

HK int'l pact on ship recycling adopted

A new convention, the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009, which aims to ensure that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives, do not pose any unnecessary risk to human health and safety or to the environment, has been adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The convention was adopted at an IMO diplomatic conference held in Hong Kong from May 11 to 15 which was attended by delegates from some 63 countries as well as a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations around the world. The conference was organised with the support of the Central People's Government.

Speaking at the close of the conference, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos noted that a new chapter has been written in IMO's history and Hong Kong has taken its rightful place among those cities such as Athens, Torremolinos, Rome, Hamburg, Nairobi that have been associated with the adoption of a new IMO convention.

Mr Mitropoulos said: "The new convention strikes the right balance between the responsibilities and obligations of ship owners, ship recycling facilities, flag and recycling States, and allows for future improvements and provides a platform and an avenue for better regulation, in due course, of the activity it addresses."

He urged governments now to turn their attention to the important task of bringing the convention into force at the earliest possible date and, thereafter, to promote its uniform and effective implementation.

"The closure of the conference," he said, "should mark the beginning of strenuous efforts: first, to initiate, back home, work to ratify the convention at the earliest possible opportunity to expedite its entry into force; secondly, to initiate action to provide technical assistance to requesting countries without awaiting its entry into force; and thirdly, to initiate action, as may be necessary, to ensure the effective implementation and proper enforcement of the convention when it comes into force."

The new convention intends to address, among others, all the issues



The Vice Minister of Transport, Mr Xu Zuyuan, signs the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

around ship recycling, including the fact that ships sold for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances such as asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone-depleting substances and other concerns raised about the working and environmental conditions at many of the world's ship recycling locations.

The convention shall be open for signature by any State at the Headquarters of the IMO from September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010 and shall thereaf-

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Chief Executive Donald Tsang welcomes IMO delegates to the conference.



From left, the Deputy Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Mr Zhan Yongxin, Vice Minister of Transport, Mr Xu Zuyuan, Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, and Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, toast IMO delegates.

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Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme enhanced

As Hong Kong is concerned about the sustainable development of its maritime industry, the Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme was introduced in 2004. Despite the current global economic downturn, the shortage of officers for sea-going ships is still apparent and will continue to haunt ship managers over the next decade.

Speaking at the 20th Anniversary of the Maritime Services Training Institute cum Grand Opening of New

Facilities, the Deputy Director of Marine, Mr Francis Liu, said that the amount of monthly incentive payment to sea-going cadets has been increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 since January 29, 2009 so as to encourage more local school graduates to join the shipping industry.

A cadet may also apply for the reimbursement of the first examination fee after passing the Class 3 examination.

Since its inception, 120 cadets



The 20th anniversary of Maritime Services Training Institute cum Grand Opening of New Facilities.

have joined the Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme. To date, 31 deck cadets and 29 engineer cadets have completed the training under the scheme while 45 deck cadets and seven engineer cadets are undergoing the training. The sea-going career is not dominated by male as there are eight female cadets joining the scheme. ⚓

APEC APSN discusses port cooperation to enhance efficiency

The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Port Services Network (APSN) Extraordinary Council Meeting held in Vancouver, Canada, between May 4 and 6 successfully recruited partners from the maritime industry as its regular members, and gave views to make the operations of the ports in the APEC region more efficient and effective.

The Director of Marine, Mr Roger Tupper, and General Manager/Shipping Registry & Seafarers, Mr K F Chick, took part in the APSN meeting in which the cooperation among the ports in the APEC region for enhancing their operational efficiency was discussed.

The APSN Council approved 21 applicants from the industry to become the regular members and the organisation of a workshop for training senior managers of port facility security.

The Council also endorsed the publication of a Report on Asia Pacific Port Development for 2007, the information of which was provided by Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand.

