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Bahrain Becomes First Arab Country to fully Implement the new Long Range Identification and Tracking of Ships Systems

Press Release

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8th September, Manama, Bahrain - The maritime industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved another milestone for the Arab world with its implementation of a new international maritime system for tracking and identifying ships.

The General Organisation of Sea Ports (GOP) has now completed implementing all the necessary requirements for the "Long Range Identification and Tracking of Ships" System (LRIT), a system whose implementation is obligatory by all International Maritime Organization (IMO) member states.

Falling in line with its ambition to realise a leadership position in the international maritime community, the GOP has now completed the implementation of all LRIT requirements, well ahead of the IMO's September 31 deadline.

As part of its strategic plans, the GOP is looking to adhere to all of the "International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea" requirements, to which Bahrain agreed to in 1985.

The LRIT system allows contracting governments to identify the location of their ships and enables them to track the vessels all over the world at any time. This system also allows the country to identify foreign ships that are approaching maritime boundaries or territorial waters. Furthermore, the LRIT system allows countries to monitor ships within a radius of up to 1,000 nautical miles of their coasts, regardless of the ship's nationality. This is fulfilled through the exchange of information between data centres established by this system. The information provided by the LRIT system is vital for safety, security and maritime search and rescue services.

As part of the GOP's work to implement the LRIT requirements and to establish Bahrain's National Data Centre, the Organisation signed an agreement in June 2008 with a specialized UK-based company, which will be responsible for managing the Bahrain National Data Centre and communicating with other Data Centres. The Kingdom of Bahrain became the first Arab country in the fraternity of only 60 countries worldwide to fully apply the new system thus far.

Mr. Hassan Ali Al Majed, Director General, GOP, said, "We are very pleased with this accomplishment which has given Bahrain the first-mover advantage in an area that is critical for maritime security and safety. As the first Arab country to implement the LRIT system, Bahrain's move demonstrates the GOP's commitment to continue abiding by all existing international regulations and new requirements in order to ensure safe, secure and clean waters around the Kingdom".

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For further information, please contact:

Maysoon Sabkar
Director of Marketing and Communications
General Organisation of Sea Ports
Tel: +973 17 359 459
Fax: +973 17 510
Email: media@gop.gov.bh

Kamalakshi Misra or Sami Amin
Hill & Knowlton
Tel: +973 17 533 532
Fax: +973 17 533 370
Email: Kamalakshi.misra@hillandknowlton.com

Sami Amin
Hill & Knowlton
Tel: +973 17 533 532
Fax: +973 17 533 370
Email: Sami.amin@hillandknowlton.com

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