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STRATEGY, PLANNING AND REFORM

Review and reform of the Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides an update on progress with the review and reform mechanism established by the Secretary-General and requests the Council to consider and adopt a number of measures to enhance the efficiency of the Organization

Strategic direction: 4

High-level action: 4.0.1, 4.0.2, 4.0.3, 4.0.5

Planned output: 4.0.1.2, 4.0.1.4, 4.0.1.5, 4.0.2.1, 4.0.2.4, 4.0.2.8

Action to be taken: Paragraph 58

Related documents: C 109/4(d), C 109/4(e); C 108/3/3, C 108/5(e) and C 108/5(f)

Background

1 The Council, at its 108th session, received information on the work being undertaken on the mechanism established by the Secretary-General to review and reform the Organization, taking into account the human and financial resources available in the current biennium. This document provides an update on progress to date and makes proposals for change for consideration by the Council.

The review and reform mechanism

2 As was reported to C 108, in aiming to meet the Secretary-General's objectives of a forward-looking, efficient and cost-conscious specialized agency within the United Nations system with strengthened and knowledge-based authority in global standard setting, the review and reform mechanism has been focused on five key areas addressing:

- .1 budget and expenditure;
- .2 human resources and office structure;
- .3 meeting support arrangements;
- .4 technical co-operation; and
- .5 information technology.

The progress made to date under each heading is reported below.

Budget and expenditure

3 The group on budget and expenditure has been requested, among other issues, to: review the 2012 and 2013 budget; develop the basis for the Secretary-General's study on a long-term plan for the future financial sustainability of the Organization; further strengthen the linkage between the Strategic Plan, High-level Action Plan and budget – including a possible priority setting mechanism; look into cost-saving initiatives and increased effectiveness; and consider how pay increases in the United Nations system should be addressed. Document C 109/4(e) provides the outcome of this work and also takes into account recommendations and proposals emanating from the other groups, as detailed below.

Human resources and office structure

4 The group on human resources and office structure has been requested, among other issues to: consider the sustainability of the current policy of personal promotions; evaluate the merits and disadvantages of the current stringent office structure; consider ways of flexible deployment of resources to emerging needs; and develop a transparent staff career development policy. Its progress to date is reported below.

Staff mobility

5 In pursuit of a more flexible and responsive Organization able to meet changing priorities whilst, at the same time, developing and broadening staff skills, a new staff mobility programme has been developed as part of the career development programme. The mobility programme will also help knowledge transfer and institutional memory at a time when a growing number of staff members are approaching retirement age.

6 The programme will be comprised of five elements: short-term assignments; temporary reallocation of duties; internal recruitment; movement within the United Nations system (through the existing inter-agency mobility arrangements) and temporary assignments outside of the United Nations system. The current Staff Regulations and Staff Rules include a number of provisions which support all the elements of the programme.

7 Short-term assignments are anticipated to be very flexible and require staff to perform functions of other staff members for periods ranging between one day and one year, either on a full or part-time basis during regular working hours or, in the case of additional assignments, over and above regular duties but outside of regular working hours with compensation given, as appropriate, under the relevant staff rule. Amongst other things, such assignments should allow staff members to acquire new knowledge and skills, or significantly enhance current skills through on-the-job experience, and gain a broader perspective of IMO's work whilst contributing to the Organization's work programmes. To facilitate the management of planned short-term assignments, an electronic roster of interested staff will be introduced.

8 Short-term needs may also be addressed through temporary reallocation of duties where functions usually performed by one staff member will be reallocated for a limited period to other staff in addition to their regular duties.

9 To encourage internal mobility and enhance staff career development in line with the practice of the United Nations Secretariat, vacancy announcements will henceforth follow a two-step approach: a vacancy notice will firstly be issued only internally (with a short deadline) and, if no suitable internal candidates are identified, the vacancy will be announced externally with its attendant dissemination on the Intranet (with a longer deadline).

10 The movement of IMO staff within the United Nations system is guided by the terms of the relevant staff rule. Staff members may review other vacancies in the United Nations system (including Peacekeeping) through relevant United Nations websites and, if their release from IMO is practicable, may apply and be released under the provisions of inter-agency mobility arrangements.

11 Staff members who are interested in broadening their experiences outside the United Nations system or in the private sector might do so, subject to the approval of the Secretary-General. During such period, staff members will be placed on special leave without pay in accordance with the relevant staff rule.

