



# ASIAN SHIPOWNERS' FORUM

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Asian shipowners expressed concern over issues relating to the Ballast Water Management and Places of Refuge.**

The 23rd Annual meeting of the Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) was held in Otsu, Japan on 20 May 2014, hosted by the Japanese Shipowners' Association (JSA).

**Mr Jiro Asakura**, Chairman of 23rd ASF, welcomed the delegates of member associations and said, "Asian Shipowners have a pivotal role to play in the global shipping industry and the ASF must continue to foster and strengthen the partnership amongst the Asian shipping community."

#### **Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention**

Thirty nine States representing 30.25% (4.75% short of the tonnage threshold) of world shipping tonnage had ratified the Ballast Water Management Convention<sup>1</sup> but unfortunately not all the available ballast water treatment systems approved by IMO consistently reach a level that meets the D2 discharge performance standard. The ASF is therefore wary that shipowners may be at risk of having to replace the fitted equipment if the system is later found unsuitable. To this end, the ASF strongly supports the proposed review of the approval and performance standards at the IMO.

While maintaining that the IMO is the rightful forum to develop international regulations and strongly discouraging countries or regions from taking unilateral actions, the ASF is extremely concerned about the very severe insurance implications that could arise due to the different BWM legislation being enforced in the United States under the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG). For this reason, the ASF is pleased to hear of Senate Bill S.2094, which would bring conflicting regulations into one national standard.

## **Places of Refuge**

The ASF thanks the Government and the local authorities of the Republic of Korea for their assistance in granting a place of refuge for Maritime Maisie, the chemical tanker severely damaged by collision and fire. The ASF recognises that this was not an easy decision, and for this reason urges all Governments, including those in Asia:

- To consider adopting the IMO Place of Refuge Guidelines and IMO Maritime Assistance Services (MAS) Guidelines as a matter of urgency;
- To consider adopting similar measures to those prescribed in the EU Vessel Traffic Monitoring Directive;
- To work with their respective shipowners associations, Recognised Organisations and other stakeholders to develop practical and implementable emergency plans for ships seeking to enter the places of refuge, and to designate appropriate places of refuge even if the names of these places are not published;
- To consider introducing channels of improved cooperation and communication between States, as well as with competent authorities and the parties involved in an incident, in order to facilitate decision making, and;
- To ratify and bring into force as soon as possible the liability and compensation Conventions agreed at the IMO.

## **Piracy and Armed Robbery of Ships**

The ASF expressed serious concern over the increasing number of attacks on ships in the Gulf of Guinea. In this regard, the ASF urges Governments to support the IMO Resolution A.1069 (28) which addresses this problem.

The ASF also noted that the number of pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia has decreased as a result of joint efforts by the industry and international bodies. Nevertheless, the ASF urged shipowners to remain vigilant and sustain their efforts in safeguarding the safety and well-being of the seafarers and ships.

The ASF strongly urges the wider dissemination of the Interim Guidelines on measures relating to the welfare of seafarers and their families affected by piracy off the coast of Somalia that have been developed by Working Group 3 of the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS WG3).

## **Canal Tolls**

The Shipping Economics Review Committee (SERC) expressed its grave concern over the Suez Canal's continuing unilateral and hasty increases in tolls and surcharges, the latest of which was implemented on 01 May 2014, and the possibility of a further Panama Canal toll increase through the use of new toll structures to be applied from around January 2016. **Mr Yasumi Kudo**, Chairman of the SERC, said, "The Canal Authorities, as competent and responsible administrators of public infrastructure of global trade, should seriously listen to the voices of canal users and governments of interested countries in order to ensure the stability, transparency, and predictability of toll pricing policies."

## Ship Recycling

While welcoming a balanced text of the EU Ship Recycling regulation, **Dr Frank F H Lu**, Chairman of Ship Recycling Committee (SRC), emphasised that "Any regulation should not be developed as alternative standardisation which undermines the Hong Kong Convention, in order to ensure sufficient capacity of safe and environment-friendly ship recycling yards in several countries. "

## ASF Chairmanship

**Mr Youn-Jae Lee**, Chairman of Korea Shipowners' Association, has been elected as the Chairman of the 24th ASF. **Mr Ma Zehua**, Chairman of China Shipowners' Association, has been elected as the Vice-Chairman of the 24th ASF. Their terms of office shall begin from 21 May 2014 until the next ASF Annual General Meeting to be held in Korea.

## ASF Secretary General

**Mr Yuichi Sonoda** will complete his term of office on 30 June 2014. **Mr Kwang-Ho Shin** has been appointed as the next ASF Secretary General and his term of office will begin from 01 July 2014.

1            Summary of Status of Convention – IMO, figures updated on 16 May 2014

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*The Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) is a voluntary organisation of the shipowners' associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations comprising shipping associations of ASEAN countries.*

*The aim of the ASF is to promote the interests of the Asian shipowning industries. It has been estimated that ASF owners and managers control and operate nearly 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.*