue.

To close

At the close of the meeting on 28 February Mr Dominguez reflected: *'We have come to the end of another productive session of the Sub Committee.'*

The Secretary-General went on to highlight some of the most important results of the Sub- Committee's work during the week.

This included:

- Finalization of the draft amendments to the LSA Code and associated instruments on design and prototype test requirements for the arrangements used in simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats.
- Finalization of the revision of Code of practice for atmospheric oil mist detectors (MSC/Circ.1086), which will be considered by MSC 110 for approval.

Significant progress was also made on:

- Revision of SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code.
- Development of amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS Code concerning containership fires.
- Measures to reduce the fire risk of ships carrying new energy vehicles.
- Comprehensive review of resolution MSC.402(96) (Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear) to address challenges with their implementation.

Mr Dominguez concluded by saying: *'All these outcomes have been achieved under the new and skillful Chairmanship of Mr Eguro of Japan, supported by your Vice-Chair, Mr Aliperta of Palau.'*

*For more on CARGOSAFE see here: <https://tinyurl.com/mrbf6589>

IMO in the Pacific

Supporting marine casualty investigations

Pacific countries have enhanced their capacity to conduct marine casualty investigations following a technical IMO training course held in Nadi, Fiji from 17-21 February.

Under IMO instruments, a flag State is required to investigate very serious marine casualties* and others, as defined by relevant conventions, occurring to any of its ships. The flag State must also report these findings to IMO through the GISIS online hub for shipping-related data.

The goal of such investigations is to help determine potential enhancements to current regulations as well as remedial actions to enhance the safety of seafarers and passengers and the protection of the marine environment.

Twenty-six participants representing thirteen countries** in the Pacific received training on key aspects, including the role of a marine casualty investigator, the concept of marine casualty and the responsibilities of States. Delegates were introduced to investigation procedures, mandatory standards, risk assessments, addressing the human element, conducting analysis and reporting methods.

This course marks IMO's first-ever technical training event of its kind in the Pacific, organized in cooperation with the Government of Fiji, the Pacific Community (SPC), Australian Transport Safety Bureau and the Transport Safety Investigation Bureau (TSIB) of Singapore.

* <https://tinyurl.com/3akv2b78>

**Participating countries: Cook Islands; Fiji; Kiribati; Nauru; New Zealand; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Marshall Islands; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Bangladesh: Ship recycling and hazardous waste laws

Draft amendments to update Bangladesh's ship recycling and hazardous waste management legislation have been developed through the IMO's SENSREC¹ project, with the aim of aligning the industry with international environmental and safety standards.

Review of amendments

The proposed amendments were presented and reviewed during a high-level workshop held in Dhaka on 16 February. This was attended by key stakeholders in government and the private sector. They seek to bring the country's shipbreaking sector in line with the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (the Hong Kong Convention)², as well as key provisions of the Basel³, the Rotterdam⁴ and the Stockholm Conventions⁵.

SENSREC

Organized by IMO's Safe and Environmentally sound Ship Recycling (SENSREC) Project, the workshop gathered 85 participants from across the Bangladeshi shipbreaking and recycling industry. High-level officials, including three government ministers, took part in the event.

Adviser to the Ministry of Shipping Mr Sakhawat Hossain and Adviser to the Ministry of Industries Mr Rahman Khan both expressed their commitment to developing Bangladesh's ship recycling industry, while stressing the need to address environmental performance and worker safety.

Tougher penalties

Adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest, Climate Change and Water Resources, Ms Rizwana Hasan called for enhanced monitoring of sustainability efforts and tougher penalties to enforce safety laws and prevent accidents and injury to the workforce.



Draft document due

Comments from the workshop will be incorporated into a draft proposal by the Ministry of Industries. The final draft will then be circulated to relevant government ministries for final comment before submission for approval.

Norwegian funding, IMO Leadership

The SENSREC initiative, funded by the Government of Norway (represented by Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh, HE Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen at the event) and led by the IMO, aims to support developing countries in implementing the Hong Kong Convention and promote sustainable practices in ship recycling.

¹ <https://sensrec.imo.org/>

² <https://tinyurl.com/5amy7csv>

³ <https://www.basel.int/>

⁴ <https://www.pic.int/>

⁵ <https://www.pops.int/>

IMO and Red Sea SAR coordination

Maritime authorities and rescue coordination centres in the southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are working to strengthen regional coordination and boost their search and rescue capabilities, with IMO support.

To enhance maritime safety and security

A Regional Search and Rescue (SAR) workshop in Mombasa held from 24-28 February focused on enhancing maritime safety and security in the region, with participants sharing experiences, challenges and best practices in SAR operations.

Discussions covered the latest developments on SAR procedures, techniques and equipment, including recent amendments to SOLAS¹ Chapter IV

regulations, related to modernizing the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)² and the recognition of new mobile satellite services.

Broad representation

Seventeen officers, radiocommunication experts, marine engineers and Port State Control officers from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen took part, alongside representatives from the EU Mission in Somalia (EUCAP), reinforcing IMO's efforts to bolster coordination in maritime rescue operations.



The Red Sea Project

The activity was delivered as part of the EU-funded Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area ('Red Sea Project')³. Under the Project, IMO works with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to support participating countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.



Capacity building

The goal is to improve the capacities of port and land-based law-enforcement authorities in these countries to implement global maritime security and safety standards, while also promoting regional dialogue at the operational-level, based on sound maritime domain awareness (MDA). These efforts align with the objectives of Africa's 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS)⁴.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/mryd93vf>

² <https://tinyurl.com/4yckeb42>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/yt2e2m78>

⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/ybp9fvt4>

International Women's Day

IMO spotlights gender data gap

On 7 March IMO marked International Women's Day (observed on 8 March each year) with a call for action to close the gender data gap in maritime and secure a more inclusive future for women in the sector.

During a special event held at IMO HQ in London IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez emphasized the role of institutions and allies in tackling gender data bias, including through effective policies and practices.

S-G's comment

Mr Dominguez said: *'There is a lot more that institutions can do in bringing down the barriers and continue to highlight our role in gender equality. This is not a process that should be led by women without men participation.'*

'We are here to support women's rights within organizations and in the global shipping sector – to be mentors, to give women a voice, to support and advocate for women's leadership.'

Keynote address

Writer, broadcaster and feminist activist Caroline Criado Perez, author of *Invisible Women*, delivered an inspiring keynote, tracing her journey from scepticism to activism.

Sharing examples from her research, she explained how deeply embedded gender bias is in data thus: *'The male body is often positioned as the 'default,' while the female body is seen as needing explanation, as atypical. This bias is deeply embedded across history, from language to medical research to protective equipment design.'*

She advocated for systemic change to address women's needs. Collating disaggregated data in all sectors can provide a baseline to support decision-making and further action.



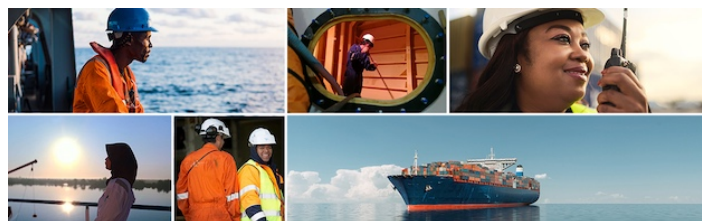
Ms Criado Perez added: *'You can have all the data in the world, but if you are not considering it from a sex and gender perspective, you are going to miss really important insights.'*

At IMO the event aligned with the UN's International Women's Day¹ actions which this year focused on the theme, **For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.**

Commitment to Gender Equality

IMO remains dedicated to advancing gender equality and diversity within the maritime sector. The forthcoming results of the 2024 Women in Maritime survey² in May 2025 will provide valuable insights into fostering inclusivity.

Additionally, the long-standing IMO gender programme³, established in 1988, continues to drive progress and support women in achieving representation aligned with modern expectations.



Gender equality and diversity are key priorities in the Secretary-General's agenda, who maintains his commitment to only participating in panels with gender-balanced representation and has urged continued efforts to create an equitable and inclusive maritime industry.

18 May International Day for Women in Maritime

IMO's dedication to gender equality and diversity is reflected in initiatives such as the International Day for Women in Maritime⁴, celebrated annually on 18 May. This day highlights the vital contributions of women in the industry, while promoting their recruitment, retention and sustained employment in maritime.

IMO is committed to creating a maritime industry and workplace where Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion⁵ are not just goals but a reality.

Through a variety of programmes and initiatives, the Organization strives to cultivate an environment that values diverse perspectives, ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of background.

1 <https://tinyurl.com/2t5sdxyd>

2 <https://tinyurl.com/2ewb86j6>

3 <https://tinyurl.com/yjcshvef>

4 <https://tinyurl.com/yxe6jux2>

5 <https://tinyurl.com/4c6kpbv6>

Africa's \$3.4 trillion opportunity:

Turning vulnerabilities into resilience

It was reported jointly from Abidjan and Geneva on 10 February that Africa has the potential to become a major driver of global trade and economic growth.

The 2024 *Economic Development in Africa Report*, launched that day by UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan and Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of Trade, Industry and SME Promotion Souleymane Diarrassouba, highlights how bold policy reforms and strategic investments can strengthen Africa's

resilience to global shocks and create new economic opportunities.

In the words of Rebeca Grynspan: *'Africa faces serious challenges - from volatile global markets and high debt costs to infrastructure gaps.*

'But these challenges are also a chance to reshape the continent's economic future. With bold reforms, investment, and full implementation of the AfCFTA, Africa can emerge stronger, more resilient, and more competitive.'

Africa's reliance on commodity exports, high trade costs, and weak infrastructure make it highly vulnerable to external shocks. The report identifies key areas for action:

Reducing dependence on volatile markets, lowering costs, strengthening SMEs

Close to half of African countries rely on oil, gas, or minerals for at least 60% of export earnings, exposing them to price fluctuations. Diversifying exports and boosting intra-African trade will create more stable revenue streams.

Infrastructure gaps in transport, energy, and ICT make trade 50% more expensive than the global average, limiting competitiveness - especially for landlocked nations. Investing in logistics and digital connectivity is critical to unlocking growth.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) provide 80% of employment across Africa but struggle with weak infrastructure, currency volatility, and limited financial access. Expanding credit, risk-management tools, and regional supply chains will boost their resilience.

