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**JOINT WMO/IOC TECHNICAL COMMISSION FOR
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**AGENDA ITEM 5: REPORTS BY ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS AND
PROGRAMMES**

AGENDA ITEM 5.1.2: International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

SUMMARY

This document provides a brief report on International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) feedback on the Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) Scheme and comments on the potential need for increased coordination between international organizations collecting meteorological, hydrographic and oceanographic data from ships.

A. DECISIONS/ACTIONS REQUIRED:

- (a) Note the feedback on the VOS Scheme provided in paragraph 4 and the opportunity to further improve the reliability and efficiency of observations in paragraph 5; and
- (b) Note the discussion on future data collection in paragraphs 6 and the need for enhancements in the coordination of meteorological, hydrographic and oceanographic data collection schemes; and the proposal in paragraph 7.

B. DISCUSSION:

Introduction

1. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international trade association for the shipping industry, representing shipowners and operators in all sectors and trades. ICS membership comprises of national shipowners' associations in Asia, Europe and the Americas whose member shipping companies operate over 80% of the world's merchant tonnage.
2. ICS is concerned with all technical, legal, employment affairs and policy issues that may affect international shipping and represents shipowners with the various intergovernmental regulatory bodies that impact on shipping, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Feedback on the Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) Scheme

3. ICS supports and encourages the VOS Scheme amongst its Members through the ICS Radio & Nautical Sub-Committee and many shipping companies either require or strongly recommend that ships actively participate in the VOS scheme. Ultimately this reflects the significance of weather in safe and efficient ship operations. We do however recognise that greater levels of participation are always desirable.
4. The feedback from ICS Members on the use of electronic logbooks and automated weather stations, where installed, is positive. In this regard ICS has identified no decisions or actions for this session of the Ship Observation Team.

5. However, ICS recognises that the provision of accurate and consistent observations is essential for the generation of reliable forecasts. ICS considers that there are opportunities to enhance the collection and reporting of observations, taking into account other aspects of ship operations which require the attention of the crew. In this regard, ICS would support any appropriate initiative to enhance the quality and efficiency of reporting by increasing use of automatic weather stations (AWS). Such systems should, so far as is technically possible, observe, collate and send data to the relevant shore-based authority, without the intervention of the crew.

Future collection of observations from ships

6. In the future, and particularly as international shipping becomes more connected to the shore, the demand for data from ships is anticipated to increase. This includes but will not be limited to observations collected under the VOS Scheme and initiatives such as the International Hydrographic Office's (IHO) crowd-sourcing of bathymetry data. Consequently, ICS sees the potential need for international organizations requesting participation of ships in meteorological, hydrographic and oceanographic data collection schemes to further coordinate such efforts.

7. In particular, whilst automated data collection systems are considered to bring significant benefits for the VOS Scheme, consideration should be given to the use of a single 'black box' solution serving the data collection needs of all international organizations wishing to collect meteorological, hydrographic and oceanographic data. Such a combined system would collect data from all the relevant sensors on board and make this information available for international organizations to download on demand. The data would be pulled from ships, rather than pushed in a report by ships and could yield the opportunities for near-real time observations.

8. In order to support the proposal in paragraph 7 above, further engagement with the IMO may be necessary, particularly were additional connectivity to type-approved ship sensors is required. Similarly, managing the costs for States of on-demand availability of data in near-real time may require engagement with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).