1. The purpose of this paper is to inform Transport Ministers on progress and developments related to existing regional domestic ship safety programmes and to seek their agreement to allocate dedicated human and/or financial resources to Maritime Administrations and undertake a community-based approach to safety of all at sea.

Background

2. Since 2009, Transport Ministers in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have consistently committed efforts to improve domestic shipping safety and more specifically the management of safety through the integration of the Safety Management System (SMS) and safe practices on board domestic ships. In 2017, the Ministers also acknowledged the establishment of private-public arrangements to improve predictability and affordability of domestic shipping services by way of introducing requirements for quality of service and safety. The Pacific Community’s (SPC) Pacific Islands Domestic Ship Safety (PIDSS) programme initiated in 2010 in response to two major maritime accidents and the Pacific Maritime Safety Programme (PMSP) implemented by Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) are considered as the two main initiatives for addressing domestic shipping safety issues in the Pacific Islands region.

3. Despite progress and efforts made toward improved safety at sea in the Pacific Islands region, the Third Domestic Ship Safety Forum (2018 Forum) held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in April 2018, reiterated the challenges and persistent issues in implementing the priorities and actions adopted in the 2012 Suva Action Plan and in the 2015 follow-up session. The 2018 Forum called for a community-based approach toward safe, reliable, accessible, green and efficient domestic shipping with a view to support resilient development of communities in PICTs.

Current status

4. The PIDSS Programme aims to improve safety of domestic shipping through the effective implementation of SMS and contributes to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Flag State Implementation for Domestic Ships in the Pacific Islands Region (Pacific MoU) with a view to a harmonised approach to Flag State Implementation. Since the 2017 Transport Ministers Meeting:

- the number of countries participation in the PIDSS Programme has increased from eight (8) to eleven (11) and another two (2) PICTs are now targeted.
- a total of eleven (11) Initial Safety Audits and five (5) Follow-Up Safety Audits were conducted on domestic shipping companies/ships, making a total of twenty-nine (29) Initial Audits and nine (9) Follow Up Audits since the inception of the PIDSS programme in 2010.
- As of 2017, there were 379 personnel (ship operators/crews and government officials) that have been trained on safety management under the PIDSS programme since 2010. Between

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2 Kiribati, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea
3 Tokelau and Palau
2017 and 2019, another 204 personnel have been trained, making a total of 583 personnel trained to date. The programme has also trained 53 personnel on Flag State Inspection in 4 PICTs\(^4\). In conjunction with PIDSS, the Pacific MoU is currently conducting a Concentrated Survey Programme on “Preventing Ship Overloading”.

5. In October 2018, the Government of New Zealand signed a Grant Funding Arrangement (GFA) with SPC. Under this agreement, the Government of New Zealand is providing funding support through New Zealand Aid for SPC to continue delivery of the PIDSS programme in partnership with MNZ and in conjunction with the PMSP for another three (3) years, up to 2021.

6. Significant improvements have been identified since the inception of the PIDSS programme in 2010, notably through ship safety audits. In the period 2010-2016 there were nineteen (19) audits carried out, fifteen (15) initial audits and four (4) follow-up audits. The initial audits concluded in a hundred and forty-five (145) findings, with only seven (7) findings confirmed rectified. With a total of nineteen (19) subsequent audits carried out from 2017 to date, it reveals an 80% increase in the number of audits. Furthermore, five (5) follow-up audits have been carried out so far that have found out that forty (40) findings have been rectified from a total of seventy-two (72). This demonstrates an increase of 21% of rectified findings despite an 80% increase of audits. Another positive impact is on behavioral changes on how key shipboard operations are carried out in accordance with the best safety practices and the approved safety manual or Safe Operational Plans (SOP)\(^5\). This indicates an improved safety culture as opposed to the former modus operandi.

7. The New Zealand Aid-funded PMSP is implemented by Maritime New Zealand in seven (7) countries\(^6\). The programme provides support in five key areas: i) regulatory support; ii) Search and rescue and oil pollution response; iii) Domestic vessel safety and infrastructure; iv) community education and awareness; and v) support for education and training of seafarers.

**Issues**

8. The sinking of the MV Butiraoi in Kiribati in January 2018 has highlighted some of the persistent issues targeted by the regional domestic ship safety programme since 2010 and by PICTs’ own initiatives to improve safety for all at sea. It led the 2018 Forum to recall the common factors that hinder maritime safety in the region, which include unseaworthy and overaged vessels, overloading, overcrowding, negligence, poverty, corruption, greed, inadequate training and inadequate laws or enforcement of laws. The Forum recommended that all Maritime Administrations should take necessary initiatives to reduce and eliminate factors that hinder vessel safety and particularly close coordination of all initiatives at the national and regional levels. This will ensure complementary assistance is provided such as the collaborative work of SPC and MNZ in delivering the PIDSS programme and PMSP.