Unlocking the potential of regional trade

Intra-African trade remains one of the continent's greatest opportunities, but it accounts for just 16% of total exports, with most trade still directed outside the continent.

The full implementation of the AfCFTA could create a \$3.4 trillion market, but unlocking this potential requires investing in infrastructure by expanding transport, energy and ICT networks, streamlining trade policies and processes such as customs and supporting industrialization through, for example, incentive tax breaks and affordable interest loans can boost manufacturing and regional production.

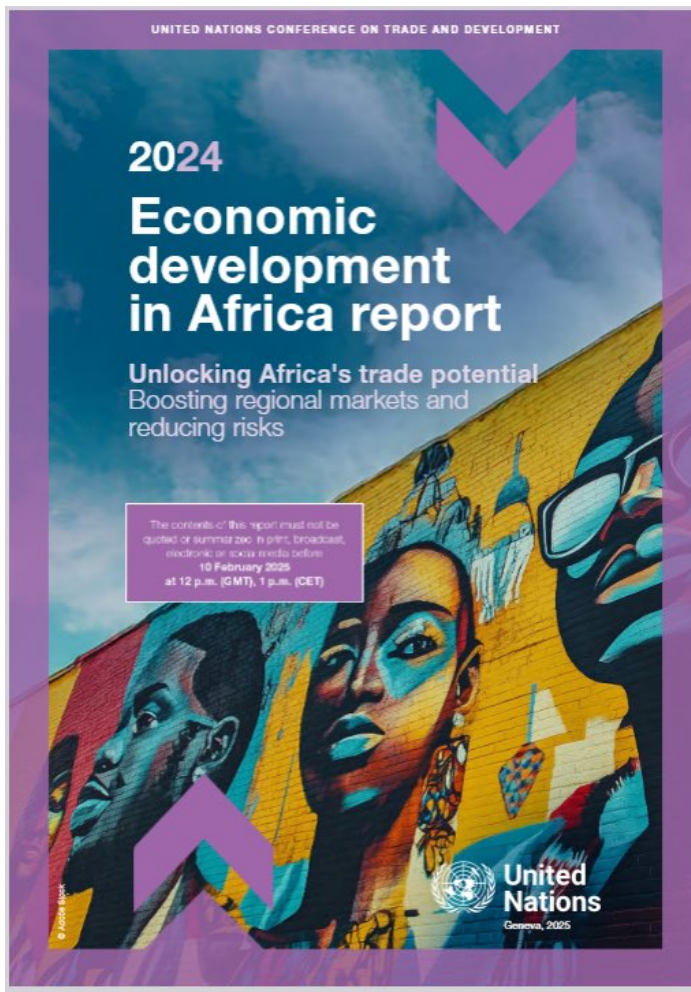
Policy actions for a stronger future

UN Trade and Development's *Economic Development in Africa Report 2024* outlines key strategies to turn challenges into opportunities:

- Incentives for industrialization: Tax breaks, lower capital costs, affordable interest loans to firms investing in manufacturing and production for regional markets.

- Risk-management mechanisms: Establishing regional funds and early-warning systems for trade-related risks, pooling public and private resources for contingency planning and insurance.
- Crisis-response facilities: Creating trade finance mechanisms to support businesses affected by global shocks, helping them pivot to regional markets and maintain jobs.

With the right policies, the UNCTAD Report goes on, Africa can strengthen economic resilience, reduce reliance on external markets, and drive inclusive growth. The path forward lies in turning vulnerabilities into lasting opportunities through bold reforms, regional collaboration, and strategic investment.



Highlights relative to shipping indicate that logistical services, or trade logistics, refer to the services and infrastructure necessary to support and facilitate the movement of trade from point A to point B.

Many players involved

The key logistical services and infrastructure consist of Customs and border clearance facilities and services, the quality and appropriateness of trade and transport infrastructure, such as roads, ports and storage facilities; the accessibility and costs of international shipping; the quality of services provided by fourth-party logistical service firms; the infrastructure and information and communications technology (ICT) skills to track and trace shipments

(by digitalization of trade) and the reliability of transport services.

Dependence on foreign-owned shipping companies

Although shipping is included in logistical services, it is necessary to discuss it as a separate item or dimension of vulnerability in Africa. The bulk of its trade with the rest of the world depends largely on foreign-owned shipping companies.

UNCTAD maritime transport indicators show that in 2021, ports in developing economies of Asia handled 59% of world port container traffic, compared with 4% of those in Africa.

Benefits of the Africa Free Trade Area

The 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy of the African Union recognizes these vulnerabilities in shipping and liner connectivity, and in 2012, set forth an agenda to extend the capabilities of Africa in shipping, recognizing the need for better ports and shipping to allow countries in the region to reap the potential benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

In this regard documents indicate that maritime transport has significant potential in Africa, given its large geographic area, projected freight volumes and customs and trade policies currently being pursued. However, such a system requires additional impetus in terms of strategy, policy and infrastructure.

More ships needed

UNCTAD reports that Africa will require close to 2 million additional trucks, over 100,000 rail wagons, 250 aircraft and more than 100 vessels by 2030, if the African Continental Free Trade Area policy is to be fully implemented.

The report

The UNCTAD report *2024 Economic Development in Africa* is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yjatrcza>

About UN Trade and Development:

UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is dedicated to promoting inclusive and sustainable development through trade and investment. With a diverse membership, it empowers countries to harness trade for prosperity.

Inhospitable havens

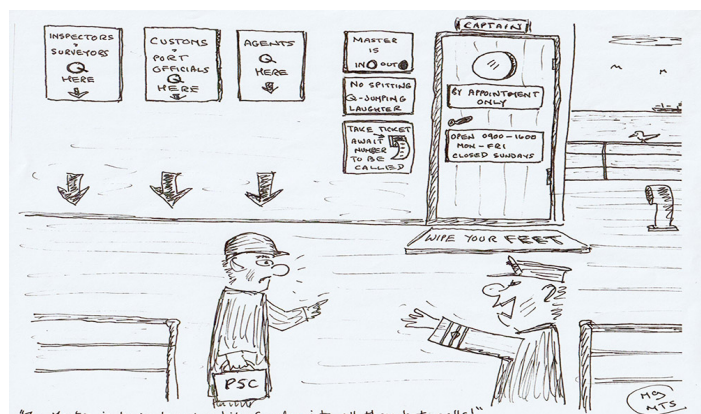
By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

"Unfriendly natives" – it said, recalling a previous visit, but the Old Man, worrying about the reaction of the pilot, demanded that the Third Mate erase this scurrilous observation, even though he subsequently agreed with its accuracy. It is not the first time they have featured as a source of seafarers' exasperation, but ports and their official (and officious) inhabitants

are noted in the latest Seafarers' Happiness Index as one reason for its fall in satisfaction.

The safe arrival in port after a sea passage might mark an interval in, or even the conclusion of, a voyage, but is, more often than not, a reason for stress and unpleasantness for those aboard ship. High-handed behaviour by port authorities, immigration, customs and others who consider they have a perfect right to march aboard and demand instant attention from people who, unlike them, have had no rest for many hours and many different responsibilities will be familiar to most aboard ship. People stamping up the gangway looking for faults and reasons to detain, fine and prosecute the ship for failure to obey its complex, inconsistent and arcane bylaws.

A general lack of courtesy, with often unrealistic expectations of the visiting ship – the ship is never right – being a regular observation. The ship, it has been often pointed out, is the “customer” of the port, which like any old retailer or service supplier, would not even exist without their “footfall”, but is rarely treated as such. Even your friendly agent, which once would be firmly on your side and pointing out all the pitfalls, will be also working for the charterer, firmly favouring the latter, possibly even conspiring against you and your interests.



Then, there are places where shore leave is prohibited, because it is so much easier to just say “no!” than to facilitate some arrangement that will allow a few crew members who can be spared their duties to get to the shops. Ships’ crews will be regarded as a downright nuisance and an interference to the smooth running of the port, or terminal.

Their welfare is “nothing to do with us.” And even if such liberty is permitted, the practicalities in the shape of distance, an absence of any affordable transport, required documentation, bureaucratic procedures or hostile gatekeepers might combine to put off even the most adventurous of souls. Small wonder that there were reports that seafarers were enjoying the longer sea passages around Africa, because of the Houthi pirates’ closure of the Red Sea. A longer interval between ports was something to be welcomed. It is not exactly an original observation, but the happiness of seafarers might be thought of as collateral damage from 9/11 and the hastily formulated ISPS Code, an explosion in the smuggling of narcotics, and the waves of illegal immigration. Covid, with the seafarers identified in the minds of the authorities as

international transmitters of disease, scarcely helped, either.

The ports, of course, will tell you of their responsibilities in law, for security and health and safety, and you clearly cannot have individuals wandering around ports and terminals with deadly machinery hard at work. It is often too much of a fuss, it will be patiently explained, to put in place arrangements that will enable a couple of seafarers to be safely taken to and from the terminal gate. An even bigger ask to try and run a bus service into town, when there are not enough customers to make the service viable. It is invariably easier to spell out the reasons for not doing something – maybe (remember this from Covid) they can get ashore at the next port.

I recall listening to the master of a ship talking about how the very best results come from the ship and its systems working in harmony with the port and terminal and its systems, but also noting how rarely this happened. But it is not too much to ask that visitors are treated with consideration and politeness; how many busy officials ashore would expect to be given immediate attention, without so much as an appointment?

It was many years ago that I was given the information and “welcome” pack that was provided by the Port of Ghent for all visiting ships, which offered comprehensive information for crews, which included bus timetables, travel arrangements, retail opportunities, location of welfare facilities and the like. I’m sure that there are other ports which will also make such an effort, but this was impressive. It was not a surprise that the then Chief Executive of the port was a master mariner, who clearly knew the significance of this gesture and the probable appreciation of its recipients.

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Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd’s List*

The Role of the Human Element

Skills and training related to MASS

During the eleventh meeting of the IMO Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping Sub-Committee (HTW11) held at IMO HQ from 11 to 14 February discussions turned to the subject of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS).

Here the agenda concerned MASS trials with the officer of the navigational watch (OOW) acting as sole lookout in periods of darkness.

With respect to the proposal in documents MSC 107/5/5 (Germany et al.) and MSC/ISWG/MASS 2/6 (Liberia), relating to the OOW as the sole lookout in periods of darkness during MASS trials, the Committee agreed to instruct the HTW Sub-Committee, as a priority, to consider the

aforementioned documents with a view to advising the Committee accordingly.

