AIDE MEMOIRE

CANDIDATURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS FOR RE-ELECTION TO THE IMO COUNCIL, CATEGORY "C"

The Twenty-ninth Regular Session of the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is scheduled to be held in London in November 2015. Elections for the forty (40) Members of the Council will be held during this Assembly.

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has served on the Council from 1991 to 1995 and from 1999 to the present, and has decided to seek re-election to the Council, under Category "C", at the forthcoming Assembly. It should be recalled that the Council membership is made up of three groups of States, designated A, B and C. Category C is open to those twenty (20) States that have special interests in maritime transport or navigation, and whose election to the Council will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world. The Bahamas exemplifies the highest credentials in each of these areas.

The Bahamas has over fifteen hundred ships, consisting of some fifty-eight (58) million gross tons on our shipping Register and is the fifth highest contributor to the IMO budget, representing 4.39% (£1.3m in 2014). The Bahamas remains the flag of choice for 140 passenger ships, with the world's largest cruise ships, the "Quantum of the Seas" (GT 168,666), the Royal Caribbean's Oasis and Allure of the Seas, flying its Flag.

The Bahamas is an active supporter of the IMO as it continues to meet its objectives for safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean seas. Consequently, it has ratified major International Conventions including: Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL); Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW); Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA); Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, AFS; and the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunkers Convention). In addition, The Bahamas was among the first to ratify the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC), demonstrating once again commitment to the indispensable human resources of ships' crews and the rights of seafarers.

Recognising the fundamental aim of enhancing maritime security and the expanded scope of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment, The Bahamas has fulfilled all of its obligations pertaining to Long Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT). Our LRIT Data Centre was one of the first to be brought into operation and make data available to naval forces combatting piracy off the coast of Somalia.

To ensure that the legal and regulatory framework has the desired positive impact, given the significant global role that The Bahamas has as a Flag Register, The Bahamas participates actively and constructively in all IMO Committees and Sub-committees, and is honoured to hold the Chair of the Implementation of International Instruments (III) Sub-Committee.

The Bahamas continues to aim to play a significant role in developing safety and environmental instruments and actively seeks to bring differing parties and perspectives together. The Bahamas has submitted papers for discussion on a wide variety of issues

including: Ballast Water Management; Passenger Ship Safety; MARPOL Record Books; and Fire Safety on Self-unloading Bulk Carriers.

Established in 1995, the government-controlled Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) is responsible for the regulation of Bahamas-registered ships world-wide and ships visiting the Bahamas under the Port State Control Regime. The BMA works closely with its Recognised Organisations, all of which are full members of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS), which carry out much of the approval and statutory survey work. The BMA maintains an active oversight of their work to ensure that the ships on the Register remain in compliance with all the required legislation. Furthermore, additional mandatory annual Flag State Inspections are carried out by a world-wide network of over two hundred and forty (240) Bahamas Inspectors. These inspectors conduct inspections of the ships and report the findings back to the BMA. Through this process, Bahamas-registered ships are known to have high safety and environmental standards, as evidenced by the high "White List" rankings achieved by Bahamas Ships on all Port State Control MOU and Qualship 21.

The Bahamas is unique in its embodiment of the geography eligibility criterion for IMO Council membership.

As a maritime Nation, consisting of an Archipelago of some 700 Islands spread over some 100,000 square miles of sea, surrounded by beautiful coral seas, preservation of the marine environment is paramount. This policy is consonant with IMO principles for safe ships, crewed by well-trained seafarers, which will ensure that the marine environment remains in a pristine state for future generations. The Bahamas is also a geographically strategic Maritime State, as significant international straits dissect its Archipelago, and link the major global Hemispheres and economic centres.

The Bahamas also possesses, aesthetically and commercially, some of the best ports in the Region. The two major ports, Nassau and Freeport, have undergone important developments in recent years. Nassau has greatly increased and improved its facilities for cruise ships, making it one of the favourite ports of call in the Caribbean Region, and is a regular port of call for the latest and largest generation of cruise liners. Freeport is one of the Region's major container terminals and possesses three dry docks and major repair berths. Transhipment of crude oil also takes place, as does the provision of bunker fuels. Repair facilities, coupled with the container berths, petroleum products transhipment and bunkering facilities, make Freeport one of the first choices for maritime services.

For many years The Bahamas has worked closely with its Caribbean Neighbours in a number of areas, relating to flag, port and coastal State responsibilities. The Bahamas is an active member of the Caribbean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (CMOU), where it holds the chairmanship position of the CMOU Technical Committee, which has developed safety standards for small ships trading in the Caribbean Region. Through active involvement in the CMOU activities and the provision of technical expertise to regional seminars/conferences, The Bahamas remains committed to preserving and enhancing the level of maritime safety, security and environmental protection in the Caribbean Region. In keeping with this commitment to enhancing environmental protection in the Caribbean Region, The Bahamas is also a part of the Global Environment Facility-United Nations Development Programme-

International Maritime Organization (GEF-UNDP-IMO) GloBallast Partnerships Project as a Lead Partnering Country (LPC) in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The Bahamas was also honoured to have been one of a small group of Member States selected for the Secretary-General's Steering Group on the Reduction of Administrative Burdens. The Bahamas has worked assiduously to assist the Group in meeting its objectives and is currently engaging with other Council Members in the Correspondence Group on the revision of the Guidelines on the Application of the Strategic Plan, with the objective of ensuring that the revised guidelines are simple, rational and efficient.

The Bahamas' membership on the IMO Council is characterised by a constructive, collaborative and proactive approach, aimed at fostering the Organization's goals of maintaining the highest standard of maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment through a process of consensus. If honoured with the privilege of re-election, The Bahamas will continue to support efforts to improve working methods to facilitate efficient delivery of modern regulations and to advocate for simplification and rationalisation of Regulations and Guidelines.

The Bahamas, therefore, welcomes your Government's invaluable support for its Candidature for re-election to the Council of the IMO under Category "C", under the provisions of Article 17 (c) of the IMO Convention.

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