



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

Distr.  
GENERAL

UNEP/CHW/TWG/16/3/Add.1  
20 March 2000

ENGLISH ONLY

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP  
OF THE BASEL CONVENTION  
Sixteenth session  
Geneva, 3-5 April 2000

DISMANTLING OF SHIPS

Addendum

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The secretariat attended the part of the 44th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 44) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) concerning the recycling of ships (8-10 March 2000).

II. Outcome of MEPC 44

2. IMO is in the process of clarifying in which areas it may usefully contribute to the reduction of safety and environmental risks associated with the recycling of ships. The process established by MEPC 44 is to set up a correspondence group on the recycling of ships to gather the necessary information to assist the MEPC to reach a decision. The secretariat is invited to be part of such correspondence group which will be coordinated by Bangladesh.

3. The secretariat is called upon by MEPC 44 to provide the correspondence group with information on its activities and perceived responsibilities associated with the recycling of ships. MEPC 44 had in front of it decision V/28 adopted by the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the dismantling of ships.

4. The outcome of the work of the correspondence group will be reported to the 46th session of MEPC in July 2001. The deadline for submitting documents for MEPC 45 in June 2000 was considered to be unrealistic. Then, the MEPC may be in a position to agree on the areas it may usefully contribute to in regard to the reduction of safety and environmental risks associated with the recycling of ships.

5. The work undertaken by the correspondence group should provide an accurate picture of the current practices concerning the recycling of ships.

6. MEPC 44 did not retain the establishment of an international comprehensive ship recycling regime as requiring action at this stage. Divergent views were expressed as to which United Nations bodies (IMO; Basel Convention or International Labour Organization) should take the lead in this domain. A majority of delegates were of the opinion that IMO should play a leading role in ship recycling. MEPC was informed about the measures taken by countries where recycling of ships occur, in particular India to improve both safety and the protection of the environment at sites.

### III. Involvement of industry

7. Industry (International Chamber of Shipping; the Baltic and International Maritime Council; the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners; the Oil Companies International Marine Forum; and the International Confederation of Free Trade Union) supports work by IMO, ILO and the Basel Convention in the areas of the recycling of ships.

8. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has established a working group with the above referred industry partners to consider practical measures which will help to contribute to acceptable decommissioning practices. It will include a standard inventory of potentially harmful materials on vessels sold for recycling, guidance on minimizing residues and other substances prior to arrival at the yards and the pre-arrival condition of the vessel, including the condition of tanks, all designed to protect the environment and to enhance safe working practices at the site.

9. In addition, an industry policy on ship recycling and an associated Code of Practice are under preparation and should be available by mid-2000. As a next stage, the industry working group intends to develop proposals with the ship-building industry on issues related to the "cradle to grave" approach.

IV. Possible elements for the technical guidelines

10. Three major aspects could be identified in regard to the recycling of ships, namely:

- (a) the design, operation and preparation of the ship;
- (b) the recycling/disposal of the ship;
- (c) the situation at the yard when dismantling of the ship occurs.

11. The first aspect could mainly be left to the work of IMO, while the second aspect could be coordinated with IMO provided that some aspects of the life-cycle management of a ship could be considered in the preparation of the technical guidelines, focussing on the environmentally sound management of the hazardous wastes generated at the recycling sites and preventive measures. In this regard, the following elements could be considered:

- inventory of hazardous wastes on vessels destined for dismantling, including such hazardous wastes that are intrinsic to the structure of the vessels (eg: asbestos)
- measures to minimize the hazardous residues generated during the operation of a vessel destined for dismantling
- assessment of the facilities for hazardous waste disposal or storage at the recycling yard and its overall waste management infrastructure
- transfer of knowledge and best available technologies to ensure efficient and environmentally sound recycling activities

12. The technical guidelines to be developed by the Technical Working Group could form part of a wider approach including the initiative taken by industry in regard to the development of a code of practice and preventive "design-for-recycling" approach to ship building, as well as any work to be undertaken by the ILO on occupational health. While developing the technical guidelines, it is important to maintain close working relationship with the Parties where dismantling of ships occur and with the IMO, especially regarding the issue of inventory lists and measures to minimize hazardous residues generated during the operation of a vessel destined for dismantling.

V. Suggested action

13. The Technical Working Group may wish to:

(a) consider elaborating, together with the Legal Working Group, a response for the IMO correspondence group concerning the activities and responsibilities of the Basel Convention in the areas of the partial and full dismantling of ships;

(b) further consider elaborating the table of contents of the technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of the dismantling of ships that will be prepared;

(c) requests the secretariat to work closely with Parties, in particular with the Parties where dismantling of ships occur and with Norway and the Netherlands who have taken a leading role on this issue with a view to evolving cooperation with IMO as requested by decision V/28 of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, noting that IMO has not yet decided in which areas it may usefully contribute to reduce safety and environmental risks associated with the recycling of ships;

(d) further requests the secretariat to establish working relationship with industry, in particular the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) with a view to involving industry in the preparation of technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of the dismantling of ships;

(e) also requests the secretariat to report to the seventeenth session of the Technical Working Group on progress in regard to:

(i) the preparation of technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of the dismantling of ships;

(ii) its cooperation with IMO and future steps to be taken to complete work on this issue.

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