

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE BOARD OF
THE INTERNATIONAL SHIP SUPPLIERS & SERVICES ASSOCIATION (ISSA)
FOR PERIOD DECEMBER 2024 – MAY 2025**

This is a report for the members of the Executive Board of ISSA on the activities of the committees and sub-committees of the IMO between December 2024 to date, as may be relevant for ISSA. It is also a report on the meeting of the ILO in Geneva in April 2025 concerning the Maritime Labour Convention, which is also relevant for ISSA; as well as the new (not yet in force) United Nations Convention on the international effects of judicial sales of ships. Some possible considerations for ISSA are contained at the conclusion of the Executive Summary.

PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(1) The International Maritime Organization (IMO)

There have been eight (8) meetings of committees and sub-committees of the IMO from December 2024 to date. Some significant implications for ISSA flow from some of these meetings.

This Report highlights some significant progress made by the IMO and some new outputs to be delivered by the IMO.

Previous well-known matters in the agenda of the IMO concern include MASS and GHG. These subjects continue to be progressed at the IMO; new subjects now also include more pollution prevention issues, more safety issues, guidance or best practice regarding ship registration, and fraudulent ship registration.

The IMO Legal Committee is overseeing matters concerning the abandonment of seafarers. Statistics on the abandonment of seafarers are excessively surpassing all the previous years' records of abandoned seafarers. The demand for supplies for abandoned seafarers can be expected to increase.

Also, cases of unfair treatment of seafarers in respect of both accidents and alleged crimes can be expected to receive ongoing attention at the IMO.

There is an expectation that Member States and NGOs will make appropriate contributions to the work of the IMO, including the welfare of seafarers.

There is growing co-operation between the IMO and the ILO, regarding, for example, the treatment of seafarers as key workers, the fair treatment of seafarers regarding both accidents and alleged crimes, and the prevention of the bullying and harassment of seafarers.

(2) The International Labour Organization (ILO)

The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 as amended (MLC) continues to be a living instrument. The ILO Secretary General has spoken of the need for a new social contract; and that it must be fundamental that all parties put seafarers and seafarers' rights at the heart of any shipping strategy.

It could be expected that the work of ISSA would be recognised and appreciated at the ILO.

(3) Report for the periodic review of the non-governmental international organizations in consultative status with IMO

Pursuant to IMO Circular Letter No.4960 of 15 January 2025 (**Annex 1**), and as required by all NGOs in consultative status with the IMO, ISSA submitted a report to the IMO by the stated deadline of 1 March 2025 for the period 1 March 2023 - 28 February 2025. The questions in the Circular Letter indicate areas where ISSA should continue to perform strongly to retain its consultative status at the IMO, which is in the interests of all the members of ISSA.

(4) The United Nations Convention on the international effects of judicial sales of ships

This Convention is not yet in force internationally. But it will impact maritime claims against ships (including claims for ship supplies), after a judicial sale of ship; and the Convention might be considered for further analysis in the light of on-going developments.

(5) Some possible considerations

ISSA might consider:

- appropriate activities for World Maritime Day and accordingly inform the IMO, taking into account IMO Circular Letter No. 4959 of 10 January 2025 (**Annex 2**).
- inviting the IMO to attend ISSA Convention 67 in Singapore in October 2025 to strengthen its relationship and co-operation with the IMO.
- Making a further contribution to the maintenance of the ILO/IMO data base on abandoned seafarers.
- an intervention/paper at the IMO with support from Governments (such as the UK) and NGOs (such as IFSMA and the ITF), regarding seafarer issues (such as abandonment), including seafarer supplies.
- gaining observer status and the right to make statements at the ILO.

PART II: REPORTS ON IMO MEETINGS

1. Introduction

The IMO Secretary-General has advised that World Maritime Day will be celebrated at IMO Headquarters on 25 September 2025. This year's World Maritime Day theme is: "Our Ocean Our Obligation Our Opportunity". Annex 2 contains IMO Circular Letter No. 4959 of 10 January 2025 which is a circular to assist Member Governments and NGOs in preparing their own activities for use in observing World Maritime Day.

