

## Outcomes of MSC 103

Submitted by IHO Secretariat

### SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides details of the outcomes of MSC 103, which are relevant to WWNWS-SC

Action to be taken: 3

Related documents: MSC 103/21 dated 25 May 2021

1. The 103<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 102/103) was held as a remote virtual meeting, from 5 to 14 May 2021. The following items are of relevance to WWNWS-SC:

a. In addressing the agenda of the session in his opening statement, the Secretary-General of IMO, Mr Kitack Lim, highlighted the efforts with other UN organizations and industry partners to encourage Member States to recognize seafarers as "key workers", as also advocated by the UN General Assembly Resolution adopted in December 2020, and to prioritize their vaccination, thereby facilitating seafarers' safe movement across borders. He noted the ongoing regulatory scoping exercise for the use of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships, highlighting the objective of the regulatory scoping exercise to identify items for further discussion in the future. He observed that the objective was not to discuss or decide on recommendations at this stage, although it was clear that many delegations would like to start the actual regulatory work as soon as possible.

**b. Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)**

The Committee reviewed the progress of the regulatory scoping exercise (RSE) and the draft report of the MASS Working Group. The MSC noted that no analysis had been conducted with respect to chapter VIII (watchkeeping) of the STCW Convention and Code (and STCW-F Convention), in particular the issue surrounding the bridge watchkeeper, as this might be perceived as a potential gap for MASS operations. It was agreed that this issue might require further consideration, there was general consensus that the STCW Convention and Code would be among the later instruments to be considered to address MASS operations and that the focus for the RSE on STCW had been on the training and certification parts of the Convention and Code. Nevertheless, the Group agreed that watchkeeping would require an additional analysis to address MASS operations in the future.

The MSC concurred that the best way forward to introduce MASS in the IMO regulatory framework could preferably be addressed in a holistic manner through the development of a goal-based MASS instrument – the future MASS code, which could be made mandatory through amendments to SOLAS and/or other IMO conventions. The Committee acknowledged that there might be issues not captured by the RSE but that were of importance to the development of MASS, such as use of data and artificial intelligence, performance and data requirements, validation, verification and certification and an accountability framework.

Recognizing that autonomous technologies had already been applied on ships and used on a trial basis, it was proposed that interim guidelines should be developed to close the safety gap for those ships that already used or were about to use autonomous technology until such time when these gaps were closed by mandatory requirements for MASS operations. The MSC agreed that the Organization would benefit from reports of experience gained from MASS trials and future MASS operations to develop such interim guidelines. The Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) informed the Group that the first-ever contract appointed to autonomous ships, AUTOSHIPMAN, was about to be finalized and be available commercially by the end of 2021. The aim of the contract was to establish a standardized ship-management agreement for autonomous ships, which mapped out where amendments and clarifications were required when operating this type of ship.

The Committee also acknowledged the need for the Maritime Safety Committee to coordinate the work on MASS with other Committees and Sub-Committees of the Organization, which required additional resources and time. Following these considerations, the MSC invited proposals for new outputs on MASS, taking into account high-priority issues and possible order for addressing MASS operations in IMO instruments. The Committee also invited Member States and international organizations to submit reports on the experience gained in the operation of MASS.

#### **c. Maritime Safety Information**

The Committee took into consideration the discussion and decisions taken at NCSR 8 on issues concerning the dissemination of MSI and SAR-related information over multiple recognized mobile satellite services, including broadcast monitoring. The Chair highlighted the important role of MSI and SAR information providers (i.e. NAVAREA and METAREA Coordinators and SAR services) in ensuring the timely dissemination of information over recognized mobile satellite services for the benefit of the whole shipping community and the need to address the cost burden for information providers associated with the recognition of new mobile satellite services for use in the GMDSS. The Chair also recognized that this was a complex issue and that further information would be necessary before the Committee could take a final decision, such as detailed information on actual costs for dissemination of information and other related functions, consideration of options to either eliminate or reduce the shore-to-ship charge for dissemination of navigational and meteorological warnings, and procedural aspects related to the possible establishment of a fund by IMO to spread the cost. Consequently, the Chair invited comments on the cost issue and on the possible establishment of a correspondence group to progress this work intersessionally with a view to reporting to MSC 105 with a final recommendation on how to address this issue.

It was felt that the Committee should consider whether to make explicitly mandatory for all area coordinators to provide MSI and SAR information to all mobile service providers recognized by the Organization. The proposal for the establishment of a dedicated fund by IMO in order to share the cost burden across all beneficiaries Member States was supported, but also exploring other possible solutions, including revising resolution A.707(17) or maintaining the current implementation. There was support that no additional cost should be borne by Member States, ship-owners, ship operators or the end users due to the recognition of new mobile satellite services.

The Committee encouraged Member States responsible for the promulgation of MSI through the World-wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS) and the Worldwide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service (WWMIWS), as well as those responsible for the dissemination and reception of SAR-related information, to progress the implementation of GMDSS mobile satellite services recognized by the Organization and to communicate this information through the GISIS module on GMDSS Master Plan, as and when changes occur.

The MSC agreed to the establishment of a correspondence group to consider the matter intersessionally and report to MSC 105. The Committee invited Member States responsible for the dissemination of MSI and SAR-related information and being concerned about the cost issues, to submit detailed information directly to the correspondence group on cost implications and, in particular, an estimation of the actual cost for the dissemination of such information over recognized mobile satellite services. The MSC also invited the United Kingdom and the United States, in cooperation with Inmarsat and Iridium, respectively, to advise the correspondence group on the feasibility to eliminate or reduce the shore-to-ship charge for navigational and meteorological warnings (as it is the case with distress alerts) and to share their views on how the cost issues could be addressed; the MSC also requested the Secretariat to submit information directly to the correspondence group on procedural aspects related to the possible establishment of a fund.

The Committee established the Correspondence Group (CG) on Dissemination of MSI and SAR-related information, under the coordination of Australia and instructed it, taking into account decisions of, and comments and proposals made at MSC 103, as well as any additional information that might be submitted directly to the Correspondence Group. The CG was instructed to consider the mandatory use of all recognized mobile satellite services providing services within the service area for dissemination of information by MSI and SAR information providers; to consider options to address cost implications for MSI and SAR information providers concerning the dissemination of information over multiple GMDSS mobile satellite services; present an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each option; and recommend a way forward for consideration by the Committee, including an implementation plan for consideration at MSC 105. The Committee invited experts representing the recognized mobile satellite service providers, NAVAREA and METAREA Coordinators, SAR authorities, Member States and international organizations concerned, in particular WMO and IHO, to actively participate in the deliberations of the Correspondence Group.

**d. Any Other Business**

The Committee agreed to include in its post-biennial agenda an output on "Development of amendments to SOLAS chapters IV and V and performance standards and guidelines to introduce VHF Data Exchange System (VDES)". The MSC agreed to include in its post-biennial agenda an output on "Development of performance standards for a digital navigational data system (NAVDAT)".

**e. Office Bearers**

The MSC unanimously elected Mrs. Mayte Medina, United States, as Chair and Mr. Theofilos Mazos, Greece, as Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2021.

2. The Sub-Committee is invited to:

- a. **encourage**, in general, the maintenance of liaison with their national Maritime Administrations to ensure that their views and interests are acknowledged in their country's views on, and contribution to, the progress of outputs affecting the provision of hydrographic services and maritime safety information;
- b. **urged** to actively engage and participate in the work of the MASS CG and the GMDSS Modernization CG, both of which impact on the activities of NAVAREA and National Coordinators; and
- c. **note** the information provided and take action as appropriate.