



ASIAN SHIPOWNERS' FORUM

Safe Navigation & Environment Committee (SNEC)

c/o Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA)

59 Tras Street, Singapore 078998

Tel: (65) 62225238 Fax: (65) 62225527

email: fasa@pacific.net.sg

26 March 2012

PRESS RELEASE

ASF URGES THE UN AND IMO TO TAKE IMMEDIATE, STRONG AND DECISIVE ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE SOMALI PIRACY PROBLEM

The Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) 22nd Interim Meeting of the Safe Navigation & Environment Committee (SNEC) was held in Singapore on 26 March 2012. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Patrick Phoon, President of Singapore Shipping Association and attended by shipowners' representatives of the ASF.

During the Meeting, the Committee expressed great anger and disappointment at the ongoing threat of piracy and armed robbery, especially those posed by Somali pirates in the Somali Basin, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Committee also expressed great concern at the increasing threat of piracy off the coast of West Africa, especially off Benin and Nigeria. In addition to the grave threat to seafarers, the threat of maritime piracy has prompted various organizations to increase costs in response.

Recalling the Counter-Piracy Proposal¹ by the ASF at the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) Meeting in Washington on 28 February 2012, the Committee strongly urges the United Nations (UN) to promptly adopt the ASF proposal to deal with the Somali piracy problem.

The ASF proposal, initiated by the SNEC, calls for the setting up of floating bases to serve as embarkation or disembarkation points for armed military personnel to board merchant ships, and to provide them and their crew with the much needed protection when they transit the pirate-infested waters. The armed military personnel, if the proposal is adopted, will be expected to be sponsored, managed and supervised by the UN.

The SNEC Chairman, Mr Patrick Phoon said, "Over the past 5 years, nearly 200 ships have been hijacked and over 3000 seafarers have been taken hostage by Somali pirates. Shipowners have also been held to ransom. This is a very serious criminal activity which simply cannot be tolerated and must be stopped!"

¹ Please see ASF Press Release and attachment issued on 7 March 2012. <http://asianshipowners.org/2012/03/25/asf-proposes-new-mitigation-measure-for-combatting-piracy/>

He added, "The UN has to step in urgently to help the international shipping community. I will further urge all States and Maritime Nations in the UN and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to cooperate and to take stronger, pro-active action, both on-shore and at sea, thus honouring their obligations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to ensure sufficient protection and security for merchant ships and their crews."

As a result of the absence of any effective and unified long-term action on the part of the world's states, shipowners are being forced to take independent measures and steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the seafarers on board their ships.

The Committee also reaffirmed its strong commitment to the protection of life and property at sea and to the preservation of a pollution-free marine and atmospheric environment.

The Committee recalled that, in June 2011, the IMO had adopted amendments to MARPOL Annex VI which will give effect to mandatory measures to be implemented by shipowners to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from international shipping. The measures represent the first ever mandatory global greenhouse gas reduction regime for an international industry sector.

In this regard, the Committee welcomed the adoption of guidelines intended to assist in the implementation of the mandatory Regulations on Energy Efficiency for Ships in MARPOL Annex VI, which will enter into force on 1 January 2013. This once again demonstrates that the IMO is eminently capable of delivering a global solution for shipping that has clearly defined short-term and long-term goals that are realistic, pragmatic and implementable.

During the Meeting, the Committee also considered and discussed other issues of concern relating to maritime safety and environment protection.

* * * * *

For any queries relating to this Press Release, please contact:

Mr. Daniel Tan,
Secretary
ASF Safe Navigation & Environment Committee

Tel: (65) 62225238
Email: fasa@pacific.net.sg

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 Shipowners' Associations comprising shipping associations of 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 the 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 ASF owners and managers control and operate nearly 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.