Also, a database containing information useful to the marine



Those attending the APEC APSN Extraordinary Council meeting pose for a photograph.

transport industry is to be developed and the contribution from the industry will help the development of the database. ⚓

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ter remain open for accession by any state. It will enter into force 24 months after the date on which 15 States, representing 40 percentage of world merchant shipping by gross tonnage, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval or have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the combined maximum annual ship recycling volume of those states must, during the preceding 10 years, constitute not less than three per cent of their combined merchant shipping tonnage. ⚓

Messages:

The Vice Minister of Transport, Mr Xu Zuyaun, was very pleased that the IMO diplomatic conference on ship recycling was held in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. He was honoured to lead the Chinese delegation to the conference and work with the delegates from member States and the international organisations concerned, making appropriate contribution to the sustainable development of the ship recycling industry.

The Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr Mitropoulos, thanked the Central People's Government of China and the Chief Executive for inviting the IMO to this vibrant and fascinating city, and also for bearing the substantial cost of moving the IMO staff over here and providing logistics support in the preparation and running of the conference. They really did pull out all the stops to ensure its success and to make the stay here very pleasant. "To name the convention just adopted after this great city was the least we could do in return," he noted.

The Director of the Marine Environment Division of the IMO, Mr Miguel Palomares, congratulated the Marine Department (MD) for the faultless organisation and the splendid facilities provided for the conference, and hoped the efforts were given the credit deserved for the success. He also conveyed thanks to the MD for making it possible for the convention to be a reality and for paving the way towards the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships in future.

PolyU's facilities named after shipping magnate Dr Frank Tsao

On May 4, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) named its Maritime Library and Research & Development Centre after shipping magnate Dr Frank in appreciation of the IMC Hong Kong International Shipping and Transport Logistics Foundation Limited's financial support.

The foundation has donated \$10 million towards the centre to provide resources for students, academics and the maritime community for further advancement in education, training

and research.

The centre will consult and co-operate with the Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council and the Marine Department on research and development initiatives to meet the industry needs.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the centre, PolyU Council Chairman, Mr Victor Lo, said: "I am sure students and faculties using the facilities will be very grateful to Dr Tsao's contributions." 🌐



Plaque unveiling ceremony to mark PolyU's facilities named after Dr Frank Tsao.

Port of HK Handbook & Directory 2009 published

A useful and practical guide to the territory's port and maritime services, The Port of Hong Kong Handbook & Directory 2009, has recently been published, and free copies are now available to interested parties.



The full-colour English booklet published by the Seaports Publications Group with the support of the Marine Department,

gives up-to-date information on the port of Hong Kong, one of the world's busiest ports and a major international maritime centre, and Hong Kong's dynamic maritime in-

dustry which serves ships calling at our port as well as the global shipping community.

This 72-page handbook provides facts and information including the statistics of the port, the Hong Kong Shipping Registry, the Hong Kong Shipowners Association, shipping companies, terminal operators, ship finance, maritime law, sea-going training and so on.

Complimentary copies are now available for shipping-related companies, organisations and individuals on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are interested to get a copy of the handbook, please send your request by e-mail to ipro_mdd@mardep.gov.hk. You can also read the publication at <http://www.seaportsinfo.com/portofhongkong/> 🌐

HK proud to play host to first IMO conference in Asia

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, said that Hong Kong was proud to play host to the first IMO diplomatic conference in Asia and witness its fruitful conclusion.

"We are truly honoured and delighted by the IMO's resolution to name the convention as the 'Hong Kong Convention' as a token of appreciation to Hong Kong," she said at the signing ceremony of the convention.

Ms Cheng said: "This significant international convention provides a single regulatory platform needed to address safety, health and environmental issues in the disposal of end-of-life ships.

"It will help protect the health of workers in recycling yards, reduce damage to the environment and be instrumental to the sustainable development of the shipping industry worldwide."

The Hong Kong Shipping Register has just crossed the 41 million gross-tonnage mark and our shipowners own, manage or operate nearly 10% of the world's merchant fleet tonnage.

She noted: "Our shipping industry has been an active and responsible member of the global shipping community, and Hong Kong will certainly play our part in supporting the regulatory framework for ship recycling based on the convention."

"The IMO's decision to hold its diplomatic conference in Asia here in Hong Kong underlines again Hong Kong's status as an international maritime centre," said Ms Cheng. 🌐

IMO diplomatic conference – a vote of confidence in HK

The Central People's Government, in bringing the IMO diplomatic conference on ship recycling to Hong Kong between May 11 and 15 has given a huge vote of confidence to the territory as an international maritime centre, the Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, said at the opening of the conference.

