



SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP DESIGN AND
EQUIPMENT
54th session
Agenda item 13

DE 54/13/4
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DEVELOPMENT OF A MANDATORY CODE FOR SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS

Alternate framework for development of the mandatory Code

Submitted by Vanuatu

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	Consideration of an alternate framework for development of the mandatory code
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	5.2
<i>High-level action:</i>	5.2.1
<i>Planned output:</i>	5.2.1.2
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 7
<i>Related documents:</i>	SOLAS 1974, chapter IX; DE 54/13, DE 54/13/3; and resolution A.1024(26)

Introduction

1 Vanuatu participated in the discussions undertaken under the auspices of the DE correspondence group formed by DE 53 on the subject of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters. We proposed this alternate approach in this forum within our response to the moderator's round 3 discussion. The ideas were not, at that time, fully developed, given the documents under discussion in that round. Since the third round was the last discussion prior to development of the report to DE 54, Vanuatu did not have an opportunity to explore the proposal at length with the other participants.

2 This bears in mind that at DE 53 there were varying opinions from delegates during plenary discussion concerning which convention(s) would be appropriate for placing the Polar Code.

3 We note that the 2010 Manila STCW Conference adopted, within Section B-V/g, Guidance regarding training of masters and officers for ships operating in polar waters, in which paragraph 1.2 states: "Masters and Chief Engineer Officers should have sufficient and appropriate experience in operating ships in polar waters".

4 It is also noted that the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code) in paragraph 1.2.3.2 states that the safety-management system should ensure, "that applicable codes, guidelines and standards recommended by the Organization, Administrations, classification societies and maritime industry organizations are taken into account".

5 Finally we note the Guidelines, adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session, for vessels operating in polar waters.

Discussion

6 Vanuatu submits:

- .1 SOLAS chapter IX includes in regulation 1 three definitions of vessel types not otherwise defined within the convention. We submit that a new definition could be included that refers directly to vessels operating within polar areas, with the intention that this draws specific attention to vessel owners and operators to the requirement to meet applicable guidelines; specifically including the Polar Guidelines.
- .2 Furthermore, the STCW Convention required polar operations-experienced crewmembers; from both the deck and engineering departments, who would be required by virtue of their safety-management systems to ensure that their vessel, crew and their equipment are prepared for the specific voyage (and contingencies) proposed. Since this level of specific detail is almost impossible for any discrete mandatory code to cover, we submit this approach would, by respecting the seafarers' own skills, both lead to better compliance and a higher level of co-operation within the framework already established by the Organization.
- .3 We fully appreciate that this approach will have to be developed further to accommodate concerns of Administrations or other organizational oversight. We believe this could be accomplished through the ISM process, either by specific inclusion of Administration representation (observers) at special voyage audits or by some other means.
- .4 Finally, we wish to point out that current and projected survey projects in cartography are improving the charts of this area, approaches that are incrementally intended to improve the safety of navigation in these regions. We believe that any approach that creates mandatory rules that lock the clock at a certain point will necessarily require constant attention. By making flexible rules that allow for standards that can be amended by seafarers on the basis of actually experienced events, the rules can remarkably enhance safety as well as the compliance aspect already mentioned.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

7 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the suggested approach and take action as appropriate.
