



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in London

47 Portland Place
London W1B 1JH

London, 13 May 2020

Mr. Xiaojie Zhang
Chair of the IMO Council
International Maritime
Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

Subject:
32nd extraordinary session of the Council - comments on Agenda item 5.

Dear Mr. Chair

Referring to the Summary of Decisions of the 31st extraordinary session of the Council (C/ES.31/D), in particular to paragraph 2.1.4, Poland would like to express satisfaction with the fact that the 32nd extraordinary session of the Council being held by correspondence has been commenced in order to discuss, inter alia, the schedule of meetings postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bearing in mind the significance of the IMO and decisions made by its organs for the entire maritime sector, it is of critical importance to adopt such arrangements to ensure the continuity of the operations of the Organization. Nonetheless, it has to be done without compromising the quality of the decision-making process.

Accordingly, Poland is of the opinion that holding sessions of organs such as committees and sub-committees, which cover very specific, technical and complex topics, by alternative method of communication, might prove challenging. For example, real-time meetings (especially for videoconferences) would be problematic because of different time zones in which IMO Member States are located. Furthermore, unanimity regarding software to be used might turn out to be difficult to achieve, not to mention other technical issues that may arise. Therefore, any ideas which lead to a departure from traditional meetings at the IMO's headquarters ought to be examined thoroughly before implementation.

On the other hand, the threat of a protracted pandemic and, consequently, the necessity of further postponements looms large. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some kind of a contingency plan for holding the meetings other than in traditional way will have to be made. Poland wishes to emphasize that if it was not a realistic option to hold the meetings in London, organising them without prejudice to their efficiency and effectiveness of results would pose a serious challenge which should be faced with due diligence and caution. One option to consider could be a discussion in electronic form via emails between designated contact points.

With regard to the prioritization of the IMO meetings which the Organization will hopefully be able to hold at its headquarters in the third quarter of 2020, Poland is pleased to acknowledge that its view is entirely in line with recommendations made in the annex to the Report of the meeting of the Officers of the IMO Organs (C/ES.32/3), published on IMODOCS on 4 May.

Please accept, Mr. Chair, assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Małgorzata Buszyńska". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Małgorzata Buszyńska
1st Counsellor
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Poland to the IMO