Flexible working arrangements

12 The Organization currently provides individual staff members with some flexibility as to working hours through staggered hours, part-time work for family reasons and working from home for medical reasons. During the refurbishment of the Headquarters building, additional flexibilities were trialled but have not been permanently adopted. Flexibilities, including variable working hours, a compressed working week or working from home (telecommuting) were utilized during the Olympic and Paralympic Games in response to the additional loading on the London transport network. A comprehensive flexible working arrangements policy, covering the above-mentioned provisions and other flexibilities is presently under consideration.

Seconded policy

13 The Organization may, at times, require assistance of senior advisers on secondment (seconded) from institutions, private sector companies or Member States. Seconded staff can provide high-level technical advice in areas where the Organization lacks manpower or specific expertise and might be engaged, at no cost to the Organization, for periods of limited duration not normally exceeding two years. A standardized approach on the engagement of seconded staff has been developed (see also agenda item 4(a)).

Career development

14 Further elements of a career development system are being developed. Those elements will include a revised performance management process, a reward and sanctions mechanism and a new career progression system. Furthermore, a revised policy and related procedure on recruitment and selection will be issued shortly.

Meeting support arrangements

15 The group on meeting support arrangements has been requested, among other issues, to: review current meeting support arrangements and identify opportunities for streamlining and cost/resource reduction; analyse current working arrangements vis-à-vis the meetings programme and possible changes to working practices; and to make proposals for improvements to the current delivery mechanism. Its progress to date is reported below.

Review of the sub-committees

16 The last review of the sub-committee structure was in the 1996-1997 biennium when the number was reduced from 11 to 9 (BLG, COMSAR, DE, DSC, FP, FSI, NAV, SLF and STW). As the work of the Organization has changed over the last 16 years, the opportunity of the Secretary-General's review and reform process has been taken to undertake a review of the sub-committees, on the basis that committees function as

policy-making bodies while sub-committees are technical bodies. In considering the biennial agendas of all the sub-committees, consideration was given to alternative arrangements including increasing the duration between meetings; reducing the number of sub-committees; or a combination of both. An evolutionary as opposed to revolutionary approach was adopted in the review, taking into account any likely effect on Member Governments, with the aim of a clear benefit from any new arrangement.

17 In considering the substantial workload of the MEPC, and its deferral of important agenda items and documents due to a lack of available time, it is timely for a sub-committee to be established to deal exclusively with environment-related matters to allow the MEPC to delegate preliminary technical/scientific discussions to a sub-committee. This should not, however, preclude the MEPC from utilizing the expertise of other specialist sub-committees, as appropriate. The MEPC has been referring many of its substantive issues to the BLG Sub-Committee such that, of the 22 items on BLG 17's provisional agenda, only three outputs were exclusively safety-related, all of which will be completed by the end of the current biennium. This argues for renaming the BLG Sub-Committee as the Sub-Committee on the Environment as opposed to adding a new sub-committee. The related ESPH Working Group more frequently deals with environmental issues as part of its routine work and it might, therefore, continue to do so under the purview of the new Environment Sub-Committee.

18 If the above proposal was implemented, as a consequence, the DSC Sub-Committee might subsequently be renamed as the Sub-Committee on Cargoes in order to address all cargo issues (i.e. both solid and liquid) in one sub-committee.

19 In considering the biennial agendas of the NAV and COMSAR Sub-Committees, it is clear that there is increasing commonality in much of the work which relates to the operation of IT-based equipment, its use and its integration. A combination of the current work of NAV and COMSAR into one body renamed as the Sub-Committee on Operations would bring the work together and reflect similar structural changes already implemented in some Member State Administrations. Noting the need to keep the workload to a reasonable level (e.g. 10 substantive items per session), SAR issues might in future be dealt with by an intersessional working group, which might meet once every two years and report directly to the MSC.

20 The remaining technical issues are concentrated in three sub-committees (DE, FP and SLF). The DE Sub-Committee has an ongoing and heavy agenda and some reallocation of responsibilities between these sub-committees would lighten its load and, noting the generally lighter agenda of SLF and FP Sub-Committees, their work might be amalgamated such that one sub-committee would address design, stability, codes, etc., whilst another would address equipment issues (fire, life-saving, etc.). In this way, the current three sub-committees might be reduced to two: Technical I (addressing SOLAS chapter II-1) and Technical II (addressing SOLAS chapters II-2 and III) – with some future flexibility between them to address workload and priority issues that may arise.