Mr Tsang congratulated the IMO and all its member States on their work on reducing risk and improving the efficiency of marine transport over the years. The new convention is another major step forward in a collective effort to make the shipping industry safer and environmentally sound. He noted that global concern for the environment demanded early voluntary implementation of the measures and requirements in the new convention. He could assure that Hong Kong would play its part.

As the financial crisis has dramatically re-shaped the shipping industry's landscape and the world economy, and within a few months, the Baltic Drybulk Index at a record high fell to a record low of just over 660 points


last December. This led to cancellation of orders and laying up of ships. In parallel, the financial crisis combined with market conditions for shipping has led to resurgence in recycling activity.

The ship recycling industry employs hundreds of thousands of workers, and also provides indirect employment to downstream industries such as maritime services, the steel industry, re-rolling mills and furnace plants. At the same time, the industry also provides a good source of raw materials for infrastructure and capital projects in many countries which can be effectively recycled.

Ships used in marine transport are normally designed with an average life span of some 20 to 30 years. Hundreds of ships reach the end of their service lives every year. Recycling steel is particularly cost effective. At the same time, the shipping industry is now facing unprecedented challenges with surplus tonnage in many sectors,

and recycling them at the end or near the end of their lifespans is a more environmentally-friendly way to alleviate the supply-demand imbalances.

"Also, new guidelines on ship recycling will alter the design, construction, operation and preparation of ships to facilitate safer and more environmentally sound recycling. The two processes are therefore interactive and complementary," said Mr Tsang.

Mr Tsang noted that the convention served two key purposes: First, it helped protect the health of workers in recycling yards, and second, it reduced damage to the environment. These would also have a direct bearing on the sustainable growth of the shipping industry in future. 



Chief Executive Donald Tsang addresses the conference.

MD, Mainland registers of fishing vessels hold 4th regular meeting

The Marine Department (MD), the Register of Fishing Vessels of the People's Republic of China (RFV) and the Guangdong Register of Fishing Vessels held their 4th regular meeting in Hong Kong on April 15 to review co-operation matters and the progress in work during the past year.

In 2008, under the arrangement made by the RFV and MD for delegating survey work, the Guangdong Register of Fishing Vessels successfully inspected several steel and fibre-glass hull vessels in accordance with the MD's technical requirements. To promote the delegation of survey work for wooden fishing vessels, the Guangdong Register of Fishing Vessels and the MD jointly inspected several wooden fishing vessels in Yangguang, Zhuhai and Shanwei in late 2008.

Both sides took the opportunity to explain to Hong Kong fishermen's representatives the procedures of delegating the survey work, survey standards and arrangement for charges. The promotional fishing activities were well received and helped alleviate concerns on the delegation of survey work.


The delegation of survey work for wooden fishing vessels was officially implemented in January, 2009. Since then, the Guangdong Register of Fishing Vessels has carried out surveys for 15 Hong Kong licensed wooden fishing vessels.

Both sides also agreed to enhance the direct communication with fishermen's representatives and to increase the capacity and locations of joint inspections. Moreover, it was agreed that the focus of each joint inspection,



The Director of Marine, Mr Roger Tupper, presenting a souvenir to the Director-General of the Register of Fishing Vessels of PRC, Mr Zhou Tong.

such as the category of vessels and inspection details, should be determined beforehand.


The two sides agreed on the need to provide authorised surveyors with inspection guidelines in order to enhance their efficiency and to meet the survey standards drawn up by the MD. 

Important issues discussed at regular meeting of MD and MSA of PRC

The Marine Department (MD) and the Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) of the People's Republic of China held a regular meeting in Hong Kong on March 19 to exchange views and enhance coordination and cooperation, in pursuit of improving maritime safety and protecting the marine environment.

The MSA delegation was led by the Executive Director-General, Capt Liu Gongchen, together with seven members including the Director-General of Guangdong MSA and the Director-General of Shenzhen MSA.

