

## **Draft Media statement**

**DATE:** Saturday, 29 November 2025

**TO:** All Media

**ATTENTION:** News Editors / Transport Reporters / All Reporters

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## **SOUTH AFRICA BOUNCES BACK INTO THE IMO COUNCIL**

**LONDON:** The Minister of Transport, Ms Barbara Creecy, and Transport Deputy Minister, Mr. Mkhuleko Hlengwa, have announced the re-election of South Africa back into the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO Assembly - held at its headquarters in London, on Friday, 28 November 2025.

South Africa was a member of the IMO Council for 22 years, since 1999. It has, however, been out in the cold since 2021 after not being re-elected in the Council.

It has now been re-elected under Category C for the 2026-2027 term. This category comprises of countries with specific interests in maritime transport or navigation. Their inclusion ensures a balanced representation of all major geographic regions worldwide. The South African delegation is led by Deputy Minister Hlengwa.

Speaking from the side-lines of the IMO Assembly, Hlengwa said, "South Africa is the only country in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region elected to the IMO Council. This position guarantees the voice for the region in the global maritime platform. South Africa's strategic maritime location, notably the Cape Sea Route also plays a vital role in facilitating maritime traffic, especially when alternative routes such as the Suez Canal are disrupted."

Creecy and Hlengwa have expressed their gratitude to the member states that supported South Africa's candidature and ultimately voting in favour of the country.

Creecy expressing her elation at the news said, "South Africa's election to this prominent position within the IMO Council provides an opportunity to promote a constructive Africa perspective in global maritime governance. It also creates a platform to influence the Assembly's decisions on critical issues such as safety, decarbonization, seafarer welfare, technical cooperation, and capacity-building, all of which impact Africa's shipping industry, ports, and coastal communities.

"Furthermore, South Africa intends to leverage this opportunity to ensure that IMO policies align with its economic, environmental, and maritime security interests."

The 34<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO Assembly is scheduled to end on Wednesday, 3 December 2025.

The IMO Council functions as the executive arm of the global maritime organization. Its responsibilities include supervising the work of the IMO, executing the decisions of the Assembly, and electing the organization's Secretary-General.

**ISSUED BY: National Department of Transport**

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