

**Contribution from the International Maritime Organization (IMO)  
to the report of the Secretary-General on  
“Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”**

In relation to UN General Assembly Resolution 80/41

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) instruments mainly relevant to General Assembly resolution 80/41 and Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) are:

- (a) the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988; the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, 1988; and corresponding protocols of 2005;
- (b) chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, and part A of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, adopted in 2002 and entered into force on 1 July 2004.

The ISPS Code focuses on the protection of port facilities and ships through preventive measures to deter and detect unlawful acts, primarily addressing physical security, control of access and security procedures. The 1988 and 2005 SUA Convention and protocols make it illegal under international law to attack ships or platforms fixed on the continental shelf, including offences relating to acts of terrorism on board ships, the carriage of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist fugitives; criminalize their transportation; and introduce provisions to enable boarding of vessels on the high seas pursuant to such offences.

IMO has developed and implemented a comprehensive global technical cooperation programme, and is an implementing partner on several important regional maritime security projects, which focuses on assisting States in the national organization of maritime security and implementation, verification, compliance with, and enforcement of, the provisions of SOLAS chapter XI-2, the ISPS Code and the SUA Convention and protocols, as well as long-range identification and tracking of ships for enhanced maritime situational awareness. IMO has also cooperated with the International Labour Organization in the production of the ILO and IMO Code of Practice on Security in Ports which provide practical recommendations for addressing security in ports, in line with SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code.

IMO has forged strong links with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, the World Customs Organization and other international and regional partners in the delivery of technical cooperation projects for maritime and border security and has participated in numerous in-country needs assessment missions with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate related to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), in which IMO serves as the maritime component of a multi-agency United Nations border management security team. IMO is likewise engaged in several of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact working groups, most notably the working group on border management and law enforcement and its work to help Member States implement comprehensive and coordinated approaches to address the threat of terrorism in the context of cross-border activities.

### ***Related instruments***

Considered an extension to the provisions of SOLAS Chapter VII, the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code (effective from 1 January 2004) provides guidance on the carriage of dangerous goods in packaged form, and in this regard defines “high consequence dangerous goods” as those which have the potential for misuse in a terrorist event and which may, as a result, produce serious consequences such as mass casualties, mass destruction or, particularly for class 7 (high consequence radioactive material), mass socio-economic disruption.

The International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code (effective from 1 January 2011) similarly provides security provisions for “high consequence solid bulk cargoes with high potential security implications” which have the potential for misuse in an unlawful act and which may, as a result, produce serious consequences such as mass casualties or mass destruction. IMO has also developed model courses on security awareness and security training to enhance port facility personnel, seafarers and maritime workers’ preparedness to deal with, among others, acts of terrorism and carriage of weapons of mass destruction.

This safety focused documentation system is crucial and may assist Authorities in preventing the illegal transport or acquisition of dangerous goods, including materials that could be used for weapons of mass destruction.

IMSBC focus on the safety aspect for the transport of solid bulk cargoes and its documentation-based control system likewise represents an effective mechanism for preventing hazards such as cargo liquefaction, chemical reactions, and structural failure. The documentation system could assist Authorities in detecting illegal acquisition, misdeclaration, and intentional misuse of chemical substances (chemical reactions), including their potential use in terrorist acts.

Both instruments related to the safe transport of cargoes, also enhance transparency, accountability, and traceability throughout the supply chain. By enforcing standardized declarations the IMO strengthens maritime safety and also may help detecting the illegal transport or acquisition of dangerous goods, including materials that could be used for weapons of mass destruction.