

## **Shipping Consultative Committee**

**Minutes of the Twenty-third Meeting held at 2:30 p.m.**

**On 23 September 2003 in the Marine Department Conference Room A**

Present:	Mr. P.F. Chun	Marine Department (Chairman)
	Mr. S.K. Anand	Marine Department
	Mr. Arthur Bowring	Hong Kong Shipowners Association
	Mr. K. Y. Ting	Hong Kong Seamen's Union
	Ms. Vivian Lee	Hong Kong Merchant Navy Officers' Guild
	Mr. William P. Amos	Johnson Stokes & Master Lawyers
	Capt. L.C. Chan	Orient Overseas Container Line Ltd.
	Capt. Pradeep Chawla	Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Ltd.
	Capt. Jude Correa	IndoChina Ship Management (HK) Ltd.
	Mr. Michael Wong	New Asia Shipping Co. Ltd.
	Capt. C.F. Cheung	Associated Maritime Co. (HK) Ltd.
	Mr. Jagmeet Makkar	K.C. Maritime Ltd.
	Mr. I. Kuligowski	Eurasia Group of Companies
	Mr. D.K. Nair	Fleet Management Ltd.
	Capt. V.M. Soman	Wallem Shipmanagement Ltd.
	Mr. Patrick Lee	China Navigation Co. Ltd.
	Mr. Y.L. Luk	Marine Department (Secretary)

In attendance:	Mr. H.M. Tung	Marine Department
	Mr. H.K. Leung	Marine Department
	Mr. W.K. Lee	Marine Department
	Mr. W.F. Leung	Marine Department

Absent with apology:	Mr. Alastair MacAulay
	Capt. Z.M. Jin
	Mr. Rajaish Bajpae
	Mr. Kishore Rajvanshy
	Mr. Gerry Buchanan
	Capt. C.M. Yu
	Mr. M.A. Cresswell

The Chairman welcomed all present and introduced Mr. Jagmeet Makkar who was a newly appointed SCC member.

## **Declaration of Interest**

2. The Chairman reminded members that, starting from last meeting, a chairman/member would be required to disclose his/her interest when he/she considered that there was a potential conflict of interest in a matter placed before the meeting. Any declaration would be recorded for future reference.

## **Agenda Item 1 – Confirmation of the Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held at 2:30 p.m. on 16 January 2003**

3. The minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 16 January 2003 were confirmed with the following amendments: -

- (a) In paragraph 14, “Mr. Karandika” should read “Mr. Karandikar”;
- (b) In paragraph 24, “Capt. Anil’s queries” should read “Capt. Tejpal’s queries”.

4. The Chairman mentioned that the confirmed minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting would be uploaded onto the Marine Department’s website for the information of the public if there was no objection from members. He said that such action would enhance transparency of the work of the committee. There was no objection raised by members.

## **Agenda Item 2(i) – Consultation Paper No. SCC/103 – Maritime Security Legislation**

5. The Chairman invited Mr. W.F. Leung to present the consultation paper SCC/103 (Information Paper on Maritime Security Legislation). Mr. Leung briefed members the details of the proposed legislation on maritime security including the structure, main provisions and schedule of the proposed legislation. The Chairman then briefed members of the progress of the legislation work. Members were invited to provide their comments.

6. In response to Mr. Makkar’s question on penalties for non-compliance of the regulation by non-Hong Kong ships visiting Hong Kong, the Chairman said that a non-complying ship might be fined, detained or subject to other control actions as stipulated under the proposed regulations. In addition, he mentioned that a ship might be detained under the regime of port State control if found without a proper International Ship Security Certificate.

7. Regarding Capt. Soman’s queries on the implementation of the ISPS Code on foreign ships in Hong Kong, the Chairman said that if a port State control officer found that a foreign ship in Hong Kong was not complying the requirements of ISPS Code, the ship

would be required to rectify the deficiency before leaving Hong Kong. If it was a minor deficiency, the ship might be allowed to rectify the deficiency at the next port of call. A vessel that could pose a serious threat to the security of HKSAR might be denied entry or ordered out of Hong Kong waters.

8. Capt. Soman further mentioned that a ship's security plan was supposed to be a confidential document that would not be disclosed to other parties including a port State control officer. Under the circumstances, he questioned how a port State control officer could decide whether security measures were taken in accordance with the security plan or not. Mr. W.K. Lee replied that the Secretariats of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Tokyo MOU on port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region (Tokyo MOU) would issue guidelines to implement the ISPS Code by port State in due course and Hong Kong would follow the guidelines accordingly. The Chairman added that, although the details of a ship's security plan would not be known to an official from the port State, an experienced port State control officer would not be difficult to spot any obvious breach of security requirements and take the appropriate control actions.

