Collision between Josco Lily and Lu Rong Yu Shui 285 in Yellow Sea on 9 April 2012

1. The Incident

1.1 At about 1739 local time on 9 April 2012, the Hong Kong registered container ship Josco Lily collided with the Chinese fishing vessel Lu Rong Yu Shui 285 (LRYS285) in an approximate position 36°11.3’N 124°14.6’E, in Yellow Sea. The collision occurred under foggy weather condition which lasted for a prolong period of time. At time of the collision, only the junior and inexperienced third officer was on the bridge of Josco Lily, while the senior officer and the master left the bridge for their meal.

1.2 As the result of collision, LRYS285 took in water in engine room, she was suffered damage on its port side but remained afloat safely. One crewmember of LRYS285 was missing and the other ten were rescued. Josco Lily was suffered minor scratches to paintwork and indentation at the top side of the bulbous bow.

1.3 The investigation revealed the following main contributed factors to the accident:

- The navigating Officer of the Watch (OOW) of Josco Lily did not comply with Rule 6 (Safe speed), Rule 8 (Action to avoid collision) and Rule 19 (Conduct of vessels in restricted visibility) of International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS). Josco Lily did not proceed at a safe speed so as to take proper and effective action to avoid collision in a timely manner. Based on scanty radar information, the OOW first made a succession of small alteration of the course to port until finally he substantially changed course to port. The succession of small alterations of course was not readily apparent to LRYS285 either observing visually or by radar. The OOW did not call the Master even though the movement of LRYS285 could cause concern afterwards. In restricted visibility, the OOW made an alteration of course to port for a vessel forward of the beam which was against the Rule 19 of COLREGS; and

- The bridge team of LRYS285 did not comply with Rule 5 (look-out) of COLREGS. They did not maintain a proper and effective look-out so they failed to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision. Consequently, they did not take effective action of collision avoidance.
2. Lessons

The lessons learnt from this incident are:

- The master and the OOWs shall strictly comply with the COLREGS at all times.

- The management company of the container ship should review the relevant procedures in its Safety Management System with respect to:
  a) the instructions and guidance for their master and officers on circumstances when the OOWs should call the master; and
  b) whenever a vessel is navigating under restricted visibility weather condition for a prolong period, the master of the vessel should ensure sufficient bridge resource for safe navigation at all times.