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**Resolution A.1136(31)**

**Adopted on 4 December 2019  
(Agenda item 8(b))**

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT  
OF IMO COUNCIL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(e) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to Council recommendations,

BELIEVING that the election to the IMO Council carries with it significant responsibility, as those Member States forming the Council carry out several important duties in support of the overall governance of the Organization,

CONSIDERING that IMO Council election campaigns run concurrently with the technical work of the Organization proceedings and therefore should complement it,

NOTING that, in recent Assembly years, Member States witnessed an escalation in the extravagance of receptions and gifts,

RECOGNIZING the ongoing efforts by the open-ended Working Group on Council Reform,

RECOGNIZING ALSO the need for commonly agreed standards of ethical behaviour to offer equal conditions for all parties who choose to take part in the campaign for Council,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Council at its 122nd session,

- 1 ADOPTS the *Ethical considerations and guidelines for conduct of IMO Council election campaigns*, as set out in the annex to the present resolution;
- 2 URGES Member States, when performing or participating in activities related to IMO Council elections, to adhere to these guidelines;
- 3 REQUESTS Member States to inform the Council of any difficulties they may experience when using the guidelines;
- 4 REQUESTS the Council to keep this resolution and the annexed guidelines under review and propose amendments, as appropriate, for adoption by the Assembly.

## Annex

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF IMO COUNCIL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

#### **Statement of intent**

1 The International Maritime Organization (IMO) should be represented by a Council that has been elected in a fair, ethical, transparent and equitable manner. This set of guidelines is intended to offer equal conditions for all parties who choose to take part in the election process. Member States seeking election as well as those participating in the election process are urged to perform their election activities in accordance with the ethical considerations and guidelines for conduct outlined below.

#### **Scope and applicability**

2 These guidelines cover ethics and conduct surrounding Council elections.

3 These guidelines apply to IMO Member States seeking election to the Council as well as those Member States participating as voters. Staff members of the IMO Secretariat who may participate in related events should continue to follow the policy which is published in internal memorandum ADMIN/14/28 and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service approved by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

#### **Objectives**

4 To urge Member States to make every effort to ensure that campaigns act to complement the policy and technical work of the Organization and Assembly proceedings.

5 To ensure that the conduct of Member States adheres to commonly agreed standards of ethical behaviour by abstaining from actions which could compromise the integrity and credibility of the election process.

6 To eliminate practices that can cause damage to the Organization's equipment and facilities.

#### **Key principles**

7 It is recognized that this set of ethical considerations and guidelines for conduct could not possibly cover every situation or circumstance. In general, the following key principles apply to all situations.

**INTEGRITY:** All Member States should maintain the highest standards of integrity, including honesty and incorruptibility in all matters affecting their official duties.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** In fulfilling the responsibilities as a prospective candidate or voter, Member States should strive to make decisions that are in the best interest of the Organization and are representative of a fair election process.

**FAIRNESS/EQUITY:** All Member States should employ open processes, keeping in mind the importance of equity and fairness in the election.

**MUTUAL RESPECT:** All Member States seeking election to the Council should have their candidacies considered based on merit, including their ability to work constructively within the Council and the Organization as a whole. Members should work to promote an inclusive environment, avoiding any potential activities which may aggravate differences or create tensions.

**TRANSPARENCY:** The election process must remain open to scrutiny, to establish trust and confidence in the process.

### **Ethical and conduct considerations**

8 Candidates are urged to ensure that the activities relating to their candidature do not interfere with the Organization's policy and technical work.

### **Hosting of receptions**

9 Hosting a reception or tour is voluntary. Such inclusion in this document should not lead the reader to believe that they are a necessary part of a campaign. However, those Member States who choose to host a reception or tour should:

- .1 make an effort to coordinate reception times, locations and consider joint receptions to ensure all have an opportunity to host and attend;
- .2 maintain the sanctity of the IMO Award ceremony for the International Maritime Prize and the Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea by refraining from scheduling receptions or tours on the first evening of Assembly; and
- .3 take into consideration that the overall cost of their reception, venue rental fees, coupled with the provision of an entire meal and a gift may unintentionally restrict some Member States from participating.

### **Gifts, favours, leaflets or other benefits**

10 Gifts, favours or leaflets are commonly distributed during Assembly in the Plenary and outside venues. Member States should be careful to consider the public perception of giving gifts, being mindful of maintaining the legitimacy and fairness of the IMO elections at all times. Member States are not expected to provide gifts, favours or leaflets as part of a campaign; however, should they choose to, the following provisions should be taken into account:

- .1 any gifts, favours or leaflets should be small in size and of nominal value, presented merely as a souvenir of a visit or as a mark of honour and should not be used as a means to seek any official action from other Member States;
- .2 distribution of leaflets or books should be kept to a minimum if distributed at all; for larger bulky documents, consider referencing a website;
- .3 during the Assembly week, the campaign materials distributed in the meeting rooms, if distributed at all, shall be limited to a single page of information regarding the candidates, with a view to preserving the decorum of the Assembly;
- .4 persons placing gifts, favours or leaflets within IMO's facilities should take care not to damage audio equipment, personal electronic devices or the privacy of a Member;

- .5 delegates should remove all gifts, favours or leaflets from their area as soon as possible but, at a minimum, each evening before departing;
- .6 all should respect that, due to cultural, organizational or other unknown reasons, some delegates may not be able to accept gifts and may be required to return them and should be allowed to do so without prejudice; and
- .7 never request, provide or accept gifts, favours or promises of any kind in return for favourable voting outcomes.

### **Campaign outreach**

11 Member States should be afforded confidentiality in their voting decisions. Diplomatic communications in support of a campaign should:

- .1 focus on how the country can serve to benefit the Organization, their experience or other contributing factors; and
- .2 refrain from using negative information to influence others to vote in their favour.

### **General and election statements**

12 During Assembly, Member States are afforded two opportunities to formally address the General Assembly: 1) a general statement; and 2) a Council election statement in support of the candidacy for Council. The following principles should be considered:

- .1 general statements should be high-level or strategic statements focused on the Organization itself and should not be utilized as a campaign speech;
- .2 Council election statements may be the only opportunity delegates have to provide details on how their country contributes to the technical and cooperation activities of the Organization and how that country will serve the Organization if elected to the Council;
- .3 Member States should provide their statements in advance to [statements@imo.org](mailto:statements@imo.org) to ensure adequate time for translation; and
- .4 Member States should not exceed the allocated time in order to allow adequate time for all Member States.

