To whomsoever it may concern

Subject: Guidance on the use of the UN/LOCODE in the destination field in AIS messages.

1. Ship's destination is one of the data that is required to be fed into the AIS at the start of each voyage and same is to be kept updated. Different names used for the same location creates confusion and difficulties in international trade and transport.

2. To avoid this it is required to have harmonization of data input by adopting an available universal protocol.

3. IMO sub-committee on Safety of Navigation agreed on guidance on the use of the UN/LOCODE in the destination field in AIS messages with circular SN.1/Circ.244/Rev.1 of 4th November 2016.

4. AIS field for the destination allows for "free text" of up to 20 characters. It is recommended to use the existing AIS destination field for entering both the port of departure and the next port of call (space for 20 characters of 6 bit ASCII is available), using the UN/LOCODE.

5. St. Vincent and the Grenadines maritime administration has issued circular N^o SOL 066 (Copy attached) based on above IMO circular and advised managing companies, owners/operators to include this requirement in safety management system and also ensure its implementation on board ships between 300 gt and 500 gt.

6. The Salient points recommended in use of the UN/LOCODE are copied below for your reference:

   - The recommended format is to indicate the port of departure at the first six positions of the data field followed by a separator and then the code for the next port of call.

   - In order to identify that it is a LOCODE, to separate the locations and to indicate the "from" and "to" ports, a ">" symbol should be used as a separator. See example below. A ship is leaving Dubai bound for Rotterdam. Use of the UN/LOCODE would represent this voyage as below:
     "AE DXB>NL RTM"

- If the next port of call is unknown, "?? ???" should be entered instead of the UN/LOCODE in the corresponding place in the data field. See example below:
  "AE DXB>?? ???"

- If the port of departure does not have a designated UN/LOCODE, then "XX XXX" should be entered instead of the UN/LOCODE in the corresponding place in the data field. See example below.
  "XX XXX>US PBI"

- If the next port of call does not have a designated UN/LOCODE, the commonly accepted English name of the destination port should be entered, preceded by "===" (3 "equals signs"). , If no such name is known, the locally used name should be entered. , In this case, there may not be enough space available to indicate the port of departure. , See example below:
  "===Orrviken"

- If only the general area of destination is known, the name or accepted abbreviation of the area preceded by "===" ("three equals signs") should be entered. , See example below:
  "NL RMT> === US WC"
  Indicating a destination on the United States West Coast.

7. Ship owners/ operators and masters are advised to be guided by above.

Enclosure:

1. St. Vincent and the Grenadines circular N^o SOL 066 Reg Guidance on the use of the UN/LOCODE in the destination field in AIS messages.