2. 109th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held from 2 – 6 December 2024

The IMO Secretary General (SG) highlighted the urgent and ongoing concern regarding the attacks on ships and seafarers in the Red Sea. These incidents, he said, not only threaten the safety and welfare of seafarers, but also endanger innocent human lives and produce far-reaching consequences not only for the shipping industry but also for the global economy as a whole. He expressed his commitment to work closely with all Member States, UN agencies and stakeholders to re-establish and ensure the principle of freedom of navigation. And he called on shipowners and operators to carry out the necessary risk assessments, make responsible and sound decisions and ensure the protection of seafarers.

Other matters on the agenda that were also highlighted by the SG were maritime autonomous surface ships; and on a parallel track, he said that MSC109 will be conducting a more in-depth study in support of the safe delivery of the IMO Strategy for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. This will involve not only the assessment of alternative fuels and technologies, but also a thorough examination of the obstacles and safety gaps in the current instruments developed by IMO. The safe implementation of the IMO Strategy for Reducing Greenhouse Gases is one of the key focuses of the work of the IMO.

The SG also highlighted the International Safety Management Code, including the outcome of the relevant considerations on violence and harassment by the Joint ILO/IMO Working Group, and recommendations emanating from the Study on the effectiveness and implementation of the ISM Code; and urged Member States to consider acceding to the Cape Town Agreement, thereby allowing the Agreement to enter into force and to fill the missing gap for fishing vessels safety.

Previously ISSA submitted a paper to MSC107 (in 2023) and to MSC101 (in 2019). Both papers related to "Access to ports and vessels by ship suppliers". The papers were well received.

Some of the highlights of the MSC109 meeting include the following. Amendments were adopted to the IGC Code (to enable the use of ammonia cargo as fuel) and to the IGF Code (for ships using natural gas as fuel); draft interim guidelines for ammonia as fuel were approved; draft amendments to SOLAS Regulation V/23 and the related performance standards to improve the safety of pilot transfer arrangements were approved; the non-mandatory Code on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) was advanced; and given the labour matters related to MASS personnel, it was noted

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that the labour related matters should be dealt with at the ILO and not at the IMO nor through the MASS Code and that it is important to acknowledge the separation of scope and remit of the IMO and the ILO; and draft amendments to SOLAS Regulation V/23 and associated performance standards for pilot transfer were approved with the intention of ensuring safe arrangements for pilots and other personnel embarking and disembarking ships in all conditions of draught and trim.

Some matters were carried forward may be of interest to ISSA. For example, due to time constraints, MSC postponed the consideration of issues related to improving the effectiveness and effective implementation of the ISM Code. Also, the interpretation of IMO instruments is an important matter that could have significance for ISSA. Regarding the application of safeguards to the proposed IMO unified interpretations of IMO instruments, MSC agreed that the safeguards agreed by MSC108 needed to be implemented to gain sufficient experience before consideration is given to providing more specific guidance on their implementation. Sub-Committees were invited to provide relevant feedback to the MSC for making informed decisions in future. Regarding maritime cyber risk management, MSC recognized the importance of cybersecurity standards for ships and port facilities and invited proposals to enhance maritime cyber security.

3. 11TH session of the sub-committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC) held from 13 – 17 January 2025

SDC finalized the draft amendments to the Guidelines on alternative design and arrangements for SOLAS chapter II-1 which now comprise goals, functional requirements and expected performances so that alternative designs for ship and machinery match the performance of the prescriptive requirements of SOLAS.

Work also started on developing goal-based SOLAS regulations to accommodate for traditional and non-traditional propulsion and steering systems.

SDC also finalized the Action Plan that is intended to increase awareness, uptake and implementation of the recently approved Guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping and to recommend to the MEPC a three-year experience-building phase, with a possible two-year extension, to gain experience and develop best practices of the Guidelines.

Progress was made with respect to the revision of the Interim explanatory notes for the assessment of passenger ship capabilities after a fire or flooding casualty under SOLAS safe-return to port requirements.

A proactive approach was adopted in addressing novel technologies by looking into remote inspection techniques for surveys under the ESP Code.

4. 12TH session of the sub-committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) held from 27 to 31 January 2025

With regard to plastic pellets, PPR finalized: draft recommendations for the carriage of plastic pellets by sea in freight containers, which will help to eliminate ship-source pellet spills

In relation to control of emission of Nitrogen Oxides, PPR finalized: draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code 2008 on the use of multiple engine operational profiles for a marine diesel engine, including clarifications of engine test cycles; and draft amendments to the NOx Technical Code 2008 on certification of an engine subject to substantial modification.

