



IMCO

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARINE POLLUTION, 1973

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST PLENARY MEETING

held at Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.1,
on Monday, 8 October 1973 at 11.35 a.m.

President:	Mr. S. BHAVE (India)
Secretary-General:	Mr. Colin GOAD (Secretary-General of IMCO)
Executive Secretary:	Captain A. SAVELIEV (IMCO Secretariat)

A list of participants is given in MP/CONF/INF.1/Rev.2 or subsequent revisions, if any.

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OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND ADDRESS OF WELCOME

The SECRETARY-GENERAL opened the Conference and welcomed the Minister for Aerospace and Shipping of the United Kingdom, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), representatives and observers.

The Conference had to examine two extremely important instruments designed to protect the marine environment. Recommendations on that subject had been made by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which had met in Stockholm the previous year; and it was to be hoped that on the conclusion of the present Conference the agreement would enter into force as soon as possible.

He paid tribute to the technical experts who had prepared the basic documentation for the Conference, and expressed his appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom for its help in preparing for the Conference, notably by provision of the necessary premises.

Mr. HESELTINE (UK), Minister for Aerospace and Shipping of the United Kingdom, welcomed participants on behalf of his Government.

For several years the nations of the world had become aware that the products of industrial activity and their discharge could cause serious damage to the earth and the oceans. They were bent therefore on adopting measures at the national level and also at the international level, which was preferable to unilateral action. In that connexion, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 had marked a turning point, and the Conference on Marine Pollution was a prolongation of the Stockholm Conference.

The first Conference on the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil had been held in London in 1954, and the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil adopted at that time had been a remarkable example of what international action could do to stop pollution. The 1969 amendments would have the effect of eliminating almost all pollution by oil from shipping operations.

The United Kingdom Government had put those amendments into force nearly a year ago, and would shortly put into force the 1971 amendments limiting the size of tankers. However, too few governments had as yet followed that example, and he asked participants to do their best to see that the amendments were implemented as early as possible especially since the new Convention to be adopted by the Conference would not enter into force for some time, and the 1954 instrument was still the only one that dealt with oil pollution.

Apart from pollution connected with shipping operations, the Conference would deal with proposals designed to eliminate pollution by dangerous substances other than oil and by waste discharged from ships. It would also have to decide on a number of proposals for reducing accidental pollution. All those decisions would give the Conference unprecedented importance. That was to the credit of IMCO, whose achievements with regard to maritime safety and pollution had been most positive and would indeed gain from being better known to the public.

He wished the Conference and IMCO deserved success.

Mr. STRONG (UNEP) said that he was happy to convey to the Conference the good wishes of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to express to the Government of the United Kingdom his gratitude for the contribution it had made to the Stockholm Conference.

The present Conference marked a further step in the international community's effort to protect the human environment. He was convinced that it would produce sound and long-lasting results.

He recalled that UNEP was now established in Nairobi, Kenya, which demonstrated that the developing countries were participating fully in international environmental co-operation.

Since one of the principal priorities of the many recommendations of the Stockholm Conference had been the protection of the oceans, UNEP would follow the work of the Conference with the greatest interest.

UNEP was at present working out various measures for monitoring, scientific research and evaluation. Some of those measures dealt with land-based sources of pollution, particularly that reaching the oceans through rivers. He stressed that IMO's work in respect of vessel-based pollution, if it were to be effective, must be carried out in harmony with UNEP.

The 1973 draft Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships should be viewed in the context of the principles adopted at the Stockholm Conference and the various international agreements at present being drawn up, notably by the Law of the Sea Conference. In that connexion, he quoted Recommendation 92 of the Stockholm Conference, and urged the Conference to incorporate into the new Convention appropriate provisions reflecting the principles adopted at Stockholm.

It was essential that all fleet-owning nations should adhere to the Convention, which should contain provisions for effective recourse against its violation by both signatory and non-signatory States. He regretted, however, that the technical provisions of the draft Convention did not go as far as he had hoped; he had therefore submitted to the Conference a separate memorandum.

