



Japan, RP and labor, mgmt groups meet on development of seafarers

The governments of Japan and the Philippines as well as labor and management groups from both countries met earlier this year in a special conference room at Tokyo's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT).

President Yoji Fujisawa and General Director Yasumi Morita of the International Affairs Bureau represented the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) at the meeting, which was held on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012.

The meeting was split into two sessions, with the morning taken up by the Technical Committee, which consisted of the education and training subcommittee and the seafarers' welfare subcommittee, and the afternoon having been scheduled for the Executive Committee session.

During the meeting of the Technical Committee, the education and training subcommittee responded to the proposal made by its Filipino counterpart when they met last time.

They also exchanged views on other matters, which included a report on the advancement of the education and training project promoted jointly by Japan and the Philippines.

As a result of holding discussions, they agreed to continue the training of Filipino maritime instructors and increase the number of academic institutes that are authorized to grant licenses.

During the seafarers' welfare subcommittee discussions, the JSU proposed a project that would provide support for seafarers who are victims of pirate attacks or accidents, as well as support for their families.



JSU President Yoji Fujisawa (seated second from left) and General Director Yasumi Morita (standing fourth from left) join their Filipino counterparts in labor, as well as representatives of the Japanese and Philippine governments and management sectors at meetings in Tokyo to address seafarer welfare and development issues. (Photo courtesy of Ocean Gate International)

In respect to the previous proposal made by the Philippines to enhance the assistance program for medical costs, the JSU pointed out that medical support is already fully provided to seafarers for certain periods of time before they begin working onboard ships and after disembarking, as guaranteed by labor agreements.

The JSU added that it cannot help seafarers not belonging to a union with their expenses.

The seafarers' welfare subcommittee decided to compile a report on the proposals as if they had both been made by Japan.

During the session of the Executive Committee, the discussions held by the Technical Committee were reported, at which time agreement was reached to launch a project, as proposed by Japan, to provide counseling for seafarer victims of pirate attacks or accidents, as well as to their fami-

lies.

At the end of the meeting, the representatives of governments of Japan and the Philippines and the nations' respective labor and management organizations signed the minutes of the meeting.

The Philippine-Japan Tripartite Meeting on Seafarers' Development came to a conclusion with JSU President Yoji Fujisawa's closing address thanking the attendees.

ITF Seafarers' Trust marks 30 yrs with seminar on MLC, welfare service provisions

The ITF Seafarers' Trust marked 30 years of work for seafarers' welfare with an international seminar in London on March 22.

The seminar had two main themes – the importance of ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 (the seafarers' "bill of rights"), and the provision of welfare services that meet the needs of seafarers in ports and onboard ship in the 21st century.

The seminar attracted almost

100 participants from organizations across the shipping industry, with speakers from the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, India, Germany and Italy representing union, employers, industry, faith, health and welfare bodies.

Tom Holmer, from the Seafarers' Trust, reported that the trust had spent over US\$200 million in its 30 years on provision for seafarers' welfare, particularly build-

There was detailed discussion

of what the MLC could mean for future provision of welfare facilities once it comes into effect. It needs to be ratified by at least 30 International Labour Organisation member states to then be translated into national law.

It was reported that Togo had become the 25th state to back the MLC, and the Convention looked likely to take effect in 2013.

However, the larger flag states were less likely to be among the initial 30. In the U.K., for exam-

ple, discussion of the MLC is going through a government scrutiny of all regulations.

Although enactment of the MLC would oblige governments to provide shore-based provision for seafarers of all flag states, there were still questions over who would fund this and whether it would be from public funds, levies on ships, voluntary contributions or a combination of these.

In the session on welfare provision, Fr Giacomo Martino,

coordinator for Apostleship of the Sea in Italy, gave a moving account of the bravery and actions of seafarers onboard the Costa Concordia, which sank so tragically with the loss of lives off the coast of Italy in January.

He reported that the Costa line provides chaplains for crew onboard all its ships, and they had played an important role in supporting crewmembers in the aftermath of the tragedy. (Source: ITF Seafarers)

UK P&I Club urges caution during Suez anchorage

The UK P&I Club has recently dealt with a case of attempted cargo theft from containers while a member's vessel was lying in wait at Suez anchorage prior to her northbound canal transit.

Fortunately this case saw the suspects leave empty handed as they were disturbed during the attempted theft and escaped down the anchor cable. At least eight containers were opened and cargo tampered with but nothing was stolen.

Further inquiry by the Club's

investigative arm Signum Services has shown that this is not an isolated incident.