In connection with the above, the delegation of Greece expressed its general support for the Committee's work on this matter, but also iterated its concern over having an officer of the navigational watch acting as sole lookout in periods of darkness during MASS trials, as this would adversely affect the safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment. MASS trials should, therefore, be conducted following the principles of safe watchkeeping set out in the STCW Convention.

IFSMA argued strongly along the lines of the statement of Greece that this should not be allowed for a matter of safe watchkeeping set out in the STCW Convention. During trials it is important that consideration be given to additional manning to avoid distracting the other key bridge watchkeepers.

IFSMA made the following statement: *'Chair, IFSMA, representing Shipmasters thanks Germany, Kingdom of the Netherlands, ICS and Liberia for their papers MSC 107/5/5 and MSC/ISWG/MASS 2/6. These papers have caused much discussion since their introduction at MSC 107.*

'In plenary, there was a clear majority who were against this proposal to reduce the watchkeepers on the bridge at night to solely the OOW. Nevertheless, the Chair stated that this was not a majority issue and that it should be taken forward in the MSC Working Group on MASS and make recommendations for the Committee, but because of the congested programme there was no time for further discussion.

'Chair, IFSMA would contest that despite the improvements in technology over the years this has barely kept pace with the increased degree of complexity and congestion in the maritime environment that our seafarers encounter today.

'In fact, recent research has highlighted the increase in GPS and AIS distortion and disruption, radar multiple blind sectors and interference by false targets and RADAR/ECDIS multi-path errors.

'In addition, communication distortion and disruption on SATCOM, VHF, UHF and mobile phone G4 and G5 base stations is also likely. In this scenario we are discussing the trials of new and innovative technology for MASS taking over from human lookouts and yet this proposal is trying to get us to remove the very lookouts that should be checking the ability of the new technology to be at least as good as their human equivalent.

'In this scenario it could easily be argued that these trials require an increased number of lookouts in order to be able to do a thorough analysis of these new technologies whilst maintaining the safety of the ship and the marine environment.

'There will need to be constant communication with the ROC overseeing the trials to ensure a proper risk assessment of the electronic maritime picture and that the picture is a true reflection of reality and of the

visual observers. Once these MASS trials have been rigorously conducted, completed and reported over time to MSC, then, and only then, can an assessment of the need for the number of lookouts be considered.

'Chair, agreeing to the proposal in these two papers for the OOW to be the sole lookout is a dangerous and, some might say, a reckless step which will endanger both seafarers and the marine environment alike. Thank you, Chair.'

Following IFSMA's intervention the EU stated their support for the German Paper. IFSMA was supported by ITF, RINA and NI with other EU nations Norway, Poland, Netherlands and Finland supporting the EU. The Sub-Committee noted that its advice should focus on its scope of work, that is to say the applicability of the STCW regulation I/13 to the conduct of MASS trials and, therefore, any further possible actions and decisions would be made by the Committee, as appropriate.

Following the discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed to advise the Maritime Safety Committee that STCW regulation I/13 applied to the conduct of MASS trials.

Regulation I/13 of the 1978 STCW Convention allows an Administration to authorize ships entitled to fly its flag to participate in trials. That may be experiments or a series of experiments, conducted over a limited period. This may involve the use of automated or integrated systems in order to evaluate alternative methods of performing specific duties or satisfying particular arrangements prescribed by the Convention. Here would be provided at least the same degree of safety, security and pollution prevention as provided by these regulations. However, this equipment cannot be verified unless there are lookouts to check the equipment.

This topic will be further considered at MSC (MSC110 to be held at IMO HQ from 18 to 27 June 2025).

Engine room fires

Remaining a major concern

GARD has seen five fires originating in the main and auxiliary engines in the first month of 2025 alone. Tragically, some of these fires resulted in fatalities and serious injuries to seafarers. While it is too early to draw any conclusions about the rest of the year, it may be helpful to review GARD's experiences from recent years. Although the main cause of these fires may not be identical, there are certain similarities in the underlying patterns of the fires.

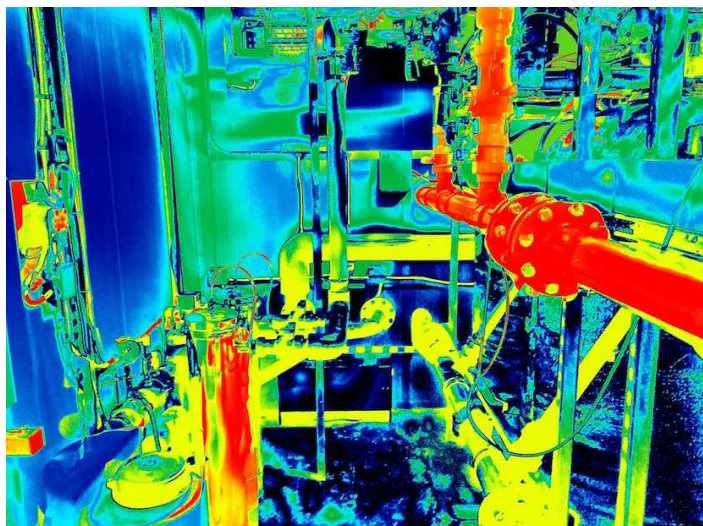
With the title *Engine room fires are still a major concern* a GARD paper has been written by Siddharth Mahajan, Kim Watle, Svend Leo Larsen and published in mid-February there is an extensive article on this subject to be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/25buayhm>

Every year fires on board ships lead to loss of life and severe damage to the ships themselves. Most fires on board ships originate in the engine room where the

three ingredients for a fire, namely fuel, oxygen and a source of ignition, exist in abundance. These do not only start the fire but also feed and intensify it further. Fire safety is not only about detecting and fighting a fire, but also about preventing it from igniting in the first place.

The GARD paper considers how these fires can be prevented. It touches upon some of the main causes of engine room fires and explore insights from GARD's claims data to understand the frequency of such fires before setting out some recommendations on how to mitigate the risks of these fires occurring.



Picture credit: www.gard.no ©

A review of Gard's hull and machinery (H&M) claims for the years 2017-2024 related to fires and explosions on vessels, shows that nearly 60% of all such fires originated in the engine room. Nearly two thirds of these engine room fires occurred on the main and auxiliary engines or their associated components such as turbochargers. The majority of these incidents were caused by a failure in a flammable oil system, most often in the low-pressure fuel oil piping, allowing spray of oil onto an unprotected hot surface. Below is an example from our claims portfolio.

To close, the GARD paper provides recommendations which can help owners, managers and their crew reduce the risk of such fires occurring.

Finally, in the article GARD have provided additional information that may assist appreciation of engine room fires. Gard documentation can be found at www.gard.no or is available on application. These items deal with fire safety onboard ships – a continuous cause for concern and case studies concern: (i) Engine room fires and failure of fixed fire-fighting systems and (ii) Use of fixed carbon dioxide fire extinguishing systems.

Other sources are Class Societies, IMO and others. For example: DNV paper: *Engine room fires - causes, contributors and preventive measures by DNV*.

IMO papers: MSC.1/Circ.1321: *Guidelines for Measures to Prevent Fires in Engine Rooms and Cargo Pumps*

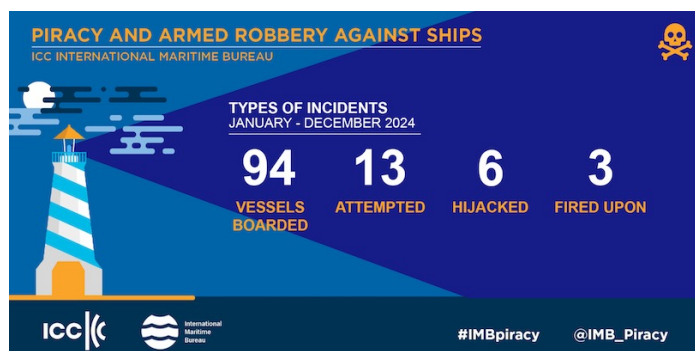
USCG's Marine Safety Alert *Fuel Spray Fire - Déjà Vu Prepare and Prevent it from Happening to You!*

The Nordic Association of Marine Insurers' (Cefor) Fire Trend Analysis: <https://tinyurl.com/3f9c46xx>

Piracy 2024 review

The ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has reported a decline in global maritime incidents and piracy in 2024 but urges continued caution as crew safety remains at risk.

The IMB annual Piracy and Armed Robbery Report recorded 116 incidents against ships in 2024 compared to 120 in 2023 and 115 in 2022. It reveals that 94 vessels were boarded, 13 attempted attacks, six vessels hijacked and three fired upon.



Caution urged

While the number of reported incidents in 2024 remains similar to those reported in 2023 and 2022, IMB urges caution to promote crew safety given an increase in the number of crew taken hostage or kidnapped – from 126 taken hostage in 2024 compared to 73 in 2023 and 41 in 2022. Twelve crew were reported kidnapped, compared to 14 in 2023 and two in 2022. A further 12 crew were threatened and one injured in 2024.

The reported use of weapons also continues to rise. In 2024, guns were reported in 26 incidents compared to 15 in 2023. Knives were reported in 39 incidents in 2024, compared to 42 incidents in 2023.



Comment

ICC Secretary General John W.H. Denton AO said: 'While we welcome the reduction of reported incidents, the ongoing threats to crew safety remain a significant concern. Safeguarding routes and ensuring

the security of seafarers, who are essential to maintaining global commerce, is vital.

'Every effort must be made to protect lives at sea while ensuring the seamless flow of goods through international supply chains. This requires a collaborative effort, with continued regional and international naval presence being crucial to this endeavour.'

Crew safety at risk in Gulf of Guinea

Activity remains relatively lower in the Gulf of Guinea with 18 incidents reported in 2024, compared to 22 in 2023, 19 in 2022, 35 in 2021 and 81 in 2020. However, crew members continue to be at risk, with the region accounting for all 12 kidnapped crew and 23 % of the total number of crew taken hostage in 2024.

East Africa

In East Africa, at least eight incidents were reported, including the hijacking of two fishing vessels and a bulk carrier in the first half of 2024. IMB encourages vigilance and adherence to the recommendations in the latest Best Management Practices.



