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EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT OF THE LRIT SYSTEM

IMSO, IMO, SOLAS Contracting Government representatives, international organizations and industry partners came together to discuss the challenges in the effective implementation and management of the international system for the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) and augmented challenges, reality and its future.

London, 16 February 2018 – Captain Moin Ahmed, Director General of the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), reiterated the importance of bringing the key stakeholders together round the table to review and explore all possible ways to promote the strategic, operational, and technical issues with regard to the effective implementation and management of the LRIT system for the benefit of public safety, security and protection of the marine environment.



Group photo of participants at the seminar

The seminar was attended by over 135 participants who have travelled from different parts of the world and represented a diverse participation from some international and regional organizations, Member States, maritime policy makers and regulators, LRIT communications



and infrastructure service providers, LRIT application service providers, data centres, search and rescue entities, security entity representatives and mobile satellite communications service providers.

The seminar was chaired by Mr Edwin Thiedeman from the United States Coast Guard, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General, Mr Kitack Lim, graced the seminar by delivering the keynote speech where he stressed on the importance of the LRIT system that provides an essential resource for the safety of life and protection of our marine environment. The IMSO Assembly Chairman Mr Dikko Tahir Bala, The IMSO Director General Emeritus Captain Esteban Pacha, and the Permanent Representative of Malta to the IMO Mr Lino Vassallo, delivered their Goodwill messages.



The Chairman of the seminar with IMSO Assembly Chairman, IMO Secretary General, IMSO Director General, and other distinguished participants

The LRIT system was proposed to IMO by the United States Coastguard in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks to track some 50,000 ships trading internationally around the world. LRIT was established by the IMO as an international system on 19 May 2006 by resolution MSC.202 (81) amending Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), regulation 19-1, and binds all Governments which have contracted to the IMO. It became operational on 1st of July 2009. The LRIT regulations apply to all ship types engaged on international voyages, including passenger ships, cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and above, and mobile offshore drilling units.



“The seminar has been an eye opener both for those who have been involved in the LRIT from early years and to those who are newcomers in the industry. The seminar has been the ideal platform to understand where LRIT fits in the maritime communications network.” said Mr Lino Vassallo.

The seminar explored the overarching challenges that Flag States face in the implementation and sustainability of the LRIT system. Mr Pier -Giovanni Taranti, from Brazil, said that the *“seminar provided a unique environment, joining technical specialists, operators, providers, member states, satellites operators and other actors of the LRIT system where special attention was given to the successful use of LRIT and the group discussed ways to better benefit from the existing infrastructure as a Flag or a Coastal state, as well as a SAR service”*

Ms Fatima Sajwani, representing Thuraya Communications Ltd found *“the Seminar is an ideal platform to meet with senior LRIT players and decision makers”* she also added that *“IMSO, as a leading organization, has put a lot of effort in creating a forum for maritime governments and technology providers to discuss different subjects related to the present and future uses of LRIT, it is also the best setting for us to showcase our capabilities in supporting LRIT in Regional Voyages and overcoming”*.

The discussions during the two days brought a general consensus that the LRIT system has been underutilized by the users and the actual LRIT system infrastructure can transmit new and useful information between member states. Captain Santoshkumar Darokar, representing the Indian delegation said that the seminar *“has reviewed many issues of intent and conceptual of the LRIT system which explore future capabilities, audit system and compliance with the SOLAS and Non-SOLAS vessels.”*

Ms Karen Day, Director at CLS Group expressed that *“Technology is not the limiting factor, it is a question of looking at all the data that is available from all the different sources and systems that we have access to and to see how we can use that data appropriately to enhance existing services or create new services, to meet existing needs, rather than just concentrating on what technology is going to be available in 10 years’ time”*.

The theme of this seminar was **“Effective Implementation and Management of the LRIT system”**, with deliberations focused on the promotion of wider use of the LRIT system to enhance maritime safety, security, protection of the maritime environment and its challenges.

The seminar had the objectives to:

- promote the wider use of the LRIT system, in order to enhance maritime safety, security and marine environmental protection;
- explore ways to efficiently use the LRIT system by all stakeholder;
- offer ways to ensure sustainability of the LRIT system;
- embrace innovative technologies and ideas supporting ship tracking; and
- increase LRIT awareness through capacity development.



The seminar brought an agreed consensus through the deliberations and in particular:

- the current implementation and use cases of the LRIT system in the context of flag State, port State, coastal state, search and rescue and maritime security;
- sustainability of the LRIT system;
- LRIT innovations such as: exploring effective ways of tracking ships, or integration of LRIT with other tracking and reporting system; and
- LRIT spectrum and cyber security.

Director General Ahmed in his closing remarks thanked all the participants for their contributions to the seminar and undertook to ensure that his team will continue working diligently to improving public safety and security communication services provided by the providers. He hoped that that this seminar is the first step of raising the importance of the potential development of LRIT in the foreseeable future.
