Man-overboard and death of the Bosun on board Medi Salerno in Chang Jiang Kou, Shanghai, China on 20 March 2012

1. The incident

1.1 At about 2158hrs on 20 March 2012, the pilot onboard the Hong Kong registered bulk carrier vessel Medi Salerno disembarked the vessel at 31-02.418’N 22-12.259’E around Chang Jiang Kou, Shanghai, China. The vessel continued its voyage to Samarinda, Indonesia. The Bosun, who was engaged in the recovering operation of the pilot combination ladder at the starboard side of the vessel, fell overboard. He could not be found despite the immediate search and rescue operations carried out after the incident. His body was later found in the water near Caiyuan town, China at about 1150 hrs on 13 April 2012.

1.2 The accident occurred after sun set and it was dark at night. A northwest wind of Beaufort scale force six was blowing. The swell was moderate at about3 meters in length. The air temperature was 8 degree Celsius. The visibility was 10 nautical miles.

1.3 The investigation reveals the main contributing factors to the accident are that:

a) the Bosun did not follow company’s safety procedures for rigging up the accommodation ladder;

b) the maintenance instruction of the accommodation ladder relating to the length of steel wire to be used was not followed; and

c) the two air hoses, which had no markings, between the air motor and the control station could be wrongly connected, thus causing a reversal on the movement of the accommodation ladder (i.e. heaving instead of lowering, or vice versa).

2. Lessons Learnt

2.1 To avoid recurrence of similar accident, it is important that:

a) company safety procedures for working over shipside should be strictly followed by crew members;

b) manufacturer’s maintenance instructions for the accommodation ladder davit winch should be complied with; and

c) the up and down movements of the accommodation ladder in response to the control lever should be tested and confirmed every time before using the equipment.