9. Capt. Soman said the proposed legislation would be applicable to convention ships but not applicable to local vessels, such as bunker barges, that would interface with convention ships visiting Hong Kong. He asked what actions MD would take to avoid local vessels from contaminating a convention ship's security measures. The Chairman replied that DM was also appointed to be the "Designated Authority" (DA) responsible for implementing the ISPS Code in respect of port facilities in Hong Kong. MD would have to review the security requirements for port facilities as well as those vessels that might interface with ocean going vessels in Hong Kong. However, a ship owner/manager should ensure that a ship's security plan should include appropriate actions to be taken if a vessel that was not required to comply with the ISPS Code was berthing alongside.

10. In response to Mr. Bowring's queries on the implementation of ISPS Code in Hong Kong w.e.f. 1.7.2004, the Chairman replied as follows:

- (a) There would be no preferential treatment given to those non-SOLAS vessels, which would have to comply with the requirements of ISPS Code when visiting Hong Kong.
- (b) If a vessel had to interface with a non-ISPS vessel, for example during bunkering operation, it would be advisable for the master of the vessel to require a Declaration of Security to be signed between the two masters. The purpose of signing a DoS was to ensure that both parties know exactly what

should be done to avoid any breach of security requirements.

- (c) A ship should keep all DoSs on board even some of them might not have been signed by other parties for some reasons. A ship security plan should include appropriate actions to be taken in respect of any security incidents that might occur in the associated security assessment and proper records should be kept on board for any actions taken.
- (d) IMO would be informed in due course that DM would be the DA for HKSAR. Also, when a foreign ship informed MD through the normal reporting procedures for entering into Hong Kong waters, the ship would be told about the security level being imposed and the details of contact regarding maritime security matters.
- (e) The Economic Development and Labour Bureau (EDLB) had got Legislative slot for the required legislation to be tabled. The legislation was expected to be in place before 1.7.2004. MD would not need the local legislation before an ISSC and/or Interim ISSC might be issued under SOLAS Convention. Local legislation however would be required for imposing penalties for non-compliance of the ISPS Code.

11. Regarding Capt. Soman's request for more information on the ship security alert system, the Chairman said that MD's Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) was studying the best way to equip the Center to receive security alert transmitted via GMDSS system. Some technical aspects of the ship security alert system were still unknown; MD was monitoring the situation closely. MD would inform the industry once the details were finalized.

12. Capt. Chawla added that five manufacturers submitted different designs of the ship security system but none of them were type-approved by all major classification societies. He worried that installation of the equipment could not be completed by 1.7.2004. The Chairman appreciated Mr. Chawla's concern but mentioned that there would be some leeway for compliance with the requirements, as the equipment would only be required at the first survey of the radio installation after 1.7.2004.

13. Mr. Bowring appreciated MD's effort to consult the industry on the issue and hoped that MD would remain flexible and pragmatic in handling the issue. The Chairman replied that MD would take a pragmatic approach to facilitate ship owners in complying the new security requirements before the deadline. In the coming few months, MD would continue the legislation work while monitoring further development at IMO. He requested members and their counterparts in the industry to contact MD if they had any

doubt or concern on the issue and MD would try its best to help them to comply with the new security requirements.

14. The Chairman replied to Mr. Nair that the implementation of ISPS Code should have little effect on the minimum safe manning of a ship because there would be no substantial increase in the workload at security level 1. For security level 2 or 3, especially if it was to be maintained for a prolonged period of time, additional local security personnel might have to be hired to beef up the security on board.

15. Mr. Bowring added that IMO had amended its resolution on minimum safe manning to include the aspect of maritime security. Liberia, which took Hong Kong's approach, had started a campaign to consider prescriptive approach in regulating minimum safe manning of ships. The Chairman remarked that it was a very complicated issue and it would not be easy to reach consensus among member Governments at the IMO.

16. In response to Mr. Nair's concern on possible terrorist attack on Hong Kong registered vessels, the Chairman said, the HKSAR Administration would, basing on intelligence from the competent government agencies, provide warning regarding security threats to Hong Kong registered vessels via their company security officers. Also the Hong Kong Police responsible for security in Hong Kong would provide intelligence information and advise the DA on what security level the port facilities and ships visiting Hong Kong should operate.

