The London Convention & London Protocol

Dumping of waste and other matter at sea

SUT, MASTS and the D'Arcy Thomson Forum
The Salvage, Decommissioning & Wreck Removal Workshop
5 December 2023

Dr Andrew Birchenough
Office for the London Convention/Protocol and Ocean Affairs
Marine Environment Division

The International Maritime Organization

- The United Nations specialized agency responsible for safe, secure and efficient shipping and the prevention of pollution from shipping

- 175 Member States and three Associate Members, including all major ship-owning nations and all major coastal states

- IMO's mandate covers a wide range of issues to prevent and control pollution caused by ships and to mitigate the effects of any damage that may occur as a result of maritime operations and accidents

- IMO **develops global regulations** and adopts treaties and guidelines at intergovernmental level

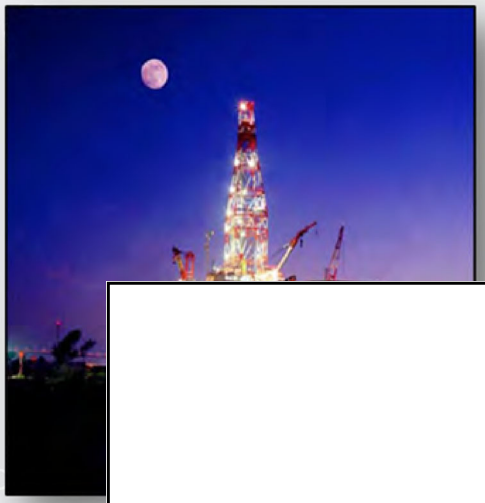
"Safe, secure and efficient shipping on cleaner oc

London Convention and Protocol

Global treaties that regulate the prevention of pollution from dumping of wastes at sea

The London Convention 1972 (LC)

- One of the first global conventions to protect the marine environment from human activities.
- In force since 1975
- Currently **87** Contracting Parties



The London Protocol 1996 (LP)

- More modern and comprehensive global treaty
- Will eventually replace LC
- In force since 2006
- Currently **54** Contracting Parties

© CEDA

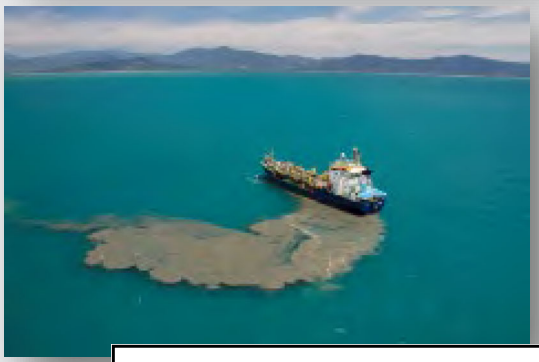
London Protocol

- A stand-alone treaty relating to the prevention of marine pollution from dumping at sea that has been in force since 2006
- Provides the precautionary framework needed for parties to effectively prevent pollution of the sea caused by dumping of waste and other matter, incineration, and new activities such as marine geoengineering and carbon capture and storage
- A key pillar of marine environmental protection in an important international regime that includes MARPOL, UNCLOS and Regional Seas Agreements

Scope of the London Protocol

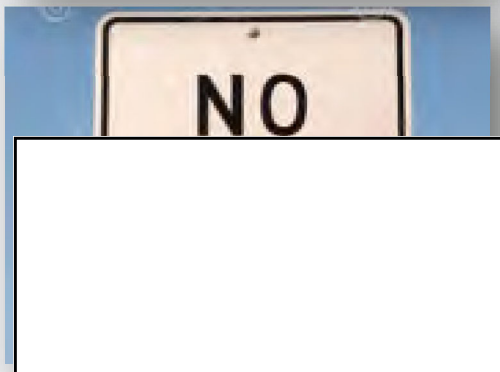
London Protocol vs the London Convention

- Greater protection: reverse listing
- Prohibition of incineration at sea
- Pragmatic and easier to apply: focus on more commonly generated wastes
- Wider coverage
  - CO_2 in sub-seabed geological formations
  - Abandonment or toppling of offshore installations
- Precautionary approach
- Polluter pays



What is dumping at sea – the definitions

- Dumping is **"any deliberate disposal into the sea of wastes or other matter from vessels, aircraft, platforms or other man-made structures."**
  - Includes storage of wastes in the seabed.
  - Includes abandonment or toppling at a site.
- Dumping is <u>not</u>:
  - Operational discharges from vessels or offshore installations.
  - Pipeline discharges from coasts or cities.
  - Wastes discharged into rivers and out to sea.
  - Placement of matter for a purpose other than disposal.



Wastes that may be considered for dumping

London Convention
Annex I & II

London Protocol
Annex 1

Industrial waste - **banned**
Incineration at sea - **banned**
Radioactive waste – **banned**

Sewage sludge – **removed from Annex 1 as of 15 January 2023**

Waste Assessment Guidelines (WAGs)

- Guide implementation of **Annex 2 of the LP**
- Provides a framework useful in many areas of waste prevention and management.
- Provides a process for assessing wastes, issuance of permits, and monitoring.

- Step 1 - Characterize Waste
  Step 2 - Waste Prevention Audit
  Step 3 - Waste Management Options
  Step 4 - Apply Action List
  Step 5 - Identify and Characterize Dump Site(s)
  Step 6 - Determine Potential Impacts and Develop Impact Hypothesis
  Step 7 - Specify Permit Conditions and Issue Permit
  Step 8 - Monitor Compliance, Conduct Field Monitoring and Assessment