

CO-OPERATIVE MECHANISM ON SAFETY OF NAVIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE (“CO-OPERATIVE MECHANISM”)

1 The Co-operative Mechanism is the key platform for the littoral States of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), user States, the industry and other stakeholders to engage in dialogue, exchange information and share their valuable perspectives on important issues relating to the SOMS.

Background

2 The Co-operative Mechanism was launched at the International Maritime Organization-Singapore Meeting in September 2007 as a result of a series of IMO-sponsored meetings on the SOMS under the IMO’s “Protection of Vital Shipping Lanes” initiative. This was a historic and significant event for the international maritime community as it realised, for the first time, the spirit and intent of Article 43 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹ The Co-operative Mechanism focuses on navigational safety and environmental protection in the SOMS, and consists of three interconnected and complementary components:

- a. A **Co-operation Forum (CF)** which is the main avenue for user States, the industry and other stakeholders to engage in dialogue with the three littoral States on issues of common interest in the SOMS;
- b. A **Project Coordination Committee (PCC)** which coordinates the implementation of Straits Projects aimed at enhancing navigational safety and environmental protection in the SOMS. User States such as Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States, as well as stakeholders such as the IMO and the European Commission, have contributed to and participated in the Straits Projects. In 2009, the IMO Malacca and Singapore Straits Trust Fund was also established to support projects under the Co-operative Mechanism; and
- c. An **Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF)** which receives financial contributions for the provision and maintenance of aids to navigation in the SOMS. To date, the ANF has received over US\$20 million in financial contributions and continues to play an important role in ensuring a sustainable means of financing the upkeep of aids to navigation that are critical in facilitating the safe navigation of ships in the SOMS.

Benefits of Participating in the Co-operative Mechanism

3 Participation in the Co-operative Mechanism enables user States, the industry and other stakeholders to:

¹ Article 43 states that “User States and States bordering a strait should by agreement co-operate: (i) in the establishment and maintenance in a strait of necessary navigational and safety aids or other improvements in aid of international navigation; and (ii) for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution from ships”.

- Discuss and work together with the littoral States on key issues and projects relating to the SOMS;
- Participate in the implementation of Straits Projects that will enhance navigational safety and environmental protection in the SOMS; and
- Contribute towards ensuring that the SOMS remain safe and open for international shipping.