

REPORT ON HTW-11

(10th to 14th
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INTRODUCTION – ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The 11th session of the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) was held from 10 to 14 February 2025, chaired by Mr. H. Storhaug (Norway). The session was attended by Members. The Secretary-General welcomed participants and delivered his opening address.

The Sub-Committee, having noted the decisions and comments pertaining to its work undertaken by PPR 11, SSE 10, NCSR 11, III 10, MSC 108 and C 132, as reported in document HTW 11/2 (Secretariat), as well as the relevant outcome of MSC 109.

This report consolidates key discussions, interventions, and contributions made by India, focusing on maritime training, competency standards, and regulatory developments.

India actively engaged in the session and submitted a total of sixteen papers. Out of these, fifteen papers have successfully progressed to the second phase, demonstrating India's proactive role in shaping maritime training policies and standards.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of key topics discussed at HTW-11, India's role, and anticipated developments in maritime training and governance.

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

The Sub-Committee noted relevant actions taken at MSC 108 (MSC 108/20, paragraph 16.5), including the approval of the establishment of an intersessional working group on the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, to take place before HTW 11 (MSC 108/20, paragraph 18.20)

HTW-11 continued the structured review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code, divided into two stages:

- **Stage 1 (Review Phase):** Gap analysis identified over 500 areas requiring revision.
- **Stage 2 (Revision Phase):** A structured work plan was developed, prioritizing Chapters 2 and 3.

List of gaps identified in the STCW Convention and Code. In addition to document HTW 11/6, the Sub-Committee considered documents: i. HTW 11/6/1 (Austria et al.), providing gaps addressing issues related to the majority of the specific areas identified for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code; ii HTW 11/6/4 (Philippines), providing gaps identified relative to addressing seafarers' issues on violence and harassment and psychological safety; iii. HTW 11/6/6 (Türkiye), proposing addressing the tonnage limitations for masters and deck officers, and propulsion power limitations for chief engineer and engineer officers; iv. HTW 11/6/7 (China), identifying gaps in the STCW Code with respect to the application of the action verb taxonomy; v. HTW 11/6/19 (United Kingdom), proposing the introduction of a senior electro-technical officer (senior ETO) position in the STCW Convention and Code.

HTW 11/6/23 (United States), commenting on document HTW 11/6 and proposing the expansion of the decision by the ISWG-STCW to consider simulation training to meet a portion of seagoing service at both the management and support levels; HTW 11/6/24 (ICS), commenting on document HTW 11/6, in particular on the scope of STCW regulation I/14 (Responsibilities of companies); HTW 11/6/26 (ICS), commenting on document HTW 11/6, in particular concerning STCW chapters VII (Alternative certification) and VIII (Watchkeeping) in order to consider the suitability of non-maritime graduates to enter the maritime workforce and watchkeeping arrangements and principles; HTW 11/6/27 (Austria et al.), providing comments on document HTW 11/6, specifically on the procedures for port State control under the STCW provisions and the inclusion of ISM related elements; HTW 11/6/29 (India), analysing seagoing service requirements and proposing that the mandatory minimum requirement of 12 months of seagoing service should not be reduced; and HTW 11/6/30 (India), commenting on document HTW 11/6/1, regarding identified gaps and provisions, in particular on the use of relevant terminology that reflects advancements in marine propulsion technologies, maintenance of cargo systems and the addressing of environmental competences.

Cumulative impact of additional training requirements, the Sub-Committee had for its consideration document HTW 11/6/25 (ICS), providing comments on the cumulative impact of additional training requirements following the decisions taken by the ISWG-STCW. In the ensuing discussion, the Sub-Committee: acknowledged the concerns expressed on the cumulative impact of new and additional training requirements for seafarers without removing any existing requirements, as well as the excessive burden on maritime education and training institutes associated with the possible new training requirements which resulted from the long list of gaps identified during the comprehensive review.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Potential burden of additional training requirements on seafarers and maritime training institutions.
- Ambiguity in the definition of "endorsement" concerning certificate issuance and recognition.
- Consideration of a new Senior Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) grade to accommodate future technological advancements.
- India strongly advocated for retaining the minimum mandatory sea service of 12 months, emphasizing that simulator-based training alone cannot replicate real-life onboard conditions.

