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## UNIFICATION OF MARITIME TONNAGE MEASUREMENT

### Note by the Secretary-General

The question of unification of maritime tonnage measurement was first considered by the Transport and Communications Commission at its third session. The Commission recommended at this session that Governments be approached for their views on the desirability of more general and closer adherence to the Oslo Rules.<sup>1/</sup> The Economic and Social Council at its ninth session (Geneva, July-August 1949) authorized such an approach.

The Commission at its fourth session considered a report by the Secretariat, including the views of Member Governments and adopted a resolution on the subject. In this resolution, it noted that from the replies of the Governments it appeared that many countries were not prepared to contemplate the unification of maritime tonnage measurement of ships on the basis of the Oslo Rules. It expressed the opinion that a solution to the problem should be sought on a basis of world-wide uniformity. It resolved that it would be appropriate to leave the question of inter-governmental action to the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) when it has started functioning and urged Governments to continue their studies of this problem. This resolution was included in the Commission's report to the Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, in a

<sup>1/</sup> The Oslo Rules are basically the "International Regulations for Tonnage Measurement of Ships", prepared under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1939, which were attached, as an annex, to the "Convention for a Uniform System of Tonnage Measurement of Ships", adopted by the Conference on Tonnage Measurement of Ships (Oslo, June 1947).

/resolution on  
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resolution on the "Situation in respect of ratification of the Convention on the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization" which the Council adopted at its eleventh session (Geneva, July-August 1950), on the recommendation of the Commission, mention is made of the unification of maritime tonnage measurement as one of the problems for the handling of which IMCO is the appropriate agency.

The Secretary-General communicated to Governments the resolution of the Commission, with special reference to the paragraph in which the Governments were urged to continue their studies.

Since the fourth session of the Commission, a meeting of tonnage experts was held in Stockholm from 2 to 10 June 1950. It was convened in accordance with a decision of the above-mentioned Conference on Tonnage Measurement of Ships held in Oslo in 1947. This decision, as incorporated in the Final Act of the Conference, provides that, "in order to avoid different application and interpretation of the Regulations, tonnage experts from the countries, the Governments of which are signatories or acceding parties to the said Convention, shall meet at least every second year in order to secure the uniform application and interpretation of the Regulations, and to make to the Contracting Governments recommendations to that effect".

At the Stockholm meeting - which was the second meeting of tonnage experts, the first having been held in Oslo in April 1948 - the following countries, parties to the Oslo Convention, were represented: Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden. The Belgium Government, a signatory of the Oslo Convention, was not represented. The United Kingdom and the United States of America were represented by observers.

The meeting decided that some of the recommendations made regarding the interpretation of certain articles of the Rules will be submitted for acceptance to the signatory Governments. The delegations in attendance submitted their views on specific cases where amendments in the Rules themselves were deemed necessary for their appropriate interpretation. It was stated in a recommendation that consideration should be given at a future meeting to certain changes or amendments to be made to the Oslo Rules.

/The observers

The observers for the United Kingdom and the United States were given the opportunity to state the views and attitude of their Governments with respect to the Oslo Rules. During the discussion, reference was made to the study undertaken by the Transport and Communications Commission concerning the unification of maritime tonnage measurement.

It was decided that the next meeting of tonnage experts will take place within two years at The Hague.

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