PPR prepared draft guidance on best practice on recommendatory goal-based control measures, which aims to reduce the impact on the Arctic of Black Carbon emissions from international shipping; draft guidelines on recommendatory Black Carbon emission measurement, monitoring and reporting; and draft guidelines on mitigation measures to reduce risks of use and carriage for use of heavy fuel oil as fuel by ships in Arctic waters.

5. 11TH session of the sub-committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) held from 10 - 14 February 2025

HTW agreed on the list of specific areas for the comprehensive review, the associated draft methodology and the road map to lay the groundwork for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code.

HTW finalized the draft terms of reference for the revision of Model Course 1.21, which will help prevent and address all forms of bullying and harassment in the maritime sector. This work was taken forward at the ILO STC5 which is mentioned below.

HTW agreed to launch the new GISIS module to address globally the obligations emanating from the STCW Convention facilitating their discharge, the addressing of fraudulent practices and alleviating the administrative burden; and the validation of two model courses.

6. 11TH session of the sub-committee on Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE) held from 24 – 28 February 2025

SSE is the technical body tasked primarily to ensure fire safety of ships and their crews and passengers, as well as providing the regulatory basis for adequate life-saving appliances.

SSE finalized the draft amendments to the HSC Codes to harmonize the lifejacket carriage requirements therein with SOLAS chapter III.

SSE made significant progress made on: revision of SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code;

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development of amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS Code concerning containership fires; evaluation of measures to reduce the fire risk of ships carrying new energy vehicles; and comprehensive review of resolution MSC.402(96) to address challenges with their implementation.

7. 49TH session of the Facilitation Committee (FAL) held from 10 - 14 March 2025

Some important results of FAL included: the approval of the revised versions of the rules of procedure and the method of work of the Committee which will be useful for the upcoming sessions of other committees; the approval of the amendments to the annex to the FAL Convention on key workers during a public health emergency of international concern that will have a positive impact both for seafarers and port workers (the issue of key workers is mentioned below in the context of the amendment of MLC, 2006); the finalization of a new version of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business, including new data sets; and the approval of the amendments to instruments related to digitalization, the revised version of the Guidelines for setting up a maritime single window and the joint FAL-LEG-MEPC-MSC guidelines on electronic certificates.

There was also a discussion on the strategy on maritime digitalization to lay the foundation for the future work of the correspondence group that will report to FAL 50. And FAL invited digitalization experts from the other IMO committees to join this correspondence group to ensure coordinated work by all relevant committees.

8. 112TH session of the Legal Committee (LEG) held from 24 – 28 March 2025

LEG met against a background of the critical issue of seafarers detained on suspicion of committing crimes. Incidents of unjust treatment of seafarers are on the rise, posing a significant challenge to the sustainability of shipping, undermining seafarers' morale and discouraging young persons from pursuing a career at sea.

LEG also met against a background of maritime security threats that is much more complex than the current scope of piracy and armed robbery against ships. Such complicity includes terrorism, drug trafficking, cyberattacks, threats to the safety and well-being of seafarers, and transnational crimes.

Regarding fraudulent ship registration and registries, maintaining high-quality shipping standards is of importance to ensure the compliance with the IMO's regulatory framework and its enforcement.

LEG adopted the Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes. The Guidelines will add value in resolving the challenges faced by seafarers and help to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly. The Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained on suspicion of committing crimes aim to improve coordination among countries, including flag States, port or coastal States, states of which seafarers are nationals, and shipowners and seafarers to provide for fair treatment more quickly. The Guidelines are further mentioned below in the context of amendments to the MLC, 2006, at STC5.

LEG agreed on adding four new outputs to the work programme: the development of guidelines or best practices for the registration of ships for the benefit of safety, protection of the marine environment and the well-being of seafarers; the suitability of IMO liability and compensation

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regimes with respect to alternative fuels; an output on Measures to address maritime security threats; and developing a Regulatory Scoping Exercise in connection with substandard ships.

LEG was informed that, from 1 January to 20 December 2024, a total number of 310 new cases of abandonment had been reported, excessively surpassing all the previous years' records of reported cases. In 144 reported cases, there was no obligatory financial guarantee. The joint IMO/ILO database on abandonment of seafarers was considered an essential tool for the resolution of abandonment of seafarer cases and should contain all adequate and accurate information that is needed for the solution of cases of abandoned seafarers, while their individual data should be protected

LEG noted the information provided by CMI on progress towards meeting the entry-into-force requirements of the UN Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships, which is further considered below.