IMB Director Michael Howlett said: *'Despite the restrained activity, there is no room for complacency as ongoing threats to crew safety highlight the importance of continued caution. Masters and vessel operators are strongly encouraged to strictly adhere to all recommendations in the Best Management Practices while transiting the Gulf of Guinea and waters off East Africa.'*

A rise in weapons and incidents in Southeast Asian waters

Incidents in the Singapore Straits continue to rise with 43 in 2024 compared to 37 in 2023 and 38 in 2022. The 2024 IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery report reveals that 93% of vessels targeted were boarded and 11 large vessels over 100,000 deadweight tonnage (DWT) were targeted in this strategically important seaway.

Hostages taken

Harm to crew continued, with 13 taken hostage, five threatened and one injured during the incidents. While considered low-level opportunistic crimes, the use of guns and knives increased to eight and 19 in 2024 respectively, compared to three and 15 in 2023. Most

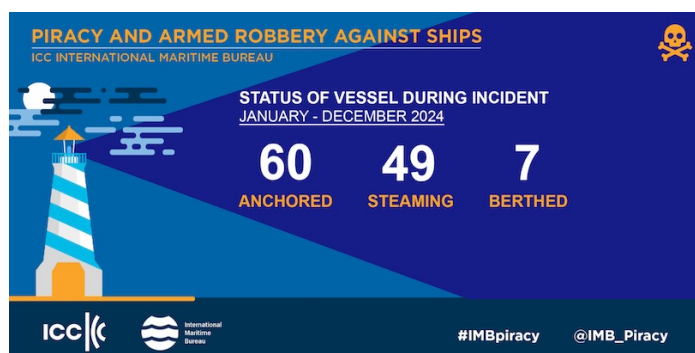
incidents were reported during the hours of darkness and while vessels were underway.

The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) has also expressed concern of late reports as well as under reporting, by vessels being boarded in these waters.

Howlett added: *The increase in use of weapons and the late and under reporting by vessels are areas of concern. We continue to urge vigilance and strongly encourage the timely reporting of all incidents, as the optimal way of providing a clearer understanding of the risks and safety measures to take.'*

Indonesian increase...

A year-on-year increase in reported incidents has been observed in the Indonesian archipelago, up from 10 in 2022 and 18 in 2023 to 22 in 2024. While 20 incidents remain under the definition of armed robbery, two fall under the definition of piracy.



In these two incidents, crew members were taken hostage for the duration of the incidents. Overall, 31 crew were taken hostage and one threatened. Knives were reported in 10 incidents and guns in three.

...and Bangladesh

The highest number of incidents in a decade was reported at anchorages in Bangladesh. IMB recorded 14 incidents in 2024, of which 13 were onboard ships anchored at Chattogram and one at Mongla anchorage. Two crew were taken hostage and a further three threatened. Knives were reported in seven incidents.

About the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

Since its founding in 1991, IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre has served as a crucial, 24-hour point of contact to report crimes of piracy and lend support to ships under threat. Quick reactions and a focus on coordinating with response agencies, sending out warning broadcasts and email alerts to ships have all helped bolster security on the high seas. The data gathered by the Centre also provides key insights on the nature and state of modern piracy.

Advice to shipmasters and owners

IMB encourages all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected global piracy and armed robbery incidents to the Piracy Reporting Centre as a vital first step to ensuring adequate

resources are allocated by authorities to tackle maritime piracy.

The 2024 report

To request a copy of the 2024 *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships* report readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2w242xy2>

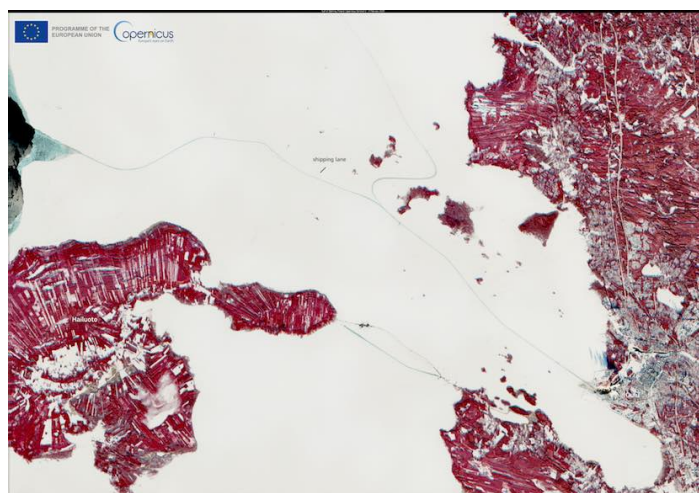
To report an incident

To report an incident shipmasters and owners will find this link of use: <https://tinyurl.com/s5bx28pw>

Copernicus over the Gulf of Bothnia

This image, acquired by one of the Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellites on 3 February, shows shipping lanes in the Gulf of Bothnia in the Baltic Sea, near the city of Hailuoto, Finland.

Winter in this area can be complicated as a result of the presence of sea ice, which affects the Gulf of Bothnia for six months* in a year on average. During this time icebreakers are required in the gulf to keep ports open.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-2 imagery. EU ©

The Arctic region is warming four times as fast as the rest of the globe and its vulnerability needs to be carefully monitored. The EU's updated Arctic policy, aims to help preserve the Arctic, to support the sustainable development of Arctic regions.

Data from the Copernicus satellites allows for accurate and frequent monitoring of Arctic regions. In particular, the Copernicus Arctic Hub** provides data and information related to the Arctic, including data on sea ice coverage. The Hub supports evidence-based decision-making and sustainable management of this crucial region by delivering insights on shipping routes, the effects of climate change, and more.

* <https://tinyurl.com/3ua3b7p2>

**The Copernicus Arctic Hub provides access to data and information in the Arctic. Readers can explore interactive maps and thematic use cases and empower decision-making and sustainable practices.

For more see here:

<https://www.arctic.hub.copernicus.eu/>

Fatal crash at sea

Ship's master and operator sentenced

Sentences have been passed on the master and management company of a UK-registered cargo vessel following a fatal crash off the south coast of Sweden in which two sailors died.

Two crew members on the Denmark-registered *Karin Hoj* lost their lives when it was struck by *Scot Carrier* and capsized in the Bornholmssundet strait during the early hours of 13 December 2021.

At Southampton Crown Court 14 February Judge Peter Henry sentenced both Intrada Ships Management Ltd, which operated *Scot Carrier*, and Sam Farrow (33), of Tower Hamlets, London, who was master of *Scot Carrier* on the night of the incident.

Sentencing, Judge Henry said: '*This was an accident waiting to happen.*' He fined Intrada £180,000 and ordered costs of £500,000.

Farrow was sentenced to eight months' jail, suspended for twelve months, with £25,000 costs.

The prosecutions were brought by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), with assistance by authorities in Sweden and Denmark.

The case against Farrow was that he had not taken safety action despite being aware that his Second Officer was failing to meet his duties as officer-of-the-watch on the bridge of *Scot Carrier*.

Ahead of the collision, the Second Officer was alone and had consumed alcohol while chatting to people online on his tablet computer. Navigation alarms were switched off and he was unaware *Scot Carrier* was gaining on *Karin Hoj*, a split hopper barge.

Farrow pleaded guilty to failing to operate a ship in accordance with the safety management system, under Regulation 7 of the Merchant Shipping (International Safety Management Code) Regulations 2014.



Karin Hoj's upturned hull, showing azimuth drive units at the stern.

Photo: MAIB.

The MCA's case against Intrada was that it had previously been made aware of officers-of-the-watch undertaking their duty alone on some of its ships – against regulations and guidance – but had failed to take preventative action.

Intrada was found guilty at a four-week trial at Southampton Crown Court of failing to operate a ship safely, under Section 100 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

Sentencing, Judge Henry said: *'The failure to provide lookouts was the undoubtedly the single biggest failure, but the failure properly to oversee and enforce bridge discipline amongst the crew introduced additional distractions from the safe operation of the vessel which aligned to create the hole in the model and led directly to the collision.'*

UK MAIB report 2023/5

The incident was reported on by MAIB here: <https://tinyurl.com/yuzypwvf>

At IFSMA

At IFSMA we reported on this accident in Newsletter No 69, October 2023, page 23.

Sailors' Society and Sea Mate training pilot

A holistic approach to crew wellbeing

A new training programme that aims to promote and sustain crew wellbeing on board has been launched by maritime welfare charity Sailors' Society.

Its revolutionary Sea Mate initiative will see the new role of wellbeing officer created on board ships, with comprehensive training provided by the charity's global team.



With funding from Trinity House, Sea Mate will equip wellbeing officers with the skills to roll out wellbeing initiatives on board ship, offering basic counselling and guidance to fellow crew members facing personal or professional challenges and acting as a crisis responder to assist during emergencies.

Sea Mates will advise the crew of all the services Sailors' Society offers, including training, resources and helplines. The aim is to create safer and more harmonious operations on board ships.

Sailors' Society CEO, Sara Baade, said: *'As crews spend less time in port and more time at sea, it is vital that seafarers get the support they need whenever and wherever they need it.'*

'As part of our mission to offer 24/7 support to as many of the world's 1.9 million seafarers as possible, this role will help maintain crew wellbeing on board and offer that first and vital triage support when seafarers are in distress.'

At the time of writing the Sea Mate pilot was due to take place in February, with seafarers from companies, including Seaspan, Seaarland Shipping Management Services, Uniteam Marine, Sanmar Group, MT shipping and Songa Shipmanagement, trialling the three-day online course.

Sea Mate is part of Sailors' Society's gold standard Wellness at Sea programme for the maritime industry, which provides a circle of care for seafarers and their families.

About Sailors' Society:

For more than 200 years, international maritime charity Sailors' Society has been transforming the lives of seafarers and their families. The charity works to provide practical, emotional and spiritual welfare support around the clock, day-in-day-out, to today's 1.9 million seafarers, supporting wellbeing across every area of their lives and giving them the best opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling – and productive – career at sea.

For more information on the charity's work readers are invited to learn more here:

<https://sailors-society.org/sea-mate>

AAL heavy-lift shipping

ABB Marine Advisory System

AAL Shipping (AAL), a multiple award-winning project heavy-lift cargo operator with HQ in Singapore has chosen ABB Ability™ OCTOPUS – Marine Advisory System to optimize operations of their advanced fleet of Super B-Class heavy lift vessels. ABB's technology will help enhance the safety and efficiency of its cargo-carrying operations.

