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For Immediate Release

Ports and Carriers United on the Need to Weigh Loaded Containers

The International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) has joined with the World Shipping Council (WSC), the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and BIMCO in the effort to encourage the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to amend the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) to require, as a condition for stowing a loaded container on board a ship, that the ship and the port facility have a verified actual weight of the container. All four organizations have consultative status at the IMO.

The announcement comes as the IMO's Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC) subcommittee, which is responsible for improving the safety of container stowage and ships operations, continues its efforts to construct a SOLAS requirement that loaded export containers have a verified weight prior to vessel loading. As instructed by the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), DSC will consider such a requirement at its next session in September 2012 (DSC 17).

"Weighing containers to confirm their actual weight is the right operational and safety practice. There is substantial experience with such a requirement in the United States demonstrating that this is feasible on a technological and commercial basis. It is time to make this a global safety practice and our association will assist its members in cooperating with terminal operators to develop a suitable and effective process," said Dr. Geraldine Knatz, president of IAPH and executive director of the Port of Los Angeles.

"We very much welcome and appreciate IAPH's support of this initiative. The tide is clearly running in support of this most important enhancement to maritime safety," said Peter Hinchliffe, Secretary General of ICS.

"Having the actual weights of containers improves safety aboard ships, safety in the ports, and safety on the roads. There is no sound reason to continue the willful toleration of ignorance about cargo containers' actual weights. IAPH support of this initiative is a positive development," said Torben Skaanild, Secretary General of BIMCO.

"Shippers today are legally obligated to provide accurate weights of containers after they have stuffed them with cargo, but there are many instances where their weight declarations are erroneous. An accident involving an incorrect container weight declaration can create potential liabilities for the

shipper and others handling the container. Having verified weights of loaded containers will reduce errors and risk, and will eliminate the guesswork from the business for all parties involved,” said Christopher Koch, president of WSC.

All four organizations noted that governments around the world continue to focus on obtaining more complete knowledge of what is actually in cargo containers arriving in their countries, and that Customs authorities would welcome having accurate cargo weights as they screen import cargoes. “This is another example of industry cooperation and initiative that will increase governments’ confidence in maritime commerce,” said Dr. Knatz.

WSC, ICS, BIMCO, IAPH and other industry parties and interested governments will consult during 2012 about the development of recommended guidelines for how to implement the container weighing requirement.

The attached examples demonstrate the extent to which misdeclared container weights can exist in today’s shipping operations. This is a problem which can only be addressed through the requirement to verify the weight of all loaded containers prior to stowing aboard a ship. (See Examples Below.)

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PORTS AND HARBORS (IAPH): IAPH is a global alliance of ports, representing some 230 ports in about 90 countries. Together, the IAPH member ports handle well over 60 percent of the world’s sea-borne trade and nearly 80 percent of the world’s container traffic. For more information about the International Association of Ports and Harbors, visit www.iaphworldports.org.

ABOUT BIMCO: BIMCO represents ship-owners controlling around 65 percent of the world’s tonnage, with members in more than 120 countries drawn from a broad range of stakeholders with an interest in the shipping industry that includes managers, brokers and agents. For more information about BIMCO, visit www.bimco.org.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING (ICS): 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.ics-shipping.org.

ABOUT THE WORLD SHIPPING COUNCIL (WSC): The World Shipping Council is an association of liner shipping companies with offices in Brussels and Washington, D.C. Its members operate approximately 90 percent of the global liner ship capacity, providing more than 400 regularly scheduled services linking the continents of the world. Collectively, these services transport about 60 percent of the value of global seaborne trade, or more than US\$ 4 trillion worth of goods annually. For more information about the World Shipping Council, visit www.worldshipping.org.

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Synopsis of Mideclared Container Weight Incidents - December 7, 2011

June 2011: Container ship *Deneb* in Algeciras: *The ship in this picture suffered a significant stability incident. A review after the incident found that out of the 168 containers on the load list, 16 – or roughly 1 out 10 --containers had actual weights far in excess of the declared weights. The actual weights exceeded the declared weight in a range from between 1.9 times as much as the declared weight to as much as 6.7 times the declared weight. The total, actual weight of these 16 containers was more than 278 tons above their total, declared weight of about 93 tons or 4 times higher than their declared weight.*



January 2007: MSC Napoli: “About 660 containers stowed on deck, which had remained dry, were also weighed. The weights of 137 (20%) of these containers were more than 3 tonnes different from their declared weights. The largest difference was 20 tonnes, and the total weight of the 137 containers was 312 tonnes heavier than on the cargo manifest” (Source: “Report on the investigation of the structural failure of MSC Napoli”, U.K. Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Report 9/208, April 2008, p.28).



