

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION  
COMMITTEE  
68th session  
Agenda item 5

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## REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS

### Setting a reduction target and agreeing associated measures for international shipping

#### Submitted by the Marshall Islands

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* In this submission, the Marshall Islands provide the justification for and request the Committee to undertake the work necessary to establish a GHG emission reduction target for international shipping consistent with keeping global warming below 1.5°C and to agree the measures necessary to reach that target

*Strategic direction:* 7.3

*High-level action:* 7.3.2

*Planned output:* 7.3.2.1

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 15

*Related document:* MEPC 68/5

1 This document is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Guidelines on 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.4/Rev.3), and provides comments on document MEPC 68/5.

2 Recent developments, not only in the South Pacific, but across the world, highlight that our climate system affects the entire global community and none more so than the most vulnerable.

3 In 2013, Pacific leaders launched the Majuro Declaration at the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum at Majuro in the Marshall Islands. The Majuro Declaration represents the position of the Pacific Island leaders. It finds that climate change has arrived and is the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific and one of the greatest challenges for the entire world.

4 In adopting the Majuro Declaration, the Pacific Islands leaders underlined the need for urgent action at all levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions commensurate with the science and to respond urgently and sufficiently to the social, economic and security impacts of climate change. Urgency is required to ensure the survival and viability of all Pacific Small Island Developing States, in particular low-lying atoll States, and other vulnerable countries and regions worldwide.

5 At the same time, the Pacific Island leaders recognized that the necessary energy revolution and economic transformation to low-carbon development is an unprecedented opportunity to enhance our security, protect and ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and environment, and to improve our people's health. At Majuro, leaders confirmed the responsibility of all to act to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to avert a climate crisis for present and future generations. The responsibility to act falls to every government, every company, every organization and every person with the capacity to do so, both individually and collectively.

6 The Third IMO GHG Study 2014 states that, under current policy, shipping emissions are expected to rise by 50% to 250% by 2050 with not one of the international shipping business as usual (BAU) scenarios anticipating a peak in shipping carbon dioxide emissions before 2050. Science says that applying an emissions trajectory for all sectors in line with existing national action and the current negotiating text for the Paris Climate Agreement (IPCC ARS RCP 2.6), shipping is forecast to constitute between 6% and 14% of total anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions in 2050. Furthermore, under the IPCC RCP 2.6 scenario, total GHG emissions peak in 2020 and decline for the next 30 years. According to the Third IMO GHG Study 2014, this would be against a backdrop of steadily rising shipping emissions.

7 The Marshall Islands, joined by over 100 other vulnerable nations, have called for emissions trajectories consistent with temperature rises in 2100 no greater than 1.5°C for which net total per annum anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions (would need to be near zero by mid-century), and taking into account wider agreement for long-term emissions below 2°C. The Third IMO GHG Study 2014 therefore makes a clear case that not only are all the currently defined BAU scenarios inconsistent with any proportional response by shipping to assist in avoiding dangerous climate change, they are also wholly inconsistent with pre-2020 national action already under way, let alone post-2020 action now being planned.

8 The Second IMO GHG Study 2009 references opportunities to improve shipping's efficiency by 25% to 75%. The data and conclusions of the Third IMO GHG Study 2014 inventories underscore the importance of slow steaming in the recent emissions reductions but spell out as well the risk that this trend is at best a short-term phenomenon. Should market conditions improve, average ship speeds will increase and rising emissions increase even further.

9 In short, without a reduction target and further regulation, future ship emissions could undermine other efforts to keep warming below dangerous levels, and could create material loopholes in the environmental integrity of all actors aiming to limit global growth in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Time is short. Nations are being asked to make ambitious carbon dioxide reduction commitments in the months leading up to COP 21 in Paris, as is required by the seriousness of the challenge. The Pacific Island nations are joining this call. The international shipping sector must be included in this process because the task requires that a global agreement include quantifiable economy-wide mitigation targets covering all sectors and all greenhouse gases. Shipping represents a fast growing source of emissions that must be addressed if we are to have a chance of limiting global

warming. The need to limit that warming to 1.5°C makes the obligation unavoidable. All must make a fair contribution. This requires a global sectoral emissions reduction target for international shipping so that this sector can be counted as an aid to the solution, and not as a loophole or drag to global efforts.

10 In its World Maritime Day event in 2013, focusing on sustainable development and IMO's contribution beyond Rio+20, IMO led an informal consultation with the maritime industry which included a rich set of actions supporting ship efficiency. The international shipping sector's contribution to the long-term global goal must include engagement on all these fronts as well as a supporting regime for guidance, so that a "level playing field" is maintained for all actors.

11 The Marshall Islands makes this submission to IMO in recognition that it is now essential for the United Nations agency charged with responsibility for regulating international shipping in the interests of the global community and future generations, to take ambitious and decisive action to address the climate impacts of shipping. Specifically IMO needs to set clear net emission reduction targets in line with the UNFCCC's ultimate objective to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

12 Once set, targets will need to be delivered and we strongly request prioritized support for development of the progressive and evolving measures necessary to achieve that target. These will need to include:

- .1 capacity building and training;
- .2 orientation to the industry and showcases of best practices for different technical capacity levels;
- .3 an evolving, supported monitoring and reporting system so as to facilitate and improve accurate, collective statistics for the international maritime sector;
- .4 frameworks to facilitate access to and implementation of technologies that improve ship efficiency generally, including aids to navigation;
- .5 frameworks to facilitate net emissions reductions from the international shipping sector;
- .6 periodic reporting on the evolution of the regime and the realization of such intermediary targets as are commensurate with the long-term target and relevant to verify the progressive effect of the regime;
- .7 a description of means where further enhanced action, beyond the target, could be possible, and specific barriers and challenges therein; and
- .8 a support framework to help States deliver on these aims.

13 This proposal is presented with a view to ensuring that the international maritime sector contributes to a future where all stakeholders can meet their own needs, following always the primacy of the safety and reliability of the service rendered to world trade and the limitation of its environmental impacts; as we move forward, we cannot measure costs simply in terms of near-term calculations, but must include a calculus of the sustainable development of the sector and all its stakeholders, which is in the benefit of all. There are

many opportunities to be harvested through a sustainable approach to international shipping, but the most important gain is in the integrity of our common global fight against climate change. In the international shipping sector, IMO, as the UN specialized agency for policy in international maritime transport, is particularly well placed to articulate these goals and deliver an effective regime.

14 For small island States, sea transport is essential for connectivity and for all aspects of our well-being. The Marshall Islands has made its national commitment to reduce emissions from domestic sea transport by 20% by 2020, and is preparing strong commitments for post-2020 action, as are many other nations and stakeholders. But local efforts are not enough. Global responsibility from all is required. Already the effects of climate change on our islands are clearly evident and for some their very existence is under grave threat.

#### **Action requested of the Committee**

15 The Committee is invited to consider the information in this document and specifically to agree:

- .1 a quantifiable and ambitious GHG emissions reduction target for international shipping, consistent with IMO's principles and that is in line with the UNFCCC's ultimate objective in Article 2, with enhanced action starting immediately and continuing well into the post-2020 time frame;
  - .2 the immediate development of progressive and evolving measures necessary to achieve that target and any intermediate targets including establishing robust MRV processes; and
  - .3 having agreed the establishment of targets and measures as set out in .1 and .2, the Committee should further agree the incorporation of provisions to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 12 above.
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