The circumstances are that while ships are held at anchor at Suez a number of suspects approach the vessel in small boats. The suspects then climb the anchor chain and gain entry to the deck via the hawsepipe. The seals are removed from a number of containers which are opened and their cargo stolen.

The intruders systematically open a number of containers until they find suitable cargo to steal closing the container doors before

they leave.

In this recent case the small boats that were seen leaving from the bow of the ship displayed red and white lights similar to those used to identify a Pilot boat. It is suspected that the thieves may be disguising their boats with these lights so as not to raise any suspicion. There are a large number of movements by small craft to each of the ships while at anchor.

Signum Services Investigator Michael Carroll said, "I am convinced that these are random opportunist thieves taking advantage of the situation in Egypt

and lack of marine police activity in the anchorage area. In my opinion there is a danger of these type of incidents increasing.

"Also of concern is that if suspects are able to gain access to the ships they could just as easily put illegal or dangerous articles onto the vessels. With the current climate there is also possibility of stowaways using this method to get on board to try and escape the uncertainty in the country. I recommend an increased state of vigilance at this location and extra patrols of the deck and use

of watchmen," Carroll said.

The Club recommends that any anti-piracy measures that have been in place during the vessels transit into high risk areas south of the Gulf of Suez be maintained throughout the vessels stay in Egyptian waters until final departure from Port Said into the Mediterranean Sea. Particular attention should be paid to maintaining a proper security watch while at anchor, tending of gangways and to the forecandle arrangements particularly the hawsepipe. (Source: The UK P&I Club)

Siemens gets IMO OK on ballast water mgmt system

The Maritime Environmental Protection Committee of the United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO) has granted Siemens Final Approval for its Sicure ballast water management system. The Final Approval is based on a directive issued by the IMO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, which requires all deep-sea vessels to operate IMO-approved ballast water management systems.

The objective is to avoid the spread of alien aquatic organisms and pathogens carried in untreated ballast water. The IMO directive will come into force in the near future and will entail retrofitting approximately 50,000 seagoing vessels worldwide.

The Sicure system is a further development of the Chloropac system, which has seen 35 years of successful ship-board use for treating seawater cooling circuits. The electrolytic system produces hypochlorite from the salt contained in seawater.

The Sicure system consists of a filtration stage followed by electrochlorination and a dosing unit which precisely meters the addition of hypochlorite. Electrochlorination occurs in a sidestream of the ballast water main. Only about one percent of the ballast water to be treated is carried through the system's electrolysis cells. This makes for small system components which are easily integrated into existing vessels. Another key advantage of the Sicure system lies in the fact that it is not only used for treating ballast water but also for treating cooling water circuits on board.

Since ballasting occurs only during very short periods in a ship's lifetime, conventional ballast water systems remain idle 95 percent of the time. By contrast, the Sicure system can be used all the time, eliminating the need for an additional system for treating cooling water. The Siemens system is particularly suited for vessels above a gross tonnage of 35,000. (Source: Siemens)

Armed guards seen becoming necessary

Armed guards have become a necessary evil in shipping, and the killing of two fishermen mistaken for pirates in India merely underscores the situation, the Asia Pacific Maritime conference in Singapore heard recently.

The International Chamber of Shipping's director of external relations, Simon Bennett, noted that shipowners are increasingly deciding that they must employ such guards in pirate-frequented waters.

"Armed guards are not a long-

term solution," he conceded. "There're still a lot of questions, and we need proper regulation of guards and resolution of liability issues in the event something goes wrong."

Swire Pacific Offshore general manager George Horsington said although armed guards are not part of the crew, shipowners nevertheless owe them a duty of care.

"There are difficulties arising from the use of armed guards, but shipping companies have no

alternatives," he explained. "If we expect ships to transit the Gulf of Aden, we as employers have a duty to protect our people."

Different laws with regards to firearms also determine how armed guards can be deployed, said P. Jeya Putra, director of the Singapore-based law firm Asialegal.

"In Singapore, where discharging firearms is a capital offence, armed guards can be deployed only in international waters," he added.

The Asian Shipowners Forum has proposed that its counter-piracy proposal be seriously considered for adoption by the UN. If adopted, the forum would expect armed military personnel, sponsored and managed by the UN, to protect merchant ships transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

The key idea is to use floating bases at sea as embarkation or disembarkation points for armed military personnel. (Source: Fairplay)

PRC exec says no need to revalidate competency certification

Despite the activation of the 2010 Manila Amendments to the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) this January, Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) officer-in-charge, board of marine engineer Mike Marasigan announced that seafarers holding unexpired certificate of competencies are generally exempt from revalidation procedures.

