



## **ASIAN SHIPOWNERS FORUM SEAFARERS COMMITTEE**

c/o Hong Kong Shipowners Association  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Queen's Centre, 58 Queen's Road, East, Wanchai, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 2520 0206 Fax: (852) 2529 8246  
E-mail: [hksoa@hksoa.org.hk](mailto:hksoa@hksoa.org.hk)

The 15<sup>th</sup> Interim Meeting of ASF Seafarers Committee  
Hanoi, 18-20<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### **JOINT STATEMENT (Adopted)**

The ASF Seafarers Committee held its 15<sup>th</sup> interim meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The meeting was hosted by the Vietnam Shipowners Association (VSA) and was presided by Mr. Li Shanmin (CSA), chairman of Seafarers Committee.

Delegates from ASF member associations of China (CSA), Hong Kong (HKSOA), Japan (JSA), Chinese Taipei (NACS) and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA), as represented by the shipowner associations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam, attended the meeting together with the Secretary-General of the ASF. Written submissions were received from India (INSA), which was not able to attend the meeting.

The Committee noted with strong concern the continuing attacks on ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, which represent a severe threat to the safety of ships trading through these areas. The Committee expressed its particular concern over the effect on seafarers during the transit of areas where there is a threat of piracy or attack, the potential psychological effect on seafarers and their families during hostage situation and the potential effect on seafarers' psychological health after being held hostage. The Committee urged companies not to underestimate these effects, and encouraged the development of suitable guidelines within the industry to assist companies and seafarers to better handle such situations.

The Committee discussed the current status of the work of the IMO's STW Committee in its comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. In particular, Members support the work to consolidate the two instruments of ILO C180 and STCW provisions on the hours of work and/or rest for better record keeping and compliance purposes.

The Committee noted that an inter-industry shore leave access working group has been formed in order to better address the instances where seafarers are not permitted full shore leave in accordance with the various international instruments. The Committee encouraged all Asian owners and managers to report all instances where shore leave is impossible or difficult to obtain. The Committee welcomed the development of new guidance by some Administrations for the coordination of crew access, which is seen as a positive step forward for seafarers to be able to gain shore leave access.

The Committee is pleased to note the progress towards the entry into force of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 and encourages all ASF members to continue to work with their individual countries or regions to achieve early ratification of the Convention.

The Committee noted with concern the increasing number of incidents where seafarers are not treated fairly or in accordance with their human rights. It is a well accepted principle that seafarers should be considered to be a special category of worker, because they have to work globally and could be subject to many different jurisdictions. The Committee urges all Administrations to closely follow the *ILO/IMO Guidelines on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers Following a Maritime Accident*, particularly in instances where a maritime accident affects the local coastline.

The Committee took note of the review of IMO Resolution A.890(21) 'Principles of Safe Manning', as amended by Resolution A.955(23), and the development of a preliminary draft revised Assembly Resolution. The Committee noted that the STW Sub-committee will consider whether to make the Resolution mandatory, and expressed concern about the potential difficulties that shipowners might have to provide task-based information when applying for safe manning documents from their Administration.

The Committee noted the results/progress of the ILO minimum wage negotiations in the JMC earlier this year as well as the outcome of the IBF negotiations. The Committee considered that in the current global economic climate, which is causing heavy losses to many shipowners including Asian shipowners, this is not the appropriate time to consider any rise in the ILO minimum wage or any other labour conditions in order to protect employment as much as possible. The Committee reiterates its position that the employment conditions of seafarers should be consistent with the current market, economic and living situation of each country/region where the seafarers are domiciled.

The Committee noted with concern the imminent enactment by the Philippine Congress of the proposed amendments to the Migrant Workers Act (RA8042). These amendments did not pass the usual consultation within the manning industry which is an affected stakeholder.

Some provisions of the amendments will have a substantial negative impact on the deployment of Filipino seafarers and therefore affect the supply of Filipino seafarers to the world fleet. The Committee urges the Philippine Congress to review its decision, particularly how it adversely affects Filipino seafarers.

The Committee was encouraged by the active cooperation between the governments, the training institutions and shipowners in the region in the employment and training of seafarers. The Committee was also pleased to note that governmental incentive schemes to attract more young people to join the sea-going career had been put in place in many member countries, and considered that this essential support would assist in the continued promotion of the supply and employment of Asian seafarers. The Committee urges ASF members to maintain recruitment and training initiatives despite the present economic downturn.

The Committee accepted the offer from China Shipowners Association to host the 16<sup>th</sup> interim meeting of the Committee in Qingdao in the autumn of 2010. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Vietnam Shipowners Association (VSA) for its kindness and generosity in hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> interim meeting in Hanoi.

19<sup>th</sup> November 2009

*Editor's note:*

*The Asian Shipowners Forum is a voluntary organization of the shipowner associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowner Associations, comprising the Shipowner Associations of the ASEAN countries. 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. The main objectives of the Seafarers Committee are to ensure and maintain common standards of training, to promote the stability of employment, the acceptance and well-being of Asian seafarers, and to monitor, consider and comment upon any new international maritime legislation and convention on manning and training. It has been estimated that ASF owners and managers control and operate around 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.*

*For more information about this press release, please contact Gilbert Feng, Secretary of the Committee, at the above contact details.*

- Ends -