

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION TO THE
INTER-AGENCY FORUM ON COORDINATED BORDER MANAGEMENT
WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION 29 – 30 JUNE 2009**

The mandate of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) lies with international shipping, based upon the Convention on the International Maritime Organization, which entered into force in 1958.

One of the conventions introduced under the auspices of IMO is the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic 1965, as amended, which has so far been accepted by 114 States. This Convention was adopted in 1965 to prevent unnecessary delays in maritime traffic, to aid co-operation between Governments, and to secure the highest practicable degree of uniformity in formalities and other procedures. The purpose of the FAL Convention is to facilitate maritime transport by simplifying and minimizing the formalities, documentary requirements and procedures associated with the arrival, stay and departure of ships engaged on international voyages. It was originally developed to meet growing international concern about excessive documentation required for merchant shipping.

Traditionally, large numbers of documents have been required by customs, immigration, health and other public authorities pertaining to the ship, its crew and passengers, baggage, cargo and mail. Unnecessary paperwork is a problem in most industries, but the potential for red tape is probably greater in shipping than in other industries, because of its international nature and the traditional acceptance of formalities and procedures.

The Convention emphasizes the importance of facilitating maritime traffic and demonstrates why authorities and operators concerned with documents should adopt the standardized documentation system developed by IMO and recommended by its Assembly for worldwide use. Contracting Governments to the Convention undertake to bring about uniformity and simplicity in the facilitation of international maritime traffic.

Within IMO, the Facilitation Committee, which is now a fully institutionalized organ of the Organization, addresses these issues as well as other matters relating to the implementation of the FAL Convention. In 2005, the Committee adopted amendments to the Convention to introduce the concept of risk management for efficient border control, together with systems for the transmission of pre-arrival and pre-departure information thus facilitating the processing of data required for the clearance of ships and allowing their transmission to a single point, commonly known as the 'Single Window' concept. Those amendments entered into force in November 2006. IMO works closely with UN/CEFACT and the WCO in relation to this complex issue.

There is a high priority given by IMO both to the security of ships and port facilities and to the complementary issue of facilitating international maritime traffic; reflecting the continuing need for IMO, and the maritime community as a whole, to sustain efforts to enhance and improve security in all aspects of ship and port operations while, at the same time, ensuring that the flow of seaborne trade continues to be smooth and efficient and that the movement by sea of persons is not unduly impeded.

Since the 1980s IMO has developed international treaties, guidelines and recommendations on measures to prevent unlawful acts against passengers and crew on board ships. In December 2002, by the International Diplomatic Conference on amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 as amended and the International Ship and Port Facility Code, IMO introduced Special measures to enhance maritime security that became mandatory on 1 July 2004 and apply to ships engaged on international voyages and the port facilities servicing them. These have been primarily designed to counter acts of terrorism and enable ships and port facilities to co-operate to detect and deter acts that threaten security in the maritime transport sector. The security measures adopted by IMO aim towards establishing a security conscious culture amongst seafarers, ship owners, ship operators, maritime sector services providers and port facility operators, users and services providers and focus on enhancing awareness and vigilance.

The 2002 SOLAS Conference resolution 9, which recognized the inter-modal and international nature of the movement of closed cargo transport units (closed CTU) and the need to ensure security throughout the supply chain also requested the World Customs Organization (WCO) to consider urgently measures to enhance security throughout international movements of closed CTUs. Although security in certain shore-side segments of the supply chain lay outside the scope of the Organization, it was, nevertheless, important to recognize that measures to facilitate international maritime traffic needed to be consistent with relevant security measures.

Accordingly, as a result of a consultative process involving WCO member Customs administrations and representatives of the private sector, IMO welcomed the adoption by the WCO Council in June 2005 of the Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (Framework of Standards), which after the addition of the Authorized Economic Operator Guidelines (AEO Guidelines) in June 2007 were merged to form one integrated document called the SAFE Framework of Standards, encouraging Customs authorities to implement a series of measures to enhance the security and facilitation of international trade. IMO, after consultation with WCO, then issued MSC-FAL.1/Circ.1, which provided further guidance in respect of securing and facilitating international trade in respect of the responsibilities of the respective Organizations.

The WCO and IMO have worked closely together in areas such as combating illicit drug trafficking, and other unlawful acts threatening the safety and security of ships and having an impact on property and persons on board, such as armed robbery and terrorist attacks, including the recent establishment of a coordinated coastguard organization in West Africa.

In this era of globalization, inter-dependency and inter-connectivity, the establishment and maintenance of safe and secure conditions worldwide, for the transport of goods and for the movement of people, is a key factor in social development and a necessity for economic growth, being, at the same time, essential for the attainment of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

The concept of coordinated border management being proposed by the WCO is timely and appropriate and aligns closely with IMO objectives in relation to the Facilitation of international maritime trade and the implementation of the aforementioned FAL Convention. In our view it is important that these matters are discussed internationally in response to emerging demands for concerted international action to ensure that the time ships spend in ports or offshore terminals is kept to a minimum. In these trying economic times, unwelcome and highly costly delays in port seriously affect the facilitation of international maritime traffic to which Governments, the shipping and port industries, seafarers and the travelling public attach an ever-increasing importance and significance.

To this end the IMO welcomes and supports the initiative taken by the WCO to further reduce the amount of time a ship spends in port by proposing more coordination of documentation, which would, in our opinion, contribute considerably to the efficiency of shipping and the facilitation of international maritime traffic. IMO looks forward to continued close and effective cooperation with the WCO in this and other areas of mutual interest to promote both rapid and harmonized procedures that would not only enhance the facilitation of maritime traffic but also make the whole process more predictable for all the stakeholders concerned to benefit from.

Thank you.
