

11th May 2020

Dear Secretary General Kitack Lim,

Thank you for your considered reply to our letter regarding the postponement of MEPC 75, and for your leadership during these difficult times.

We understand and support the IMO's primary focus on the efforts of the shipping industry to maintain the flow of essential medical supplies, food and equipment in the context of the current pandemic.

We welcome your statement that IMO's efforts to achieve its Initial GHG Strategy goals must not be delayed, despite the COVID-19 crisis and the postponement of MEPC 75.

We understand that there are a range of challenges to moving technical discussions and especially negotiations into a digital format, including the provision of simultaneous interpretation into the official IMO languages. However, we note that:

- a) No interpretation is needed for Intersessional Working Groups. Could we not therefore arrange a trial session of the first day of the ISWG-GHG?
- b) [VOICE](#) (Virtual Online and In-person Conferencing Experience), which is being used elsewhere in the UN at the UNFCCC [Adaptation Committee](#) and [Technology Committee](#), does support interpretation into multiple languages.
- c) We understand that some IMO Member States are already arranging informal online discussion groups to further the work on GHG measures. In the interests of transparency, perhaps you could request that invitations for these discussions are sent to all Member States and organisations in consultative status, particularly developing countries, SIDS and LDCs?
- d) Physical participation in MEPC and other IMO meetings is also challenging for many Member States.
- e) The transition to low and zero emissions global and national economies will inevitably involve less global travel and greater use of technologies that allow full and effective participation through online channels.

Given that many parts of the world are only in the very early stages of this pandemic, there is no guarantee that a safe and fully attended in-person ISWG-GHG or MEPC can be held later this year, or even next year. As such, we feel the IMO must move much faster in setting up digital channels, to allow a representative, global discussion involving member states and observers to continue in these difficult times, along the lines of what other multilateral organisations are doing.

The development of such tools may also help to address the long-standing problems that many Member States have attending IMO meetings. Remote attendance is a necessity now but the tools that IMO develops to deal with the current situation could help ensure better representation of remote and less well funded Member States in the future.

The undersigned environmental organizations stand ready to support the IMO, IMO Member States, and the MEPC to continue towards its GHG reduction goals in any way that we can.

Thank you as always for your collaboration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**John Maggs, Clean Shipping Coalition** (Members: AirClim, Bellona, Carbon Market Watch, Clean Air Task Force, Environmental Investigation Agency, Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, Stichting De Noordzee, Oceana, Ocean Conservancy, Seas at Risk, and Transport & Environment)

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