"The 2010 Manila Amendments to the STCW took effect last Jan. 1 but we must all remember that this clause has a four-year transition period which will end this coming Dec. 31, 2016. This means that seafarers holding unexpired certificates of competency (good until 2014 or 2015) have no need to undergo revalidation procedures mandated by the 2010 Manila Amendments. They would wait until their certificates have reached its expiration point before undergoing revalidation," Marasigan emphasized.

But he pointed out that senior officers with the rank of master mariners, chief mates, second engineers, are not covered by this rule as they are required to complete their management level courses (MLCs) before undergoing revalidation of their certificate of competencies.

The PRC official attributes this to the fact that Filipino seafarers, as attested by the recent European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) findings, are deficient in their management level education.

"So this ruling is really part of the corrective measures being asked by the EMSA," Marasigan explained.

He also advised senior seafaring officers to "bite the bullet" in this matter and expedite their acquisition of their MLCs and other relevant training as contesting it would have dire impact on the Philippine manning industry.

"Many of our Filipino seafarers, captains and senior officers alike, have tons of experience when it comes to commanding vessels and crews but what the EMSA is asking is that we show them documents or certificates of training or competency declaring to the world that our people are really trained and have formal education in handling ships at the high seas," the PRC official emphasized.

He also added that Filipino seafarers should not fall into the mindset that their Japanese and Norwegian employers are not really keen on such requirements and therefore should not take such matters seriously.

"The STCW is the Bible of the maritime profession. If you think you can work around it, then your thinking is wrong as there will come a time that you will be asked to submit your MLC documents for advancement purposes. If you failed to that at the specified time, then your career is good as sunk. And for the record, Filipino seafarers, especially those gunning for an officers' badge, must allocate

time and effort to complete their MLCs," Marasigan pointed out.

He also urged engine and deck officers to comply with the new PRC ruling instructing them to take additional training modules to perfect their craft, adding that it would be more to their advantage if they complete the requirement.

Marasigan is referring to MLC Function 3 for deck officers and MLC Function 4 for senior engine people.

He added that the modules were designed, at the express request of the EMSA, so that the competency tables for the two specializations can be aligned to world standards.

As this develops, Filipino seafarers, those numbers serving abroad is estimated to be some 400,000 strong, won laurels anew when their efforts to the world economy were personally cited by newly-appointed International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu during a visit to the Philippines early this month.

He also expressed hope that Filipino sailors competence and seamanship skills would further increase in the coming years.

The IMO chief added that Filipino seamen deserved to be lauded as they play a very valuable role in ensuring the economic well-being of the Philippines and Asia as a whole.

Noting the significant role of national shipping within the Philippine archipelago, he encour-

aged the industry to take appropriate action to ensure the safety of domestic navigation.

Sekimizu also urged the country's manning industry to take steps, wherever possible, to raise public awareness of the maritime industry and its importance to the world economy.

The IMO chief also pledged to support the Philippines in all facets of its maritime development program.

He also expressed support and appreciation for the efforts made by the Philippines to provide a continuous supply of competent seafarers to the global shipping community.

He also affirmed IMO's commitment to provide the Philippines with assistance in all aspects of its maritime development, including the fields of education, training, and certification of seafarers under the STCW Convention.

Sekimizu also spoke of his vision of a wider approach to technical co-operation, which would be based directly on the identification, through detailed country profiles, of the individual maritime needs of each developing country.

He further promised IMO's support for the Philippines' efforts to formulate a national maritime transport strategy, which would provide a springboard for the development of maritime clusters in the country, comprising seafaring, ship building and repair, and ship management. (Source: The Seafarer Times)

VOICES from SEAFARERS



**Officers and Crew
of M/V CAPE ACACIA**

We are very thankful for the JSU staff visiting our vessel and hope that this kind of activity will continue in order to update us on the latest information about the JSU.

your time to visit our ship. More power to the JSU.



**Officers and Crew
of M/V PRESTIGE ACE**

We are very thankful to the JSU staff who visited us in Yokohama and informed us of the latest developments regarding our career and especially our new wage scale.



**Capt. Emmanuel G. Lozada and
Crew of M/V SPRING OCEAN**

We are glad to hear the latest news and information from the JSU. We are thankful for the JSU staff's explanation regarding our benefits and we propose that this union should continue negotiating for our internet access onboard.



**Officers and Crew
of M/V AZUL LEGENDA**

We are pleased that the JSU Filipino staff visited our ship. With their brief explanation about the new CBA, we learned and understood the importance of being a member of this union.