India's proposal in HTW 11/6/29 to retain this sea service requirement was extensively debated and was supported by Bahamas and Argentina but did not find support from EU countries, USA and Philippines and therefore has not progressed to the next phase. However, India's concerns were acknowledged and may be reconsidered in further discussions.

In this context, the Sub-Committee agreed to keep all documents, i.e. documents HTW 11/6/8 to HTW 11/6/18, HTW 11/6/20 and HTW 11/6/21 (India), on proposals for draft amendments to the STCW Convention and Code in abeyance, to be considered, as appropriate, during the phase 2 (Revision), in accordance with the gaps identified during phase 1 of the comprehensive review.

CLARIFICATION OF THE TERM "ENDORSEMENT"

The Sub-Committee considered document HTW 11/6/2 (Secretariat), providing information on the use of the term "endorsement" in the provisions of the STCW Convention and Code, taking into account the discussions in the ISWG.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE OVERSIGHT AND VERIFICATION PROCESSES

The Sub-Committee noted the discussion by the ISWG-STCW concerning the enhancement of the communication of information provisions related to the oversight and verification processes (HTW 11/6, paragraphs 19 to 24 and annex 2), in particular that ISWG-STCW recognized that the current system was not sustainable in the long-term, and considered possible options for improving the current system, e.g. enhancing the existing system using the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) to streamline the STCW compliance and quality standard evaluation process, and developing a new oversight system. The Sub-Committee also noted that the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) was conducted in accordance with the Framework and Procedures for the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (resolution A.1067(28)), which set out the overall strategy for the Scheme, including its objectives, principles, scope, and responsibilities; and established the fundamental principles governing the Scheme.

While the Procedures provided guidance to all those involved in preparing, conducting, and reporting on mandatory Member State audits. Audits were carried out against the IMO Instruments Implementation (III) Code (resolution A.1070(28)), which served as the audit standard. In this context, the Sub-Committee had for its consideration documents: i. HTW 11/6/3 (Philippines), highlighting identified gaps between the texts of STCW regulations I/2 and I/10, including in the context of the application of the communication of information provisions HTW 11/6/5 (Norway and United States), proposing a way forward on how to develop a relationship between the STCW oversight system in STCW regulations I/7 and I/8 of the STCW Convention and IMSAS; and ii. HTW 11/6/28 (Japan), proposing a verification scheme of compliance with the STCW Convention leaning on independent evaluation schemes and IMSAS.

Following consideration of these documents, the Sub-Committee: i. recognized that the current STCW oversight system was not sustainable in the long-term and improvements would be necessary; ii. highlighted the relevance of the so-called "White List", and the need to explore how the outcomes of both the STCW oversight and IMSAS systems should contribute to the establishment and maintenance of such a list; iii. agreed that the scope of the STCW oversight system and IMSAS should be maintained,

integrated, and be complementary for consistency, including their cycles, the engagement of appropriate experts and the consolidation of their administration. In doing so, the respective strengths of the systems should be taken into account, as well as the proposals in both documents; iv. invited the Maritime Safety Committee to endorse the above course of action, and to invite the III Sub-Committee to note the possible integration of both schemes; agreed that the work in relation to the enhancement of the communication of information provisions related to the oversight and verification processes should be carried out by a standalone correspondence group and instructed the Working Group to prepare the corresponding draft terms of reference, for approval by the Sub-Committee, taking into account documents HTW 11/6/5 and HTW 11/6/28, as well as the relevant parts of document HTW 11/6/3; and encouraged both IMSAS auditors and competent persons to participate in this correspondence group.

Development of Training Guidelines for Seafarers on Alternative Fuels and New Technologies

HTW-11 initiated work on interim guidelines for seafarers on ships powered by alternative fuels and new technologies. India played a crucial role in discussions on Agenda Item 7, emphasizing the need for a foundational training framework complemented by specialized modules for different fuel types.

Priority Fuels Identified:

- Methyl/Ethyl Alcohol
- Ammonia
- Hydrogen Fuel Cells
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)
- Battery-Powered Ships

India's proposal for a modular approach was widely supported, ensuring that seafarers receive targeted training on safety measures, emergency response, and risk mitigation.

A Correspondence Group was established to continue developing these guidelines before HTW-12.

