

➤ Delegates at IOMOU meet aim at insuring safety of ships

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Meet seeks to bar sub-standard ships from plying in Indian Ocean

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PANAJI: The director general of Shipping, Dr S B Agnihotri has expressed optimism that all the Indian Ocean border countries become part of Indian Ocean MOU meeting on Port State Control (PSC).

Speaking at the 14th Indian Ocean MOU meeting on Port State Control (PSC) in Goa, Dr Agnihotri advised the delegates of 15 countries regarding items he felt important to be deliberated. He welcomed the addition of the Union of Comoros.

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"We will discuss the detention of vessels and the member states will take a pledge to eradicate sub-standard vessels plying the Indian Ocean region," said a delegate from Kenya.

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The delegates will review and discuss various issues such as training port staff at State Control office, harmonisation of PSC inspection among several MoUs. The US Coast Guard, representing Abuja MoU is an observer.

The meeting aims at insuring safety of ships and clean seas, said DG Shipping at the inaugural session and formally opening the session on IOMOU on PSC. The PSC aims to verify whether foreign flag vessels calling at a port of a state comply with applicable international conventions. There are several cases,

said delegates, when vessels are not found complying with applicable laws or relevant convention requirements, the PSC system impose actions to ensure that they are brought into compliance. Such vessels to be inspected are selected on the basis of criteria outlined in the MOU and a non-discriminatory policy is observed.

At the initiative of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a review on the adequacy of the region's maritime safety infrastructure, as well as requirements in accordance with the International Maritime Convention was carried out. From this, it was felt that regional co-operation for the countries on the Indian Ocean rim, would be the solution to control the plying of sub-standard ships in the region. Accordingly, the concept of an Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (IOMOU) was mooted.

The Goa meeting held at Taj Vivanta is being attended by the member authorities of Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Iran, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, South Africa, Tanzania, Yemen and the observers from United States Coast Guard and Abuja MoU. The meeting is hosted by the Directorate General of Shipping, government of India.