21 No proposals are made for the work of the FSI Sub-Committee, other than to change its name to the Sub-Committee on Implementation, to reflect the fact that its work has been increasingly addressing issues related to the implementation of IMO instruments – not only for flag States but also for port and coastal States.

22 Should the Council decide to endorse the proposed changes to the sub-committee structure, the committees should be invited to consider the implications and practicability of the proposals and report to the spring session of the Council.

23 If the above proposals were to be implemented from the start of the next biennium, there would be a reduction of four meeting weeks per biennium. Further savings could be obtained if some or all of the sub-committees met less frequently than annually but no proposals are being made in that regard at this time. The terms of reference for the new sub-committee(s) would need to be reviewed in the light of any changes made in line with these proposals.

Review of working, drafting and correspondence group arrangements

24 In analysing the Committees' Guidelines on the organization and method of work (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.4/Rev.2) on the establishment of various groups, no need was identified to increase the number of groups per session but the restrictions placed on how these groups should be distributed during a session (i.e. only three working groups and two drafting groups can be established) is arguably restricting the efficiency of working arrangements during some sessions. To enhance efficiency, it is recommended that the current restrictions be relaxed such that, if required, the distribution of ad hoc groups should allow up to five working and/or drafting groups per session, provided that the maximum number of five groups is not exceeded and information on the planned group arrangements is issued at least seven weeks prior to the start of a session.

Agenda management

25 In order to assist with prioritization of work items, the Guidelines might reinstate a maximum for the number of substantive items permitted to be placed on a sub-committee's meeting agenda (a maximum of 10 items (or Action Plan outputs) was the prevailing criterion prior to 2002). This measure would also support the agreed reduction of sessions requiring interpretation to eight per sub-committee meeting. To further assist in prioritization, unplanned outputs for the current biennium should only be accepted by the committees in exceptional circumstances (i.e. significant casualty, major oil spill, etc.), which is currently not the practice.

Streamlining the processing and translation of documents

26 In the context of the long-term strategy for the reduction of costs of international meetings, the Ad Hoc Council Working Group on the Organization's Strategic Plan (CWGSP) has previously considered options that may generate economies and efficiency gains. In this context, it may be recalled that the volume of documentation is apparently ever-increasing, as demonstrated in table 1 below and is unlikely to reduce or be manageable unless action is taken.

Table 1 – Increase in documents

Biennium	No. of pre-session documents	No. of pages	Percentage increase over previous year
2006-2007	2,290	23,898	14
2008-2009	2,606	28,325	18.5
2010-2011	2,948	31,446	10

27 In respect of the receipt, logging and initial internal distribution of documents for processing, to reduce the internal administrative burden to the minimum, the Secretariat proposes to investigate the feasibility of establishing dedicated email addresses for the receipt of documents (e.g. desubcommittee@imo.org) which would be directed to the relevant sub-committee or Committee Secretary. This same process could also be set up for intersessional groups.

28 One element of the work of a committee and sub-committee Secretary is to add value to a technical submission by clarifying unclear proposals, correcting technical or historical errors, identifying missing data, English editing, etc. Due to the volume of documents, the input from meeting Secretaries is now concentrated *primarily* on English editing, as opposed to technical review. In considering the above (i.e. time vs. value added), the Secretariat is reviewing the pros and cons of utilizing experienced editors only in the preparation of documents, with the possibility of some staff cost-savings, or relaxing internal deadlines to facilitate technical review by meeting Secretaries. Adjustments to approval processes for the processing of documents to sub-committees are also under consideration in order to improve efficiency.

Document structure

29 This part of the review aimed to identify documents that unnecessarily duplicate existing texts with a view to reducing the time and costs associated with the drafting, translating and processing of such documents. In considering how best to avoid such duplications, the Secretariat proposed (C 108/5(e)/3, paragraph 15.2) that all committees should have, in their reports, a new section entitled "Action requested of other IMO bodies" to facilitate subsequent cross-referencing by other IMO bodies and thereby avoid the unnecessary reproduction and translation (or even retranslation) of existing texts. C 108 approved the proposal (C 108/D, paragraph 5(e).3) in order to reduce translation and printing costs and this will be introduced in due course.