DRAFT INTERIM CIRCULAR ON TRAINING FOR SEAFARERS USING ALTERNATIVE FUELS

HTW-11 prepared a draft interim IMO Circular covering:

- Onboard familiarization requirements for ships using alternative fuels.
- Basic and advanced training for personnel handling these fuels.
- Competency standards for emergency response training.
- Periodic emergency exercises for alternative fuel-powered ships.

Approval is expected at the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 110 in June 2025.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE HTW-11 HAD VALIDATED FOLLOWING MODEL COURSES IN THIS SESSION

General Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS); Restricted Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS); Company Security Officer; Port Facility Security Officer; Actions to Be Taken to Prevent Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery.

MODEL COURSES PLANNED FOR VALIDATION BY HTW 12

The Sub-Committee recalled that HTW 10 had endorsed the revision of two model courses with a view to validation at HTW 12 (HTW 10/10, paragraph 3.10). Model courses planned for validation by HTW 13 and HTW 14 Revision of model courses related to the revised annex to the 1995 STCW-F Convention and new STCW-F Code 3.18 With regard to the future arrangements for the validation of model courses, as set out in document HTW 11/3 (Secretariat), the Sub-Committee: endorsed the following model courses to be revised for validation by HTW 13: (i) Skipper on a Fishing Vessel; and (ii) Chief Engineer Officer and Second Engineer Officer on a Fishing Vessel. Sub Committee endorsed the following model courses to be revised for validation by HTW 14: (i) Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch on a Fishing Vessel; and (ii) Safety of Fishing Operations (support level).

REVISION OF MODEL COURSE 1.27 ON OPERATIONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC CHART DISPLAY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (ECDIS)

The Sub-Committee noted that MSC 108 had adopted the revised Performance standards for electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) by resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1, and NCSR 11 had invited the HTW Sub-Committee to consider revising Model Course 1.27 on Operational Use of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) to incorporate the necessary updates emanating from said resolution (NCSR 11/19, paragraph 18.28.2). 3.20 The Sub-Committee also noted that MSC 109 had invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit relevant proposals to the HTW Sub-Committee to address STCW competency requirements for ECDIS S-100 as part of the existing output on the comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code (MSC 109/22, paragraph 19.34.5).

India Formally expressed interest in revising Model Course 1.27 (ECDIS) to ensure its alignment with modern technological advancements.

INDIA'S PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING A New MODEL COURSE IN RELATION TO TABLE A-II/2 OF THE STCW CODE

The Sub-Committee had for its consideration document HTW 11/3/8 (India), proposing the development of a new model course dealing with the competence of "Manoeuvre and handle a ship in all conditions" contained in table A-II/2 of the STCW Code. The Sub-Committee recalled that HTW 9 had considered a proposal by the delegation of India to: i. consider the validated revision of Model Course 1.22, addressing standards of competence at the operational level, to be a new model course; and ii. retain the existing Model Course 1.22, addressing standards of competence at the management level, and in considering this proposal, HTW 9 had noted that this matter had been extensively discussed previously and that, instead, it had been agreed to amend Model Course 7.01 on Master and Chief Mate in the future to address and include any specific competences and KUPs corresponding to this course, as and when revised (HTW 9/15, paragraph 3.16).

In the ensuing discussion, the Sub-Committee noted the views expressed by several delegations that Model Course 7.01 on Master and Chief Mate could be revised to address the updates owing to the change of contents in Model Course 1.22 on Bridge Resource Management, instead of developing a new model course. Subsequently, the Sub-Committee: i. reiterated the decision made by HTW 9, i.e. to amend Model Course 7.01 on Master and Chief Mate in the future to address its specific competences and KUPs; and ii. requested the Secretariat to include Model Course 7.01 in its periodic review for consideration at the next session with a view to its subsequent revision.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED THE WORKING GROUP ON MODEL COURSES, CHAIRED BY MR. VUSI SEPTEMBER (SOUTH AFRICA).

Skipper on a Fishing Vessel; and Chief Engineer Officer and Second Engineer Officer on a Fishing Vessel, with a view to validation by HTW 13, and Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch on a Fishing Vessel; and Safety of Fishing Operations (support level), with a view to validation by HTW 14.