Following the conclusion of LEG, there was an IMO/ITLOS workshop addressing ship registration, among other issues.

9. 83RD session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) held from 7 – 11 April 2025

The landmark work of the MEPC on GHG emissions has a global impact on climate change on the planet.

MEPC approved the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI mandating the IMO net-zero framework in its endeavours to combat climate change.

MEPC also adopted a revised 2025 Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships.

MEPC made progress on the review of the BWM Convention, and advanced development of draft amendments for approval at MEPC 84;

MEPC adopted amendments to the NOx Technical Code and approved the designation of two new Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas, the Nasca Ridge National Reserve and the Grau Tropical Sea National Reserve emphasizing their biological and ecological significance, and socio-economic and cultural importance.

PART III: REPORT ON ILO MEETING

5th meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC 5) of the ILO (established under article xiii of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended), held from 7 to 11 April 2025

1. Introduction

The MLC, 2006, is regarded as the “fourth pillar”, complementation three key conventions of the IMO – SOLAS, MARPOL, and STCW. The MLC, 2006, is considered to be a living instrument and as such subject should remain up to date; truly responsive to global demands and challenges; and ready to address emerging issues.

In the midst of change and uncertainty, what remains steady are the original principles of the MLC: the MLC as a living instrument that is readily updateable; adapting to developments in the sector; providing fair and decent work for seafarers; a level playing field for shipowners; and a clear set of implementable standards for governments.

2. Proposals for amendments

STC 5 had before it 16 proposals for amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006.

Proposals Nos 1 to 5 had been submitted jointly by the Seafarers’ and Shipowners’ groups; proposals Nos 6 to 10 by the Seafarers’ Group; proposal No. 11 by the Shipowners’ group; and proposals Nos 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 by different groupings of Governments.

The meeting was attended by 280 Government, 37 Shipowner, 41 Seafarer representatives, and Observers representing a number of IGOs and NGOs.

3. Amendments

After a challenging but successful STC5, the most significant amendments agreed on the basis of tripartism included the following.

Regarding an amendment in the aftermath of COVID-19 when seafarers rights under the MLC, 2006, were grossly violated, there is now a reference in the Code of the MLC, 2006, for the first time to seafarers as key workers, and strong commitments are secured from Governments in relation to their treatment as key workers at all times, especially in terms of shore leave, repatriation and access to medical care. The amendment provides that:

“Each Member should designate and recognize seafarers as key workers and take appropriate measures to facilitate their safe movement when travelling in connection with their employment or work, including, but not limited to, access to shore leave, repatriation, crew changes and medical care ashore”.

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Regarding the fair treatment of seafarers, the Guidelines on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers are now enshrined in a mandatory Standard in the Code, which required Governments to take due account of the separate Guidelines, one Guideline covering maritime incidents, and the other Guideline covering alleged crimes. This is of much significance to the prevention the unfair treatment and criminalization of seafarers. The amendment provides that:

“1. In carrying out an inquiry into a marine casualty, Members shall take due account of the principles established by the IMO Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident, and the recommendations of the ILO/IMO Guidelines on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the event of a maritime accident and the ILO/IMO Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes.
2. Without prejudice to national legislation, Members shall cooperate, as far as practicable, with concerned States to assist in the application of the above-mentioned Guidelines”.

The provisions of the MLC, 2006, on the prevention and elimination of shipboard violence and harassment had been strengthened. It was said that the industry is suffering from a lack of attractivity, recruitment and retention. Consequently, the amendment includes a reference to the “prevention and elimination, including through prohibition in law, of shipboard violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and sexual assault, with due regard to the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)”.

It is anticipated that regarding hours of work and hours of rest, future discussions will focus on the lack of enforcement of the existing regulations, and in cooperation with IMO, the limits for rest and hours of work would be reviewed in order to reduce fatigue.

The sixth meeting of the STC will be held from 3 to 7 April 2028.

PART IV:

REPORT FOR THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF ISSA IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH IMO

IMO Circular Letter No.4960 of 15 January 2025 was sent to all Non-Governmental International Organizations in consultative status with IMO. In response, the following Report was presented to the IMO. Such reports are of course required of all NGOs.

The Report completed on behalf of ISSA is set out below.

“1. Please enter your name and title.