Streamlining reports

30 A streamlined reporting procedure was tested by six sub-committees during 2003-2004 and, having considered the outcome, MSC 79, endorsed by MEPC 52 and C 93, decided to halt the trial and re-establish the previous reporting procedure to include historical and background information and a summary of positions taken during the debates. Nevertheless, the trial had demonstrated that sub-committee reports could be reduced by approximately 45 per cent, chiefly related to a reduction in new text generated during the meeting (i.e. not advance text), which resulted in a consequential reduction in overtime payments. Reductions in the amount of text produced in advance of the meeting (background, historical information, etc.) might be achieved by simply making better use of the annotated agenda (i.e. by enhancing the background information), which is typically processed four to six months in advance of the session, and making only references to the annotated agenda in the main report under each agenda item. The Council may wish to consider this refinement.

31 Further limitations on the resource requirements might also be achieved by establishing a maximum number of pages to be translated per meeting. Recent developments in the upgrading of the current audio system to capture recording of the debates in the Main Hall and Committee Rooms 9 and 10 and to make the recordings available digitally online, filtered by delegation, subject and language, provides an opportunity to revisit the streamlining of reports. The new system will obviate the need to produce summary records and, as the debate will be captured and available for reference and download, the summary of discussion in the working languages and positions taken during debate need no longer form part of the written report. Adopting a strategy such that background information features in the annotated agenda; the written report of the meeting contains only references, outcomes and decisions (a "summary of decisions" format); and the discussion is recorded and available online will result in savings in the cost of précis-writers, dispensing with written summary records, a reduction in the size of all reports, a related reduction in production and translation costs, etc. The Council will wish to consider this in conjunction with the long-term plan for the future financial sustainability of the Organization (C 109/4(e)).

32 C 108 also considered, but did not then support, a proposal (C 108/5(e), paragraph 15.1) aiming at reducing the translation and related resources necessary to support the reports of working and drafting groups prepared and considered during meetings. The Secretary-General thus proposes, as a cost-saving measure, with the introduction of the enhanced sound recording system shortly and the adoption of the strategy (paragraph 31) such that reports are in "summary of decisions" format, every effort will also be made to streamline the reporting of discussion in working groups which meet in committee rooms without recording facilities to bring them in line, as far as is practicable, with the same summary format. This proposal, if rigorously applied, is estimated to produce savings of some 60 per cent of the costs related to the drafting and processing of ad hoc group reports. In support of these initiatives, work is under way to streamline the chairmen's briefs for meetings by the use of templates and rigorous enforcement of best practices and an update and simplification of the "IMO Style" Manual, once reforms have been agreed.

Priority setting

33 As there are many competing demands for limited resources, an organization-wide priority setting methodology and practical mechanisms to implement it are necessary in order to enable the work of the committees and sub-committees to be addressed through effectively allocating resources. As priority-setting decisions for specific proposed outputs and/or tasks might require consultations with numerous subject matter experts from the Secretariat, Member States, international organizations and others, a simple, effective and as high-level as appropriate mechanism, if implemented, should be managed by the Council.

34 Any priority-setting mechanism should clearly define: criteria on which to compare outputs; the processes to vote/score/rank outputs; and processes to make final decisions. At the most basic level, some priority-setting strategies, such as limiting the number of outputs to be placed on an agenda or the maximum number of pages to be translated may be effective. More systematic, but relatively simple approaches such as Quadrant analysis and Grid analysis have been further explored for possible introduction at IMO.

35 **Quadrant analysis** is a useful tool based on two clear criteria upon which to make a decision (e.g. effort and impact) and those two criteria can be qualified in a dichotomous way (e.g. high vs. low). The use of specific criteria means that this technique is slightly more time-consuming than other methods, but its structural simplicity makes it suitable for incorporation into existing IMO Guidelines and procedures. In addition, Quadrant analysis can be performed by a subject matter expert (i.e. sponsor of a proposal) or a group of experts (i.e. working group). The comparison criteria and response categories must be clearly defined or the results of the analysis will be meaningless. For example, what does "low effort" mean in comparison to "high effort" (e.g. number of sessions, need for working group, etc.) or "low impact" vs. "high impact" (e.g. developed in response to a casualty, number of ships and/or seafarers impacted, basic technology improvements, etc.).

