## IMO session brief notes

**10th session of Sub-Committee**

**on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 10)**

**5-9 February 2024**

The 10th session of the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 10) was held in person in London 5-9 February 2024 with hybrid facilities allowing remote participation. Main outcomes of the meeting are given below.

***Groundwork laid for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code***

The Sub-Committee agreed on a roadmap, methodology and a list of specific areas for the comprehensive review of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the accompanying STCW Code.

The STCW Convention establishes basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level. In 2022, the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 105) instructed the HTW Sub-Committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code to adapt the existing global standards for seafarer training to reflect new trends, developments and challenges in the maritime sector.

***Road Map***

HTW has proposed a two-phase road map. The road map includes two distinct phases – a review phase – looking for gaps due to new technology, outdated information, or areas that need updating, this was considered by correspondence since HTW 9 and is listed below. There will then be a revision phase which will focus on the necessary revisions to the STCW Convention and Code. It is proposed that this will culminate with a meeting held in autumn 2027 to adopt amendments to the STCW Convention and Code, and the associated draft MSC resolutions. The road map will be sent to MSC 108 (May 2024) for the Committee’s agreement.

***List of specific areas identified for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code***

HTW agreed to include the following list of specific areas to be considered as part of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code:

1. Emerging technologies on ships and ship operations;

2. Digitalization of documentation, including certificates issued under STCW;

3. Emerging technologies in education and training;

4. Facilitation, flexibility and quality of onboard, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators;

5. Flexibility and efficiency in implementation of new training requirements and reduction of administrative burdens;

6. Requirements for sea time or practical experience in relation to new and emerging technologies including the use of simulation;

7. Psychological safety, bullying and harassment, including SASH, gender diversity and gender sensitization;

8. Mental health;

9. Twenty-first century and interpersonal skills;

10. Addressing inconsistencies;

11. Addressing different interpretations;

12. Addressing taxonomy and terminologies;

13. Flexibility in revalidation of certificates and endorsements;

14. Overview of the implementation of the Convention, in particular the need to update the STCW "White List";

15. Lessons learned;

16. Flexibility;

17. Alternative certification under chapter VII;

18. Watchkeeping arrangements and principles to be observed (chapter VIII);

19. Alignment of STCW with requirements placed on ships, seafarers, and shipowners by other IMO and relevant international instruments;

20. Cybersecurity;

21. Implementation and transitional provisions;

22. Addressing outdated training requirements;

The above specific areas will now be sent to MSC for the Committee’s agreement.

***Proposals for new amendments to the STCW Convention and Code***

Several proposals for amendments to the STCW Convention and Code were submitted for HTW’s consideration including:

- Amendments to section B-VI/4 of the STCW Code regarding the inclusion of a footnote referring to the use of an industry-developed medical guide for ships;

- Amendments to the STCW Code concerning a new competence on navigation in a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) environment impacted by external interference;

- Developing guidelines for mandatory onboard training containing specific training time and methods of approved seagoing service;

- Recommendations for Polar Code training programs.

***Accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention***

A proposal for a draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention was not considered but will be forwarded to the Inter-Sessional Working Group for their consideration.

***The Sub-Committee agreed:***

- 22 specific areas of the Convention and Code to be reviewed, including addressing training requirements for emerging technologies on ships, e-certification, mental health and gender sensitization, among others;

- A two-step methodology, consisting of a review of the Convention and Code to identify gaps (Phase 1) and then a revision stage to develop amendments to address those gaps (Phase 2);

- Establishment of an Inter-sessional Working Group before the next session of the Sub-Committee (HTW 11) to advance the work, subject to decision by the MSC and the IMO Council;

- A roadmap outlining a timeline for action, including finalizing the list of gaps identified by Spring 2025 (HTW11); finalizing draft text of amendments and resolutions by Spring 2027 (HTW13).

All the above will be submitted to the upcoming 108th meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 108) for approval.

