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25<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
Taipei, Taiwan

## ***Press Release***

### **For Immediate Release**

The Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) held its 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Taipei, Taiwan, hosted by the National Association of Chinese Shipowners (NACS). Mr Vincent Lin, the 26th ASA President, welcomed delegates of member associations and called members to build stronger collaboration and unity amongst the shipping industry and regional partners.

### **Understanding and implementation of STCW and MLC, 2006**

The ASA has noted that the introduction of amendments and new requirements can often lead to difficulties when changing reasonable and appropriate practices in order to comply with new regulations. One area of concern is practical on board compliance with the work/rest hour provisions of MLC, 2006 and STCW.

The ASA is given to understand that some ships may not be maintaining correct records of work/rest hours, and urges all members to ensure that records are maintained correctly. In addition, the ASA requests its members to support the master if instances are reported when the requirements are difficult to comply with.

The Chairman of the ASA Seafarers Committee (SC), Mr Fu Xiangyang, said that fatigue is of major concern, and compliance with the provisions of STCW and MLC, 2006 is an important step to alleviate fatigue. It is also important to impress on seafarers that rest is essential, and that other distractions should be kept to a minimum during rest periods so as to combat fatigue.

### **International CLC and Fund Conventions**

The ASA attaches great importance to the consistent application and interpretation of the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC) and Fund Conventions. Concerns have arisen from recent interpretations of the Conventions with respect to the provisions concerning limitation of liability and the channelling of liability.

The ASA is therefore pleased that this issue will be further discussed at the next session of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC) governing bodies. The ASA encourages States which are currently party to the 1969 CLC to migrate to the 1992 CLC, and requests all States to consider the benefits of ratification of the Supplementary Fund Protocol. The ASA furthermore encourages States to ratify the Protocol of 2010 to the Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Convention.

The Chairman of the ASA Ship Insurance and Liability Committee (SILC), Mr Robert A. Ho, said that it is important for States to adopt the latest versions of the Conventions in order to take advantage of the latest increase in limits.

## **IMO Regulations and Protection for Shipowners**

After years of uncertainty, progress was made in 2016 on two issues of utmost importance to the shipping industry.

In September 2016, Finland acceded to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), which triggered the Convention as it pushed the tonnage of ratifying parties above the 35% tonnage threshold. A month later, at the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 70), IMO agreed to confirm the implementation of the global sulphur limit of 0.50% m/m (mass/mass) with effect from 1 January 2020.

Now that finally there are firm dates, shipowners must be prepared to work closely with their respective maritime administrations and IMO to ensure that the implementation of these regulations will be practical and enforceable.

In addition, Mr. Esben Poulsson, Chairman of the ASA Safe Navigation and Environment Committee (SNEC), said that, "As responsible shipowners, we are fully committed to complying with all legislation to safeguard the environment. We must also ensure, however, that shipowners, are not unfairly penalized when they are not able to fully comply due to circumstances beyond their control."

## **Canal Tolls**

The ASA noted that securing a safe-transit environment at appropriate toll levels was crucially important for all Panama and Suez Canal users. Mr Eizo Murakami, Chairman of the ASA Shipping Economics Review Committee (SERC), said, "The ASA should continue its efforts, in collaboration with international shipping organizations such as the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), to establish and maintain a regular dialogue mechanism between the respective authorities of the Panama/ Suez Canals and users of those canals in order to ensure a safe transit environment and prevent sudden and unjustified toll increases."

## Hong Kong Convention

In view of continued steady growth of world ship recycling demand, the ASA reconfirmed the necessity to continue to promote the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (HKC) as the single global standard. The ASA welcomed yard improvements in Alang, India and similar positive improvement activities taking place in other ship recycling countries. Dr. C. H. Yeh, Chairman of ASA Ship Recycling Committee (SRC), commented that Panama's September 2016 ratification and Turkey and Denmark's ratification in 2017, combined with the intent to ratify by other countries such as India, Japan, China and The Netherlands indicates a clear direction which will ensure early entry into force of the Convention.

Ms Sabrina Chao, as Chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association (HKSOA), was elected as the 27<sup>th</sup> Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) President. Ms. Lisa Teo, as Chairman of Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Association (FASA), was elected as the Vice-President of ASA.

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### **Editor's Note:**

*The Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) is a voluntary organization of the shipowner 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 aims of the ASA are to promote the interests of Asian shipowners. Between annual ASA 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 ASA shipowners and managers control and operate around 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.*