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MSC.1/Circ.1506
12 June 2015

**PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN WATERS
OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA**

Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia-based Piracy

1 The Maritime Safety Committee (the Committee), at its eighty-ninth session (11 to 20 May 2011), having, inter alia, recognized the importance of the Best Management Practices (BMP) and the recommendation therein, adopted resolution MSC.324(89) on *Implementation of Best Management Practice Guidance*, and expressed its general understanding of the need to keep the BMP alive, relevant, dynamic and updated. The latest version of the BMP guidance, BMP 4, was promulgated as MSC.1/Circ.1339.

2 The Committee, at its ninety-fifth session (3 to 12 June 2015), noted with appreciation that the development of the BMP guidance by the industry, and its implementation on board ships operating in the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean, had been a significant factor in containment of Somalia-based piracy.

3 The Committee noted the definition of the High Risk Area (HRA) as set out in paragraph 2.4 of BMP 4, which defines the HRA, inter alia, as an area "where pirate activity and/or attacks have taken place".

4 The Committee noted further that the geographical extent of the HRA is set out in the BMP and is defined by the authors of the BMP and its signatories. The HRA as defined in the BMP is susceptible to change based on changes in the actual threat circumstances and therefore the Committee expressed sympathy for the proposal by Egypt to remove the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea from the HRA definition in the BMP.

5 The Committee, therefore, observed that High Risk Area (HRA) may now be incorrect terminology for describing the area in which piracy attacks have not taken place but where preparatory self-protection measures are nevertheless recommended. The Committee calls on the authors of the BMP to take necessary steps to amend the coordinates of the HRA in view of excluding the above-mentioned area from the HRA definition at the earliest time, taking into consideration the threat assessment and respectfully request them to report back to MSC at its next session.

6 The Committee reiterated its strong support for the BMP and continued to stress the need for ships to continue to implement its recommended practices, taking into account the guidance provided in resolution MSC.324(89) and the Organization's current recommendations to Governments and guidance to shipowners and ship operators, shipmasters and crews on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships.*

7 States and international organizations are invited to bring this circular to the attention of shipowners, ship operators and managers, companies, shipmasters, ship security officers and all other relevant parties.

* MSC.1/Circ.1333/Rev.1 on *Recommendations to Governments for preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships*, and MSC.1/Circ.1334 on *Guidance to shipowners and ship operators, shipmasters and crews on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships*, or revisions thereto.