Fatal accident of a sailor fell overboard a local dumb lighter “Kwong Fei 38” and drowned in the waters east of Round Island on 13 January 2017

1. The Incident

1.1 A locally licensed dumb lighter was towed by a tug boat from Stonecutters Island via Mirs Bay towards Yantian. When the tug-and-tow was underway in the waters off Round Island, Mirs Bay, a sailor onboard the dumb lighter fell overboard and drowned.

1.2 It was evening, the weather was rainy, and the wind was north breeze.

1.3 The deck was slippery due to rain fall and the sailor did not wear slip resistant safety footwear. After completing work on adjusting towing ropes in the bow, the sailor walked along the ship side towards the accommodation. It was probably that the sailor was tripped by a wire, a chain or a manhole cover on deck so that he lost his balance and fell overboard.

2. Lessons learnt

2.1 To display conspicuous warning signs on board to advise shipboard personnel that there are no guard rails installed on deck in accordance with the Code of Practice -- Safety Standards for Class II Vessels; and to remind all shipboard personnel to wear suitable safety or protective gears (e.g. suitable working clothing, slip resistant safety shoes, lifejacket, safety belt, etc.) when working or walking on ship sides without guard rails as far as practicable during towing. Shipboard personnel must pay particular caution in rainy days to prevent falling overboard due to slippery deck.

2.2 To keep good housekeeping of the materials such as wires, chains, etc. on open deck areas to minimize the hazards of tripping the shipboard personnel.