Collision between the Hong Kong registered oil tanker “Brightoil Lucky” and the two Chinese fishing vessels “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 377” and “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 378” at Sea of Japan on 5 October 2017

1. The incident

1.1 In the early morning on 5 October 2017, the Hong Kong registered oil tanker “Brightoil Lucky” (the vessel) encountered dense traffic follow of fishing vessels about 120 nautical miles (nm) east of North Korean coast when she was en-route to Kozmino, Russia from China. The vessel collided with two Chinese fishing vessels “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 377” (“377”) and “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 378” (“378”) in position 39°47.4’N 132°07.9’E at about 0500 hours Ship’s Mean Time. “378” capsized resulting in the loss of 13 lives. The vessel and “377” sustained minor damage.

1.2 In the accident, the weather was overcast with a visibility of 12 nm or more. A southeasterly light breeze was blowing and sea condition was slight.

2. Lessons learnt

2.1 The master of the vessel should ensure an adequate watchkeeping arrangement to maintain a safe navigational watch especially at night and during heavy traffics. The officer in charge of the navigational watch (OOW) should not be the sole lookout during hours of darkness.

2.2 The OOW should avoid carrying out multiple tasks alone and call assistance of watchkeeping ratings and the master in compliance with the standing orders.

2.3 The communication among the bridge team should be maintained effectively to avoid loss of situational awareness. Any doubt of unexpected target emerging and / or disappearing should be reported to the bridge team so that early action can be taken.

2.4 The master of the vessel should ensure that the ship and her equipment are maintained properly to ensure the reliability of such equipment and system including the VDR.

2.5 The fishermen when engaging in fishing activity should comply with the Rules of COLREGS by displaying adequate lights and shapes and take early action to avoid collision.