

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF SHIPS'
BALLAST WATER AND SEDIMENTS, 2004

(Consolidated as to the 2020 amendments)

Article 1

Definitions

For the purpose of this Convention, unless expressly provided otherwise:

1 "Administration" means the Government of the State under whose authority the ship is operating. With respect to a ship entitled to fly a flag of any State, the Administration is the Government of that State. With respect to floating platforms engaged in exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed and subsoil thereof adjacent to the coast over which the coastal State exercises sovereign rights for the purposes of exploration and exploitation of its natural resources, including Floating Storage Units (FSUs) and Floating Production Storage and Offloading Units (FPSOs), the Administration is the Government of the coastal State concerned.

2 "Ballast Water" means water with its suspended matter taken on board a ship to control trim, list, draught, stability or stresses of the ship.

3 "Ballast Water Management" means mechanical, physical, chemical, and biological processes, either singularly or in combination, to remove, render harmless, or avoid the uptake or discharge of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens within Ballast Water and Sediments.

4 "Certificate" means the International Ballast Water Management Certificate.

5 "Committee" means the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the Organization.

6 "Convention" means the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

7 "Gross tonnage" means the gross tonnage calculated in accordance with the tonnage measurement regulations contained in Annex I to the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969 or any successor Convention.

8 "Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens" means aquatic organisms or pathogens which, if introduced into the sea including estuaries, or into fresh water courses, may create hazards to the environment, human health, property or resources, impair biological diversity or interfere with other legitimate uses of such areas.

9 "Organization" means the International Maritime Organization.

10 "Secretary-General" means the Secretary-General of the Organization.

11 "Sediments" means matter settled out of Ballast Water within a ship.

12 "Ship" means a vessel of any type whatsoever operating in the aquatic environment and includes submersibles, floating craft, floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs.

Article 2

General Obligations

1 Parties undertake to give full and complete effect to the provisions of this Convention and the Annex thereto in order to prevent, minimize and ultimately eliminate the transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens through the control and management of ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

2 The Annex forms an integral part of this Convention. Unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to this Convention constitutes at the same time a reference to the Annex.

3 Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as preventing a Party from taking, individually or jointly with other Parties, more stringent measures with respect to the prevention, reduction or elimination of the transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens through the control and management of ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, consistent with international law.

4 Parties shall endeavour to co-operate for the purpose of effective implementation, compliance and enforcement of this Convention.

5 Parties undertake to encourage the continued development of Ballast Water Management and standards to prevent, minimize and ultimately eliminate the transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens through the control and management of ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

6 Parties taking action pursuant to this Convention shall endeavour not to impair or damage their environment, human health, property or resources, or those of other States.

7 Parties should ensure that Ballast Water Management practices used to comply with this Convention do not cause greater harm than they prevent to their environment, human health, property or resources, or those of other States.

8 Parties shall encourage ships entitled to fly their flag, and to which this Convention applies, to avoid, as far as practicable, the uptake of Ballast Water

with potentially Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens, as well as Sediments that may contain such organisms, including promoting the adequate implementation of recommendations developed by the Organization.

9 Parties shall endeavour to co-operate under the auspices of the Organization to address threats and risks to sensitive, vulnerable or threatened marine ecosystems and biodiversity in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction in relation to Ballast Water Management.

Article 3

Application

1 Except as expressly provided otherwise in this Convention, this Convention shall apply to:

- (a) ships entitled to fly the flag of a Party; and
- (b) ships not entitled to fly the flag of a Party but which operate under the authority of a Party.

