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CARRIAGE OF IRON ORE FINES THAT MAY LIQUEFY

1 The Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC), at its fifteenth session (13 to 17 September 2010), considered a preliminary report submitted by a Member Government relating to two recent serious casualties in the last monsoon season of 2009 and many near misses reported by the ship masters on ships engaged in the carriage of iron ore fines. The Sub-Committee also considered another submission made by an industry organization relating to the carriage of this cargo.

2 In considering the above submissions, the Sub-Committee concluded that:

- .1 there is a need to raise awareness despite the efforts made by the various protection and indemnity clubs and other reporting casualty services, informing of the probable dangers of liquefaction associated with carriage of iron ore fines;
- .2 that iron ore fines is not specifically listed in the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code;
- .3 iron ore fines may liquefy and should be treated as such, in particular the Master should refer to section 7 of the IMSBC Code, which warns about cargoes that may liquefy;
- .4 if this cargo is shipped with moisture content in excess of its transportable moisture limit (TML) there is a risk of cargo shift, which may result in capsizing;
- .5 the Master should be aware that some shippers have in the past declared this cargo under the "iron ore" schedule in the IMSBC Code, which is classified as a Group 'C' cargo;
- .6 the Master should not accept this cargo for loading unless the moisture content of the cargo indicated in the certificate is less than its transportable moisture limit; and
- .7 the Master should exercise good seamanship when handling and carrying this cargo, such as protecting the cargo holds bilge covers to stop the ingress of this fine cargo into the bilge wells, for further guidance refer to sections 7 and 8 of the IMSBC Code.

3 In order to investigate further the hazards and risks associated with the carriage of iron ore fines, including clarification of the existing schedules on DRI and iron ore Group 'C' and the need for a new schedule, Member Governments and international organizations are invited to submit relevant information regarding the safe handling and carriage of this cargo, at their earliest convenience, to the Organization.

4 Member Governments are also invited to bring the above information to the attention of shippers, terminal operators, shipowners, ship operators, charterers, shipmasters and all other entities concerned, requesting that extreme care and appropriate action be taken, taking into account the provisions of relevant IMO instruments when handling and carrying iron ore fines in bulk.