AAL has currently four 32,000 dt ships in operation with four due for delivery by 2026. The third-generation Super B-Class vessels have been designed for maximum flexibility to transport bulky, heavy and high-value loads. Deployed across varying and often challenging conditions worldwide, managers of the heavy-lift vessels pay particular attention to their operational needs considering safety and efficiency.

Project cargo and offshore wind markets

OCTOPUS is a market leader in motion monitoring and forecasting solutions within the global semi-submersible fleet. Now the demand for the monitoring and operational planning software from the project cargo and offshore wind markets is on the rise, it is understood.

Motion monitoring

ABB's OCTOPUS package for AAL includes response forecasting and motion monitoring, which ensures vessel operations remain within allowable motion limitations. This helps to minimize the risk of damage to the ship and its cargo while also supporting route planning optimization. By maximizing fuel consumption efficiency, the feature also contributes to reduced carbon emissions per transported cargo unit.

Forecast modelling

It is reported that a key area of benefit is when vessels are sailing with the 'AAL Eco-Deck' in place along the starboard side. When either using or planning to use the Eco-Deck, ABB's OCTOPUS technology can provide monitoring and forecasting of the potential reaction of the vessel to various modelled wave and weather conditions – crucial to planning safe and efficient sailings.



Project cargo needs

The system has been employed in such trades as container shipping and semi-submersibles for many years. It is anticipated that other segments such as project cargo and offshore wind which need enhanced insight into vessel motions to enable safer passage in varying weather conditions.

Steady market growth

According to Data Horizon Research* the multi-purpose vessel market has been experiencing steady growth in recent years, driven by increasing global trade and the versatility of such vessels. This market has seen a shift towards larger and more technologically advanced vessels, capable of handling diverse cargo types while maintaining fuel efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

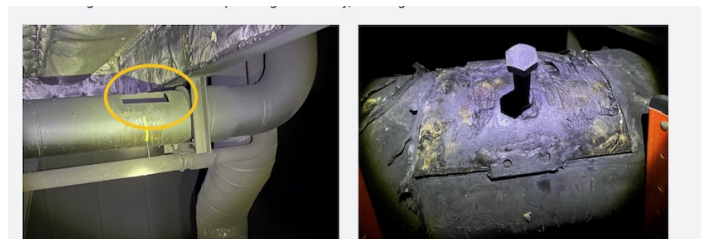
* <https://tinyurl.com/4jhvhva>

Engine Room Fire

Cargo vessel *Stride*

NTSB report, Summary

On January 8, 2024, about 0331 local time, a fire broke out in the engine room aboard the cargo vessel *Stride* (built 1997; 21,600gt; 598ft loa; Korean Register class) during bunkering operations while it was docked at the Barbours Cut Marine Terminal in LaPorte, Texas.



Circled area identifying the open section of fuel vent piping (left) and cut out placed back in position after the fire (right). (Source: NTSB)

Illustrations per National Transportation Safety Board.
NTSB ©

Crewmembers shut down all ventilation to the engine room, and the fire self extinguished. Shoreside firefighters and the ship's emergency teams removed three crewmembers from the engine control room who were unable to escape the fire; two died on scene, and one was seriously injured. No pollution was reported. The vessel was declared a constructive total loss, valued at \$12 million.

What the NTSB found

The NTSB determined that the probable cause of the fire on board the cargo vessel *Stride* was diesel oil cascading onto operating machinery in the engine room during bunkering due to an incorrect valve type installed into a diesel oil tank fill line, which prevented diesel oil from filling the tank and directed it up the common vent line, where it flowed from a cut out section of the vent pipe down into the engine room. Contributing to the overfilling of the bunkering line was engine crew members not monitoring the levels of the tanks being filled aboard the vessel, as required by the bunkering procedure in the operating company's safety management system.

Lessons learned

Consulting vessel drawings when ordering replacement components. Vessel drawings contain piping symbols for equipment such as valve types, sizes, and functions. Owners, operators, and crews should carefully note all components of a vessel's drawings and diagrams to ensure that proper spare or replacement parts are ordered to maintain functionality.

Ensuring adequate personnel for bunkering operations

During bunkering operations, vessel owners, operators, and crews should ensure adequate personnel are available to take frequent soundings,

establish fuel tank filling rates, and communicate to the person in charge, so tanks are monitored and do not overflow.

The report

The NTSB report is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdhyzubu>

NZ port accidents

Prosecution and fine

A chief executive who oversaw the Port of Auckland for more than a decade was sentenced on 21 February, in a significant case in relation to a 2020 fatal incident at Fergusson Container Terminal in the port. The total penalties include a \$130,000 fine and an additional \$60,000 payment to Maritime NZ.

In November 2024 Judge Bonnar KC in the Auckland District Court found Tony Gibson guilty of one Health and Safety at Work charge, after stevedore Pala'amo Kalati was killed in August 2020.

This is the first time in New Zealand an officer of a large company has been convicted of a breach of their duty of due diligence.

The Judge's decision has been seen as one that clarifies health and safety legislation obligations for officers of large companies.

Maritime NZ Director, Kirstie Hewlett, stated: *'This has not been a quick process, and we fully understand how difficult the ongoing proceedings against the Port and Mr Gibson would have been for those close to Mr Kalati, and the other victim.'*

The District Court found that, as the chief executive of Port of Auckland, Gibson did not ensure that the Port complied with its health and safety responsibilities.

She added: *'This was a serious departure from the duty of care he should have provided to the workers at the port as the senior officer in charge (the chief executive).'*

'Mr Gibson had the knowledge, influence, resources and opportunity to address safety gaps and ensure that appropriate systems were in place at the port, but failed to do so.'

During his more than a decade managing it, the port company was convicted of several offences under health and safety legislation. These past incidents resulting in fatalities and serious injuries.

Gibson knew of safety issues raised but did not take timely action to address them, even though it was in his control to do so.

This case serves as a strong reminder to chief executives of large companies that they need to understand the critical risks at their businesses; and assure themselves, through reliable sources, that

there are controls and systems in place, and that these are working effectively on the ground.

Hewlett said in conclusion: *'More broadly I also want to recognise the work of the Port sector- port companies, stevedores and unions since the death of Mr Kalati to improve safety on New Zealand ports. This work has included the delivery of the Approved Code of Practice (for loading and unloading cargo at ports and on ships) which was launched last year to ensure consistent base line safety standards. It is important that this work continues to ensure we prevent tragedies like this and that workers come home healthy and safe.'*

The Port of Auckland itself has also faced consequences, pleading guilty to two charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and receiving a NZ \$500,000 fine. It has been reported that contributing factors to the incident included reduced oversight of work activities due to COVID-19 pandemic-related process changes.

NZ TAIC investigations

In October 2023 the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) identified major safety issues that required the immediate attention of the NZ stevedoring sector.

There had been two fatal accidents in April 2022. In the first accident, on 19 April at the Port of Auckland, a stevedore working on a container vessel moved under a suspended 40-foot container and suffered crush injuries when the container was lowered onto them. In the second, on 25 April at Lyttelton Port, a stevedore involved in loading of coal onto a bulk carrier was discovered, deceased, buried under coal on the deck of the vessel.

The Chief Investigator of Accidents, Naveen Kozhupakalam, said the relevant TAIC report identified broad safety issues for the whole stevedoring sector in three areas – regulatory activity, cohesion in the stevedoring sector, and individual employers' management of safety.

He commented: *'The Commission wants regulators Maritime NZ and WorkSafe to do more to promote future safety across the sector. They need to take a 'just culture' approach, provide insight, promote information sharing and maturity in risk management, and encourage continuous learning.'*

'If regulators can do that, then it's more likely that stevedoring will be able to make progress towards operating more like businesses in other high-risk industries, where training, qualifications, and adherence to standards are part of business-as-usual.'

The TAIC recommended that Maritime NZ work with the stevedoring industry to develop and implement a risk management code of practice, minimum training standards, and ongoing improvements such as sharing of safety information amongst industry players.

Far East shipbuilding concerns

Over several days in mid-February there were press articles reporting on the Trump administration's proposal to charge fees on the use of China's commercial ships which it was said could help counter that country's maritime dominance.

The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) outlined a plan for fees on Chinese-built ships that transport traded goods as well as mandates requiring a portion of US products to be moved on American vessels.

Comments invited by USTR

On 21 February from Washington, DC the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) invited comments by 24 March from the public on proposed Section 301 actions aimed to obtain the elimination of China's acts, policies, and practices targeting the US maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors for dominance.

In this investigation (known as under Section 301), USTR found China's acts, policies, and practices to be unreasonable and to burden or restrict US commerce.

To obtain the elimination of China's acts, policies, and practices, and in light of China's market power over global supply, pricing, and access in the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors, USTR proposes to impose certain fees and restrictions on international maritime transport services related to Chinese ship operators and Chinese-built ships, as well as to promote the transport of US goods on US vessels.

US Trade Act, 1974

Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 is designed to address unfair foreign practices affecting US commerce. The Section 301 provisions of the Trade Act provide a domestic procedure through which interested persons may petition the US Trade Representative to investigate a foreign government act, policy, or practice and take appropriate action. Section 301(b) may be used to respond to unreasonable or discriminatory foreign government acts, policies, and practices that burden or restrict U.S. commerce.

Trade union petitions

On 12 March 2024, five national labour unions filed a petition requesting an investigation into the acts, policies, and practices of China targeting the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors for dominance. One of these petitioner unions was the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers.

Specifically, USTR found China's targeting for dominance unreasonable because it displaces foreign firms, deprives market-oriented businesses and their workers of commercial opportunities, and lessens competition and creates dependencies on China, increasing risk and reducing supply chain resilience.

China's targeting for dominance is also unreasonable because of Beijing's extraordinary control over its economic actors and these sectors.

USTR found that China's targeting for dominance burdens or restricts US commerce by undercutting business opportunities for and investments in the US maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors; restricting competition and choice; creating economic security risks from dependence and vulnerabilities in sectors critical to the functioning of the U.S. economy; and undermining supply chain resilience

Petitioners allege that China targets the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sector for dominance and engages in a wide range of unreasonable or discriminatory acts, policies, and practices that provide unfair advantages across maritime industries.

These include businesses such as shipbuilding, shipping, and maritime equipment, including: implementing industrial planning and policies that are designed to unfairly capture market share, distort global markets, and advantage Chinese enterprises.