36 Once the criteria are agreed and adopted (e.g. supply/demand; cost/benefit; effort/impact) and the appropriate responses also identified (e.g. yes/no; high/low), an analysis can be undertaken against the suggested actions, as given in the example in table 2.

Table 2 – Quadrant analysis

	Low Impact	High Impact
High Effort	Hard slogs. Avoid	Major Projects. Reflect on costs before committing
Low Effort	Fill-ins. If funds are available	Quick wins. Always pursue

As highlighted in table 2, proposed outputs that will require a high degree of effort but will ultimately have a low impact should not be taken forward, whereas quick wins should always be pursued.

37 Quadrant analysis might readily be incorporated into the Council's *Guidelines on the application of the Strategic Plan and the High-level Action Plan of the Organization* (resolution A.1013(26)) and the committees' guidelines on the organization and method of their work. In this regard, a quadrant analysis might be conducted by the Chairmen when preparing the preliminary assessment of proposed new outputs; and by Member States when proposing new outputs (planned or unplanned) to assist the Chairmen with the preliminary assessment. In the event that Quadrant analysis is the preferred priority-setting mechanism, the Council will need to decide on the criteria to be compared and provide a clear definition for each choice and response category. In addition, the Secretariat could use Quadrant analysis for allocating its own resources (e.g. TC Funds, training, reallocation of human resources, consideration of new ideas, etc.).

38 **Grid analysis** is a comparison method that is used when decisions must be justified with ample evidence. The goal is to weigh outputs against each other (ranking) so that choices can be made as to priorities and this is useful when many different criteria need to be considered. The process also lends itself to creating rankings for proposed outputs/projects and, if necessary, setting a cut-off limit. As the process is more detailed than Quadrant analysis, it takes more time, and requires a more sophisticated and engaged group (with adequate time available) to complete a detailed and considered ranking.

39 As with Quadrant analysis, the identification of appropriate criteria is key, particularly as the number is almost limitless (cost, effort, fit with mandate, number, impact, etc.) so a reasonable number, ideally less than 10, should be identified. Rating against the criteria must also be agreed (1 to 3 scale of low, medium or high; or excellent, very good, good or poor). An optional refinement is the apportionment of weights where some criteria are more important than others. An example of a completed grid analysis is given in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 – Rating

	1 = poor, 2 = ok, 3 = good				
	Fit with mandate	Fit with leadership's agenda	Cost to implement	Expected degree of change	Total
Weight	5	2	3	4	
A	3	1	1	2	
B	2	1	2	1	
C	1	1	3	1	
D	1	3	1	3	

Table 4 – Scoring

	1=poor, 2 = ok, 3=good				
	Fit with mandate	Fit with leadership's agenda	Cost to implement	Expected degree of change	Total
<i>Weight</i>	5	2	3	4	
A	3 x 5 = 15	1 x 2 = 2	1 x 3 = 3	2 x 4 = 8	28 - winner
B	2 x 5 = 10	1 x 2 = 2	2 x 3 = 6	1 x 4 = 4	22
C	1 x 5 = 5	1 x 2 = 2	3 x 3 = 9	1 x 4 = 4	20
D	1 x 5 = 5	3 x 2 = 6	1 x 3 = 3	3 x 4 = 12	26

40 In the above scenario, without the weighting, option D would have come out on top with a score of "8". However, with the weighting, it can be seen that the priority shifted to option A with a score of "28".

41 Grid analysis might be incorporated into the Council's *Guidelines on the application of the Strategic Plan and the High-level Action Plan of the Organization* (resolution A.1038(27)) and effectively conducted by the Council Working Group on the Strategic Plan when preparing the High-level Action Plan and associated outputs for a new biennium; the Secretariat when deciding on internal projects and outputs, when a quadrant analysis is not appropriate, to justifying the allocation of resources; and TCD when preparing the proposed ITCP for the coming biennium.

42 The two methodologies outlined above, with differing levels of complexity and rigour, can assist the Assembly, Council, committees and the Secretariat to be more strategic in their decision-making. Used in the right situations, they provide a transparent priority-setting process to help make decisions faster, justify choices and avoid conflicts.