17. Regarding Capt. Chawla's queries on the competency of local security personnel and licensing of security companies, the Chairman said security personnel and security companies were required to be licensed in Hong Kong. Mr. Chawla said that, from his observation on the performance of security watchmen in Hong Kong, he doubted about their quality and wondered whether they had any knowledge on the ISPS Code. The Chairman replied that it should be the responsibility the masters, the ship security officers, and the port facility security officers to ensure those security personnel they deployed were competent enough to do the job. After further discussion, the Chairman agreed to request C/MAI, who was a member of the advisory committee for implementing the ISPS Code, to bring up the matter at the advisory committee for consideration.

18. In reply to Capt. Chan, the Chairman said Marine Department would not provide information about security levels being imposed at other ports outside Hong Kong. Mr. Anand suggested Capt. Chan to obtain the information from their local agents at the ports of calls for their ships.

## **Agenda Item 2(ii) – Validation Panel – latest update on work progress**

19. The Chairman invited Mr. W.F. Leung to brief members on the Validation Panel's progress of work. Mr. Leung reported to the committee the findings of the monitoring system which included: -

- i. Feedback obtained from 25 companies who responded to MD's questionnaire on competency standards of officers under their employment.
- ii. The results of 20 assessments on the competence or performance of officers on 15 ships on which FSQC inspections had been conducted during the period between January and July 2003.
- iii. PSC detention records that reflected officers' competency on Hong Kong registered ships and foreign ships in Hong Kong.
- iv. Analysis of competency standards of officers from the few accident cases involved Hong Kong registered ships in 2003.

20. Mr. Leung further reported that, from the result of analysis on the feedback and FSQC assessment, the competency standards of officers from different countries were found acceptable in general. However, the preliminary findings showed that the officers from PRC had their standards varying from excellent to poor. It appeared that different training institutions in the Mainland might have varying standards. MD would liaise with the concerned parties and try to identify the root of the problem.

21. The Chairman supplemented that, as MD had just started the monitoring work at the beginning of 2003, the information obtained might not reflect the full picture yet. However, MD would continue the monitoring work in order to ensure that the competency of officers working on board Hong Kong registered ship were of the required standards. Meantime, MD would consider bring up the issue at the next regular meeting with the PRC officials to see if anything could be done to improve the situation.

22. Mr. Bowring mentioned that the communication network established by MD and the Mainland would be useful in addressing the problem. He requested the Chairman to keep HKSOA informed of any progress made. The Chairman agreed and requested C/MAI to take the required follow up actions.

23. Mr. Chawla mentioned that, from his experience in interviewing more than 400 officers from PRC, the quality of officers varied between training institutions as well as within the same institution. It appeared that the officers might have got their certificates at different examination centers. From his unofficial contacts, he knew that the PRC

government officials had the will to tighten up the control. He suggested that, with the help of the information produced by MD and the commercial pressure from shipping companies, the training standard of universities/training institutes would be further enhanced. The Chairman thanked Mr. Chawla's suggestion and mentioned that MD would work closely with the Mainland officials in this aspect to improve the situation.

**Agenda Item 2(iii) – The IMO new requirements on Bulk Carrier Safety – latest update**

24. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Tung briefed members on the latest development on bulk carrier safety at IMO, especially the following four documents: (a) MSC.145 (77) – Performance standards for water level detectors on bulk carriers; (b) MSC.146 (77) – Application of IACS UR S26, S27, S30 and S31 to bulk carriers; (c) MSC/Circ. 1069 – Interpretation of SOLAS XII/13; and (d) MSC/Circ. 1070 – Ship design, construction, repair and maintenance. He mentioned that MD would issue Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Information Notes (HKMSIN) to inform ship owners the details.

25. Mr. Tung also informed the members the other measures on bulk carrier safety that were expected to be adopted by MSC 79 by the end of 2004. The requirements of double side skin construction were expected to be enforced in mid-2006.

26. The Chairman supplemented Mr. Tung's briefing by saying that the most pressing issue was the water ingress alarm. According to the information given by the eight recognized classification societies, at present only two classification societies had type-approved such device. MD would monitor the situation and advise ship owners as soon as possible when more information was obtained.

