

IFSMA 36th General Assembly Statements and Resolutions

IFSMA STAT 1/2010 (AGA 36) – Deepwater Horizon

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, 17/18 June 2010, expressed their deep concerns about the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe and expressed its sympathy not only to the families of those who lost their lives, but to all those who will suffer from economic, environmental and domestic impact in their lives, particularly to seafarers and other people who work and earn their income at sea in the affected area.

Regarding the ongoing and forthcoming operations at sea in connection with the Deepwater Horizon, IFSMA recognizes the need for urgency in order to save the environment from as much damage as possible. But at the same time IFSMA is concerned with reports from its members on the safety and wellbeing of the masters and crews on board salvage vessels and other vessels operating in the area. IFSMA has received reports on illness caused by fumes and gases as well as reports on excessive working hours over long periods of service.

Without any direct connection to the Deepwater Horizon and in respect of the ongoing accident investigations and the future findings and conclusions IFSMA also wants to emphasize that maritime skills and competences in general, and especially in terms of offshore operations, are vital to any deepwater operation. IFSMA therefore urges IMO to address standards for manning of moveable offshore installations and standardization of certification, training, competence and proficiency within the field of offshore operations as well as setting the standards for contingency planning.

IFSMA STAT 2/2010 (AGA 36) – Hours of Rest

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, 17/18 June 2010, expressed their concern over the proposals for revision to the hours of rest in the STCW Convention. Therefore IFSMA wishes to use the opportunity of this Conference to share the views of IFSMA Members.

At IMO the subject of fatigue has been discussed at length on many occasions. As fatigue is of great concern to all of us, actions to prevent it should be taken whenever possible. The Secretary General has mentioned fatigue as an important cause of incidents and accidents and has also requested the Member States to always take the Human Element into consideration.

Over the years IMO has taken initiatives in order to achieve a reduction of fatigue. At this Diplomatic Conference the Member States are given the opportunity to improve the existing regulations and thereby reduce the problems of fatigue even further.

During STW-39 the fatigue problem was discussed once again and action was taken on the derogation paragraph in the STW Chapter VIII, Section A-VIII/1.4. It was agreed that this paragraph was contradictive to the work to reduce fatigue. Therefore this paragraph was removed. This action was also recognized at the following meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee.

A number of papers have now been submitted, with the purpose to include new possibilities and means of deviating from the main rule set out in STW Chapter VIII, Section A - "fitness for duty", the main rule providing for 10 hours of rest a day and 70 hours of rest a week.

IFSMA is not supportive of any of the submissions as they will all have an increased negative effect on fatigue and therefore also on safety.

IFSMA urges the IMO Member States to focus on safety and prevention of further fatigue to seafarers, particularly with regard to watch keeping personnel.

IFSMA RES 1/2010 (AGA 36) – Piracy

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, noted with great concern the immense and increasing threat to seafarers from maritime piracy worldwide, particularly from pirates operating off the coast of Somalia.

IFSMA calls upon relevant national bodies to criminalize maritime piracy in their domestic jurisdictions, in accordance with current international law.

In this process, IFSMA encourages states to include in their criminal laws a prosecutable definition of intent to commit piracy. IFSMA recommends this be done by using equipment specific to maritime piracy as an evidentiary standard to prove intent.

IFSMA also encourages a UN Security Council Resolution that would call for the incorporation of equipment laws into national jurisdictions.

IFSMA will continue to be actively engaged in discussions of potential solutions for maritime piracy, particularly in forums that give voice to non-governmental organizations.

IFSMA calls upon the international community to provide the framework to enable ITLOS and respectively ICC to become engaged in trials against pirates.

IFSMA has noted with great concern the recent US initiative to impose civil and criminal penalties on shipping companies who pay ransoms to pirates in order to end the hijacking of their crews and vessels.

IFSMA once again recalls its position that under no circumstances the crew on board merchant ships should be armed or any armed guards be taken on board

IFSMA calls upon all seafarers, their families and friends as well as everyone else, to sign the "End Piracy Now" petition at www.endpiracypetition.org to urge Governments to act now to fight piracy.

IFSMA RES 2/2010 (AGA 36) – Victims of any Acts of Piracy

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, noted with great concern the information provided by the Master Mariners Society of Pakistan about the circumstances of the death of its member Captain M. Jaffer Jafri, who was murdered during the hijacking of the ship "QSM Dubai" by pirates.

IFSMA is calling upon all Governments and Shipping Companies to take responsibility by giving full support to the families of any victims amongst ships crew resulting from any act of maritime piracy.

IFSMA is of the opinion that all victims of any acts of piracy affecting crew and their families should be taken care of financially and by the provision of trauma counselling.

IFSMA RES 3/2010 (AGA 36) – Recruitment

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, noted that the shipping industry will continuously need to attract, employ and retain young talent to keep the world fleet sailing.

The delegates further noted that attracting and retaining sufficient new entrants is a major task that will need the efforts of all stakeholders.

The delegates emphasised that optimising recruitment would require a review of present recruitment methods and the exploration of new ones.

Moreover, the delegates noted that the assessment of the quality of life on board vessels should be an integral part of all stakeholders' considerations in the shipping industry in order to recruit and retain seafarers.

IFSMA RES 4/2010 (AGA 36) – Asbestos on Board Ships

On the occasion of the 36th Annual General Assembly, the delegates of IFSMA assembled in Manila, Philippines, noted with great concern the continuous trend of seafarers being exposed to asbestos on board vessels.

Apart from the dangers related to exposure to asbestos present on vessels built before SOLAS Chapter II-1 *Construction - Structure, subdivision and stability, machinery and electrical installations*, came into force on 1 July 2002, the delegates noted that in addition to the current limited exemptions, ending 1 January 2011, that asbestos is also found on some new builds with the keel being laid after 2002.

The delegates also noted the concern recently expressed at the 53rd Session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment, a proposal for the inclusion of a footnote to Regulation II-1/3-5 expressly prohibiting the installation of any material containing asbestos purchased prior to 1 January 2011, being kept in any ship's store or in a shipyard for a ship under construction, that it should not be permitted to be installed after 1 January 2011 as a working part.

The delegates moreover noted that when vessels enter into service, they frequently become contaminated with asbestos when undergoing repairs at shipyards throughout the world and/or while storing and using maintenance products and spare parts that often contain asbestos.

The delegates further noted that without proper training seafarers cannot easily identify whether or not products or spare parts contain asbestos, and that they therefore run a serious exposure risk during maintenance work.

IFSMA calls upon the relevant international, regional and national bodies to take appropriate action to ensure compliance to national, regional and international regulations regarding the use of asbestos products.

IFSMA strongly recommends that information is provided on materials containing asbestos and seafarers are made aware of the dangers of asbestos through appropriate training.