

A fatal accident on board a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier *Tuo Fu 8* on 10 June 2014

1. The Incident

- 1.1 On 10 June 2014, while a Hong Kong registered bulk carrier *Tuo Fu 8* was in the approximate position of 12°40S 67°42E in the Indian Ocean, en-route to Brazil, an able-bodied seaman (the AB) fell to his death during cargo hold cleansing work.
- 1.2 Crew members including the AB were assigned to cleanse cargo holds including the upper part of the side shell in order to prepare the cargo holds for loading grain cargo. In order to cleanse the upper part of the side shell, crew members had to climb a portable aluminum ladder to reach the top of the hopper plate to continue to climb a fixed vertical ladder so as to reach the upper part of the side shell.
- 1.3 At the time of the accident, the AB climbed to the top of the hopper plate (about 4 meters high above the bottom of cargo hold) after he had finished his work. Suddenly, he slipped on the hopper plate towards the bottom of the cargo hold and further slid about three meters on the bottom surface before stopping. His safety helmet was dropped and his head knocked against the bottom of the cargo hold while falling down. He was declared dead on board the vessel.

2. Lessons learnt

- 2.1 It is important that crew members on board ships should be aware of the danger of staying at the top of hopper plates inside cargo holds, which are usually acutely inclining surface and probably wetted by washing water during cargo hold cleansing. Crew members should remain their alertness to avoid a slipping and should use safety belt at all time.