27. Mr. Bowring mentioned that, according to Martec, there were approvals for different component parts of the water ingress alarm system, but there was no approval for the whole system yet. Also, IACS was working on the unified approval standards for the water ingress alarm system. Martec also told him that TUV was testing the water ingress alarm produced by Martec using the draft approval standards produced by IACS but there was no class approval for any system yet. Some members said a few manufacturers claimed that their equipment had gotten the required approval. Mr. Bowring suggested members to ask the concerned manufacturers for the type-approval certificate to verify that a system had gotten the required type approval before installing on board. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that IACS should finalize the unified interpretation on IMO's performance standards for the water ingress alarm system so that manufacturers

could obtain the necessary approval accordingly.

**Agenda Item 2(iv) and 3 – Hong Kong Shipping Register – statistics, port State control detention, Flag State Quality Control (FSQC) and Pre-Register Quality Control (PRQC)**

28. Mr. Anand suggested that agenda item 2(iv) and 3 were inter-related and could be discussed together. He then referred members to the statistics on the Hong Kong Shipping Register. He highlighted that, as of 23 September 2003, the tonnage of Hong Kong registered ship had reached 18.83m and the dominant tonnage was bulk carrier, followed by tanker and containership. He advised members that there was a trend having more general cargo ships registered in Hong Kong. Such ships tended to be old and were more prone to problems. MD had taken steps to make owners more aware of Hong Kong's stringent quality standards. FSQC and PRQC inspections were being carried out regularly to uphold the quality of ships in the Hong Kong register. More recently, the Document of Compliance of one company was cancelled and another company voluntarily withdrew the registration of a ship with Hong Kong because of not being able to maintain the required standards.

29. Mr. Chawla expressed his concern about the age of general cargo ships, which had an average age of 17.98. He worried that the detention rate of Hong Kong registered ships might increase if these old ships were not maintained properly. Mr. Anand replied that he had instructed his staff to pay more attention to these vessels and revise FSQC criteria if necessary in order to uphold the quality of the Hong Kong Register. Mr. Makkar supported MD to take action to maintain the quality of Hong Kong ships. The Chairman stressed that MD would take appropriate actions to maintain the quality of Hong Kong ships and keep the industry informed.

30. Mr. Bowring appreciated that MD came to the industry for advice but not for permission. He also appreciated the close contacts MD had established with the industry and it was great that the industry was informed of MD's actions soon after any new steps were initiated. The Chairman replied that one of MD's obvious roles was to facilitate ship owners to comply with regulations.

31. Mr. Nair requested MD to circulate statistics of PSC detention records and common detainable deficiencies found at different ports to owners so that they could advise their masters accordingly. Mr. Anand said that MD regularly tabled the detention statistics for Hong Kong ships at Shipping Consultative Committee meetings and other forums. He

mentioned that the standards of PSC inspections varied from port to port and from one PSC officer to another PSC officer, it would therefore be difficult to draw up conclusion from these statistics. The Chairman agreed with Mr. Anand that MD could not come up with any conclusion with one or two incidents. However, as MD had over 800 ships in the register, PSC data obtained over a longer period of time could be useful. If the data were analyzed, it might be possible to identify problematic areas for our ship owners' attention so that their vessels could be better maintained. Mr. Anand requested Mr. Lee, GM/SSB to take note of the discussion and explore what MD could do.

32. Mr. Chawla expressed his concerns about the way PSC inspections were being conducted by certain countries and he mentioned about one particular country that had different interpretations on detainable deficiencies. Mr. Lee said MD had made appeals to the country several times when MD found the detentions had been questionable. However, the appeals were rejected. Mr. Anand said MD would bring the issue up at next Tokyo MOU meeting. The Chairman said that unreasonable detentions would undermine the PSC regime and would not bring up the standards of ships. Mr. Tung mentioned that Mr. Varghese had brought the issue of unreasonable detention to the previous Annual Meeting of the Tokyo MOU for discussion and the concerned country was brought under pressure at that time.

33. Regarding the table of "Details of Hong Kong ships detained by other port States", Mr. Chawla suggested to add the "ship type" and "ship age" in the table. Mr. Anand agreed that was a good suggestion and would revise the table accordingly.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Enhancing Training for Lifeboat On-load Release Mechanism under the STCW Code**

34. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. W. F. Leung briefed members that an investigation into a recent accident on a Hong Kong ship, which resulted in the loss of two lives, revealed that the main attributing factor was the lack of understanding of the danger associated with the use of lifeboat on-load release mechanism. It appeared that there was an urgent need to strengthen the relevant contents in shore-based lifeboat training so that crewmembers would have sufficient knowledge to operate the on-load release mechanism safely in lifeboat drills as well as real emergency situation. Mr. Leung told members that, Hong Kong would submit a paper to propose amendments to Table A-VI/2-1 of the STCW Code to include expressly the training requirements for the use of the on-load release mechanism and the danger associated with its use for discussion at the next STW

Sub-committee meeting scheduled to be held in January 2004 at IMO. Furthermore, more practical training on the use of off-load release device would also be proposed.