Introducing a priority-setting mechanism

43 Taking into account the above, the following draft mechanism is proposed for the Assembly to decide on the Organization's priorities for a coming biennium:

- .1 the committees prepare the proposed high-level actions and associated outputs for the coming biennium before the Council's summer session;
- .2 the Council considers the budgetary implications of the proposals prepared by the committees and instructs the Secretary-General accordingly in the preparation of his related budget;
- .3 the Secretary-General prepares the draft updated Strategic Plan, High-level Action Plan and results-based budget taking into account an analysis of priorities conducted by the Secretariat and forwards them to the CWGSP for review, which may include prioritization, if necessary;
- .4 taking into account the CWGSP consideration of the matter at its extraordinary session, the Council considers and submits the draft proposals to the Assembly with its comments;

- .5 the Assembly considers the Secretary-General's proposals, together with the comments of the Council, and takes action as appropriate or forwards it, if required, to a new ad hoc Policy Group on Priorities, which would meet during the Assembly and consist of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the committees, for consideration with a view to advising the Assembly accordingly; and
- .6 the Assembly would consider the Policy Group's report and take action as appropriate.

44 In preparation for the process, a quadrant analysis might be conducted by the Secretariat to band proposed planned outputs into the following four categories (effort vs. impact):

- Band A – low effort/high impact
- Band B – high effort/high impact
- Band C – low effort/low impact
- Band D – high effort/low impact

It should be borne in mind that planned outputs in Band D (the least desirable) may still be proposed for inclusion in the HLAP, taking into account various aspects (political, economic, other) and the resources available. The above analysis would serve as a basis for preparing the Secretary-General's biennial proposal; however, the details and results of this analysis would not be reported to the Assembly. The Secretariat's analysis is for review by the Secretary-General as other methods may also be employed, as appropriate, to formulate the final biennial proposal. In addition, the Secretariat would have to agree on the meaning of the terms "low/high-effort" and "low/high-impact". A flow chart has been prepared to graphically illustrate the above procedure, as set out in the annex.

Technical co-operation

45 The group on technical co-operation has been requested, among other issues, to: consider establishment of country maritime profiles for technical co-operation needs for each developing country; and consider ways to promote the establishment of national maritime policies. Its progress to date is reported below.

Establishment of country maritime profiles

46 For each developing country, the Secretariat proposes to establish maritime profiles to be used as the basis for determining needs through identifying gaps. The work entails development of a country maritime profile template (TC 62/3/1 refers), in order to collect and collate data in a harmonized manner; storage and access of data electronically through a dedicated database; fielding of needs assessment missions to those countries where there is insufficient or out-of-date information; development of a "needs matrix", taking into account the information and data available for each country; and initiation of a "bespoke" approach for a programme of national maritime TC assistance. The outcome of Member State audits will assist in filling the "information gap" in the respective country maritime profiles in respect of the current 10 conventions the Audit Scheme addresses.

Promotion of national maritime policies

47 The Secretariat and the IMO Regional Coordinators with various IMO partners, including relevant United Nations agencies, regional organizations, WMU and IMLI, will provide assistance to maritime administrations in the development of national maritime policies and the

establishment of good maritime domain governance through fielding technical advisory missions to guide maritime authorities on "best practices" and on harmonization of regional strategies.

ITCP design

48 The current outcomes from the committees result in the listing of a relatively high number of "priority TC themes", all of which have to be addressed by the biennial ITCP, which in turn dilutes the focus and impact of the biennial assistance. By selecting a limited number of themes per year, the annual regional coverage can be targeted more effectively, with a view to maximizing the impact for those selected instruments which will be implemented under national activities throughout the regions, and financed through the allocation of a "ring-fenced" percentage of core TC Funds, based on the existing Technical Advisory Services Programme as a blueprint. The aim of the training at the national level is to meet the individual needs of an administration while reaching a much wider audience. Regional seminars to sensitize administrations of new or revised instruments will be retained and maritime sustainability will be addressed through a new linkage between the ITCP and Sustainable Development Goals.

Information technology

49 The group on information technology (IT) has been requested, among other issues, to: assess IT needs for Secretariat staff and meetings; and review the costs and benefits associated with the upgrading and updating of hardware and software. Its progress to date is reported below.

