conclusion of regional agreements consistent with this Convention. Parties shall seek to co-operate with the Parties to regional agreements to develop harmonized procedures.

Article 14
Communication of information

1 Each Party shall report to the Organization and, where appropriate, make available to other Parties the following information:

(a) any requirements and procedures relating to Ballast Water Management, including its laws, regulations, and Guidelines for implementation of this Convention;

(b) the availability and location of any reception facilities for the environmentally safe disposal of Ballast Water and Sediments; and

(c) any requirements for information from a ship which is unable to comply with the provisions of this Convention for reasons specified in regulations A-3 and B-4 of the Annex.

2 The Organization shall notify Parties of the receipt of any communications under the present Article and circulate to all Parties any information communicated to it under subparagraphs 1(b) and (c) of this Article.

Article 15
Dispute Settlement

Parties shall settle any dispute between them concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice.

Article 16
Relationship to International Law and Other Agreements

Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of any State under customary international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Article 17
Signature, Ratification, Acceptance, Approval and Accession

1 This Convention shall be open for signature by any State at the Headquarters of the Organization from 1 June 2004 to 31 May 2005 and shall thereafter remain open for accession by any State.

2 States may become Parties to the Convention by:

(a) signature not subject to ratification, acceptance, or approval; or

(b) signature subject to ratification, acceptance, or approval, followed by ratification, acceptance or approval; or

(c) accession.

3 Ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument to that effect with the Secretary-General.

4 If a State comprises two or more territorial units in which different systems of law are applicable in relation to matters dealt with in this Convention, it may at the time of signature, ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession declare that this Convention shall extend to all its territorial units or only to one or more of them and may modify this declaration by submitting another declaration at any time.

5 Any such declaration shall be notified to the Depositary in writing and shall state expressly the territorial unit or units to which this Convention applies.

Article 18
Entry into Force

1 This Convention shall enter into force twelve months after the date on which not less than thirty States, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than thirty-five percent of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant shipping, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited the requisite instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in accordance with Article 17.

2 For States which have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in respect of this Convention after the requirements for entry into force thereof have been met, but prior to the date of entry into force, the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall take effect on the date of entry into force of this Convention or three months after the date of deposit of instrument, whichever is the later date.

3 Any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession deposited after the date on which this Convention enters into force shall take effect three months after the date of deposit.

4 After the date on which an amendment to this Convention is deemed to have been accepted under Article 19, any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession deposited shall apply to this Convention as amended.

Article 19
Amendments

1 This Convention may be amended by either of the procedures specified in the following paragraphs.

2 Amendments after consideration within the Organization:

(a) Any Party may propose an amendment to this Convention. A proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary-General, who shall then circulate it to the Parties and Members of the Organization at least six months prior to its consideration.

(b) An amendment proposed and circulated as above shall be referred to the Committee for consideration. Parties, whether or not Members of the Organization, shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Committee for consideration and adoption of the amendment.