2 This Convention shall not apply to:

- (a) ships not designed or constructed to carry Ballast Water;
- (b) ships of a Party which only operate in waters under the jurisdiction of that Party, unless the Party determines that the discharge of Ballast Water from such ships would impair or damage their environment, human health, property or resources, or those of adjacent or other States;
- (c) ships of a Party which only operate in waters under the jurisdiction of another Party, subject to the authorization of the latter Party for such exclusion. No Party shall grant such authorization if doing so would impair or damage their environment, human health, property or resources, or those of adjacent or other States. Any Party not granting such authorization shall notify the Administration of the ship concerned that this Convention applies to such ship;
- (d) ships which only operate in waters under the jurisdiction of one Party and on the high seas, except for ships not granted an authorization pursuant to sub-paragraph (c), unless such Party determines that the discharge of Ballast Water from such ships would impair or damage their environment, human health, property or resources, or those of adjacent of other States;
- (e) any warship, naval auxiliary or other ship owned or operated by a State and used, for the time being, only on government non-commercial service. However, each Party shall ensure, by the adoption of appropriate measures

not impairing operations or operational capabilities of such ships owned or operated by it, that such ships act in a manner consistent, so far as is reasonable and practicable, with this Convention; and

(f) permanent Ballast Water in sealed tanks on ships, that is not subject to discharge.

3 With respect to ships of non-Parties to this Convention, Parties shall apply the requirements of this Convention as may be necessary to ensure that no more favourable treatment is given to such ships.

Article 4

Control of the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens Through Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments

1 Each Party shall require that ships to which this Convention applies and which are entitled to fly its flag or operating under its authority comply with the requirements set forth in this Convention, including the applicable standards and requirements in the Annex, and shall take effective measures to ensure that those ships comply with those requirements.

2 Each Party shall, with due regard to its particular conditions and capabilities, develop national policies, strategies or programmes for Ballast Water Management in its ports and waters under its jurisdiction that accord with, and promote the attainment of the objectives of this Convention.

Article 5

Sediment Reception Facilities

1 Each Party undertakes to ensure that, in ports and terminals designated by that Party where cleaning or repair of ballast tanks occurs, adequate facilities are provided for the reception of Sediments, taking into account the Guidelines developed by the Organization. Such reception facilities shall operate without causing undue delay to ships and shall provide for the safe disposal of such Sediments that does not impair or damage their environment, human health, property or resources or those of other States.

2 Each Party shall notify the Organization for transmission to the other Parties concerned of all cases where the facilities provided under paragraph 1 are alleged to be inadequate.

Article 6

Scientific and Technical Research and Monitoring

1 Parties shall endeavour, individually or jointly, to:

- (a) promote and facilitate scientific and technical research on Ballast Water Management; and
- (b) monitor the effects of Ballast Water Management in waters under their jurisdiction.

Such research and monitoring should include observation, measurement, sampling, evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness and adverse impacts of any technology or methodology as well as any adverse impacts caused by such organisms and pathogens that have been identified to have been transferred through ships' Ballast Water.

2 Each Party shall, to further the objectives of this Convention, promote the availability of relevant information to other Parties who request it on:

- (a) scientific and technology programmes and technical measures undertaken with respect to Ballast Water Management; and
- (b) the effectiveness of Ballast Water Management deduced from any monitoring and assessment programmes.

Article 7

Survey and certification

1 Each Party shall ensure that ships flying its flag or operating under its authority and subject to survey and certification are so surveyed and certified in accordance with the regulations in the Annex.

2 A Party implementing measures pursuant to Article 2.3 and Section C of the Annex shall not require additional survey and certification of a ship of another Party, nor shall the Administration of the ship be obligated to survey and certify additional measures imposed by another Party. Verification of such additional measures shall be the responsibility of the Party implementing such measures and shall not cause undue delay to the ship.

Article 8

Violations

1 Any violation of the requirements of this Convention shall be prohibited and sanctions shall be established under the law of the Administration of the ship

concerned, wherever the violation occurs. If the Administration is informed of such a violation, it shall investigate the matter and may request the reporting Party to furnish additional evidence of the alleged violation. If the Administration is satisfied that sufficient evidence is available to enable proceedings to be brought in respect of the alleged violation, it shall cause such proceedings to be taken as soon as possible, in accordance with its law. The Administration shall promptly inform the Party that reported the alleged violation, as well as the Organization, of any action taken. If the Administration has not taken any action within 1 year after receiving the information, it shall so inform the Party which reported the alleged violation.