INDIA'S KEY INTERVENTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Plenary and Working Group Contributions

India actively engaged in three working groups:

- **WG 1:** Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code
- **WG 2:** Training provisions for seafarers on alternative fuels and technologies
- **WG 3:** Model Courses revision and validation

Key Highlights of India's Contributions:

- Supported Agenda Item 7, advocating for tailored training for alternative fuels.
- Formally expressed interest in revising Model Course 1.27 (ECDIS) to ensure its alignment with modern technological advancements.
- Actively contributed to WG-1 discussions on STCW amendments, particularly emphasizing structured training for seafarers and maintaining the already established minimum 12 months of sea service for first level of Nautical officer certification.

ROLE OF HUMAN ELEMENT IN FUTURE MARITIME OPERATIONS

HTW-11 addressed the impact of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) on seafarer training, including:

- Increased need for digital skills and IT-based training.
- High-level training provisions for the MASS Code, pending MSC finalization.
- Consideration of regulatory flexibility in watchkeeping arrangements for autonomous ships.

The Sub-Committee noted the information provided in document HTW 11/INF.13 (China), on the studies conducted by Dalian Maritime University (DMU) on the education of crew and remote operators to meet the requirements of MASS operation; as well as providing information on practices implemented within the existing maritime education system.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE NOTED CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY SEVERAL DELEGATIONS ON UNLAWFUL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH CERTIFICATES

The Sub-Committee also noted that these practices could be effectively deterred through enhanced cooperation, increased transparency by Member States regarding their procedures, contact points, and access to their registers, the implementation of digital tools, and, most importantly, the effective application of existing IMO instruments. The Sub-Committee further noted the importance for Member States and companies of the conduct of verifications of seafarers' documentation before issuing endorsements attesting recognition or employing seafarers.

DRAFT MSC RESOLUTION ON ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION RELATED TO MEDICAL PROVISIONS IN THE STCW CONVENTION

The Sub-Committee noted that, owing to time constraints, the ISWG-STCW was unable to consider the draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention (HTW 11/6, paragraph 97). The Sub-Committee agreed to instruct the Working Group to finalize the draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the STCW Convention set out in the annex to document HTW 10/6/9, with a view to approval by the Committee.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STCW GISIS MODULE

The Sub-Committee noted the information provided in document HTW 11/INF.4 (Secretariat), on the launch of the STCW GISIS module for a trial period of two years.

On 14th February 2025 during the last day of HTW-11 in the plenary India submitted before the Chair that *“India firmly believes that we are in a transitional phase where the pace of regulatory evolution must align with the rapid transformations occurring in the maritime sector. As we chart the course for the future, it is imperative that we equip our seafarers with the necessary competencies to navigate these emerging challenges effectively. The need of the hour is to ensure that the maritime workforce is prepared with the right skills in the shortest possible timeframe. To this end, India underscores the importance of a well-structured and time-bound approach in the ongoing comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. India aligns with the statements made by the Poland, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and France. While the current roadmap proposes the adoption of the draft amendments to the STCW Convention and Code, along with the associated draft resolutions, in 2031, India respectfully suggests an expedited timeline.”*

NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE MEETINGS

HTW-12 is scheduled for 23 to 27 February 2026, with a focus on:

- Advancing the comprehensive STCW review.
- Developing fuel-specific seafarer training guidelines.
- Addressing competency requirements for emerging maritime technologies.

Additionally, the Biennial Status Report and Provisional Agenda for HTW 12 were discussed, highlighting key agenda items for the next session. India remains dedicated to ensuring that maritime safety, seafarer training, and regulatory effectiveness remain at the forefront of international maritime policies.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2026

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Sub-Committee unanimously re-elected Mr. Haakon Storhaug (Norway) as Chair for 2026. The Sub-Committee agreed to postpone the election of the Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2026 to the next session, i.e. at the beginning of HTW 12.

CONCLUSION

India's participation at HTW-11 reaffirmed its commitment to shaping global maritime training standards. With seventeen papers submitted and fourteen progressing to the second phase, India remains a key stakeholder in discussions on STCW amendments, training for alternative fuels, and human element considerations in emerging technologies.

The Directorate General of Shipping will continue engaging with international maritime bodies to safeguard the interests of Indian seafarers and training institutions, ensuring alignment with global regulatory developments.

India will also closely monitor and actively contribute to future discussions on alternative fuels, MASS regulations, and competency frameworks to maintain its leadership in maritime training and governance.