

MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND TANKER SAFETY

A G8 ACTION PLAN

Global sustainable development and poverty reduction requires healthier and more sustainably managed oceans and seas. The fisheries sector alone is the main source of protein for one billion people as well as a major provider of livelihoods: it provides some 5-10% of the world's food supply. There is growing pressure on the marine environment. The decline in marine biodiversity and the depletion of fish stocks are of increasing concern, as is the use of Flags of Convenience, especially for fishing vessels, as a means to avoid management conservation measures. The recent sinking of the "Prestige" has again demonstrated that tanker safety and pollution prevention have to be further improved.

1. By acting in accordance with the relevant United Nations Conventions, we will work towards sustainable fisheries and marine conservation.

Specifically, we commit to:

1.1 The ratification or acceding to and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the overall legal framework for oceans;

1.2 Develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, for the management of human activities in order to protect oceans and seas and their resources, drawing on the work underway in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO);

1.3 Maintain the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas, including on the high seas;

1.4 The urgent restoration and maintenance of fish stocks;

1.5 The ratification and effective implementation of the relevant UN and, where appropriate, associated regional fisheries agreements or arrangements, noting in particular the UN Fish Stocks Agreement;

1.6 The urgent development and implementation of international plans of action under the FAO, inter alia to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

1.7 Strengthening regional fisheries organisations, including through improved data collection and compliance with their measures by their member States;

1.8 Reaffirmation of the commitments made at Doha, to clarify and improve disciplines in the context of negotiations under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures that covers fisheries subsidies, and at Johannesburg to reform subsidies that damage the environment and are otherwise incompatible with sustainable development;

1.9 Address the lack of effective flag State control of fishing vessels, in particular those flying Flags of Convenience;

1.10 Build capacity in marine science, information and management, through, inter alia, promoting the use

of environmental impact assessments and environmental evaluation and reporting techniques, for projects or activities that are potentially harmful to the coastal and marine environments and their living and non-living resources;

1.11 Improved co-ordination and co-operation among national agencies and international organisations, notably the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the FAO, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the UN Environment Programme, including through capacity building to improve global assessment and reporting and strengthen science-based decision making;

1.12 The incorporation of priorities from the 1995 Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment into national, regional and international policies and initiatives;

1.13 Establish ecosystem networks of marine protected areas, consistent with international law and based on scientific information by 2012 in our own waters and regions, and work with others to achieve the same in theirs;

1.14 For those of us who participate in the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the FAO, promote responsible fisheries as embodied in this code.

2. We have agreed to take all necessary and appropriate steps to strengthen international maritime safety. We will support IMO efforts, and will take the lead within the IMO in order to:

2.1 Work towards further accelerating the phasing out of single hulled tankers;

2.2 Address through appropriate measures the special risks posed by the carriage of the heaviest grades of oil in single hulled tankers;

2.3 Accelerate the introduction of a code in particular for flag States. As a first step, introduce a voluntary model audit scheme with the aim of enhancing the responsibilities of flag States for the effective implementation and control of IMO instruments and to enhance supervision over recognised organisations authorised by flag States;

2.4 Establish mandatory pilotage in narrow, restricted and congested waters in conformity with IMO rules and procedures. Relevant coastal States should also give consideration to the introduction, in such waters, of pilots' immediate reporting to the relevant authority of evident defects or deficiencies, and to other measures;

2.5 Accelerate the adoption of guidelines on places of refuge for vessels in distress;

2.6 Enhance compensation funds to the benefit of the victims of oil pollution and review the international compensation regime;

2.7 Support efforts to improve the training of seafarers, including mandatory minimum qualifications.

We have also agreed to intensive port State control inspections and to carry them out effectively, and to make publicly available details of any ships detained; to these ends, as appropriate, to request the relevant regional bodies, such as the Paris Memorandum and the Tokyo Memorandum, to update as soon as possible existing procedures and guidelines in this sphere.

We shall consider expanding existing potential for technical cooperation programmes, within the framework of the IMO Technical Co-operation Committee and Subcommittee on Flag State Implementation, for assisting countries in their efforts to increase maritime safety and pollution prevention, including the effective discharge of flag State obligations and adequate application of port State control procedures.

We are, in addition to efforts to improve the safety regimes for tankers, committed to act on the significant environmental threat posed by large cargo vessels and their bunkers and therefore encourage the adoption of liability provisions including, where appropriate, through the ratification of relevant international liability conventions, in particular the 2001 International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage (Bunker Convention) and the 1996 International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea.

We will also support efforts within the International Labour Organisation to finalise a new consolidated convention on maritime labour standards and will seriously consider the ratification of this convention when adopted.