ICT strategy

50 The Secretariat is preparing an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy to cover the period 2012 to 2018 with the aim of enabling flexible, more effective and cost-efficient ICT requirements meeting the needs of the Secretariat and the expectations of Member States and other stakeholders, through accessing and sharing of information easily and seamlessly; by storing data for easy retrieval in a secure environment; by providing user-friendly interface for sharing, capturing and managing the Organization's knowledge base; and enhancing skills and planning.

51 The ongoing development of GISIS provides for a more effective data management system to better facilitate the work of Member States and the Secretariat and has replaced numerous individual databases with no common taxonomy and very limited data quality assurance. GISIS is thus reflected in the Organization's Strategic Plan (resolution A.1037(27)), principally addressing the requirements of identifying and making effective use of ICT for improving the management of and access to shipping-related information. With over 70,000 public-registered users, an estimated 4,900 pages viewed per day and 9,000 visits per month, GISIS provides a response to information needs, including IMO Member State users' needs with approximately 1,300 visits each month to the GISIS Members' Area. Future developments will enhance usability and provide for custom reports, statistical analysis and improved cross-module searches.

52 Managing increasingly large amounts of information through the process of identification, gathering, storage, processing, analysing and disseminating information for decision-making, whilst preserving institutional knowledge, is a challenge being met through the introduction of document management and web portal systems. In line with developments elsewhere in the United Nations system and the business community, the Organization is working towards "unified communication" the basis of which is the consolidation of Office products on Microsoft technology. The goal is effective

communication using different modes of communication, different media, and different devices to simplify and strengthen the process of information exchange between IMO stakeholders and reduce hardware, communication and related support costs. Improved utilization of ICT will also support IMO's outreach programme through the public website and social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, RSS feed, etc., and further enhance dissemination of information about IMO's work to a wider audience and thus promote public understanding of the role of IMO and its achievements.

53 The advent of unified communication will open up the possibilities for running virtual meetings for correspondence groups, working groups, sub-committees and committees. It will be possible for Member States to reduce the number of delegates to a meeting to a minimum while others might join in remotely in the IMO virtual meeting workspace. Recent developments, including web-based online registration, coupled with document access through IMODOCS, and moves towards "paperless" (PaperSmart) meetings reduce costs and make IMO meetings "environment friendly". The introduction of improved audio recording of meetings and the provision of indexing and access to the audio files could significantly reduce the need for written records and provide the opportunity for a step-change in the way meetings are held and outcomes reported.

54 Web-based systems will also be used to support capacity-building work through the capture and storage of data on Member State country profiles and provide for rosters of consultants for engagement in IMO projects, including through tracking Member State Audit Scheme audits and outcomes. Enhanced facilities for remote access and platform-independent applications will also enable staff members to work remotely.

ICT cost

55 Cost is incurred in providing ICT services through the purchase and maintenance of the Organization's hardware (servers, data storage devices (SAN and others), networking equipment, desktop PCs and laptops); the upkeep of software licences (operating systems licences for servers and desktop PCs, licences for antivirus, malwares, firewall, database and mail systems, Microsoft Office applications, SAP users, etc.); telecommunications (equipment, voice and data); and in respect of maintenance, consultancy and hosting contracts.

56 The strategy for hardware replacement ensures that costs are spread as far as possible over the years and maintenance costs are reduced through refreshing equipment regularly, therefore striking a balance between budgetary constraints and guarding against obsolescence. In this respect, it is the Secretary-General's intention to always ensure the highest possible ICT service to Member States whilst maintaining the Secretariat reasonably up to date with technological developments.

ICT implementation

57 Attention has been given to the aligning of the strategic initiatives to the overall strategic plan of the Organization and to the review and reform agenda of the Secretary-General. Implementation of current initiatives on information and knowledge management has already begun with the deployment of the Microsoft SharePoint platform in the development environment. SharePoint implementation will form the bedrock of the Organization's collaborative platform. In addition to the collaboration platform, SharePoint includes document management and web portal systems which will be deployed to help manage the knowledge that is needed to meet the demands of a forward-looking and flexible Organization. A unified communication system is being configured, with testing at an advanced

stage. Similarly, a new messaging system using the Microsoft Exchange platform and Outlook front end has been deployed.

