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PRESS RELEASE

TOKYO MOU PSC COMMITTEE HELD ITS 31ST MEETING VIA VIRTUAL MEANS UNDER COVID-19 CIRCUMSTANCES

Tokyo, Japan – The Port State Control Committee, the governing body under the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region (Tokyo MOU*), held its 31st meeting remotely via virtual means from 21 to 22 January 2021. The 31st Committee meeting, which was originally scheduled to be held in Republic of Korea in December 2020, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently organized via a combination of written procedures and virtual meeting as agreed by all member Authorities. The 31st meeting of the Committee was chaired by Mr. Kenny Crawford, Deputy Director, Maritime Systems Assurance, Maritime New Zealand.

Attendance of the meeting

The 31st meeting of the Port State Control Committee was attended by 21 member Authorities of Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam; a co-operating member Authority of Mexico; and observers of Macao (China), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the United States Coast Guard, the Black Sea MOU (represented by Russian Federation), the Caribbean MOU, the Indian Ocean MOU, the Paris MoU, the Viña del Mar Agreement (represented by Chile) and IMO. Observers of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Abuja MOU, the Riyadh MOU and ILO were unable to attend and sent their



apologies.

Prior to the Committee meeting, the 14th meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) from 18 to 19 January 2021 was also convened remotely via virtual means. The TWG meeting discussed matters relating to PSC technical procedures and guidelines, the Concentrated Inspection Campaigns, the information system and information exchange, evaluation of work done by intersessional technical groups and technical co-operation activities.

Decisions of the Committee

The top agenda discussed at the 31st meeting of the Committee was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to PSC activities of the Tokyo MOU. The Committee considered the work done by the extraordinary intersessional group on impact of the COVID-19 crisis, which was established through written procedure to investigate the impact of COVID-19 to the activities of the Tokyo MOU, as well as to identify relevant areas/items where actions/measures can be taken to reduce or minimize such influence, and to make proposals and develop appropriate countermeasures for consideration of the Committee. The Committee, while noting a significant decrease of the number of inspections conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, decided to publish 2020 data without redaction in the Annual Report in the same manner as they have been published in the past. The Committee also considered a draft interim guidance relating to COVID-19 circumstances and the matter of investigation on conduct of remote PSC inspections. The Committee, taking into account the urgent need for the guidance, agreed to request the extraordinary intersessional group on impact of COVID-19 crisis to further develop and finalize the interim guidance relating to COVID-19 circumstances and development of practical procedures for remote PSC inspection for consideration and approval of the MOU's Standing Working Group (SWG) on its behalf. The Committee further agreed to implement those technical co-operation programmes which can be implemented by utilizing virtual means as far as possible and to develop guiding documents to do so.

The Committee considered the application for observer status by Cambodia. In accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum, the Committee unanimously agreed to grant observer status to Cambodia.

The Committee was informed of the results of a trial on remote follow-up inspection procedure and agreed to extend the trial for a longer period in order to gain more experience to validate and improve the procedure. The purpose of the remote follow-up inspection is to allow PSCOs to verify and close deficiencies, without physically visiting the vessel under specific circumstances. Such a mechanism can be used at the discretion of each port State Authority, whereby the Authority is satisfied that there is appropriate and reliable evidence of rectification of deficiencies.

The Committee considered and approved the final report of the CIC in 2019 on Emergency Systems and Procedures, which will be published on the Tokyo MOU website in due course. The Committee reconfirmed the arrangements and preparations for the joint CIC with the Paris MoU on Stability in General, which was postponed from 2020 to 2021 due the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee took note of the amended schedule for future joint CICs

due to the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., CIC on STCW in 2022, CIC on Fire Safety in 2023 and CIC on Crew Wages and Seafarer Employment Agreement under MLC in 2024. The Committee considered and agreed to accept the proposal by the Paris MoU to carry out a CIC on Ballast Water Management (BWM) in 2025. The Committee further considered and approved the amendments to the policy on joint CIC, for harmonization with the Paris MoU.

The Committee considered and adopted the revised Strategic Plan, Strategic Directions and the list of planned actions for a five-year period from 2021 to 2025. The Committee further approved a revised strategic plan for technical co-operation programmes for the period of 2021-2025 and expressed its appreciation to the Nippon Foundation for the support provided to the technical co-operation programmes.

Since Mr. Alex Schultz-Altmann, the Chair of the Committee, who had stepped down in July 2020, the Committee held a by-election and unanimously elected Mr. Kenny Crawford, Deputy Director, Maritime Systems Assurance, Maritime New Zealand, the current Vice-Chair of the Committee as the Chair, and Mr. Chen Kit Jam, Assistant Director (Flag State Control), Shipping Division, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, as the Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remaining terms of office.

Date and place of the next Committee

The 32nd meeting of the Port State Control Committee is tentatively scheduled to be held in Lima, Peru from 27 to 30 September 2021.

26 January 2021

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Notes to editors:

* The Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region, known as the Tokyo MOU, was signed among eighteen maritime Authorities in the region on 1 December 1993 and came into operation on 1 April 1994. At present, Tokyo MOU consists of 21 member Authorities: Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. Mexico adheres to the Tokyo MOU as a co-operating member Authority. Cambodia (accepted at the current meeting), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Macao (China), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the United States Coast Guard, the International Maritime Organization, the International Labour Organization and the Secretariats of the Paris, the Indian Ocean, the Black Sea, the Riyadh, the Caribbean and the Abuja Memoranda of Understanding on Port State Control and the Viña del Mar Agreement are associated with the Tokyo MOU as observers.

The Secretariat of the Memorandum is located in Tokyo, Japan. The PSC database system, the Asia-Pacific Computerized Information System (APCIS), was established. The APCIS center is located in Moscow, under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation.

Port State Control (PSC) is a check on visiting foreign ships to verify their compliance with international rules on safety, security, marine environment protection and seafarers living and working conditions. It is a means of enforcing compliance in cases where the owner and flag State have failed in their responsibility to implement or ensure compliance. The port State can require defects to be put right, and detain the ship for this purpose if necessary. It is therefore also a port State's defense against visiting substandard shipping and PSC is the second defense for ensuring safety, security, marine environment protection and seafarers living and working conditions.