Furthermore, activities by China include directing mergers and anti-competitive activities; providing non-market advantages to Chinese firms to dominate key upstream inputs and technologies; providing advanced financing mechanisms advantaging Chinese industry; creating a Chinese network of upstream suppliers, foreign ports and terminals, shippers, and equipment and logistics software that allow advantageous use of information; tolerating intellectual property theft and industrial espionage; and controlling shipping freight rates and capacity allocations.

The petitioners also aver that China threatens to discriminate against US commerce and disrupt supply chains.

Moreover, petitioners allege that China's acts, policies, and practices burden or restrict US commerce. They dramatically increase China's shipbuilding excess capacity and global market share, contributing to declines in US shipbuilding capacity, production, and market share.

US difficulties widespread

Such activity artificially depresses prices, which makes it more difficult for US companies to compete for sales. It impedes US investment, production, and employment; reduces the number of US-produced ships in the domestic and global merchant fleets; and provides unfair advantages and preferences that burden or restrict trade in inputs, and burden or restrict trade opportunities for upstream inputs and downstream industries.

In addition, the petitioners assert that China threatens to undermine US national and economic security.

Some interesting facts emerge

According to estimates by the US Maritime Administration (MARAD), the US private shipbuilding

and repair industry directly provided 107,108 jobs, \$9.9 billion in labour income, and \$12.2 billion in gross domestic product in 2019.

There are 154 private shipyards in the United States, spread across 29 states and the US Virgin Islands. In addition, there are more than 300 shipyards engaged in ship repair or capable of building ships.

US shipbuilders delivered 608 vessels of all types in 2020, including fifteen deep-draft vessels and five large oceangoing barges. The majority of these 608 vessel deliveries were inland dry cargo or tank barges and tugs and towboats. US shipbuilders delivered only four bulk vessels in 2024, the equivalent of 29,796 compensated gross ton (CGT), down from seven bulk vessels in 2023, or 73,359 CGT.

The importance of the shipbuilding and repairing industry to the US economy goes beyond the direct employment, labour income, and gross domestic product (GDP) that the sector generates. Companies in the shipbuilding and repair industry purchase inputs from domestic industries (indirect impact), and employees spend their incomes supporting the local and national economies (induced impact).

According to MARAD's estimates, on a nationwide basis—including direct, indirect, and induced impacts—the industry supported 393,390 jobs (107,180 direct, 276,100 indirect, 10,110 capital-related), \$28.1 billion of labour income, and \$42.4 billion in GDP in 2019.

Each direct job in the US private shipbuilding and repair industry is said to be associated with another 67 jobs in other parts of the US economy.

China has targeted the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors for dominance, both domestically and globally, through industrial planning over the last three decades. China has employed increasingly aggressive and specific targets in pursuing its dominance.

China's aims

In 2002, then-Premier Zhu Rongji expressed ambitions for China to become the world's largest shipbuilder, and in 2003, Beijing declared shipbuilding a 'pillar industry'. As early as 2003, China expressed ambitions to become a Strong Maritime Nation, a Strong Shipbuilding Nation, and a Strong Shipping Nation. These strategies encompassed efforts to dominate all facets of the marine economy including the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors.

China continues to pursue these goals. When Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Secretary Hu Jintao mentioned China's Strong Maritime Nation goals in the 18th Party Congress work report in 2012, it elevated the stature of this strategy. As recently as April 2022, President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping said: 'Building a Strong Maritime Nation is a major strategic task for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.'

Top-down industrial planning and targeting is a critical feature of China's state-led, non-market economic system. China organizes the development of its economy at a high level through broad, national-level five-year economic and social development plans. It then employs industry-specific plans that typically align chronologically with the national five-year plans.

These plans often contain detailed quantitative and qualitative targets, including for production, domestic content, and domestic and international market shares, and outline the non-market policies and practices China should use to achieve them.

Local governments and agencies also issue their own supplemental industry-specific plans to implement the objectives laid out in the national plans, and include more granularity for execution of those objectives. These national five-year plans and industry-specific plans are reinforced by overarching industrial plans that are longer term and seek alignment between and among industries to drive China's broader economic and geopolitical goals to achieve technological and industrial parity and then dominance relative to advanced economies.

Indeed, these industrial planning and targeting policies are driven by China's persistent and long-standing goals of dominating strategic sectors and to secure control over its own supply chains.

Asian shipbuilding shares

The US churns out its own steady supply of warships and Europe leads the world in building cruise ships, global merchant shipbuilding is dominated by three Asian countries: China, South Korea and Japan, which together account for well over 90% of commercial shipbuilding.

China has targeted the maritime, shipbuilding and logistics sectors for dominance, effectively undercutting competition and winning market share with dramatic effect, the Office of the US Trade Representative said in its proposal.

China's market share has grown from less than 5% of global tonnage in 1999 to more than 50% in 2023. China owned 19% of the commercial world fleet as of January last year, and it controls production of 95% of shipping containers, the office said.

The USTR report

The US Trade Representative report of 16 January 2025, (*Section 301 Investigation of China's Targeting of the Maritime, Logistics, and Shipbuilding Sectors for Dominance*) at 182 pages, is available by the link provided here: <https://tinyurl.com/38pckb4t>

Editorial note

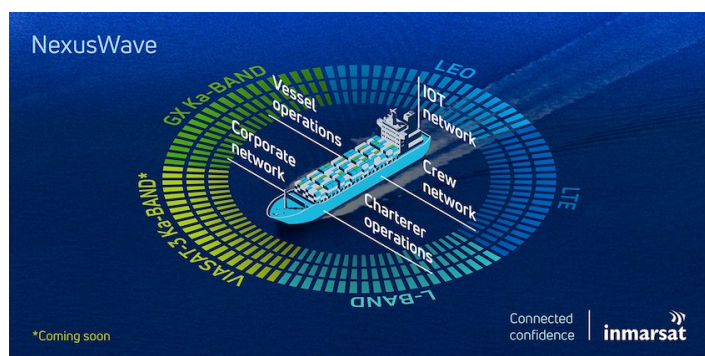
Text herein is based on material kindly provided by US Trade Representative publications and news service.

Inmarsat Med appointment

Pulsar International

It was announced from London on 25 February that Inmarsat Maritime, a Viasat company, has appointed Pulsar International as the first reseller partner for NexusWave in the Mediterranean market.

This agreement will also enable Pulsar to act as a local installation partner in the region. Pulsar will be offering its customers round-the-clock first-line support in local language. Pulsar has already secured commitments to deploy NexusWave to several Mediterranean-based operators including Greek fleet owners Spring Marine, Roswell Tankers, and Newport.



Inmarsat NexusWave bonded network.

Inmarsat's NexusWave is underpinned by a unique multi-dimensional bonded network that brings together Global Xpress (GX) Ka-band, low-Earth orbit (LEO), coastal LTE, and L-band services for fast, resilient, always-on connectivity with unlimited data and global coverage.

As a fully managed service, it is said to deliver consistent performance levels, while offering complete transparency into total cost of ownership – with no unexpected charges.

The Swedish Club launch

Passage Plan+ guide to enhance safe navigation

Early in February marine insurance specialist, The Swedish Club, announced the launch of its Passage Plan+ Guide, an essential resource designed to support shipowners, operators, and navigation officers.

Voyage/Passage planning is something that must be carried out for every vessel before departure. Every company has its own procedures and there are many guides defining how it should be handled.

Joakim Enström, Senior Loss Prevention Officer, The Swedish Club, commented: *'As an insurance company, we handle many claims every year and issues regarding Voyage/Passage planning are a recurring theme.'*

'This is something every bridge officer should be familiar with, but the quality of planning can differ

greatly from officer to officer. As such we wanted to launch the Passage Plan+ Guide to enhance our members existing plans.'

The *Passage Plan+ Guide* includes several suggestions to provide a more resilient Voyage/Passage Plan including:

- Port cards: Used for port-specific information about each vessel.
- Voyage/Passage planning in confined waters.
- Route, manoeuvring, mooring and towing plans.
- Sharing pilotage plans before the pilot boards.
- Bridge team set-up including officer monitoring.
- Communication.
- Due diligence.

A robust and efficient Voyage/Passage Plan can help the bridge team detect anomalies, errors, and faults that could otherwise lead to grounding, contact, or collision. Whilst no system is perfect, a prepared bridge team is better at detecting an issue before it is too late. A flexible system allows all bridge team members to contribute and analyse new information that will have an impact on the vessel's safety.



Passage Plan+ is available to download now from this link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2n8tz637>

Or readers may visit Swedish Club's Loss Prevention publications site here: <https://tinyurl.com/2vt3whaa>

About The Swedish Club

The Swedish Club was founded by shipowners in 1872 and is today a leading and diversified mutual marine insurance company, owned and controlled by its members. The Club writes Protection & Indemnity,

Freight, Demurrage & Defence, Hull & Machinery, Hull Interests, Loss of Hire, War Risks, and any additional insurances required by shipowners or charterers. It also writes Hull & Machinery, War Risks and Loss of Hire for Mobile Offshore Units and FPSOs.

Its head office is located in Gothenburg, Sweden, with branch offices in Athens, Oslo, London, Hong Kong and Singapore.

More information about The Swedish Club is available at: www.swedishclub.com

The biggest methanol-fuelled engine

At the end of February Swiss marine power company WinGD's announced that its first methanol-fuelled engine is to be delivered to the shipyard after passing factory and type approval tests. The ten-cylinder, 92-bore X-DF-M engine is destined for a 16,000 TEU container ship and is the biggest methanol-fuelled engine built to date.

There are 56 X-DF-M engines on order across bore sizes ranging from 52 to 92, in similar cylinder configurations and engine rating fields as diesel-fuelled X-engines.

Methanol capability

It is understood that addition of methanol capability to WinGD's engine line-up further extends the decarbonisation options available to deep-sea ship operators, which include the long-established X-DF LNG-fuelled engine platform and a new ammonia-fuelled X-DF-A platform.

Dominik Schneider, CEO of WinGD commented: *'Production of sustainable, renewable fuels of all types continues to advance, but long-term availability and cost remain uncertain.'*

'Ship operators can place their trust in WinGD to deliver reliable, efficient engine designs that enable decarbonisation across all candidate fuels.'

