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14 July 2010

To: Shipowners / Ship Managers and Classification Societies

Dear Sir/Madam,

QUALSHIP21 status for 2009

We regret to inform you that Hong Kong marginally exceeded the detention rate set by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and thus lost its qualification in QUALSHIP 21 for 2009. To re-acquire the QUALSHIP 21 status we will strive to improve the quality of our fleet, at the same time we also need the cooperation of the shipping companies and the ship's crew.

2. Up-to-date, there have been five (5) vessels detained in USA in 2010. This represents a significant increase in comparison with the same period last year. To further enhance the quality of Hong Kong registered ships, the Marine Department (MD) will be working together with shipping companies and Hong Kong Shipowners Association to implement the following scheme:

- If any ship of a management company is detained under port State control (PSC), the ship masters of the company concerned are required to inspect their ships in accordance with the checklist developed by the MD before their entries into the US. The completed and signed checklists by ship masters should be endorsed by their respective management companies before submission to the MD for scrutiny and necessary follow-up action.
- The MD will enhance Flag State Quality Control inspections on ships visiting the US and pay more frequent visits to management companies with ships trading to the US in order to facilitate improvement to their safety management systems; and
- The MD will hold PSC seminars periodically for the supervisors of management companies so as to provide updated information in relation to PSC inspections. The first seminar is tentatively scheduled to be held at end July 2010. The information presented at the seminars will also be delivered to the company staff when MD conducts Document of Compliance audits or pay visits to the management companies concerned.

3. The MD will continue to maintain high safety standards of the Hong Kong-registered ships and endeavor to re-acquire the QUALSHIP 21 status. However, maintaining a good record of HK flagged ships in PSC inspections requires continuous efforts of all stakeholders. As such, we would keep working closely and cooperatively with all HK shipowners, management companies, classification societies and the masters in achieving this target. Should you have any questions related to PSC inspections for Hong Kong ships, please feel free to contact Senior Surveyor/Cargo Ships Safety Section at

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C.F. Liu', written in a cursive style.

(Barry C.F. Liu)

Ag. Senior Surveyor/Cargo Ships Safety Section
for Director of Marine