February 25, 2011: Longshore & Shipping News

‘Near miss’ at Australia wharf as 28-ton container falls



“The container that fell 12 meters and narrowly missed two workers was severely overloaded and the third accident this month at Darwin Port. Two workers at the Darwin Port had to run to avoid a shipping container crashing onto East Arm Wharf at the weekend, the Maritime Union of Australia says. The container was listed as four tones, but the Maritime Union says it weighed 28 tonnes and exceeded the crane’s load limit.”

May 9, 2011: ABC News Melbourne: *An overloaded forklift lies in a container yard in west Melbourne after its load tipped it forward, May 9, 2011. Story from May 10.*



February 2007: Container ship *MV Limari* in Damietta: *Container stack collapsed due to stack overweight. The master's incident report to the authorities notes that: "Excessively heavy units loaded in the upper tiers and that the maximum stack weight had been exceeded considerably in some rows. The effect of the overweight units was to impose excessive forces on the lashings. Further, exceeding permissible weight distribution and/or exceeding the maximum stack weight in any stack, results in overstressed stowage/securing elements and overstressed containers". The actual container weights were established by the devices on the gantry crane when lifting and shifting the collapsed containers. The actual container weights exceeded the declared weights by 362% (Row 08), 393% (Row 06), 407% (Row 04) and 209% (Row 02) in Bay 52 where the collapse occurred.*



March 2011: Excerpt from the publication “Container carriage. A selection of articles previously published by Gard AS”:



“Two recent cases which Gard Services has been involved with have certain similarities. Both cases involved heavy weather and the collapse of an on-deck container stack in way of the bottom container. In each case, the bottom container was of questionable fitness in terms of structural integrity. However, that was not the only factor. In each case the weight of certain containers within the stack was found to be in excess of the manifested weight. In one case, four containers (forty foot units) in the collapsed stack were found to have 18 MT or more undeclared cargo, which even resulted in the maximum operating gross weight for each container being exceeded”. (The Gard publication was accessed on December 6, 2012, at: <http://www.gard.no/ikbViewer/page/sharing-knowledge/allpublications>).

January 2006: P & O Nedlloyd Genoa: *Overweight containers contributed to this incident. “The declared weight of a container provided by the shipper and used for all stow planning and onboard stability purposes can, if inaccurate, cause major discrepancies between actual and declared weights. Furthermore, incorrect weight can result in stack overload and the application of excessive compression and racking forces on containers and their lashings. Although there are no financial gains to be made by the shipper who declares less than actual weight, the industry acknowledges that over-weight containers are a problem. However, as yet this has not justified a requirement for compulsory weighing of containers prior to loading” (Source: “Report on the investigation of the loss of containers overboard from P&O Nedlloyd Genoa”, U.K. Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Report 20/2006, August 2006, pages 19, 30 and 31)*



2011: Mariners’ Alerting and Reporting Scheme (MARS): Hazards of under-declared cargo weights:

“A large container vessel was loading at the final load port before commencing a trans-ocean voyage. The exit channel from the terminal had a draught restriction and sailing was subject to a narrow tidal window. Pre-arrival loading information listed some 350 containers, most of them going on the deck stacks. Being a regular vessel at the port, the terminal's computer system provided a departure stability condition with the sailing draughts allowing for adequate under-keel clearance (UKC) as per company's SMS. However, during the latter half of the 12-hour loading period, the chief officer realised that there was substantial under-declaration in the manifested container weights (later estimated to be an average of 12 per cent). This meant that after loading the manifested boxes, the ship was in serious danger of grounding in the channel. Thanks to quick thinking by the master, a total of about 850 tonnes of ballast was discharged before sailing from the twin auto-heeling tanks, which due to their high location and narrow width resulted in a safe even-keel trim and an acceptable stability condition. The ballast was restored in the heeling tanks after reaching deep waters but unfortunately, it was realised after sailing that stack-weight limits had been exceeded in many deck stacks.” (MARS 2011 was accessed on December 7, 2011, at:

<http://www.nautinst.org/en/forums/mars/mars-2011.cfm/Hazards%20of%20under-declared%20cargo%20weights>).

