

ASSEMBLY  
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Agenda item 19(c)

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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### (c) Relations with non-governmental organizations

#### Submitted by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA)

##### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This submission is intended to update the IMO Assembly about the ongoing transformation of IALA from a non-governmental international organization to an intergovernmental organization, extend an invitation to Member States for participation in the forthcoming conference, and urge Member States to proceed with the ratification or accession to the governing convention.

*Strategic direction, if applicable:* 7

*Output:* 7.9

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 12

*Related documents:* IMO Assembly resolution A.42(II); A 29/INF.8 and A 31/INF.7

## Introduction

1 This document serves as an update on the pivotal transformation of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) from a non-governmental international organization to an intergovernmental organization (IGO).

2 This transition has been a long-term objective aimed at augmenting IALA's capacity to act as an international technical organization assisting coastal States. Specifically, the organization supports these countries in fulfilling their international legal obligations related to the provision of Marine Aids to Navigation including Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and other relevant conventions.

3 Though this transformation signifies a milestone event in IALA's history, it will not alter its nature and principal aim. The organization will remain a consultative, technical and not-for-profit organization.

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## Objective of the transformation

4 The underlying aim of the IALA transformation remains consistent with its existing mission: to work collaboratively in facilitating the safe, efficient movement of vessels by standardizing and improving Marine Aids to Navigation on a global scale.

5 This endeavour serves the dual purpose of benefiting the maritime community and safeguarding the marine environment. The objectives of IALA's transformation into an IGO are as follows:

- .1 fostering the safe and efficient movement of vessels through the improvement and harmonization of Marine Aids to Navigation worldwide for the benefit of the maritime community and the protection of the marine environment;
- .2 promoting access to technical cooperation and capacity-building on all matters related to the development and transfer of expertise, science and technology in relation to Marine Aids to Navigation;
- .3 encouraging and facilitating the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning Marine Aids to Navigation; and
- .4 providing for the exchange of information on matters under consideration by the Organization.

## Current status

6 After more than a decade of preparation, coastal States gathered at a diplomatic conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2020. At this landmark event, 50 States came to a consensus on the text of a convention that would facilitate IALA's transformation into an IGO.

7 The French government assumed the role of the depositary of this newly established Convention. The Convention opened for signatures in January 2021 and a signing ceremony was subsequently held in IALA Headquarters in January 2022, thereby commencing the ratification process. As of now, 50 States have signed, and IALA awaits the ratification or accession from 30 States after which the Convention enters into force.

8 IMO Member States which have not ratified or acceded to the IALA Convention yet are recommended to formalize their commitment to standardizing and enhancing Marine Aids to Navigation including VTS globally, thereby contributing to safer and more efficient maritime activities while fulfilling their international legal obligations.

9 More information on the IGO transformation of IALA can be found at <https://www.iala-aism.org/the-igo-project/>

## Upcoming IGO Conference and assembly

10 To ensure a smooth transition and effective functioning of the new IGO structure, a comprehensive review of the general regulations of IALA is imminent. These regulatory guidelines will be prepared during an upcoming IGO conference generously hosted by Japan in Tokyo. Scheduled from 7 to 10 November 2023, this Conference will be a decisive step in formulating regulations that will be submitted for approval to the first General Assembly of the restructured IALA.

11 Furthermore, it is anticipated that the first General Assembly of IALA in its new IGO status will convene in late 2024 or early 2025, to be hosted in Singapore.

**Action requested of the Assembly**

12 The Assembly is invited to note the information provided.

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