

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC Convention)**

- Adopted by IMO on 30 November 1990
- Entered into force internationally on 13 May 1995
- Singapore acceded on 10 March 1999
- Currently, there are 73 States that are party to the Convention
- Parties to the OPRC convention are required to establish measures for dealing with oil pollution incidents, either nationally or in co-operation with other countries.
- Under the Convention, ships are required to carry a shipboard oil pollution emergency plan. Operators of offshore units under the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties are also required to have oil pollution emergency plans or similar arrangements which must be co-ordinated with national systems for responding promptly and effectively to oil pollution incidents.
- Ships are also required to report incidents of pollution to coastal authorities and the Convention details the actions that are then to be taken.
- The convention also calls for the establishment of stockpiles of oil spill combating equipment, the holding of oil spill combating exercises and the development of detailed plans for dealing with pollution incidents.
- Parties to the convention are required to provide assistance to others in the event of a pollution emergency.

### **Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC-HNS Convention)**

- Adopted by IMO on 15 March 2000
- Will enter into force internationally, 12 months after ratification by not less than 15 States
- States ratifying the Protocol should already have acceded to the OPRC Convention.
- Currently, seven States have acceded to the Protocol, namely Ecuador, Greece, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Uruguay.
- Singapore will be acceding on 16 October 2003.

- Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) are defined by reference to lists of substances previously identified and included in various IMO Conventions and Codes. These include liquid substances defined as noxious or dangerous; liquefied gases; liquid substances with a flashpoint not exceeding 60°C; dangerous, hazardous and harmful materials and substances carried in packaged form; and solid bulk materials defined as possessing chemical hazards. However, for the OPRC-HNS Protocol, the definition excludes oil, since oil and oil-related pollution matters are dealt with under the OPRC Convention.
- Like the OPRC Convention, the OPRC-HNS Protocol aims to provide a global framework for international co-operation in combating major incidents or threats of marine pollution. Parties to the Protocol are required to establish measures for dealing with pollution incidents, either nationally or in co-operation with other countries. Ships will be required to carry a shipboard pollution emergency plan to deal specifically with incidents involving HNS.
- The Protocol also requires ships, seaports and HNS handling facilities within port, where there exist risks of HNS pollution into the sea, to maintain HNS Pollution Contingency Plans. The seaports and HNS handling facilities are also required to establish a minimum level of pre-positioned equipment for responding to pollution incidents.