INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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PREVENTION OF AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

Continuation and work plan for greenhouse gas emissions correspondence group

Submitted by the United States

SUMMARY	
Executive summary:	This document comments on IMO's work regarding greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping, the report of the greenhouse gas correspondence group, and how the group's work should proceed
Strategic Direction:	7.3
High-level Action:	7.3.1
Planned output:	7.3.1.3
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 12
Related documents:	MEPC 55/23; MEPC 56/23 and MEPC 57/4/5

Introduction

1 This document comments on IMO's work regarding greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping, the report of the greenhouse gas correspondence group, and how the group's work should proceed.

2 The United States continues to recognize the importance of taking action to address global climate change as well as IMO's primary role in addressing greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime sector. To that end, MEPC 56 was a productive session with the creation of the terms of reference for an updated study on maritime GHG emissions and the creation of a correspondence group to discuss how to minimize greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime sector.

3 Shipping is the most greenhouse gas efficient way of transporting goods, and actions to reduce GHG emissions from international shipping should take this into account. The United States welcomes action to reduce maritime greenhouse gas emissions and the co-chairs of the correspondence group ably produced a report which provides many options as to how this can be done. We note that there are many complicated details left to resolve on this issue and discussion should continue in accordance with the timetable and work plan agreed at MEPC 55.

Comments

4 The report of the correspondence group raises a number of policy options as to how IMO can work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping. There are a variety of options to reduce emissions, and a range of views on the desirability of those options. Some members of the group seem to have discarded certain options, while giving other options undue weight. The United States believes that no option should be discarded at this time and no option should be given undue weight as our discussions continue.

5 Operational and technological improvements available today can provide immediate and tangible GHG emissions reductions across the globe, while future improvements promise even further reductions. Current options include: reducing hull resistance, optimizing the amount of fuel injected, optimizing voyage planning and better logistics, making course corrections and routing improvements, establishing the most fuel efficient speed for each vessel, and setting up best practices for energy efficiency for ships. Short sea shipping shows promise for further efficiencies.

6 Certainly new designs such as hull designs and propeller designs will lead to improvement in marine shipping fuel consumption, but given the long life of ships, it will take some time for these solutions to migrate into the fleet and have any large impact. In the future, increased use of alternative fuels, renewable energy sources such as wind and solar show promise, as well as fuel cells for auxiliary power.

7 Voluntary measures such as partnerships, labelling and standards, and some market-based measures also offer real potential for reduction of maritime GHG emissions. Programs to promote cleaner, more efficient vehicles and equipment, such as the U.S. SmartWay Transportation program and the Clean Diesel Campaign, are examples of voluntary programs that are successfully reducing emissions. The Tool Box for Port Clean Air programs being developed by the International Association of Ports and Harbors is an example of labelling tools that can provide information on best practices. Voluntary programs as well as operational and technical measures bring reduced GHG emissions, but also lead to increased economic growth and a more sustainable shipping industry.

8 A top-down, binding cap and trade program for the maritime sector will most likely not lead to consensus from a wide range of maritime powers. Operational, technical, and voluntary measures offer real reductions and will most likely be more acceptable to a broader range of IMO members. As such, and to be consistent with IMO's non-discriminatory nature, we should encourage global action that leads to global solutions while also engendering multiple benefits.

9 The report of the correspondence group raises the question of how the correspondence group should proceed. It is our view that the work of the correspondence group has been useful, and if further work of general use is agreed, the correspondence group's mandate should be renewed.

10 One option for further work would entail considering "the appropriate level of reductions to be achieved" and "addressing legal aspects of introducing and enforcing measures." It is the view of the United States that consideration of these items pre-judges an outcome of a mandatory cap and trade program. Additionally, it would be premature to have these conversations given the schedule outlined at MEPC 55, which does not call for appropriate level of reductions or addressing consideration of legal aspects of enforcing measures.

11 In light of the above, the United States proposes that MEPC 57 analyse and discuss the informative and interesting options put forward in the report, but does so in a way that does not pre-judge any outcomes nor depart from the timeline for discussions as agreed upon at MEPC 55.

Action requested of the Committee

12 The Committee is invited to consider the information provided and decide as appropriate.

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