**C/E Paul A. Araneta and Crew
of M/V POSEIDON LEADER**

We request the expansion of free training benefits of all JSU members.



**Capt. Paquito B. Rodriguez and Crew
of M/V BRILLIANT SUNRISE**

We members thank the JSU and we are all happy to know that your primary aim is to provide welfare services to all your members by funding seafarers' facilities in our country.



**Capt. Vivek Malhan and Indian Crew
of M/V ALIOTH LEADER**

The JSU is doing a great job of taking care of all seafarers. Please keep it up. We look forward to many more years of a fruitful relationship.



Crew of M/V MODERN PEAK

Mabuhay! And thank you for visiting and giving us updated information and good news. We hope that the JSU will continue its welfare and services to all seamen. Once again, thank you very much!



**Capt. Virgilio F. Dimanlig,
C/E Jerrylito L. Sacramento and Crew
of M/V CAPE COSMOS**

Thank you very much for visiting our ship. We hope that the JSU will continue its welfare services and activities for its members.



**Capt. Alan F. Pitogo and Crew
of M/V GRAND PIONEER**

We would like to thank the JSU for giving us



**Officers and Crew
of M/V DIONYSOS LEADER**

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the JSU. We are honored to be one of the vessels you visited. May God Almighty bless us and our families in the Philippines. More power, good health and long life. Keep up the good work.



**Officers and Crew
of M/V ORIENTE CHALLENGER**

We'd like to extend our utmost support of the JSU for the efforts to lift its members' welfare and working conditions, such as the recent increase in crew salary. Keep up the good work and rest assured of our continuous cooperation.

Industries prepare for 2nd ocean sustainability confab

The World Ocean Council's second Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS) will be held December 3-5, 2012 in Washington D.C. to further advance leadership and collaboration among the diverse ocean business community in addressing marine environment and sustainability challenges.

The SOS is the only international, cross-sectoral ocean sus-

tainability conference designed by and for the private sector.

The 2012 event builds on the highly successful SOS 2010, held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which drew more than 150 representatives from a wide range of ocean industries.

"Companies and industry associations around the world are expressing strong interest in coordinated, international business leadership on cross-cutting

ocean sustainability issues", stated WOC Executive Director Paul Holthus.

He further noted that many companies see the business value of collaboration that helps ensure continued access for responsible use of ocean space and resources.

The conference will address priorities for cross-sectoral industry leadership and collaboration in ocean sustainability, including:

ocean policy, regulations and governance; marine spatial planning; the role of industries in ocean and climate observations; biofouling, biosecurity and invasive species; fisheries and aquaculture interaction with other industries; cross-sectoral collaboration in responsible use of the Arctic; sound and marine life; port waste reception facilities and marine debris; marine mammal interactions; the role of finance,

insurance and legal sectors in ocean sustainability. Other cross-cutting topics critical to responsible industry operations in the marine environment will be developed as the program evolves.

Limited opportunities are available for speakers to address the themes above. Experts interested in being considered as speakers are encouraged to contact the WOC. (Source: Fairplay)

USCG's ballast water regs approach IMO standards

Ballast water rules issued by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) today align closely with IMO standards, as expected by shipowner representatives.

The rules, which are effective 90 days after they were published in the U.S. Federal Register on March 23, will require shipowners to limit vessel discharges to fewer than 10 living organisms per cubic meter for organisms 50 micrometers or larger.

For organisms of 10-50 micrometers, discharge must include fewer than 10 per milliliter of ballast water.

Vessel operators must install approved ballast-water management systems during a vessel's first scheduled drydocking after January 1, 2014 or January 1, 2016, depending on the size of the vessel's ballast-water capacity.

The USCG pushed back the

compliance date for new vessels from January 1, 2012 to December 1, 2013. It estimated the deferral will delay the compliance date for up to 600 newly constructed vessels.

The agency estimated the installation cost of new ballast-water management systems will be US\$250,000 to US\$2.5 million per vessel, depending on the type and capacity of the system.

"Now that they've come out with

these rules, it gives shipowners the comfort of knowing they can move forward with retrofits, and to a standard that makes sense," Blank Rome attorney Jonathan Waldron told *Fairplay*.

"Now we just have to watch what the states are going to do," Waldron noted. He pointed out that states could still attempt to put in place more stringent standards. (Source: *Fairplay*)

IMO, EU reportedly on collision course over CO2 emissions

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is on a policy collision course with the European Union over vessel CO2 emissions, according to reports.

