



# Asian Shipowners' Forum

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## PRESS RELEASE

### *Asian Shipowners' Forum welcomes India to membership.*

At its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, held today in Tainan, the Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) welcomed the Indian National Shipowners Association as its latest member. There are now 8 members of the ASF, which are the shipowner associations of Australia (ASA), China (CSA), Chinese Taipei (NACS), Hong Kong (HKSOA), India (INSA), Japan (JSA), Korea (KSA) and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowner Associations (FASA), which comprises the shipowner associations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The worldwide economic turmoil has contributed to the dramatic fall in shipping markets that has resulted in increasing difficulty in the employment of seafarers due to ships being withdrawn or laid up. The ASF recognises the benefit of maintaining employment, and therefore considered that employment conditions of seafarers should be consistent with the economic situation of the country or region where the seafarers are domiciled. Members of the ASF agreed to maintain as much as possible recruitment and training initiatives despite the present market conditions.

During its meeting, the ASF noted that on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) had, in light of the current economic crisis, announced short-term reduction of charges. As the effective period of the reduction expires on 30<sup>th</sup> September, the ASF urged the ACP to institute a more meaningful reduction of a longer duration.

While expressing its strong appreciation to the United Nations and all Governments that have committed naval and air forces to the area, the ASF stated its continuing concern over the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and surrounding seas. The potential trauma suffered by seafarers on ships that are hijacked, as well as their families ashore, is of deep concern to the ASF. The ASF urged all Asian shipowners to comply with the advisories issued by the relevant bodies, and to adopt the Best Management Practices issued by industry organizations.

The ASF considers that a long term solution to the problem may only be achieved by addressing the root cause of piracy in Somalia and by encouraging the formation of a 'Malacca Strait' style of multilateral cooperation amongst the littoral States.

The ASF agreed that measures to be adopted by the shipping industry should demonstrate effective and substantial reduction of total GHG emissions – this can only be achieved by improving the fuel efficiency of vessels through such energy efficient methods such as speed management and the development and adoption of technological methods. Instituting a 'cap and trade' mechanism may be complicated to apply in practice and could result in the suppression of shipping activities with the possible imposition of an unreasonable financial burden.

The ASF also discussed the criminalization of seafarers, and the liability of the seafarer presumably being determined by the seriousness of an accident rather than by any criminal culpability. This will, naturally, have a strong effect on the recruitment and retention of seafarers.

The ASF also discussed the outcome of the Diplomatic Conference on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, held 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May in Hong Kong, and expressed its support for the early entry into force of the new Convention.

For more information, contact Mr. Wang Cheng, Secretary-General of the Asian Shipowners' Forum, at Tel: +65 63254737 or E-mail: [information@asf.com.sg](mailto:information@asf.com.sg).

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*Editor's note:*

*The Asian Shipowners' Forum is a voluntary organization of the shipowner associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations comprising shipping associations of ASEAN countries. The aims of the ASF are to promote the interests of the Asian shipowning industries. Between annual ASF meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by the five Standing Committees; the Shipping Economics Review Committee, the Seafarers Committee, the Ship Recycling Committee, the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee, and the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee. It has been estimated that ASF owners and managers control and operate nearly 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.*