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TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
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Agenda item 7

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ROLE OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Review of the Checklist for considering human element issues by IMO bodies (MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1)

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and The Nautical Institute (NI)

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides information on recent use of the *Checklist for considering human element issues by IMO bodies (MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1)*, and assesses its contribution to establishing a structured approach for the proper consideration of human element issues at IMO. It discusses the possible need to review the specific questions in the checklist and associated guidance and instructions, as well as the guidance on the process that requires completion of the checklist.

Strategic direction, if applicable: 6

Output: 6.15

Action to be taken: Paragraph 13

Related documents: Resolution A.947(23); MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1 and MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.1

Background

1 The human element is a complex multi-dimensional issue that affects maritime safety, security and marine environmental protection. It involves the entire spectrum of human activities performed by seafarers, shore-based management, regulatory bodies, recognized organizations, shipyards, legislators and other relevant parties, all of whom need to cooperate to address human element issues effectively.

2 Resolution A.947(23) sets out the human element vision, principles and goals for the Organization, including a specific goal to have in place a structured approach for the proper consideration of human element issues for use in the development of regulations and guidelines by all IMO committees and sub-committees.

3 To meet this goal, IMO approved the *Checklist for considering human element issues by IMO bodies* (MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1). It was agreed that the checklist should be completed by all relevant IMO bodies before approving or adopting amendments to mandatory and non-mandatory IMO instruments, and Member States were also encouraged to complete it before submitting proposals for development or amendments to IMO instruments.

4 To formalize its use, the *Organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.1) sets out the information required in submissions of proposals for the inclusion of an output, which includes the completed checklist contained in MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1 to demonstrate that the human element has been sufficiently addressed as well as the criteria for the assessment of proposals by the MSC and MEPC.

5 Mindful of the time passed since the approval of the checklist contained in MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1, the co-sponsors decided to conduct a review of checklists completed as part of submissions of proposals for the inclusion of new outputs to assess its contribution to establishing a structured approach for the proper consideration of human element issues at IMO.

Discussion

6 The co-sponsors reviewed checklists completed as part of submissions of proposals for the inclusion of outputs from MSC 93 to MSC 100. The sample reviewed comprised 65 submissions of proposals, of which 63 had checklists annexed thereto, which amounted to 1,240 responses to the questions found in the checklist.

7 The co-sponsors analysed the responses to the questions and comments section provided in the checklist to obtain an indication of the possible consideration given to human element issues in the proposal using the fact that the instructions in the checklist specify that:

- .1 "Yes" responses require the respondent to "provide supporting details and/or recommendation for further work";
- .2 "No" responses require the respondent "to make proper justification as to why human element issues were not considered"; and
- .3 "NA" (not applicable) responses require the respondent to "make proper justification as to why human element issues were not considered applicable".

8 Based on an analysis of the responses, the co-sponsors observed that:

- .1 there is a high completion rate (97%) of the checklist as part of submissions of recent proposals for the inclusion of outputs in the MSC agenda;
- .2 the majority of the 1240 responses to the questions in those checklists completed were "NA" (62%);

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- .3 a proportion (20%) of the checklists completed did not include any comments despite there being a requirement in the checklist to provide comments;
 - .4 where comments were included at the end of the checklist, there was considerable variation in quality in the comments provided:
 - .1 33% of the comments provided included a clear and unambiguous explanation for a "NA" or "No" response; and
 - .2 only 19% of the comments provided the supporting details and/or recommendation for further work required for a "Yes" response;
 - .5 only 27% of the completed checklists indicated that a relevant IMO body with human element expertise reviewed and considered the proposal (although the reviewing body is not named); and
 - .6 only 27% of the completed checklists indicated that human element experts were consulted in the development of the proposal.
- 9 Based on the above observations, the co-sponsors have concluded that:
- .1 some of the questions are ambiguous or lack clarity;
 - .2 some of the questions appear to overlap or be repeated;
 - .3 some of the questions may not be aligned with changes in the understanding and consideration of marine human element issues since the checklist was developed;
 - .4 some of the questions may need to be revised to take account of the checklist transitioning from being voluntary to there being a requirement to complete it when submitting proposals for the inclusion of a new output;
 - .5 some of the questions may be set at too high a level for the consideration of human element issues related to a specific proposal for the development or amendments to IMO instruments;
 - .6 some of the guidance associated with the checklist may be insufficient to allow a respondent, especially with a limited knowledge of human element issues, to consider the human element issues and complete the checklist;
 - .7 the part of the process where human element expertise should be sought from a relevant IMO body by the respondent does not appear to be available anymore compared to when the checklist was developed; and
 - .8 the part of the process where completed checklists are reviewed by the Committee during consideration of the proposal for the inclusion of a new output appears to have focused on their completion and not on the adequacy of the responses and comments provided therein.

10 Given the central role the checklist plays in the consideration of human element issues at IMO, its contents and associated process should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals. Therefore, the co-sponsors recommend that it may now be the appropriate time to:

- .1 review the specific questions in the checklist (i.e. annex to MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1).
- .2 review the guidance and instructions associated with the checklist (i.e. MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.1 and annex); and
- .3 review the guidance on the process that requires completion of the checklist (i.e. relevant provisions of MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.1).

Proposal

11 The co-sponsors propose that the Sub-Committee considers the information provided on recent use of the checklist (paragraphs 6 to 9), and discusses the possible need to review the specific questions in the checklist and associated guidance and instructions, as well as the guidance on the process that requires completion of the checklist (paragraph 10).

12 A general discussion during this session of the Sub-Committee would provide an indication of possible support for further work in this area, which with the Committees' endorsement, could be carried out under the output on the "Role of the human element".

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

13 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the information provided and proposal in paragraph 11, and take action as appropriate.
