



ASIAN SHIPOWNERS FORUM

Safe Navigation & Environment Committee (SNEC)

c/o Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA)

59 Tras Street, Singapore 078998

Tel: (65) 62225238 Fax: (65) 62225527

email: fasa@pacific.net.sg

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PRESS RELEASE

1. The 15th Interim Meeting of the Asian Shipowners Forum (ASF) Safe Navigation & Environment Committee (SNEC) was held in Singapore on 15th September 2008. It was hosted by the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA).
2. The meeting was attended by 24 representatives of shipowner associations from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA) as represented by delegates from the shipowner associations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Mr. Wang Cheng, Secretary General of the ASF, also attended the meeting.
3. As Chairman of the SNEC, Mr. S.S. Teo, President of Singapore Shipping Association, chaired the SNEC meeting on behalf of FASA.
4. During the meeting, the Committee considered and discussed various current issues concerning the safe navigation of ships and the protection of the marine environment. Highlighted below are some of the important issues discussed:

- **Piracy & Armed Robbery**

The Committee noted from the half yearly 2008 report of the International Maritime Bureau that the number of attacks around the world for the first half of this year had dropped by 9.52%. There were 114 incidents reported during January to June 2008 as compared with 126 incidents for the same period in 2007.

In Asian waters, the Committee also noted that incidents of piracy and armed robbery in Asia have continued to decline, with 45 incidents in the first half of 2008 as compared with 49 cases for the same period in 2007.

In terms of region, attacks in the African region now ranked highest accounting for over 56% of the world's total number of attacks. Ships transiting the Gulf of Aden are now most vulnerable and are at high risk of attack and hijack. So far this year, more than 50 vessels have been attacked, with many hijacked by heavily-armed pirates mainly with the aim of demanding heavy ransom from shipowners. Many of these vessels are operated by Asian shipowners.

The Committee strongly condemned these deplorable and dangerous acts of piracy and armed robbery by the pirates operating from Somalia as they seriously threaten the safe navigation of ships, but also put at high risk the lives of the crew on board. The marine environment too faces the high risk of pollution as many of the vessels that have been attacked are fully laden tankers, VLCCs and chemical tankers.

In June this year, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1816 authorising foreign naval vessels and aircraft cooperating with the transitional government in Somalia to enter the territorial waters of Somalia for the purpose of repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, using all necessary means. In spite of this resolution, the attacks have continued unabated. Following the grave concerns of Asian shipowners, the Committee strongly endorses the recent ICS press release and urgently appeals to the IMO and all maritime nations to exercise strong political will to combat this problem. Where possible, governments are urged to reinforce and strengthen the coalition naval and air forces based in the Middle East.

The Meeting cautioned all ship masters to exercise high vigilance and caution when transiting or trading to all pirate prone areas. For ships transiting the Gulf of Aden, ship masters are strongly recommended to make full use of the voluntary reporting system set up by the United Kingdom Maritime & Trade Office (UKMTO) and to navigate in the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) as demarcated and advised by them from time to time.

- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**

The Committee noted that, at the IMO's First Intersessional Meeting of the Working Group on GHG Gases from Ships held in Oslo, Norway, from 23 to 28 June 2008, three of the main issues discussed were the development of a CO2 Design Index, a CO2 Operational Index together with a Ship Efficiency Management Plan and Economic Instruments with the potential to reduce GHG.

While the Committee reaffirmed its strong commitment to protecting the global environment and encouraging sustainable technologies, the Committee however stressed that any measures developed should be the result of careful and thorough study, and should have clearly defined short-term and long-term goals that are realistic, pragmatic and implementable.

In particular, the Committee is of the strong view that Economic Instruments such as the proposed global bunker levy and emission trading schemes, would need to be carefully studied as there is a host of practical, administrative and even legal issues to be addressed. Meanwhile, the Committee is of the view that the current high price of bunkers itself is a very effective economic incentive for fuel efficiency and reduced emissions from shipping. Many shipowners are already exercising careful voyage planning and slow steaming to increase efficiency.

5. The Committee also discussed other issues relating to maritime safety and environment protection such as the Marine Electronic Highway, amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, ballast water management and the upcoming Bunker Convention.

The Committee reaffirmed its strong commitment to the protection of life and property at sea and to the preservation of the marine environment.

6. The members of the Committee expressed their appreciation to the SSA for hosting the 15th Interim Meeting of the SNEC in Singapore.

Editor's Note:

The Asian Shipowners Forum consists of 7 Shipowners' Associations in the Asian region, being the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners Associations (FASA), which are Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea.

The aims of the ASF are to promote the interests of the Asian shipowning industries. Between annual ASF meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by five Standing Committees; the Shipping Economics Review Committee, the Seafarers Committee, the Ship Recycling Committee, the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee, and the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee. It has been estimated that ASF Owners and Managers control and operate around 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.

For further information on this Press Release, please contact Mr Daniel Tan, Secretary of the Committee at the address shown on the Letterhead.