



## **ASIAN SHIPOWNERS FORUM SEAFARERS COMMITTEE**

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The 13<sup>th</sup> Interim Meeting of ASF Seafarers Committee  
Zhoushan, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007

### **JOINT STATEMENT**

(Adopted on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007)

The ASF Seafarers Committee held its 13<sup>th</sup> interim meeting in Zhoushan, Zhejiang, China on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The meeting was jointly hosted by the China Shipowners Association (CSA) and Zhejiang International Maritime College which was chaired by Mr. Li Shanmin, China Shipowners Association (CSA).

Delegates from ASF member associations of China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei 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.

Mr. Li Da Ze, a senior official of the Seafarers Department of the Maritime Safety Administration in China, held a seminar during the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> December introducing the recently effective China Seafarers Regulation. The Regulation was the first government document with the purpose of improving the quality of seafarers, safeguarding the legal rights of seafarers and regulating the manning and training market in China. The Committee welcomed the development of the regulation in China and considered it is a positive step by the Chinese government to meet the requirements of ILO Maritime Labor Convention 2006 towards the final ratification of the Convention.

The Committee noted that IMO's STW Committee would undertake a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. Members agreed that given the fact that the majority of the world's seafarers were recruited and supplied from the region, ASF Associations should actively participate in and contribute to the review by sharing their experiences of the implementation of STCW 95 and working interactively with their individual governments in future IMO meetings so as to ensure the revision would be conducted in a systematic and organized manner and would best reflect the interests of shipping industry and governments in the region.

The Committee discussed the debate in the industry on Safe Manning and the review of Resolution A.890 (21) by IMO's STW Committee. The Committee agreed that there was a need to develop a system or a mandatory instrument by which actual hours or work could be verified and that there was a need for a consistent system of verification for actual hours worked or rest taken. The Committee considered that instead of developing a new instrument, resolution A.890(21) should remain the operative instrument for discussion.

The Committee noted the debate in the industry on the development of competences for watch-keeping deck and engine room ratings for inclusion in the STCW Convention. The Committee considered it necessary that the competences for ratings be developed to focus on the definition of seagoing service requirements for certification in the deck and engine departments. The Committee considered it important that the implementation of the amendments relating to competencies for ratings should be recommendatory.

The Committee supported the ILO campaign for early ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and appreciated the assistance offered by the ASF member associations to High Level Tripartite missions when they visit their individual countries and/or regions. The Committee was encouraged by the increased interests of member countries/regions towards the early ratification of the Convention.

The Committee welcomed the development and successful implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) or IHR (2005). The Committee considered that it provides a new legal framework to better manage collective defenses against acute public health risks that can spread internationally and have a devastating impact on human health which causes negative interference on trade and seafarers travel.

The Committee noted the position expressed by one member over its particular concern on the establishment of the "DER" fund at the 3<sup>rd</sup> IBF meeting and its further development. The Committee reaffirmed its position that the employment conditions of seafarers should be consistent with the economic situation of each country/region where the seafarers are domiciled rather than on a single global basis.

The Committee noted with deep concern the restrictions on crew changes in the US after the development of Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The Committee considered this would have a negative impact on the crew changes in the US ports as it is normal practice to get crew to embark/disembark in good time with sufficient rest.

The Committee noted with serious concern over the imbalanced market of seafarers employment in the region because of high demand causing aggressive competition for seafarers which results in a distorted employment market. The Committee considered

this will not assist in finding a solution to the ongoing shortage of seafarers and will not contribute to improving the number and quality of seafarers.

The Committee was pleased to note that with the utmost efforts of ASF members in promoting the local awareness of youngsters to consider a seafaring career, the number of seafarers serving on ships in most ASF member countries/regions have increased compared to previous years. The Committee was encouraged by the active cooperation between the governments, the training institutions and shipowners in the region in the education, training and employment of seafarers. The Committee was also pleased to note that incentive schemes of governments and private shipping companies to attract more young people to join the sea-going career had been in place in many member countries and considered that these interactions would assist in the continued promotion of the supply and employment of Asian seafarers. The meeting noted the difficulties faced by most of the training institutions in the region in seafarers training and considered that the ASF, GlobalMET and other regional METs should continue to cooperate by sharing training resources in order to assist the development of Asian senior officers.

The Committee accepted the offer from the Malaysian Shipowners Association to host the 14<sup>th</sup> interim meeting of the Committee in Kuala Lumpur in the autumn of 2008. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the China Shipowners Association (CSA) and Zhejiang International Maritime College in particular for its kindness and generosity in hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> interim meeting in Zhoushan.

6<sup>th</sup> December 2007

Editor's note:

The Asian Shipowners Forum consists of 7 Shipowner Associations in the Asian region, being those from Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowner Associations. Between annual ASF meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by five "S" 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 and acceptance 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.

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