

## Campaign to speed up conventions ratification

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THE International Chamber of Shipping and the International Shipping Federation have launched a campaign to encourage governments to ratify International Maritime Organization standards that have been adopted but have yet to come into force, writes James Baker.

The ICS and ISF will this week publish a brochure aimed at pressurising governments into approving conventions that are lingering in legislative limbo at national government level, and which cannot come into force until a required number of governments have given their consent.

“You get the feeling that governments see adoption of conventions as being the job done,” ICS secretary-general Tony Mason said. “But in reality the job has just started when a convention is adopted.”

IMO conventions have no status until ratified by a threshold number of governments. But even when governments have signed up to conventions, they still have to clear the hurdles of domestic policy-making, legislative timetables and political agendas.

“The ICS and ISF have a role not only to ensure that conventions agreed by the IMO are sensible, but also to keep up pressure to make sure they come into force in a reasonable time,” Mr Mason said.

Ratification is even more important when modifying existing conventions, Mr Mason said. “Solas and Marpol are easily updated through tacit adoption facility, but this can only happen when a country has ratified the original convention.”

Marpol Annex VI came into force in 2005 but the low number of countries who approved it could lead to problems when a review of Annex VI is finalised and governments are required to adopt amendments on stricter standards.

“The United States has been thumping the table for improved environmental regulation, but Marpol VI is still lumbering through the sausage machine of US legislation,” Mr Mason said.

The ICS and IFS are focusing on six IMO conventions requiring better ratification: the 2004 Ballast Water Management Convention; the Anti-fouling Systems Convention; the LLMC protocol; the HNS Convention; the Bunkers Convention; and Marpol Annex VI.

Two International Labour Organisation conventions — the Maritime Labour Convention and the Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention — have also been identified as needing urgent ratification.

“It is important for the industry, governments and for society as a whole that we have global regulation for a global industry,” Mr Mason said. “These are the antidote to the chaos and inefficiency of local regulations.”

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