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Circular Letter No.4844  
4 March 2024

To: IMO Member States  
United Nations and its specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **International Symposium on Extreme Maritime Weather: Bridging the Knowledge Gap Towards Safer Shipping (23 to 26 September 2024)**

1 The Secretary-General has the honour to invite participation in the forthcoming International Symposium on Extreme Maritime Weather: Bridging the Knowledge Gap Towards Safer Shipping, jointly organized by IMO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), scheduled to take place from 23 to 26 September 2024 at IMO Headquarters, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR.

2 The Symposium aims at finding possible solutions to minimize the risks created by extreme maritime weather events – those which are dangerous to any ship at sea and are a threat to life, property, and the marine environment, notwithstanding also the economic impacts to the global blue economy. It will also provide an update on developments, building upon the success of the [first Joint Symposium](#) organized in October 2019, which attracted an exceptionally wide range of expert international speakers and delegates.

3 The Symposium will be part of several IMO activities being organized in connection to the World Maritime Theme 2024 "[Navigating the future: safety first!](#)." The Symposium will also serve as a contribution to the [UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#) and the UN Early Warnings for All initiatives.

4 The programme will consist of presentations and discussion sessions featuring representatives of Member States of both IMO and WMO, international organizations, international shipping and meteorological communities and other stakeholders. The provisional programme of the Symposium is set out in annex 1. The final programme of the Symposium will be published shortly at <https://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/2nd-WMO-IMO-Symposium-on-Extreme-Maritime-Weather.aspx>

5 The Symposium will be an in-person event and will be conducted in English only without interpretation.

6 Participation is open to all IMO and WMO Member States, UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs and other participants. Member States and international organizations are invited to disseminate this invitation widely to interested parties and stakeholders, including shipping and meteorological communities.

7 Registration is mandatory for participation. Information on registration procedures and visa applications is set out in annexes 2 and 3. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation.

8 For any additional information and queries, please contact the IMO Secretariat by email at: [ncsr@imo.org](mailto:ncsr@imo.org)

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**ANNEX 1**

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EXTREME MARITIME WEATHER:  
BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP TOWARDS SAFER SHIPPING**

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

<b>Day 1                      Monday, 23 September</b>	
Session 1	Opening session and welcome remarks
Session 2	Impacts of extreme weather on safety at sea
Session 3	Weather and ocean observations and data collection to improve safety at sea
<b>Day 2                      Tuesday, 24 September</b>	
Session 4	Digitalization of metocean information and its dissemination of information to ships
Session 5	Enhancing knowledge opportunities for seafarers and forecasters
<b>Day 3                      Wednesday, 25 September</b>	
Session 6	Improved weather warnings and forecasts through better products and services
<b>Day 4                      Thursday, 26 September</b>	
Session 7	Strengthening collaboration
Session 8	Bridging the knowledge gap towards safer shipping: Summary report and closing

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## ANNEX 2

### REGISTRATION

IMO Member Governments, UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs are required to provide, prior to the meeting date, the names of their delegations attending the meeting via the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS), as advised in Circular Letter No.4336 of 5 November 2020.

WMO members should follow the relevant WMO procedures for registration.

An electronic access card will be issued at IMO to registered participants to pass through the security barrier in the IMO building.

Issue of the access card will require photographic proof of identity, e.g. passport, identity card or driving licence. Delegates may also be required to show proof of identity at any time while they are in the Headquarters building if requested by IMO Security. In view of the significant costs incurred in producing access cards, delegates who have previously been issued with one are kindly requested to bring it with them for reactivation.

Any matters relating to the use of the OMRS and the participation in the forthcoming Symposium should be communicated to:

Registration Unit  
Meeting Services and Interpretation Section  
Email: [onlineregistration@imo.org](mailto:onlineregistration@imo.org)

IMO Members of delegations will not be registered to attend the meeting without authorization from their OMRS Delegation Coordinator. Delegates whose names do not appear on the OMRS list will be requested to contact their OMRS Delegation Coordinator in order to process their authorization to attend the meeting.

Delegates are advised that the Registration Desk will be open from 8.30 a.m. (UTC+1) on **Monday, 23 September 2024**, when early arrival would be appreciated.

General information on administrative and housekeeping issues relating to meetings at IMO may be found in an information leaflet for delegates, which can be downloaded from IMODOCS. Delegates are kindly requested to familiarize themselves with the contents of the information leaflet.

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### ANNEX 3

#### PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE SUPPORT BY IMO OF VISA APPLICATIONS

As established in article 7.2 of part III on Access and communications of the Headquarters agreement, delegates are entitled to have their entry into the United Kingdom authorized without delay and without charge.

Delegates who are travelling to participate in this meeting and who require United Kingdom entry visas should, in the first instance, apply online for an "**EXEMPT**" visa at: [www.gov.uk/exempt-vignette](http://www.gov.uk/exempt-vignette), note the reference numbers and follow the online instructions to attend either the nominated Visa Application Centre or the United Kingdom Embassy or High Commission. United Kingdom visa applications should be accompanied by the following documentation:

- i. a copy of this Circular Letter, (numbered CL.4844), to be used as the official letter of invitation;
- ii. the nomination letter; and
- iii. a Note Verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Delegates must be nominated by their competent Ministry (usually the Ministry of Transport or the National Maritime Administration). The nomination letter should be accompanied by a Note Verbale issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

If, after following the above-mentioned procedure, delegates still encounter visa problems, either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, the National Maritime Administration or the competent Ministry should request visa assistance in writing to the Head of the IMO External Relations Office, on paper bearing the official letterhead. The letter should state the reasons given by the British Embassy/High Commission as to why visas have been or may be refused and contain the following details:

- i. First name:  
Family name  
Profession  
Date of birth  
Type of passport  
Passport No  
Place of issue  
Date of issue  
Valid until  
Visa reference number  
Date and place of visa application:
- ii. Purpose of visit
- iii. Duration of anticipated stay in the United Kingdom

This exercise must be undertaken **at least six weeks** before the date on which the session begins, to enable the Organization to support the visa application accordingly and the visa to be issued in good time.

Any requests for visa assistance should be communicated to [visa@imo.org](mailto:visa@imo.org)