9. While most PICTs have the tools to progress the adoption and implementation of SMS, it is essential that effectiveness implementation is verified. The shipping companies are therefore required to conduct their own internal safety audits for continual improvement, while Maritime Administrations carry out external compliance audits. However, most PICTs do not have the resources and capacity to conduct these safety audits yet, therefore this particular training has now been incorporated in the PIDSS Programme. Since 2018, one of the objectives of PIDSS is to assist Maritime Administrations take ownership and leadership of the programme. This requires at least one officer in the Maritime Administration who has the capacity and time to monitor the effective implementation of PIDSS.

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\(^4\) Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu and Kiribati

\(^5\) The safety manual or the SOPs are specifically designed and adapted to non-convention vessels in the Pacific similar to safety management manuals implemented by convention vessels under the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. Both SOPs and safety management manuals are part of the ship SMS.

\(^6\) Kiribati, Niue, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga
10. Maintenance and servicing of ships and their equipment is problematic in PICTs; especially those countries without local ship and equipment maintenance facilities and suppliers. It is costly for ship operators to get maintenance services and supply of equipment from abroad and this often results in postponement or absence of preventive and corrective maintenance. In addition, most ship operators have not designed a proper ship Preventive Maintenance Plan (PMP) and often are not able to anticipate the maintenance and supply of spare parts and equipment. While a PMP forms an integral part of the ships’ SMS, SPC lacks resources to assist in the development of tailored ship’s PMPs. In the new phase of PIDSS, the establishment of a Maintenance Fund is being explored and would be used to assist in providing equipment and maintenance services to ship operators implementing a SMS and associated PMP. The designated officer from the Maritime Administration will monitor and report on the use and maintenance of equipment and services from the PIDSS programme.

11. Most domestic shipping companies lack qualified and experienced staff to properly manage a maritime business that include the safe and reliable operations of ship. This goes beyond the simple implementation of SMS as described above and include an understanding of specificities of operating a ship risks and statutory requirements. It also includes the capacity to implement sound business management to provide safe and quality shipping services.

12. In several maritime accidents or incidents in the Pacific, ship overloading has been identified as a common and main causal factor. While the ultimate responsibility of the Master and the ship owner cannot be undermined, they are sometimes placed under pressure from governments and/or communities to deliver the expected service whatever the conditions are. It is often due to the lack of understanding by communities/public and government officials of the technical limitations and restrictions of a ship. There is pressing need to extend the work done under the PMSP on community education and awareness of safety at sea to instill a culture of safety and responsibility among domestic ships’ passengers and boat users, who must claim for the right to safety for all at sea in the Pacific Islands region. This is paramount for a community-based approach to domestic shipping safety to become entrenched in the Pacific Islands region.

Recommendations

9. Transport Ministers are invited to:
   i. Acknowledge the results and progress made for the safety of domestic shipping in the Pacific Islands region and the support from New Zealand to the SPC’s PIDSS programme and the MNZ’s PMSP;
   ii. Recognise the persistent issues that hinder maritime safety in the Pacific domestic shipping, which include unseaworthy and overaged vessels, overloading, negligence, poverty, corruption, greed, inadequate training and inadequate laws or enforcement of laws; and
   iii. Agree to allocate dedicated human and/or financial resources to Maritime Administrations to monitor implementation by domestic ships’ operators of safety management systems and preventive maintenance under the PIDSS programme;
   iv. Agree to undertake a community-based approach to safety for all at sea and implement national initiatives to instil a culture of safety and responsibility and a public claim for the right to safety for all at sea; and
   v. Request development partners to include in all sea transportation initiatives in the Pacific, domestic ship safety management and community awareness and education on safety for all at sea.

[16 August 2019]
### Annex 1: PIDSS Programme Progress 2010 - 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PICTs</th>
<th>Year PIDSS introduced</th>
<th>2010 – 2016</th>
<th>2017 - 2019</th>
<th>2017 - 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel Trained</td>
<td>Ships Considered</td>
<td>Ships with approved SMS</td>
<td>Ships with draft SMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONGA</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIRIBATI</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANUATU</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLOMON IS</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUVALU</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMOA</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIJI</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOK IS</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>379</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010 - 2016

15 Initial Audits + 4 Follow Up Audits = 19 Safety Audits

2017 - 2019

14 Initial Audits + 5 Follow Up Audits = 19 Safety Audits

2010-2016
19 audits in 6 yrs

2017-2019
19 audits in 1.5 yrs

Audit Activities increased by 80%
Annex 3: Initial and Follow Up Audit Findings Analysis

Findings Cleared

2010 - 2016

2017 - 2019

Findings Cleared increased by 21%