***Enhanced efforts on prevention and addressing bullying and harassment***

As part of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, the Sub-Committee finalized the draft terms of reference for the revision of Model Course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities, with a view to validation at HTW 12 (2026). The aim is to incorporate new competencies to help prevent and respond to all sorts of bullying and harassment in the maritime sector.

MSC 108 is expected to adopt draft amendments to STCW Code, to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment in the maritime sector, including sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH), following review of the approved draft amendments by the next meeting of the joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element (JTWG), which meets from 27 to 29 February 2024, at IMO headquarters in London.

The new provisions will apply to all seafarers by means of amendments to the STCW Code, table A-VI/1-4 (Specification of minimum standard of competence in personal safety and social responsibilities).

***Training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels***

The Sub-Committee discussed the development of training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels. It agreed that the work related to this issue should be separate from the work on the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the existing output of MSC on "Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels" could be utilized to develop relevant training provisions for seafarers, and invited MSC to include this output in the agenda of the Sub-Committee for discussion at HTW 11.

***Recommendations to enhance Polar Code training***

The Sub-Committee considered a set of recommendations put forward by several Member States, including revisions to the STCW Convention and Code, aimed at enhancing training for seafarers who operate in polar waters.

The recommendations are based on the findings and experiences gleaned from five regional capacity-building workshops delivered between 2019 and 2022, and a workshop in December 2023 to review lessons learned over the course of this training programme.

The Sub-Committee agreed to include some recommendations as part of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code and invited MSC to consider some other recommendations for further action as appropriate.

***New GISIS module on STCW***

The Sub-Committee agreed to launch a new module on the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) to support Parties in carrying out their obligations under the STCW Convention. The module will enhance communication and information sharing, while also helping to address fraudulent practices and alleviate the administrative burden.

The expected functionality of the module includes:

- STCW focal points;

- Initial communication of information (articles IV(1) and VIII(3); and section A-I/7, paragraph 2);

- Subsequent reports (article IX(2) and section A-I/7, paragraphs 3 to 6);

- List of competent persons (section A-I/7, paragraph 7, MSC.1/Circ.797 series and Circular Letter No.1882);

- Dispensations (article VIII(3));

- Fraudulent certificates; and

- Simulators (regulation I/12).

The new GISIS module will have a trial period of two years and the experience gained during this trial period is expected to be reported to a future session of the Sub-Committee, with a view to providing relevant input to the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, in particular with regard to the enhancement of the communication of information provisions.

The Sub-Committee encouraged STCW Parties to use the new module and to provide the necessary information for its correct and reliable operation.

***Fraudulent Certificates***

The Sub-Committee noted information received by the Secretariat on reports concerning fraudulent certificates of competency and endorsements detected in 2022 and 2023. The Sub-Committee noted that the issue of fraudulent endorsements amongst shipping personnel was a serious problem that affected the safety of seafarers and ships.

The Sub-Committee underscored the importance of having appropriate Certificate of Competency (CoC) endorsements in accordance with regulation I/10 of the STCW Convention and encouraged STCW Parties to take a broader range of actions to tackle the problem, noting that the new STCW GISIS module would consolidate the information on Parties the certificates of which were recognized in compliance with regulation I/10 and the "Certificate Verification facility", with a view to allowing Parties to manage and update relevant information.

***Validation of Model Courses***

The Sub-Committee validated the following Model Courses:

- Model Course 1.32 on Operational Use of Integrated Bridge Systems Including Integrated Navigational Systems;

- Model Course 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator;

The Sub-Committee approved the draft terms of reference for the revision of the following model courses:

- Model Course 1.37 on Chemical tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator;

- Model Course 2.06 on Oil tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator

This document has been prepared by the Russian Maritime Register of Shipping for reference purposes and contains a summary of the main results of the meeting of the IMO working body. For reference purposes, the document reflects background information on the outcomes of discussions and decisions taken during IMO meetings. Similar information about other IMO meetings is available on the RS website.

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