'As interest in methanol and regulatory clarity increases, we anticipate the X-DF-M platform will become a key contributor to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from global shipping.'

Delivery ceremony

The milestone was marked by a delivery ceremony held at engine builder CMD in Shanghai, attended by senior executives from WinGD, CMD and China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC) as well as local government officials and global customers and partners. Eight classification societies were also present for a signing of the X-DF-M type approval certification, which assures that the engine can be built to WinGD's design by all engine builders.

A spokesperson for CMD added: *'It is a big responsibility to build the first engine of any type, especially one for an emerging fuel with the potential of methanol. Our debut methanol-fuelled engine*

performed as expected across all tests and we are looking forward to offering the X-DF-M platform as a new option for shipbuilders.'

Conversion packages available

As previously reported, the first X-DF-M engine will be installed in the fourth vessel of a new series. The previous three engines were fitted with 10X92-B engines which will be converted to 10X92DF-M engines once the first, newbuild methanol engine is commissioned. Dual-fuel methanol conversion packages will be available for all WinGD single-fuel and dual-fuel engines.

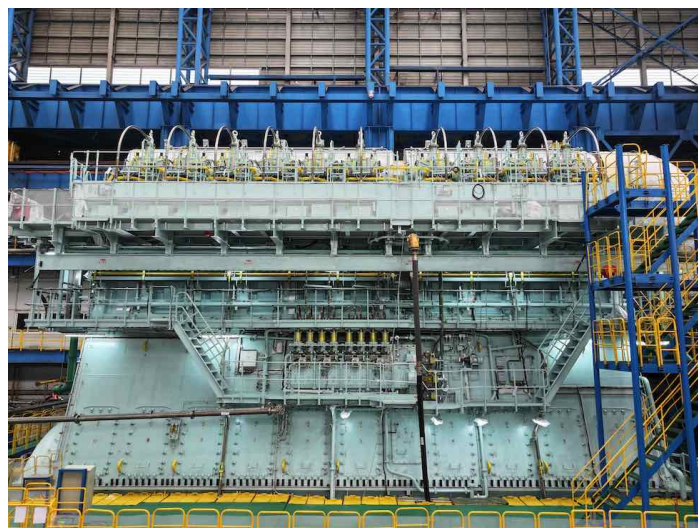


Illustration per www.wingd.com ©

Methanol, like LNG, can be produced with low carbon emissions by using either biomass or renewable energy with captured carbon. The evolution of these fuel pathways – with similar routes towards green ammonia and e-diesel – will be essential for shipping's energy transition, as will the engine technology to use emerging low- and zero-carbon fuels. WinGD's range of single- and dual-fuel engines support maritime decarbonisation, whichever fuel pathway ship operators choose.

About WinGD

WinGD advances the decarbonisation of marine transportation through sustainable energy systems using the most advanced technologies in emissions reduction, fuel efficiency, hybridisation and digital optimisation.

With their two-stroke low-speed engines at the heart of the power equation, it has been said that WinGD sets the industry standard for reliability, safety, efficiency and environmental design, backed by a global network of service and support.

WinGD has its HQ in Winterthur, Zurich Canton, in northern Switzerland where it has been since its origin as the Sulzer Diesel Engine business in 1893, whereas today it is powering transformation to a sustainable future.

Relaunch of London Thamesport Service

Norwegian short sea container operator Viasea Shipping has relaunched its service between London Thamesport, Northern Europe and the Baltic region. This was reported on 28 February.

It is understood that the new service will call at London Thamesport every Saturday and is part of Viasea's ongoing commitment to improving operational efficiency and reliability. This revised service has been introduced in response to growing demand for cargo shipments from the south of the UK to Northern Europe and the Baltics.

Commenting on the new sailing, Mark Taylor, Director, London Thamesport, said: *'We are aware that Viasea had a number of options for this service and are delighted that they have chosen to locate it at London Thamesport. The decision is a vindication of the hard work and effort of the whole team at the port which enable us to offer the highest level of service to customers and port-users.'*



Viasea Shipping has relaunched its service between London Thamesport, Northern Europe and the Baltic region.

'This service extends the range of destinations served from London Thamesport and reinforces London Thamesport's position as a key hub for short sea container traffic. We look forward to working with Viasea to continue to increase the range, frequency and reliability of options for shippers.'

Amber Bensley, Viasea UK Sales Manager, added: *'We are pleased to announce that Viasea are calling London Thamesport as part of our Baltic & Norway liner services. Their reliability, professionalism and commitment to quality goes in line with supporting our operation and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership once more.'*

Norwegian-owned Viasea Shipping, established in 2016, is an independent short sea operator connecting Norway with the UK, Europe and the Baltic states. The new service from London Thamesport will call weekly with connections to Rotterdam and the Norwegian ports of Oslo, Moss and Kristiansand, with onward connections into the Baltic and Poland.

About Hutchison Ports London Thamesport

Hutchison Ports London Thamesport is located on River Medway near London, in the heart of South East England, 35 miles from Central London. The terminal provides road and rail links to the UK's important manufacturing and distribution centres and is ideally positioned to serve as a port of entry for UK-bound short-sea container traffic as well as infrastructure projects around London.

Hutchison Ports London Thamesport is a member of Hutchison Ports, the ports and related services division of CK Hutchison Holdings Limited. Hutchison Ports is the world's leading port investor, developer and operator with a network of port operations in 53 ports spanning 24 countries throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Australasia. Over the years, Hutchison Ports has expanded into other logistics and transportation-related businesses, including cruise ship terminals, distribution centres, rail services and ship repair facilities.

Coast Guard medevacs cruise ship passenger

Offshore Hawaii

On 28 February the US Coast Guard reported from Honolulu that it had medevaced a cruise ship passenger who experienced multiple strokes 300 miles offshore Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, the previous day.

Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu watchstanders received notification on 26 February at 1448 local from crew aboard the Holland America Line cruise ship *Koningsdam* reporting that a 72-year-old man experienced multiple stroke episodes offshore the Island of Hawaii. Watchstanders consulted with the duty flight surgeon, who recommended a medevac within twenty hours.



Photo per USCG District 14 External Affairs.

USCG ©.

At 0900 on 27 February an HC-130 Hercules airplane crew and an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point rendezvoused with *Koningsdam* about 57 nautical miles south of Honolulu.

The helicopter crew hoisted the ailing man from the cruise ship and transported the patient to Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu. The man is reportedly in stable condition.

Lieutenant Commander John Stockton, HC-130 Hercules aircraft commander, Air Station Barbers Point commented: *'By combining the skills of our crews and the specialized capabilities of our aircraft, we are able to respond to emergencies across the vast Pacific region. Teamwork is critically important for medevacs, which are among the most time-sensitive and high-stakes missions we take on.'*

A P Møller-Mærsk A/S

Annual Report 2024

News: India and Africa

Early in February Maersk issued its Annual Report for 2024. This showed strong financial results for the year with growth across all segments and significantly improved profitability with earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) increasing 65% to US\$6.5 billion.

High container demand

Results were driven by higher container demand and elevated freight rates in Ocean, top line and volume growth in Terminals and solid improvements in most Logistics & Services products

Given the strong results and the strength of the balance sheet, the Board of Directors proposes a dividend of DKK 1,120/share and separately announced the initiation of a share buy-back programme of up to around US\$2bn to be executed over a period of twelve months.

Comment

Vincent Clerc CEO of A P Møller - Mærsk A/S commented: *'Our ability to navigate shifting circumstances and ensure steady supply chains for our customers was put to the test throughout 2024.'*

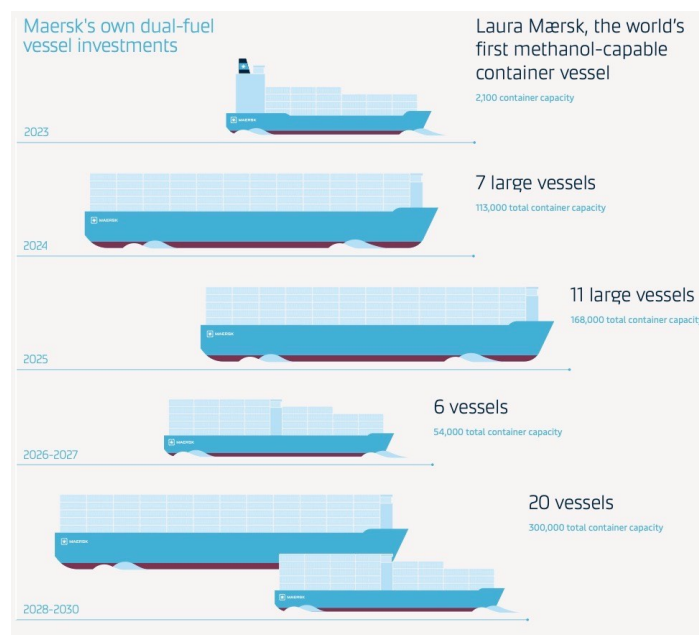
'Our efforts were rewarded with record-high customer satisfaction. We successfully capitalized on increased demand while enhancing productivity and rigorously managing costs – all of which contributed to our strong financial performance.'

'With three strong businesses – Ocean, Logistics, and Terminals – plus integrated offerings across the supply chain, we are uniquely positioned to support our customers in an era where geopolitical changes and disruptions continue to reinforce the need for resilient supply chains.'

Improved profitability

Profitability in Ocean improved compared to the previous year supported by a significant increase in freight rates reflecting the situation in the Red Sea and strong volume demand. High utilization and cost discipline ensured that Ocean operations were streamlined and able to tackle uncertainties. Operational costs were stable year-on-year, offsetting the increased costs and additional bunker consumption of re-routing the network south of the Cape of Good Hope.

Logistics & Services sector demonstrated resilience in 2024 with momentum building steadily each quarter culminating in volume growth, higher revenue and improved EBIT margin compared to 2023. Revenue grew 7% supported by solid growth in Warehousing, Air and First Mile product categories while profitability benefitted from progress in most products.



Terminals delivered its best ever financial results in 2024 with EBITDA and EBIT reaching record highs. This was driven by significant top line growth due to strong volumes along with inflation-offsetting tariffs increases, a better customer and product mix, and higher storage revenue.