2 Any violation of the requirements of this Convention within the jurisdiction of any Party shall be prohibited and sanctions shall be established under the law of that Party. Whenever such a violation occurs, that Party shall either:

- (a) cause proceedings to be taken in accordance with its law; or
- (b) furnish to the Administration of the ship such information and evidence as may be in its possession that a violation has occurred.

3 The sanctions provided for by the laws of a Party pursuant to this Article shall be adequate in severity to discourage violations of this Convention wherever they occur.

Article 9

Inspection of Ships

1 A ship to which this Convention applies may, in any port or offshore terminal of another Party, be subject to inspection by officers duly authorized by that Party for the purpose of determining whether the ship is in compliance with this Convention. Except as provided in paragraph 2 of this Article, any such inspection is limited to:

- (a) verifying that there is onboard a valid Certificate, which, if valid shall be accepted; and
- (b) inspection of the Ballast Water record book, and/or
- (c) a sampling of the ship's Ballast Water, carried out in accordance with the guidelines to be developed by the Organization. However, the time required to analyse the samples shall not be used as a basis for unduly delaying the operation, movement or departure of the ship.

2 Where a ship does not carry a valid Certificate or there are clear grounds for believing that:

(a) the condition of the ship or its equipment does not correspond substantially with the particulars of the Certificate; or

(b) the master or the crew are not familiar with essential shipboard procedures relating to Ballast Water Management, or have not implemented such procedures;

a detailed inspection may be carried out.

3 In the circumstances given in paragraph 2 of this Article, the Party carrying out the inspection shall take such steps as will ensure that the ship shall not discharge Ballast Water until it can do so without presenting a threat of harm to the environment, human health, property or resources.

Article 10

Detection of Violations and Control of Ships

1 Parties shall co-operate in the detection of violations and the enforcement of the provisions of this Convention.

2 If a ship is detected to have violated this Convention, the Party whose flag the ship is entitled to fly, and/or the Party in whose port or offshore terminal the ship is operating, may, in addition to any sanctions described in Article 8 or any action described in Article 9, take steps to warn, detain, or exclude the ship. The Party in whose port or offshore terminal the ship is operating, however, may grant such a ship permission to leave the port or offshore terminal for the purpose of discharging Ballast Water or proceeding to the nearest appropriate repair yard or reception facility available, provided doing so does not present a threat of harm to the environment, human health, property or resources.

3 If the sampling described in Article 9.1(c) leads to a result, or supports information received from another port or offshore terminal, indicating that the ship poses a threat to the environment, human health, property or resources, the Party in whose waters the ship is operating shall prohibit such ship from discharging Ballast Water until the threat is removed.

4 A Party may also inspect a ship when it enters the ports or offshore terminals under its jurisdiction, if a request for an investigation is received from any Party, together with sufficient evidence that a ship is operating or has operated in violation of a provision in this Convention. The report of such investigation shall be sent to the Party requesting it and to the competent authority of the Administration of the ship concerned so that appropriate action may be taken.

Article 11

Notification of Control Actions

1 If an inspection conducted pursuant to Article 9 or 10 indicates a violation of this Convention, the ship shall be notified. A report shall be forwarded to the Administration, including any evidence of the violation.

2 In the event that any action is taken pursuant to Article 9.3, 10.2 or 10.3, the officer carrying out such action shall forthwith inform, in writing, the Administration of the ship concerned, or if this is not possible, the consul or diplomatic representative of the ship concerned, of all the circumstances in which the action was deemed necessary. In addition, the recognized organization responsible for the issue of certificates shall be notified.

3 The port State authority concerned shall, in addition to parties mentioned in paragraph 2, notify the next port of call of all relevant information about the violation, if it is unable to take action as specified in Article 9.3, 10.2 or 10.3 or if the ship has been allowed to proceed to the next port of call.

