Resolution on the Smooth Implementation
of the SOLAS Convention on the VGM of Containers
Adopted on May 11, 2016 by the IAPH Board of Directors at
IAPH Mid-term Ports Conference in Panama

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RECOGNIZING that the amendments to the International Maritime Organization's Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention will go into effect on July 1, 2016, requiring all shippers to certify and submit the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) of containers to the carriers and terminal operators in advance of loading the container aboard a vessel.

RECALLING that IAPH adopted a resolution on "the Verification of Container Weight in the Supply Chain" at Los Angeles in 2013, requesting the establishment of compulsory rules to require shippers to weigh and make correct declaration.

NOTING that there are concerns as listed below about the implementation of the new rule among the parties concerned,

On a proposal duly seconded, it is unanimously resolved that

1. IAPH fully endorses the new requirements on the VGM under the SOLAS Convention as amended in order to improve the safety of the supply chain.

2. IAPH strongly urges national authorities to communicate the accepted tolerance levels for weighing equipment used to determine, and where necessary verify a declared VGM. It is important that this level of tolerance allows sufficient flexibility as it should not create blockages to the supply chain while also not in any way jeopardising improved safety.

3. IAPH urges parties concerned that the verified gross mass (VGM) and any other relevant information will always be communicated by the shipper to the carrier and to the terminal operator, unless it has been contractually arranged that this information is supplied by any other party. The shipper remains responsible for communicating via the agreed chain of communication and in accordance with an agreed timetable. All aims should be to communicate the VGM prior to the delivery of a packed container to a port terminal facility. It should be noted in the event this does not happen it is possible the terminal will refuse entry of that container.