The IMO has been unable to make "tangible progress" after a week of talks recently. This has led the European Union executive of the 27-nation European Union bloc to threatened to enforce its own shipping regulations if the IMO fails to act, as it has with aviation.

IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu has called for an impact assessment study on nine different market-based proposals and to finalize it by 2013.

The talks were bogged down by a debate about technical cooperation and technology transfer in relation to an agreement on an energy efficiency design index reached last year, delegates said.

Last July, forty eight countries voted in favor of adopting a mandatory energy efficiency design index (EEDI) for new ships and a voluntary energy efficiency management plan for all ships.

"There is bad feeling as a result of that," said John Maggs, policy advisor at Seas At Risk, a European association of non-governmental environmental organizations.

The talks were also held back by a debate about the appointment of a steering group to oversee the commissioning of the impact study, he said, adding "which as a result of developing country lobbying is now a necessary precursor to making any further progress." (Source: *Shiptalk*)

Bimco introduces standardized maritime security contract

A new standardized contract between shipowners and private maritime security companies will be launched by Bimco later this month.

The Guardcon hopes to provide clarity on key issues such as the relationship between the master and the security team leader on board.

The drafting sub-committee will meet on March 16 to finalize the draft, and then an electronic version of the contract became available on its Web site from March 26.

The relationship and interactions between the master and the security team has long needed clarifying. In essence the master is

in charge throughout. However in the event of a threat of piracy the security team leader will inform the master that they are invoking the rules for the use of force. Each member of the security team then has sole responsibility for any decision taken to use force.

Even then, if the master per-

ceives there to be a risk of safety, he also has the right to order the team to stop shooting.

This should give masters the confidence that they are always in ultimate control, but give the security personnel the latitude to make the very difficult decisions that they have to take during an attack. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

New York to pursue uniform nat'l ballast water rules

In recently filed comments with the Environmental Protection Agency, DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens indicated that New York will pursue a uniform, national ballast water standard that will leave in place the Environmental Protection Agency's current standards in New York for the remainder of EPA's current Vessel General Permit through December 2013.

"New York remains concerned about the introduction and spread of invasive species in the state's waterways and we hope that a strong national solution can be achieved," Martens said.

"At the same time, shipping and maritime activity is critical to New York state and international commerce. A technically feasible national standard which recognizes the critical economic role played by our waterways is the only viable way to address the spread of destructive aquatic invaders through ballast water." (Source: *MarineLink.com*)

Piracy hijacking success rate near pre-2007 level

Piracy countermeasures have returned the rate of successful hijackings to pre-2007 levels, a NATO naval officer has told reporters.

Just six ships have been pirated for ransom in the past eight months, from "36 in the preceding eight", Lt. Cdr. Mehmet Elyurek said yesterday aboard the missile frigate Giresun, the Turkish flagship of the force NATO operates off the Horn of Africa, *Reuters* reported.

The rate of successful hijackings had "almost returned to pre-crisis (2007) levels", added Elyurek, who noted that more merchant ships have turned to armed security guards, razor wire and pirate-pummeling water pumps.

John Steed, a former head of the UN counter-piracy unit, said a major reason for the drop in the number of hijackings is that the pirates got so rich last year.

IHO issues data to test unexpected ECDIS behavior

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) has issued a set of data comprising two fictitious Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) cells and four sets of tests to check for a number of anomalies or unexpected behaviour in systems and to allow operators to see whether their ECDIS software is up to date and conforms to the latest ECDIS standards for displaying chart data. (Seaways January 2012).

The IHO have advised that, as of end of January 2012, almost 400 reports of checks (covering 15 of the 25 or so manufacturers of type-certified ECDIS) have been received by IHO from sea. Despite

this relatively low number of responses, all those reports received by the IHO indicated some level of unexpected behaviour was present on all the systems that were checked. However, at the same time, the nature of the unexpected behaviour was not exactly the same in every manufacturer's system.

While the anomalies range in their potential seriousness for safety of navigation, there were concerns raised over the display of underwater features and isolated dangers; the display of complex lights as intended; the display of "submerged wreck - dangerous" as intended by the standards; the display of "underwater hazard with

a defined depth" and the display of Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ASL), Environmentally Sensitive Sea Lanes (ESSA) and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) properly.

Additionally, about 1 in 2 of the reports showed the ECDIS would not be able to display a "new object" properly if it was introduced by IMO and 1 in 2 of the reports indicated that the ECDIS had limitations in some aspects of the route checking

The check data can be downloaded from the IHO Web site (<http://www.iho.int>) via the Newslink button on the homepage. (Source: *The Mars/Nautical Institute*)

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