Financial Guidance

Container volume growth

There is an expectation that global container volume growth in 2025 will be around 4% and Maersk will grow in line with the market. For the purpose of the financial guidance, Maersk assumes that the Red Sea re-opens mid-year for the low end of the guidance, and re-opens at year-end for the high-end. Maersk's outlook for 2025 is subject to considerable macroeconomic uncertainties impacting container volume growth and freight rates.

Cochin Shipyard

On 17 February from Mumbai Maersk and Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore collaborative opportunities in ship repair,

maintenance, and building activities in India. This strategic partnership aligns with the Government of India's Vision 2047 maritime objectives and recent Union Budget 2025-26 announcements to position India among the top five global maritime hubs.

This collaboration comes at a crucial time when the global shipping industry is expected to face capacity constraints in ship repair yards around the world. This partnership signifies a strategic step towards establishing India as a premier maritime service centre. Under the MoU, Maersk will leverage its expertise as an off-taker in its global fleet to strengthen CSL's capabilities, primarily focusing on container ship maintenance, repair, and drydocking.

Kenya cadetships

On 27 February from Mombasa Maersk and Kenya Ports Authority announced the launch of a comprehensive maritime training programme. This initiative marks a significant milestone in Maersk's commitment to developing Kenya's maritime sector and supporting the country's Blue Economy.

Present at the event was HE Adbulswamad Shariff Nassir, Governor, Mombasa County, representatives from the Royal Danish Embassy in Nairobi, Bandari Maritime Academy, Shippers' Council Eastern Africa and Kenya Ships' Agents Association.

The programme will provide fully funded, twelve-month sea-time training opportunities aboard Maersk vessels for ten Kenyan cadets. This strategic investment creates an opportunity to overcome significant challenges faced in the maritime sector around practical sea-time experience for graduating cadets.

Mumbai

One day later Maersk celebrated the name-giving of its newest dual-fuel methanol container vessel in Mumbai as a part of the vessel's maiden voyage to India. The vessel, named *Albert Maersk*, is the eleventh vessel in Maersk's fleet capable of operating on methanol.

Vincent Clerc, CEO, A P Moller - Maersk, hosted the name-giving ceremony, which was attended by the Honourable Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, the Honourable Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Khadse, diplomats, government authorities, customers, partners and Maersk employees.

Exercise Cutlass Express 2025

Concluded in Tanzania

According to US Navy Public Affairs the US 6th Fleet and the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) hosted the closing ceremony for Exercise Cutlass Express 2025, concluding the exercise's fifteenth in a series since 2011, on 21 February in Dar es Salaam.

Twenty partner nations

During the exercise, which took place from 10 to 21 February over one thousand participants from twenty partner nations supported Exercise Cutlass Express 2025 as part of a global network of partners to enhance cooperation and expertise in maritime security operations in the Western Indian Ocean.

To improve coordination

In Tanzania, two national maritime operation centres (MOCs) participated in the exercise to collaborate on real-time scenarios linked to the visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) training hosted in Tanga, Tanzania. Exercise Cutlass Express 2025 also contained linkages with the US Army Southern European Task Force, Africa-led exercise Justified Accord 2025, also taking place in Tanzania, to improve coordination between land- and sea-based operations.

To quote Andrew Lentz Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* of the US Embassy in Tanzania: *'We value the TPDF's role as a regional leader in deploying peacekeeping forces, countering violent extremist organizations, and promoting maritime security.'*



USS Mount Whitney 6th Fleet Command and Control Ship.
Photo US 6th Fleet Public Affairs
USN ©.

'Through exercises like Cutlass Express, we are building the readiness of our militaries and deepening the bilateral and multilateral relationships required to confront today's most complex security challenges.'

Expanding capacity

Cutlass Express focuses on enabling East African partners to expand their capacity and capability to support maritime security operations and combat threats such as piracy, trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The coordination of ten national MOCs across eight partner nations sought to improve regional coordination, with this year being the first to feature a US P-8A Poseidon aircraft to establish communication links during Cutlass Express.

Tanzania, Mauritius and Seychelles

VBSS training in both Tanzania and Mauritius, as well as a week-long rule of law course hosted in Seychelles, allowed partners to share and refine their tactics for interdiction operations while ensuring a legal finish to hold malign actors accountable for illicit at-sea activity.

Rear Admiral David E Ludwa, reserve director of logistics, ordnance and engineering for Navy Reserve US 6th Fleet, commented: *'Ensuring the free flow of commerce within the region, especially over critical sea lines of communication and the vast expanse of this maritime environment, is vital to the economic stability and security of the region.'*

'We must work together, deepen our partnerships, and continue to improve the quality of exercises like Cutlass Express to enhance our ability to communicate and synchronize maritime operations to collectively counter the manifold threats we face.'

Broad participation

Participants in this year's iteration of Cutlass Express spanned five continents and included Australia, Belgium, Comoros, Djibouti, France, Georgia, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom.

Cutlass Express is one of three regional maritime exercises led by the US 6th Fleet as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide collaborative opportunities to African forces and international partners to address maritime security concerns.

Commander, US 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners to advance US national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Submarine cable resilience

International summit

The first International Submarine Cable Resilience Summit, took place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 26-27 February.

Submarine cables carry over 99% of the world's data traffic. They enable the digital economy and connect billions of people worldwide.

The International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience was established by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) in November 2024, with the aim of promoting dialogue and collaboration on potential ways and means to improve the resilience of this vital infrastructure that powers global communications and the digital economy.

The International Submarine Cable Resilience Summit aimed to foster global collaboration, secure innovative solutions, and engage leaders from government, industry and international organization.

With incidences of cable damage on the rise, the summit was the key platform to address critical issues and ensure the reliability, sustainability and future-readiness of the world's 1.4 million-kilometre subsea cable network.

Alongside the first face-to-face meeting of the new International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience, the summit featured high-level panels, interactive workshops and discussions designed to drive actionable strategies and improve the resilience of global connectivity infrastructure.

Innovative discussions brought together leaders and experts from the public and private sectors to strengthen cooperation on critical cable infrastructure for global digital connectivity.

Outcomes

This important gathering produced several important outcomes:

Specialized working groups: The ITU-ICPC Advisory Body formed last November established dedicated expert groups on:

- Timely Deployment and Repair.
- Risk Identification, Monitoring and Mitigation.
- Fostering Connectivity and Geographic Diversity.
- Expert insights: In-depth panel discussions explored regulatory frameworks, deployment challenges and investment strategies for cable resilience.
- High-level participation: representatives from governments, international organisations and industry shared key insights.

Summit Declaration

Governments, companies, digital regulators, and international organizations expressed their collective commitment to strengthen regulatory frameworks, step up risk assessments and infrastructure resilience for the world's undersea communications backbone. This declaration is to be found below:

**The International Advisory Body on
Submarine Cable Resilience Declaration
(agreed by the International Advisory Body on
Submarine Cable Resilience on 26 February 2025)**

Abuja, Nigeria

We, the members of the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience, recognize the vital role of submarine telecommunications cables in enabling global connectivity, empowering economic growth, and supporting digital transformation. They are critical infrastructure and should be respected in accordance with international law.

In the spirit of collaboration and shared understanding, we adopt this Declaration as a framework for fostering resilience and encouraging cooperative efforts to support this vital infrastructure.

1. Acknowledging Vital Infrastructure

We recognize the essential role that submarine telecommunications cables play as critical infrastructure in enabling global economic, social, and governmental activity through interconnected communication systems by carrying over 99% of intercontinental data traffic.

2. Strengthening Cable Protection Through Risk Mitigation

We underscore the importance of identifying and mitigating a range of risks to submarine cable systems, including natural events and accidental maritime damage, through the timely exchange of pertinent information, knowledge and best practices as well as enhanced cooperation between government agencies and all relevant stakeholders. We encourage promotion of sufficient and necessary mitigation and recovery measures to reduce the scale and scope of cable damage.

3. Promoting Diverse Routes and Landings to Enhance Resilience and Continuity

Considering that submarine telecommunications cables are crucial to the digital ecosystem from strategic, economic, safety, security, and strategic autonomy perspectives, we encourage the development of geographically diversified infrastructure, through all possible funding approaches including Public-Private-Partnerships, to mitigate potential disruptions, increase resilience, maintain connectivity, and ensure no region is left isolated.

4. Facilitating Timely Deployment and Repair

We encourage the development of government policies and practices to expedite the deployment of new submarine cable systems, ensure the maintenance and timely repair of damaged cables, to promote streamlined permits processes, maintain stockpiles/spares, and further support the development of the submarine cable installation and repair ecosystem.

5. Promoting Global Cooperation

We encourage international cooperation among governments, national regulatory

authorities, research centres, universities, industry stakeholders, international organizations and other stakeholders to address shared challenges and support the continuous operation of submarine cable networks.

6. Advancing Sustainable Approaches

We uphold international law, and promote best practice principles and multistakeholder coordination

on submarine communication cables. We support the adoption of physical risk based planning and environmentally sustainable practices informed by the best available science in the planning, deployment, and maintenance of submarine cables, ensuring the responsible management of natural and marine environments.

7. Fostering Technological Innovation

We highlight the value of innovative technologies and solutions that can mitigate the risks of damage to and enhance the resilience and efficiency of submarine cable systems, to ensure they remain operational, robust and reliable.

8. Facilitating Capacity Building

We advocate for the development of knowledge-sharing platforms and training programs to enhance the ability of all nations, particularly developing countries, to manage protect and repair submarine cable systems effectively and efficiently.

9. Preparing for Future and Present Connectivity Needs

Recognizing the rapid growth in global data transmission and the reliance of the entire digital ecosystem on such connectivity, we support efforts to ensure that submarine cable infrastructure can meet the demands of an accessible, stable and open digital future, and address the current digital divide, inter alia, through investment in new cable systems, upgrades to existing routes, and improved capacity planning.

10. Encouraging Proactive Risk Awareness

We encourage regular risk assessments and cooperative approaches among all relevant stakeholders, including governments, cable operators, system suppliers, and maintenance providers, to identify and address risks and challenges in submarine cable systems, contributing to greater resilience and preparedness for the long-term.

11. Using Data for Informed Decisions

We underline the importance of using data-driven and evidence-based approaches, including the analysis of cable routes, natural hazard risks, maritime activities and resources, to develop repair capabilities, guide decision-making and prioritize areas requiring additional focus.

Through this Declaration, we reaffirm our shared vision of collaboration, innovation, and sustainability, ensuring that submarine cables continue to play a vital role in global connectivity and development.