ISSA Secretary Sean Moloney

2. Please provide your email address.

secretariat@shipsupply.org

3. Please select the name of your organization.

ISSA

4. Briefly outline your organization's interest in and contribution to the work of the relevant bodies of IMO in the past biennium (in terms of applicable work outputs) (approx. 200 words).

ISSA has members located in 95 countries and over 550 ports worldwide. For the period 1 March 2023 to 28 February 2025, ISSA submitted the following paper: MSC 107/7/1 27 March 2023 entitled “ Measures to enhance maritime security Access to ports and vessels by ship suppliers”. The paper drew attention of the Committee to difficulties experienced by ship suppliers globally in accessing ports and vessels to deliver stores due to questionable ISPS Code restrictions. After citing examples of difficulties and expenses being experienced by ISSA members, the paper went on to state that the examples cited are having an adverse impact on ship operations since ships cannot sail without stores. ISSA stressed that it is imperative that ports, terminals and port authorities provide simple and economical ways for ships stores to reach the ships to ensure the well-being of human life on board, safety of navigation and the prevention of marine pollution.

For the Council meeting 29 July 2023, Mrs. Yvonne Paul, Head, Administration, ISSA attended. Please see List of participants (C129-INF.1)

For MSC 109 December 2024, Professor Hilton Staniland attended as a Representative of ISSA. Please see List of participants (MSC 109/INF.1)

5. Briefly outline how your organization disseminates information on and promotes the work of IMO to its membership and/or beyond (approx. 200 words).

At MSC 107, ISSA made available copies of its booklet on guidance issued as far as ship supply and the ISPS Code are concerned and invited distinguished IMO delegates to take copies to convey this information to the relevant department in their home countries.

ISSA made available copies of its booklet to its members on guidance for its members regarding ship supplies and the ISPS Code. A full copy of the guidelines can be downloaded from the website of ISSA.

ISSA continues to promote the good works of the IMO in the Ship Supplier Journal. The President of ISSA referred to its submission to MSC 107 in the foreword of the [97th edition](#) (2023) of the Ship Supplier Journal, indicating that ISSA’s agenda had been discussed by IMO Member States.

In the 100th edition of the Ship Supplier Journal there is an article welcoming the New Secretary General of the IMO.

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The Ship Supplier Journal is distributed to the ISSA membership online and to its advertisers and subscribers in hard copy. The Ship Supplier Journal also available to view and download via the Ship Supplier website.

6. Briefly explain how your organization plans to contribute to the work of the relevant bodies of IMO in the next biennium (in terms of applicable work outputs) (approx. 200 words).

At the recent ISSA convention in Dubai (October 2023), a panel session took place to discuss “The Need for Sustainability”. Please see the ISSA website.

There were articles in the 99th edition of the Ship Supplier Journal on the topic of Green ISSA initiatives making references to the shipping industries environmental footprint. The ISSA Quality Standard has been updated to take into account the key requirements of: ISO 9001:2015 covering the Quality Management System; ISO 14001-2015 covering environmental Aspects; ISO 45001 covering Occupational Health and Safety Management; ISO 22000-2005 covering the Food Supply Industry. In addition, the ISM Code and ISPS Code have been taken into account. Please see the ISSA website.

For the next biennium ISSA has made all the necessary arrangements to ensure regular attendance at IMO meetings and to make contributions (both written and verbal) to the work of the IMO.

7. If applicable, please provide information on meetings and conferences convened by your organization or under its auspices to which IMO sent representation during the period under review.

ISSA plans to invite the IMO to attend ISSA Convention 67 in Singapore in October 2025”.

PART V:

REPORT ON UN CONVENTION GOVERNING THE RECOGNITION ABROAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF JUDICIAL SALES OF SHIPS

As mentioned above, LEG noted the information provided by CMI on progress towards meeting the requirements of the UN Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships (the Beijing Convention) to enter into force. The Beijing Convention attempts to enhance the legal certainty of judicial sales of ships as giving clean title after a judicial sale of a ship. The Beijing Convention covers claims against ships, including claims for supplies.

The European Union (EU) has signed the Beijing Convention. And full ratification by the EU would give rise to the recognition of clean titles within the EU.

As the Beijing Conventions moves closer to coming into force ISSA might consider whether or not it might adopt a public position concerning the Beijing Convention.

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Annexes:

Annex 1: IMO Circular Letter No. 4960 of 15 January 2025

Annex 2: IMO Circular Letter No. 4959 of 10 January 2025