Article 12

Undue Delay to Ships

1 All possible efforts shall be made to avoid a ship being unduly detained or delayed under Article 7.2, 8, 9 or 10.

2 When a ship is unduly detained or delayed under Article 7.2, 8, 9 or 10, it shall be entitled to compensation for any loss or damage suffered.

Article 13

Technical Assistance, Co-operation and Regional Co-operation

1 Parties undertake, directly or through the Organization and other international bodies, as appropriate, in respect of the control and management of ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, to provide support for those Parties which request technical assistance:

- (a) to train personnel;
- (b) to ensure the availability of relevant technology, equipment and facilities;
- (c) to initiate joint research and development programmes; and
- (d) to undertake other action aimed at the effective implementation of this Convention and of guidance developed by the Organization related thereto.

2 Parties undertake to co-operate actively, subject to their national laws, regulations and policies, in the transfer of technology in respect of the control and management of ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

3 In order to further the objectives of this Convention, Parties with common interests to protect the environment, human health, property and resources in a given geographical area, in particular, those Parties bordering enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, shall endeavour, taking into account characteristic regional features, to enhance regional co-operation, including through the conclusion of regional agreements consistent with this Convention. Parties shall seek to co-operate with the Parties to regional agreements to develop harmonized procedures.

Article 14

Communication of information

1 Each Party shall report to the Organization and, where appropriate, make available to other Parties the following information:

- (a) any requirements and procedures relating to Ballast Water Management, including its laws, regulations, and guidelines for implementation of this Convention;
- (b) the availability and location of any reception facilities for the environmentally safe disposal of Ballast Water and Sediments; and
- (c) any requirements for information from a ship which is unable to comply with the provisions of this Convention for reasons specified in regulations A-3 and B-4 of the Annex.

2 The Organization shall notify Parties of the receipt of any communications under the present Article and circulate to all Parties any information communicated to it under subparagraphs 1(b) and (c) of this Article.

Article 15

Dispute Settlement

Parties shall settle any dispute between them concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice.

Article 16

Relationship to International Law and Other Agreements

Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of any State under customary international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Article 17

Signature, Ratification, Acceptance, Approval and Accession

1 This Convention shall be open for signature by any State at the Headquarters of the Organization from 1 June 2004 to 31 May 2005 and shall thereafter remain open for accession by any State.

2 States may become Parties to the Convention by:

- (a) signature not subject to ratification, acceptance, or approval; or
- (b) signature subject to ratification, acceptance, or approval, followed by ratification, acceptance or approval; or
- (c) accession.

3 Ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument to that effect with the Secretary-General.

4 If a State comprises two or more territorial units in which different systems of law are applicable in relation to matters dealt with in this Convention, it may at the time of signature, ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession declare that this Convention shall extend to all its territorial units or only to one or more of them and may modify this declaration by submitting another declaration at any time.

5 Any such declaration shall be notified to the Depositary in writing and shall state expressly the territorial unit or units to which this Convention applies.

Article 18

Entry into Force

1 This Convention shall enter into force twelve months after the date on which not less than thirty States, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than thirty-five percent of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant shipping, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited the requisite instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in accordance with Article 17.

2 For States which have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in respect of this Convention after the requirements for entry into force thereof have been met, but prior to the date of entry in force, the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall take effect on the date of entry into force of this Convention or three months after the date of deposit of instrument, whichever is the later date.

3 Any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession deposited after the date on which this Convention enters into force shall take effect three months after the date of deposit.

4 After the date on which an amendment to this Convention is deemed to have been accepted under Article 19, any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession deposited shall apply to this Convention as amended.

Article 19

Amendments

1 This Convention may be amended by either of the procedures specified in the following paragraphs.

2 Amendments after consideration within the Organization:

(a) Any Party may propose an amendment to this Convention. A proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary-General, who shall then circulate it to the Parties and Members of the Organization at least six months prior to its consideration.