If there was a true desire to achieve the goal of "the complete elimination of intentional pollution by oil and other harmful substances" if possible by 1975 and at the latest by 1980, stringent and broadly applicable international standards must be laid down, and adequate control measures for the discharge of polluting substances - including scientific criteria and vessel construction standards - must be established. He believed that although the draft Convention in its present form might reduce oil pollution from vessels, it was inadequate to achieve its "complete elimination". The segregated ballast system appeared to be the best way of achieving that end, and he recommended that that system should be enforced earlier than had been specified, if possible by 1975. He also believed that uniform standards should be adopted for "persistent" and "non-persistent" oils. Finally, he urged that consideration should be given to the means of reducing risks of accidents in tanker operations. Those were some of the many points that should be examined as regards the draft Convention.

He hoped that the Conference would produce a text for a Convention that would be strong, effective and enforceable.

AGENDA ITEM 1 -- ELECTION OF PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. EL-SAMMAK (Arab Republic of Egypt) proposed that Mr. Bhave, leader of the Indian delegation be elected President of the Conference.

Mr. TRAIN (USA), Mr. CABOUAT (France), Mr. PIERACCINI (Italy), Mr. SUGIHARA (Japan), Mr. TIKHONOV (USSR), Mr. AL NAQIB (Kuwait), Mr. SEKYEI (Ghana), Mr. ADERO (Kenya), Mr. DIAMANTOPOULOS (Greece), Mr. ARCHER (UK), Mr. RENTNER (German Democratic Republic), Mr. POCH (Spain), and Mr. TUCKAN (Jordan) unreservedly supported that proposal.

Mr. Bhave (India) was elected President by acclamation.

Mr. BHAVE (India) took the Chair.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Conference for the confidence it had shown him, and hoped that he would be worthy of it.

He announced that the Friends of the Earth, a non-governmental organization dealing with the protection of the environment - which had already requested consultative status with IMCO - had also asked to take part in the Conference as an observer pending the decision to be taken on the matter by the IMCO Council in November 1973 (MP/CONF/10).

Mr. TRAIN (USA) supported by Mr. SEIDENFADEN (Denmark) proposed that the Conference should accede to the request from the Friends of the Earth.

The request from the Friends of the Earth (MP/CONF/10) was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 2 -- ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (MP/CONF/1/Rev.1)

The agenda (MP/CONF/1/Rev.1) was adopted without change.

AGENDA ITEM 3 -- ADOPTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE (MP/CONF/2)

Captain SAVELIEV (Executive Secretary) said that Rule 7(b) should be amended to enable the Secretary-General to appoint two Deputy Executive Secretaries, one in charge of administrative questions, the other in charge of legal questions.

The provisional Rules of Procedure (MP/CONF/2) were adopted with that amendment.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.



IMCO

FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY

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President:	Mr. S. BHAVE (India)
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A list of participants is given in MP/CONF/INF.1

N.B. Corrections to be incorporated in the final summary record of the meeting should be submitted in writing (two copies in English or French), preferably on a copy of the provisional summary record, to the Distribution Counter, Bishop Partridge Hall, within three days of the publication of this record.

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size of tankers. However, too few governments had as yet followed that example, and he asked participants to do their best to see that the amendments were implemented as early as possible, especially since the new convention to be adopted by the Conference would not enter into force for some time, and the 1954 instrument was still the only one that dealt with oil pollution.

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Mr. Bhave (India) was elected President by acclamation.

Mr. BHAVE (India) took the Chair.

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The request from the Friends of the Earth (MP/CONF/10) was approved.

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The agenda (MP/CONF/1) was adopted without change.

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Captain SAVELIEV (Secretariat) said that Rule 7(b) should be amended to enable the Secretary-General to appoint two assistant executive secretaries, one in charge of administrative questions, the other in charge of legal questions.

The provisional Rules of Procedure (MP/CONF/2) were adopted with that amendment.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.