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LC-LP.1/Circ.88  
4 February 2019

**CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION OF MARINE POLLUTION BY DUMPING  
OF WASTES AND OTHER MATTER, 1972, AND ITS 1996 PROTOCOL**

**Invitation to provide information on fibre-reinforced plastic vessels dumped or placed  
in the marine environment, including best management practices and alternatives to  
disposal at sea**

**Background**

1 In 2016, the governing bodies instructed the Scientific Groups to propose recommendations regarding whether to develop advice on the disposal of fibreglass vessels for consideration at the next joint session of the governing bodies. The following year, the governing bodies noted the Scientific Groups' discussion on the disposal of fibreglass vessels, acknowledging that this issue was a concern for many countries (LC 39/16, paragraphs 9.11 to 9.16) and instructed the Secretariat to engage a consultant to collate, inter alia, information on the scale of the problem and to identify key knowledge gaps relating to impacts of fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) vessels dumped or placed in the marine environment and to consult within IMO, and with other relevant treaty bodies, regarding the end-of-life management of fibre-reinforced plastic vessels (LC 39/16, paragraph 9.21.1.1 and 9.21.1.2).

2 In 2018, the Meetings noted the Scientific Groups' discussion regarding developing recommendations on disposal of fibreglass vessels (LC/SG 41/16, paragraphs 2.18 to 2.31), and considered document LC 40/9/2 (Secretariat), which contained a final report on the current state of knowledge regarding the end-of-life management of fibre-reinforced plastic (e.g. fibreglass) vessels, and on alternatives to disposal at sea, and noted the statement of concern on this matter adopted by the Scientific Groups (LC/SG 41/16, annex 2).

3 It was also noted that, having reviewed the draft report, the Scientific Groups had identified that knowledge gaps existed in relation to the scale of the issue of FRP vessel disposal, the impacts of FRP on the marine environment and alternatives to disposal at sea, and that there was not enough information at this time to make a determination as to what were the most appropriate options for the end-of-life management of FRP vessels. Consequently, the Groups had concluded that it would not yet be possible to provide a clear recommendation on this matter, as requested by the governing bodies.

4 At the 2018 session, the governing bodies were also informed by means of a presentation by the author of the report, highlighting the global nature of the issue of FRP vessels, providing information on the current, and future, management options and presenting the main conclusions from the report.

5 In the subsequent discussion, the Meetings were informed of how a number of delegations were attempting to address this issue (LC 40/16, paragraph 9.23), and it was noted that for a number of Parties, including in particular some developing countries and small island States, the solutions presented were interesting, but would be difficult to implement as most vessels were not manufactured in the country and the market was small. The Meetings noted therefore that solutions were limited and the majority of vessels currently went to landfill or were abandoned along the coast.

6 Following discussion, the governing bodies, inter alia, endorsed the Scientific Groups' instruction to the Secretariat to finalize and share the report on end-of-life management of FRP vessels and on alternatives to disposal at sea. The report, as presented to the governing bodies in 2018, can be found in document LC 40/9/2, and the final publication will be available on the website<sup>1</sup> in due course.

7 The governing bodies also requested the Secretariat to issue a circular to gather more information from Contracting Parties and other relevant bodies on current operating procedures and best practices associated with the end-of-life management of FRP vessels and on alternatives to disposal at sea, with the aim of collecting information before the next meeting of the Scientific Groups in 2019, and to provide a report summarizing additional information collected in response to the circular to the next meeting of the Scientific Groups. Due to the late issuing of this circular, the Secretariat will provide a further update, if so required, to the governing bodies in October 2019.

8 The governing bodies further encouraged Contracting Parties and other relevant bodies to respond to the circular to be issued by the Secretariat, and urged Contracting Parties to continue to share information with the Secretariat and the Scientific Groups. Any information collected would be used by the Scientific Groups to evaluate whether further work would be required on this issue, with a particular emphasis on identifying best management practices and making alternatives to the disposal at sea of FRP vessels available.

9 For a full account of the discussion, please see document LC 40/16, paragraphs 9.16 to 9.26, and LC/SG 41/16, paragraphs 2.18 to 2.31 and annex 2.

### Invitation

10 To facilitate this exercise, National Focal Points are hereby invited to submit to the Secretariat such information which could assist in the Scientific Groups' work to develop advice on regarding FRP vessels dumped or placed in the marine environment, with particular emphasis on identifying best management practices and making alternatives to the disposal at sea of FRP vessels available.

11 The information should reach the Secretariat no later than **29 March 2019**, and should be submitted (preferably by email) to:

Office for the London Convention/Protocol and Ocean Affairs  
International Maritime Organization  
4 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7SR  
United Kingdom

Email: [olcp@imo.org](mailto:olcp@imo.org)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://londonprotocol.imo.org>