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**Department of Policy and Business Practices**

## **Statement on the Need for an International Solution to the Problem of Air Emissions from Ships**

*Prepared by ICC's Committee on Maritime Transport*

Air pollution from oceangoing ships is one of the most significant issues facing the international maritime and port industries today. It is an issue of particular concern in ports and coastal areas with heavy vessel traffic. The ICC Committee on Maritime Transport, which brings together maritime transport providers, users, freight forwarders and port interests, believes that this is a major international problem that requires an effective and efficient international solution.

In 1997, the maritime nations of the world, under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), concluded an important international agreement regulating air emissions from large marine engines and setting fuel standards for these engines. The agreement is Annex VI to the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships – commonly referred to as MARPOL Annex VI. The treaty came into force in 2005 and today 47 countries representing 75 percent of the world's large vessel tonnage have ratified Annex VI.

The governments of the IMO developed this convention to reduce air pollution from large ships and to establish an international regulatory structure empowered to improve such regulation in the future, as technology allowed. Even before Annex VI came into force, it became clear that technology developments, in particular concerning NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, would enable emissions below the standards set in 1997. It was also clear the engine technology and production of low sulfur fuels would permit reduction of emissions, particularly in the critical coastal and port areas.

Upon entry into force in 2005, the IMO began the process of amending the treaty by considering various options for adopting stricter standards for the emission of

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nitrogen oxides (NOx) and reviewing technology options for possible reductions of sulfur oxides (SOx) and particulate matter (PM) emissions. That process is currently in its final stages. During this process, however, some countries and regional bodies have taken steps which could lead to national or regional regulation of vessel air emissions.

In this regard, ICC, the world business organization, calls on the IMO to complete its current work early this year and to adopt new, environmentally effective emission standards which will be acceptable to IMO Member States and which take due account of fuel availability considerations. At the same time, ICC urges those Member States to refrain from taking national, regional or local action on this important issue until the IMO adopts these new standards, which will likely be sufficiently strict to avoid the need for such action.

Only through an effective international IMO regime can the maritime and port industries avoid a patchwork of vessel air emission regulations around the world. This would result in major operational problems, produce varying fuel standards and lead to considerably higher and unnecessary costs for all segments of the industry.

The need for the development of global rules for reducing air pollution from ships is equally applicable to the development of measures to address greenhouse gas emissions from ships, particularly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). ICC welcomes the decision of IMO to accelerate its updated study of greenhouse gas emissions by ships, and the announcement of its intention to develop proposals for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by ships before the end of 2009.

The shipping industry, while the most environmentally friendly form of transport, must still do its part to work toward improving its environmental performance. Global standards are a key element in that effort.

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