Issues discussed included the ratification and implementation of International Maritime Organization (IMO) instruments including the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol); International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) Annex VI amendments; voluntary IMO member State audit scheme; Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC) 1996 Protocol; the Long Range Identification and Tracking System (LRIT); Bunker Convention; Anti-Fouling Systems (AFS) Convention and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention.

Operational issues such as hosting the IMO diplomatic conference on ship recycling in Hong Kong, navy protection provision for Hong Kong ships in the Gulf of Aden, the safety of high-speed passenger vessels in the Pearl River Delta, hydrographic survey and chart management as well as the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) matters, were also discussed. 



The officials of the Marine Department and the Maritime Safety Administration of the PRC pictured after holding the regular meeting.



The Marine Department and the Maritime Safety Administration of the PRC exchange views.


HKSR crossing 41M GT mark

The gross registered tonnage (GRT) of Hong Kong registered ships on the Hong Kong Shipping Register (HKSR) has crossed the 41 million mark recently.

Despite the world economic crisis, the GRT of the HKSR crossed the 40 million mark on January 15, 2009. We have also seen a growth of about one million GRT in the last three and a half months and the GRT

stood at 41 millions in late April.

According to the Danish Ship-owners' Association, among the world's registers, the HKSR, in terms of the GRT, is in the fifth place and just after Panama, Liberia, Bahamas and the Marshall Islands.

In the sustainable development of Hong Kong as a world maritime centre, the HKSR continues to target quality ships. 

HK shipping mission visits Shanghai

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, led a 16-member shipping mission to Shanghai on March 26 to promote Hong Kong as an international maritime centre providing comprehensive shipping services, and to enhance maritime industries development of both cities.

As the State Council had endorsed speeding up Shanghai's development into an international maritime centre, Hong Kong's shipping industry experts took the opportunity to share their experience with the Shanghai shipping industry as well as to explore how best to complement each other in their strengths.

Delegation members included Legislative Councillor Ms Miriam Lau representing the transport constituency, and experts in ship owning, ship brokering, ship finance, maritime insurance, maritime law and ship registration. They attended a welcome dinner hosted by the Shanghai Municipal Urban and Rural Construction and Transportation Commission and the Shanghai Municipal Transport and Port Authority.



The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, speaking at the "Seminar on Shanghai-Hong Kong Interactive Development in Shipping Service Industry".

On March 27, the delegation attended the "Seminar on Shanghai-Hong Kong Inter-active Development in Ship-ping Service Industry" hosted by the Shanghai Municipal Urban and Rural Construction and Transport Commission and co-organised by the Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council and the Marine Department.

At the seminar, Ms Cheng and other delegation speakers introduced Hong Kong's competitive edge in the

maritime industry, and also examined how Hong Kong and Shanghai could enhance co-operation, achieve synergy and promote the economic development of the country.

Ms Cheng and some members of the delegation also discussed ship finance development with Shanghai's banking sector's representatives at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Shanghai. 


MD corporate DVD, a new release

Our DVD will walk you through the major services provided by the Marine Department in just eight minutes, showing you that we are one in promoting excellence in marine services.

Divided into three chapters, the Marine Department's corporate DVD vividly displays how the department promotes Hong Kong's economic development round the

clock, facilitates growth of international shipping, and works behind the scene for Hong Kong's livelihood through vessel traffic management, harbour patrols, aids to navigation, surveying vessels, providing cargo handling facilities, search and rescue operations, probing into marine accidents, the Hong Kong Shipping Register, cross-boundary ferry terminals, ensuring up-to-date hydrographic

information of Hong Kong waters, collecting floating refuse, combating oil pollution, maintaining and repairing government vessels at the Government Dockyard and training its personnel.

The DVD is available at <http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/aboutus/vcd.html>. 

Marine Department, Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Hong Kong
G.P.O. Box 4155
Enquiries: (852) 2542-3711
Fax: (852) 2541-7194, 2544-9241
Web site: www.mardep.gov.hk
Email: mdenquiry@mardep.gov.hk

Hong Kong Maritime News Editorial Board
Tel: (852) 2852-4423
Fax: (852) 2543-8531
Email: ipro@mardep.gov.hk
Subscription: (852) 2852-4544