35. Mr. Chawla commented that there were too many different designs of lifeboat on-load release mechanism being used and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to train seafarers to understand all of them. He suggested to discuss with IACS to draw up a performance standard that would limit the number of designs. Mr. Bowring added that he had discussed the issue with manufacturers at a seminar held one week ago. It was concluded that lack of training and maintenance could be contributing factors to these accidents, but the basic problem would be lack of uniformity in the design of the mechanism that made training of the crew difficult. Therefore he suggested MD to submit a paper to IMO asking for a common performance standard for the mechanism. The Chairman replied that a common performance standard was there, but there was no common standard on how the mechanism should be designed. The Chairman opined that proper training would enhance the awareness of the crew on the potential danger associated with the operation of the mechanism so that necessary precautions would be taken to minimize the chance of an accident.

36. Mr. Chawla raised another issue that a lot of port authorities did not allow a ship to lower its lifeboat in their ports. He took an example on a tanker trading between Japan and Saudi Arabia where both countries did not allow a tanker to lower its lifeboat in their ports. Under the circumstances, he wondered how training could be provided on board. Mr. Tung commented that discussion had been held at the DE Sub-Committee of IMO about a training kit for lifeboat. Something more concrete could be finalized at next DE Sub-Committee meeting.

37. After further discussion, the Chairman concluded that, many suggestions had already been proposed at IMO to address the issue, MD would closely look at the issue again to see whether anything more could be done to eliminate this sort of accidents.

38. Capt. Correa suggested publicizing the details of the equipment that involved in an accident so that ship owners could be aware of the danger of using that particular type of design. Mr. Anand said it could be done if there was no court case involved. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the MAI section would explore if the particulars of the equipment found causing an accident could be published.

**Agenda Item 5 – Consultation Paper No. SCC/104 – Proposed Amendments to the Merchant Shipping (Limitation of Shipowners Liability) Ordinance, Cap. 434**

39. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Tung presented the subject consultation paper. He said that MD proposed to make three main amendments to the MS (Limitation of Shipowners Liability) Ordinance, i.e. (i) to apply the Athens Convention to the carriages between HK/Macau and HK/Mainland ports; (ii) to adjust the limits of liability to the LLMC 1996 Protocol levels; and (iii) to delete sub-section 17(1) so that ships of 300 GRT or less would not have a lower limit of liability. He mentioned further that the Economic Services Panel of the Legco had accepted the amendment proposal in July 2003 with two remarks. The first remark was whether there was any need to enact the 1996 LLMC Protocol at this stage and the second was that the proposal might increase insurance premium. MD wished to report the development to the industry and further seek their views before taking further action on the legislation.

40. Mr. Tung mentioned that MD consulted the Provisional Local Vessel Advisory Committee (PLVAC) early September and it had no strong views on MD's proposed amendments. However, one member of PLVAC did mention that the proposal might lead to higher insurance premium for ships less than 300 GRT.

41. Mr. Amos mentioned that everyone agreed that carriers were entitled to limit their liabilities on personal injury claims, he then asked what was the amount of the liability limits set in the proposed amendments. The Chairman replied that, under the 1976 Protocol to the Athens Convention 1974 and the existing local legislation, the limit for passenger injury claim was 46,666 Special Drawing Rights (SDR). The new proposal would not change the amount of limit but to extend the cover to include carriages between Hong Kong/Macau and Hong Kong/Mainland ports. With respect to the amendments to give effect to the 1996 LLMC Protocol, if adopted, it would limit ship owners' liability for total passenger claims to 175,000 SDR times the number of passengers which the ship was authorized to carry.

42. Mr. Bowring asked whether the regulation applicable to Hong Kong registered ships while they were in Hong Kong. The Chairman explained that the regulation was applicable to all vessels while they were in Hong Kong. He further mentioned that Athens Convention was applicable to international carriages only and the proposed amendments would extend the Convention to cover the carriages between Hong Kong/Macau and Hong Kong/Mainland. Similarly, the original LLMC was applicable to ocean-going vessels only, but the Hong Kong's local legislation made LLMC also applicable to local vessels.