Action requested of the Council

58 The Council is invited to note progress on the Secretary-General's review and reform programme and to consider the conclusions and recommendations made, in particular, with respect to:

- .1 budget and expenditure;
 - .1 note that the financial implications of the proposals emanating from the Secretary-General's review and reform process to date are contained in the long-term plan for the future financial sustainability of the Organization (C 109/4(e));
- .2 human resources and office structure;
 - .1 note the introduction of the staff mobility programme and consider providing opportunities for staff to broaden experience under that policy (paragraphs 5 to 11);
 - .2 note that, under agenda item 4(a), the new policy on secondees will be put forward for approval and consider nominating suitably qualified candidates when the need arises (paragraph 13);
- .3 meeting support arrangements;
 - .1 endorse the proposal for the establishment of a sub-committee to deal exclusively with environment-related matters and, as a consequence, the renaming of the BLG Sub-Committee as the Sub-Committee on the Environment (paragraph 17);
 - .2 endorse the proposal on the renaming of the DSC Sub-Committee as the Sub-Committee on Cargoes (to include both wet and dry cargoes) (paragraph 18);
 - .3 endorse the proposal for the amalgamation of the NAV and COMSAR Sub-Committees under one new Sub-Committee on Operations (paragraph 19);
 - .4 endorse the proposal for SAR issues to be considered in an intersessional working group reporting directly to MSC on a biennial basis (paragraph 19);
 - .5 endorse the proposal for the reallocation of responsibilities between the DE, FP and SLF Sub-Committees (paragraph 20);
 - .6 endorse the proposal for the amalgamation of the FP and SLF Sub-Committees and, as a consequence, the renaming of the DE and amalgamated FP/SLF Sub-Committees as Technical I and Technical II (paragraph 20);

- .7 invite the MSC and MEPC to give early consideration to the implications and practicability of the proposals listed in subparagraphs .1 to .6 above and report to the spring session of the Council (paragraph 22);
- .8 note the potential saving of 4 meeting-weeks per biennium (see also C 109/4(e)) (paragraph 23);
- .9 endorse the proposal that the committees' Guidelines on the organization and method of work be amended such that: the restriction of the combination of the five ad hoc groups at any session of the sub-committees be removed; the maximum number of substantive agenda items (all corresponding to High-level Action Plan outputs) at any session be 10; and unplanned outputs only be accepted within a biennium in exceptional circumstances; and invite the MSC and MEPC to consider accordingly (paragraphs 24 and 25);
- .10 note the potential for future savings through utilizing experienced editors (not technical officers) in the preparation of meeting documents (paragraph 28);
- .11 endorse the proposed revision of the Annotated Agendas to meetings to contain all relevant background information (paragraph 30);
- .12 note the benefits to be gained from the introduction of enhanced audio recording systems in capturing discussion and thus obviating the need for a written summary of debates (paragraph 31);
- .13 endorse a strategy such that background information features in the annotated agenda; as far as practicable, the written report of the meeting contains only references, outcomes and decisions (a "summary of decisions" format); and the full discussion is recorded and available online, for all of the Organization's committees and sub-committees (paragraph 31);
- .14 endorse the proposal to streamline the reporting of discussion in working groups which meet in committee rooms without recording facilities to bring them in line, as far as is practicable, with the same "summary of decisions" format in order to realize the anticipated savings (paragraph 32);
- .15 endorse the timing, use and methodologies for priority-setting in the development of the Strategic Plan, High-level Action Plan and Results-based Budget for the forthcoming biennium (paragraphs 43 and 44 and the annex);
- .4 technical co-operation;
 - .1 note the development of country maritime profiles through the use of an appropriate template to collect and collate data in a harmonized manner (paragraph 46);

- .2 note the development and promotion of national maritime policies (paragraph 47);
- .3 note the anticipated improved focus and impact of assistance through a redesign of ITCP (paragraph 48); and
- .5 information technology;
 - .1 note the preparation of an ICT Strategy 2012-2018 (paragraph 50);
 - .2 note the ongoing development of GISIS to enhance usability and provide for custom reports, statistical analysis and improved cross-module searches (paragraph 51);
 - .3 note the introduction of document management and web portal systems to manage information (paragraph 52);
 - .4 note the anticipated benefits to be gained from unified communications including participation through "virtual" meetings (paragraph 53); and
 - .5 note the strategy of the use of existing ICT provisions and the aligning of those provisions with the Organization's strategic objectives (paragraph 57).

ANNEX
FLOW CHART OF PRIORITY-SETTING MECHANISM
(odd-numbered years)