(b) An amendment proposed and circulated as above shall be referred to the Committee for consideration. Parties, whether or not Members of the Organization, shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Committee for consideration and adoption of the amendment.

(c) Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting in the Committee, on condition that at least one-third of the Parties shall be present at the time of voting.

(d) Amendments adopted in accordance with subparagraph (c) shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to the Parties for acceptance.

(e) An amendment shall be deemed to have been accepted in the following circumstances:

(i) An amendment to an article of this Convention shall be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which two-thirds of the Parties have notified the Secretary-General of their acceptance of it.

(ii) An amendment to the Annex shall be deemed to have been accepted at the end of twelve months after the date of adoption or such other date as determined by the Committee. However, if by that date more than one-third of the Parties notify the Secretary-General that they object to the amendment, it shall be deemed not to have been accepted.

(f) An amendment shall enter into force under the following conditions:

(i) An amendment to an article of this Convention shall enter into force for those Parties that have declared that they have accepted it six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted in accordance with subparagraph (e)(i).

(ii) An amendment to the Annex shall enter into force with respect to all Parties six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted, except for any Party that has:

(1) notified its objection to the amendment in accordance with subparagraph (e)(ii) and that has not withdrawn such objection; or

(2) notified the Secretary-General, prior to the entry into force of such amendment, that the amendment shall enter into force for it only after a subsequent notification of its acceptance.

(g)

(i) A Party that has notified an objection under subparagraph (f)(ii)(1) may subsequently notify the Secretary-General that it accepts the amendment. Such amendment shall enter into force for such Party six months after the date of its notification of acceptance, or the date on which the amendment enters into force, whichever is the later date.

(ii) If a Party that has made a notification referred to in subparagraph (f)(ii)(2) notifies the Secretary-General of its acceptance with respect to an amendment, such amendment shall enter into force for such Party six months after the date of its notification of acceptance, or the date on which the amendment enters into force, whichever is the later date.

3 Amendment by a Conference:

(a) Upon the request of a Party concurred in by at least one-third of the Parties, the Organization shall convene a Conference of Parties to consider amendments to this Convention.

(b) An amendment adopted by such a Conference by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to all Parties for acceptance.

(c) Unless the Conference decides otherwise, the amendment shall be deemed to have been accepted and shall enter into force in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraphs 2(e) and (f) respectively.

4 Any Party that has declined to accept an amendment to the Annex shall be treated as a non-Party only for the purpose of application of that amendment.

5 Any notification under this Article shall be made in writing to the Secretary-General.

6 The Secretary-General shall inform the Parties and Members of the Organization of:

(a) any amendment that enters into force and the date of its entry into force generally and for each Party; and

(b) any notification made under this Article.

Article 20

Denunciation

1 This Convention may be denounced by any Party at any time after the expiry of two years from the date on which this Convention enters into force for that Party.

2 Denunciation shall be effected by written notification to the Depositary, to take effect one year after receipt or such longer period as may be specified in that notification.

Article 21

Depositary

1 This Convention shall be deposited with the Secretary-General, who shall transmit certified copies of this Convention to all States which have signed this Convention or acceded thereto.

2 In addition to the functions specified elsewhere in this Convention, the Secretary-General shall:

(a) inform all States that have signed this Convention, or acceded thereto, of:

(i) each new signature or deposit of an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, together with the date thereof;

(ii) the date of entry into force of this Convention; and

(iii) the deposit of any instrument of denunciation from the Convention, together with the date on which it was received and the date on which the denunciation takes effect; and

(b) as soon as this Convention enters into force, transmit the text thereof to the Secretariat of the United Nations for registration and publication in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 22

Languages

This Convention is established in a single original in the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages, each text being equally authentic.

DONE AT LONDON this thirteenth day of February, two thousand and four.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorised by their respective Governments for that purpose, have signed this Convention.