Mr. Tung supplemented that it was the ferry operators' views that the Athens Convention should apply to carriages between Hong Kong/Macau and Hong Kong/Mainland ports.

43. Mr. Amos mentioned that the 2002 Protocol to the Athens Convention further increased the limit for each passenger claim to 250,000 SDR and he asked whether Hong Kong would apply the new limit or not. The Chairman replied that Hong Kong had not accepted the 2002 Protocol yet.

44. Mr. Bowring asked whether members should wear the hat of a ferry operator or the hat of a consumer (passenger) when making comments on the proposed amendments. The Chairman replied that, as an Administration, MD would have to take a balanced view so that there would be a reasonable protection for both ship owners and passengers who might become victims of an accident.

45. Mr. Bowring declared that HKSOA supported the proposals and other members had raised no objection.

## **Agenda Item 6 – Any other business**

### **STCW undertakings**

46. The Chairman invited Mr. H.K. Leung to brief members about the latest situation on the STCW undertaking. Mr. Leung reported that Greece had signed the undertaking with Hong Kong on 11.2.2003 and the total number of countries that had undertakings with Hong Kong was 44. Recently Spain had indicated that it agreed to sign and the standard undertaking form had been sent to Spain for signature. Furthermore, at the request of the Solomon Islands, Hong Kong had sent the standard undertaking form to them for consideration and agreement.

47. Mr. Chawla asked whether the Validation Panel would check the quality of officers from Solomon Islands before signing an undertaking with them. The Chairman replied that, as long as the Solomon Islands was on the "White List", Hong Kong would have no reason to refuse these officers to serve on board Hong Kong ships unless there was evidence to suggest otherwise.

### **Double Taxation Agreements**

48. Regarding double taxation agreement (DTA) with other countries, Mr. Leung

reported that Singapore had finally agreed to sign the DTA agreement with Hong Kong and EDLB were waiting for Singapore's reply to decide the date of signing. In July 2003, EDLB had sent an invitation letter to Poland for the DTA and her reply was waiting. Mr. Leung mentioned that EDLB had already sent invitation letters to 19 other countries but many countries either showed no interest or had no response to the invitation. Mr. Leung promised to keep members informed of new development on the issue.

49. Mr. Leung also mentioned that MARPOL Annex IV would be in force internationally with effect from 27.9.2003 and MD was trying to have the local legislation in place by February 2004. The Chairman supplemented that the new legislation would have minimal effect on existing ships, as there was a 5-year grace period for them to comply with the new requirements.

50. The Chairman then briefed members on the following new initiatives of the IMO:

(a) Model Audit Scheme

IMO was putting forward a Model Audit Scheme, which was a voluntary scheme for auditing an Administration's performance in implementing instruments covering maritime safety, security and protection of marine environment. The plan was to have the scheme in place by 2005.

(b) Phasing-out of single hull tankers

MEPC would decide at the meeting in December 2003 whether to adopt an EC proposal to accelerate the phasing-out of single hull tankers.

(c) Ballast Management Convention

A conference would be held early 2004 to adopt the Convention.

51. Finally, the Chairman said some countries were pushing very hard on the issue of ship recycling. The Chairman invited members to send their views on the above-mentioned issues to MD so that MD could take into account their views when formulating its position on the issues.

52. Mr. Ting informed members that ITF and ISF had agreed on the unified interpretation on the wages of AB working on board national flag vessels. Presently, less than 300 Hong Kong registered ships had signed the Collective Bargain Agreement (CBA) with the Hong Kong Seamen's Union and he expected that the remaining vessels would be targeted by ITF. Mr. Bowring mentioned that AB rank was not included in the STCW,

and asked how ITF set their minimum wages for the other ranks. Mr. Ting said they should be agreed between local seamen unions and the shipping companies.

53. Finally, the Chairman mentioned that Mr. Anand, who had been serving MD for more than 20 years, would be retired by the end of 2003. It would be Mr. Anand's last SCC meeting. Mr. Anand expressed his thanks to all members for their co-operation in the past and the excellent interaction in the committee. The Committee would like to put on record of its appreciation of Mr. Anand's long and excellent service to the committee and wished him a long and happy retirement life.

**Agenda Item 7 – Date of next meeting**

54. The Secretary would advise the date of next meeting in due course.

55. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 17:15 p.m. The Chairman invited the members for drinks in V.I.P. room.