

Notes from IMO FAL41 Committee, 4-7 APR 2017

Introduction

The Committee was opened at 0930 by Ashok Mahapatra (IFSMA Individual Member) who mentioned MV Stellar Daisy sinking, with only 2 crew members rescued. He commended the efforts of SAR authorities in searching for the 22 Pilipino and South Korean crew members still missing, thoughts are with the families of those still missing. Chairman Yury Melenas joined in with condolences to South Korea, Marshall Islands (vessel's flag State) and Philippines. Marshall Islands noted that this was a Very Large Ore Carrier, on afternoon 31st March flowing a major SAR operation by Uruguay, 2 Pilipino seafarers were rescued, he thanked those involved in SAR operation, Marshall Islands said they will continue to monitor the operation, in accordance with the Casualty Code a MI investigator has been appointed to investigate the circumstances of the loss. Marshall Islands, Russian Federation, Philippines, Brazil, Argentina and South Korean delegates spoke on the loss of Stellar Daisy. (Day 2) The IMO Secretary General, now in attendance at the Committee, extended his appreciation for the SAR efforts. He sincerely hoped the results of the investigation would help to avoid such accidents in the future. He also mentioned IMO Strategic Plan, with the continued development of technology in world trade. In connecting ships, ports and people, IMO can enhance this integration and promote the free flow of commerce in maritime trade.

This was the first FAL Committee to meet in regular session once a year, to focus more on the relationship between ports and ships.

Key issues to be considered:

- to add value and make Explanatory Manual to the FAL Convention more user friendly, to be considered when the Committee expands scope of manual.
- Public authorities are able to meet their obligation by April 2019.
- Shipboard interface, will be considered at this session, shipping if it is to function efficiently need ports and the interface in vital.

Agenda item 3 – Consideration and adoption of proposed amendments to the Convention.

An explanation of legal position on updating the Annex to FAL Convention was offered – i.e. are they integral part of convention or not. This question was referred to the Legal Committee for definitive answer.

Agenda Item 5 - Application of single-window concept

The Maritime Single Window (MSW) is an interesting subject for IFSMA to follow in its attempt to reduce the administrative burden on the Shipmaster. Most of existing systems could already meet the requirements, missing was conformance of data submission.

Options:

1/ development of a donor system

2/ develop of a new system. The Working Group recommended this option.

3/ not to develop. (see FAL41/5) (see also wording in FAL41/5/2 paragraphs 6,7,8)

MSWs should include all procedures applicable to ships. Best practices, example of Japanese system mentioned, should be taken account of. Cameroon being mindful of comments by shipmasters on time taken to check paper documents, stated that it is moving towards electronic submission of documents.

Long discussion on various options. Useful comments were expressed that there should be only one common system, otherwise it is no better than paper. It was noted that MSW also has application in areas other than port entry documents.

ISO (FAL41/5/3) - Web Forms that crew have to complete is not the way to go as it will increase the workload on the crew. Should be an automatic system, machine to machine, not manual input, signatures need to be trusted.

Electronic Certificates – fully accepted in Denmark and Singapore. 2,600 certs issued by Denmark since June 2016. No detentions by PSC reported. Singapore moving towards full electronic certificates. Bahamas has started a pilot project for electronic certificates.

The Working Group recommended that the Committee should invite submission of documents to FAL 42 regarding the application of the MSW concept on such topics as:

- .1 electronic exchange of information, including machine-to-machine communication, web-based services, and graphic user interfaces;
- .2 integration of other national agencies and stakeholders into MSW;
- .3 processes for streamlining government to business communication and clearance of ships and cargo;
- .4 the value and concerns about collection of information regarding national data requirements in excess of those recommended in the FAL Convention and annex; and
- .5 ways the Committee can support application of MSW concepts in developing countries.

Agenda Item 8 – Consideration and analysis of reports and information on persons rescued at sea and stowaways.

The Committee was invited to consider the information provided: by the Secretariat on stowaway incidents, and to ascertain if any further action is necessary; and by Member States on persons rescued at sea.

Secretariat reported – since FAL 40 stowaway cases up to 31/12/16 4,500 incidents involving 14,113 stowaways. Noted that GSIS not accurate and encouraged member states to enter required information.

PANDI reported on collecting data and statistics, updated final figures will be published soon on their website – preliminary numbers, show downward trend, but costs remain same. On ports of embarkation they reported that European ports have now become significant.

Agenda Item 9 - Guidelines on the facilitation aspects of protecting the maritime transport network from cyber threats.

The Committee approved a joint FAL/MSC Circular on guidelines for maritime cyber security.

Agenda Item 10 – Analysis and consideration of recommendations to reduce administrative burdens in IMO instruments including those identified by the SG-RAR.

Member governments encouraged to use the GSIS module on notifications pursuant to article VIII of the FAL Convention and too keep such information up to date. Agreed that a circular be issued to show concerns expressed.

Agenda Item 15 - Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2018

Chairman, Yury Melenas (Russian Federation) and Vice Chair Marina Angsell (Sweden) were re-elected for another term.