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For Immediate Release

Global Shipping Organizations Commend the International Maritime Organization for Agreeing to Solve the Problem of Misdeclared Container Weights

The decision of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee to solve the problem of misdeclared container weights will significantly improve the safety of container ships, their crews, shoreside personnel involved in the handling and transport of containers, and other cargo aboard the ship.

In December 2010, the World Shipping Council (WSC) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) jointly urged the IMO to establish an international legal requirement that all loaded containers be weighed at the marine port facility before stowage aboard a vessel for export. See http://www.worldshipping.org/public-statements/Solving_the_Problem_of_Overweight_Containers_For_Release.pdf

Last week's meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee of the IMO (MSC 89) agreed to a proposal made by the Netherlands, Denmark and Australia to establish a new work item to address the issue of incorrectly declared containerized cargo shipments and to undertake other measures to improve the safety of container stowage and ship operations.

WSC and ICS, along with many IMO Member States and representative bodies for seafarers, dockworkers and masters, support this initiative that demonstrates the compelling need to address the problem. Verification of actual container weight before vessel loading and the availability of the actual container weights for proper and safe stowage planning will mark a long overdue and important improvement in industry safety. WSC and ICS look forward to assisting the IMO to institute a new set of requirements to accomplish this as soon as possible.

WSC and ICS submitted a paper to MSC 89 which stressed the importance of a clear requirement to ensure that all containers' weights are verified before vessel loading (See http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/MSC_89-22-17_-2-.pdf). The collaborative effort by WSC and ICS in support of this initiative represents a sustained effort to solve a problem that has plagued container shipping for years. The industry organizations sought to address the problem through the issuance of industry best practices and voluntary measures, when they published "Safe Transport of Containers by Sea: Guidelines on Best Practices," available at: http://www.worldshipping.org/pdf/industry_guidance_shippers_container_stuffers.pdf However,

the problem will not be solved until there is a legal requirement to verify container weights before containers are loaded onto ships. In those countries that require loaded containers to be weighed before vessel stowage for export, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that operations can proceed very efficiently without any disruption to commerce. The shipping industry is optimistic that the IMO's decision to making this an international requirement will save lives, reduce cargo losses, and improve operational efficiency for all concerned.

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ABOUT THE WORLD SHIPPING COUNCIL:

The World Shipping Council is an association of liner shipping companies with offices in Brussels and Washington, D.C. Its members carry over 90 percent of international containerized trade. The Council's goal is to provide a coordinated voice for the liner shipping industry in its work with policymakers and other industry groups interested in international transportation issues. For more information about the World Shipping Council and the liner shipping industry, please visit www.worldshipping.org.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING:

The International Chamber of Shipping is the representative body for the global shipping industry. Its member national shipowner associations operate about 80 percent of the world merchant fleet. For more information about the International Chamber of Shipping, visit www.marisec.org.

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