

**RESOLUTION A.638(16)**

*Adopted on 19 October 1989  
Agenda item 14*

**UNIQUE CONSIGNMENT IDENTIFIER (UCI)**

THE ASSEMBLY,

HAVING CONSIDERED the general purposes of the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965, as amended, and in particular article III thereof,

BELIEVING that promoting the use of automatic data processing is one means of advancing the purposes of the Convention,

DESIROUS of achieving the goal of developing a unique consignment identifier (number or other reference) which could be used throughout the entire existence of a consignment and which would greatly assist the development of automatic data processing,

HAVING REGARD TO the many parties in international trade which would benefit from the use of such a unique consignment identifier,

RECOGNIZING that the development of an internationally unique identifier for bills of lading, sea waybills and other transport documents (hereinafter referred to as transport documents) represents a significant step towards this goal and removes the need for the establishment of national standards,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the standards already adopted by national customs administrations and the experience that will be gained as those standards are implemented,

BEING CONCERNED, however, that the proliferation of different national standards could be prejudicial to maritime facilitation and the attainment of the purposes of the Convention,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FURTHER the fact that maritime carriers, customs administrations and transportation groups consider it desirable and necessary to establish an internationally unique consignment identifier, as the use of electronic data interchange increases,

NOTING the interest taken by the Customs Co-operation Council and by the Economic Commission for Europe's Working Party on the Facilitation of International Trade Procedures in activities in this area,

NOTING ALSO the provisions of Standard 2.15 of section 2.G of the Annex to the Convention:

"Public authorities shall accept information conveyed by any legible and understandable medium, including documents handwritten in ink or indelible pencil or produced by automatic data processing techniques",

NOTING FURTHER that, in accordance with Recommended Practice 2.3.1 of the Annex to the Convention, public authorities may require, on the Cargo Declaration, "Bill of lading numbers for cargo to be discharged at the port in question", and that consideration

is being given to amending that recommended practice to allow transport document numbers which are internationally unique to be required by public authorities,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendations made by the Facilitation Committee at its eighteenth session to the effect that it would not be appropriate to include the full text of the international standard for deriving a unique number in the Annex to the Convention and that the establishment of such a standard should not be the sole responsibility of IMO,

1. ENDORSES the initial establishment of an international standard and relevant associated code sets to provide a unique transport document identifier for use in maritime carriage of goods which should take into account, to the extent possible, the standards already implemented by national customs services and the experience gained in their use;
2. INVITES the appropriate bodies to commence work towards the creation of an internationally unique consignment identifier;
3. REQUESTS the Secretary-General to advise the Customs Co-operation Council and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe of the contents of this resolution;
4. INVITES the Facilitation Committee to consider what amendments to Recommended Practice 2.3.1 might be appropriate when a standard is developed.