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Circular Letter No.4432
9 July 2021

To: All IMO Member States and Associate Members
Contracting Governments to the Convention on Facilitation of International
Maritime Traffic, 1965, as amended, which are not Members of IMO
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status
Liberation movements

Subject: **FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on Maritime
Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) (12-14 October 2021)**

General

1 Pursuant to the decisions of the Facilitation Committee (FAL), at its 45th session (1 to 7 June 2021), the Secretary-General has the honour to invite representation at the FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), which will be held remotely from 12 to 14 October 2021.

2 Should the IMO Headquarters building become available for hybrid meetings (part virtual, part physical), delegations will be given at least 30 days' notice of such hybrid meetings.

3 The meeting will be conducted in English without interpretation.

Waiver of the rules of procedure and interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions of the Committee

4 Certain rules of procedure which presupposed in-person Committee meetings were waived, due to the prevailing exceptional circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow for the FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on MASS to take place remotely.

5 In this regard, a remote extraordinary session of the MSC, LEG, MEPC, TC and FAL Committees to address procedural matters took place from 16 to 21 September 2020. Decisions at the session included waivers of certain rules of procedure of all Committees to allow for remote sessions and the approval of MSC-LEG-MEPC-TCC-FAL.1/Circ.1 on *Interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions of the Committees during the COVID-19 pandemic*. The report of the extraordinary session is set out in document ALCOM/ES/5/1.

Terms of reference and provisional agenda

6 Having noted the decision to postpone agenda item 15, Regulatory scoping exercise for the use of MASS, FAL 45 agreed to convene the FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on MASS to complete the regulatory scoping exercise on the FAL Convention intersessionally (FAL 45/WP.1/Rev 1, paragraph 1.7).

7 The Group should work in line with the instructions of the Facilitation Committee, in accordance with the terms of reference approved by FAL 45 as set out in annex 2. The provisional agenda for the meeting is set out in annex 3.

Modality of the meeting and platform for the virtual meeting

8 The FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on MASS is expected to take place from **Tuesday, 12 to Thursday, 14 October 2021**, from 11.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. (UTC +1), with a 15-minute break in the middle, using Microsoft Teams as the virtual meeting platform.

Technical recommendations

9 To ensure the best possible sound quality and connectivity, the recommended equipment is:

- .1 USB headset;
- .2 wired internet connection (20mbps download and 10mbps upload speed);
- .3 laptop or PC with Intel 5 or higher and 8GB memory (RAM) or higher; and
- .4 latest version of Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox (Chrome v68+ or Mozilla Firefox v77+) with access to microphone and camera in browser settings when prompted.

10 The joining instructions will be emailed to registered participants by 11 October 2021.

Submission of documents

11 Members are invited to note that the meeting documentation will be issued in English only. In order to allow sufficient time for preparation, documents should be received by the Secretariat at the latest, as indicated in the Notes at the end of the attached provisional agenda.

12 A document template is available on the IMODOCS website for use in the preparation of documents.

Distribution of documents

13 Relevant documentation will be made available on IMODOCS (<https://docs.imo.org>) under "IMO Documents", "Meeting Documents", "FAL Committee" and finally "ISWG/MASS".

14 Upon request, documents will also be distributed via email. Interested Members are invited to provide their email address to falsec@imo.org for inclusion in the distribution list.

Contact details

15 For any enquiries with respect to this meeting, please contact falsec@imo.org.

ANNEX 1

REGISTRATION AT IMO MEETINGS

Member Governments, UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs are required to provide, prior to the meeting date, the names of all the members of their delegations attending the meeting via the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS) as advised in Circular Letter No.4336 of 5 November 2020.

Any matters relating to the use of OMRS and the participation in the forthcoming virtual meeting of FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group on MASS should be communicated to:

Registration Unit
Meeting Services and Interpretation Section
Email: onlineregistration@imo.org

Members of delegations will not be registered to attend the meeting without authorization from their OMRS Delegation Coordinator. Delegates whose names do not appear on the OMRS list will be requested to contact their OMRS Delegation Coordinator in order to process their authorization to attend the meeting.

A link for the virtual meeting and joining instructions will be sent to those delegates who registered in OMRS.

ANNEX 2

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE FAL COMMITTEE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING
GROUP ON MARITIME AUTONOMOUS SURFACE SHIPS (MASS)**

(FAL 45/WP.10)

Taking into account the progress made and document FAL 44/14, the FAL Committee Intersessional Working Group is instructed to:

- 1 consider the results of the second step of the regulatory scoping exercise (RSE), reported in document FAL 44/14;
- 2 prepare the outcome of the RSE, which should contain as a minimum:
 - .1 information for all degrees of autonomy for every section of the FAL Convention expected to be affected by MASS operations;
 - .2 the most appropriate way(s) of addressing MASS operations in the FAL Convention;
 - .3 identification of themes and/or potential gaps, within the FAL Convention, that require addressing;
 - .4 identification of gaps and themes that are common with those of other relevant IMO instruments for which the RSE has been finalized (e.g. MSC 103/WP.8; LEG 108, if finalized); and
 - .5 identification of priorities for further work; and
- 3 submit a written report to FAL 46.

FAL COMMITTEE INTERSESSIONAL
WORKING GROUP ON MARITIME
AUTONOMOUS SURFACE SHIPS (MASS)
1st session
Agenda item 1

FAL/ISWG/MASS 1/1
9 July 2021
ENGLISH ONLY
Pre-session public release:

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

**for the meeting of the FAL Committee Intersessional
Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS),
to be held remotely,* from Tuesday 12 to Thursday 14 October 2021**

The meeting will commence at 11.00 a.m. (UTC +1) on Tuesday 12 October 2021

Opening of the meeting

- 1 Adoption of the agenda
- 2 Consideration of the results of the second step of the regulatory scoping exercise
- 3 Any other business
- 4 Consideration of the report of this meeting to FAL 46

Closing of the meeting

Notes:

- 1 Documents for the meeting will be issued in English only. In order to allow proper preparation, documents should be received by the Secretariat via email (fal@imo.org) in Microsoft Word not later than **Friday, 17 September 2021**. Commenting documents received by 17 September 2021 may be submitted up to **Friday, 1 October 2021**.
- 2 All documents should include a brief summary.
- 3 The following word-processing format should be observed in order to standardize the presentation of documents:

- font: Arial;
- font size: 11 pt;
- justification: full;
- margins: 2 cm top, 2.5 cm bottom, left and right.

* Refer to the decisions of ALCOM/ES (ALCOM/ES/5/1) and MSC-LEG-MEPC-TCC-FAL.1/Circ.1 on *Interim guidance to facilitate remote sessions of the Committees during the COVID-19 pandemic*.

4 A document template is available on the IMODOCS website for use in the preparation of documents.

To facilitate processing, documents should be submitted in Microsoft Word, preferably by email to: falsec@imo.org.

5 In order to improve access to information and increase transparency, submitters of meeting documents are invited to give their consent for their documents to be released to the public prior to the meeting by checking the "opt-in box" at the top right corner of the new document template provided on IMODOCS (pre-session public release). In the absence of explicit consent, submissions will not be released to the public prior to the meeting.
