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Jakarta

Press Release

**Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA)
34th Annual General Meeting**
Hosted by
Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA)
Jakarta

"Asia's Position in Global Maritime"

Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) held its 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Jakarta on 27 May 2025. The meeting was hosted by the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Association (FASA) and attended by more than 200 representatives from the ASA member associations.



ASA Chairperson, **Mrs Carmelita Hartoto**, welcomed all members to the AGM. She said, "At this 34th ASA Annual General Meeting, we reaffirm Asia's pivotal role in shaping the future of global shipping. Under the theme 'Asia's Position in Global Maritime,' we are united in our commitment to driving collaboration, accelerating decarbonisation initiatives, and embracing innovation to build a resilient and forward-looking maritime industry." The AGM was followed by the International Shipping Forum (ISF), one of ASA's flagship programmes. **Mr. Arsenio Dominguez**, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), graced the ISF with his attendance and delivering a keynote address.

The ISF explored critical topics such as regulatory compliance, maritime workforce development, decarbonisation, and maritime security situation, among others.

Key messages from the 34th ASA AGM, derived from the reports of the ASA Committees, are below:

Primacy on Safeguarding Seafarers' Mental Health

Seafarers serve as the indispensable backbone of global trade, enabling the uninterrupted movement of essential goods across oceans. Yet, their critical role comes at a profound personal cost: enduring extended isolation, and prolonged separation from loved ones. These cumulative stressors significantly elevate risks of anxiety and depression, possibly creating a mental health problem. The amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006, adopted in April 2025, represent a significant step forward in addressing these issues, by designating seafarers as key workers, strengthening repatriation provisions, implementing visa-free shore leave policies, and enhancing anti-bullying and harassment measures. ASA appreciates the new amendments and calls for collective action to embed

mental health safeguards into industry practices, intensify awareness-raising initiatives, and accord seafarers' mental health the same level of importance as their physical safety.

Reaffirming the Vital Need for Liability Limitations in Global Shipping

ASA strongly underscores the indispensable role that limitation of liability plays in safeguarding the future of international maritime trade. In the wake of a recent major incident involving severe infrastructure damage and complex legal proceedings, ASA is sounding a clear warning about the risks of undermining this fundamental principle.

Limitation of liability is not merely a legal technicality- it is the backbone of maritime commerce. By capping liability for shipowners and managers at a reasonable level, as set out in international conventions and the laws of many Asian jurisdictions, this principle enables shipowners to operate with the confidence and predictability needed to keep global supply chains running. It strikes a critical balance, ensuring that claimants receive fair compensation whilst protecting the shipping industry from potentially crippling, unlimited financial exposure.

The current climate of heightened scrutiny and calls for reform threatens to unravel a system that has underpinned centuries of safe and efficient sea transport.

Weakening or abolishing liability limitations would have profound and far-reaching consequences. It would drive up costs, deter investment, and disrupt the insurability of shipping operations, with negative repercussions rippling through economies and affecting consumers everywhere.

ASA urges all regulators and stakeholders to recognise that limitation of liability is not a loophole for avoiding responsibility, but a carefully crafted safeguard that supports both justice and economic stability. ASA remains steadfast in its commitment to constructive engagement but is unequivocal in its belief that the preservation of liability limitations is essential to the resilience and prosperity of the shipping industry in Asia and around the world.

Unified Action on Maritime Security and Enhanced Awareness on Environmental Impact

ASA has urged the maritime industry to maintain heightened vigilance and strengthen cooperation in response to evolving maritime security (MARSEC) threats along key global shipping routes.

ASA emphasised the importance of continued collaboration with regional authorities and international partners to ensure timely incident reporting and enhance maritime domain awareness.

Simultaneously, ASA highlighted the pressing need for alignment and readiness as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) advances toward finalising its greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction framework. Updates from MEPC 82 and 83 revealed various proposals on fuel standards, emissions levies, and incentive schemes for low- and zero-emission technologies. ASA acknowledged the complexity of balancing ambitious environmental goals with operational realities—especially for smaller operators and developing regions—and called for practical, fair, and inclusive implementation strategies.

ASA reaffirmed its commitment to supporting initiatives that enhance maritime safety and reduce emissions and encouraged all stakeholders to actively contribute to shaping effective and inclusive global regulations.

Ensuring the Principles of Free Trade and Fair Competition

Amid intensifying economic conflicts and the growing rise of protectionism and unilateralism worldwide, ASA is concerned about the principles of free trade, fair competition, and market access now being undermined, posing a serious threat to

the sustainable development of global trade and the resilience of supply chains. In response to these challenges, ASA adopted its statement in March 2025, in which Asian shipowners encourage their governments to promote non-discriminatory measures for foreign-flagged vessels and to adopt internationally harmonised, transparent, and predictable regulatory frameworks within their jurisdictions for cross-border shipping. Furthermore, it is also indispensable to continue close communication with the Canal authorities to ensure safe, smooth, and stable transits of the canals, key chokepoints affecting global maritime trade.

Commitment to the greener lifecycle of shipping

The global shipping industry has faced unprecedented complexity due to tightening environmental regulations and geopolitical tensions, and this has been profoundly reflected in the ship recycling market. ASA further promotes and strengthens the long-standing policy of encouraging ship recycling countries to prepare adequately for the entry into force of the Hong Kong Convention, ensuring that priority is given to the use of HKC-certified yards and call on wider ratification of the HKC. In addition, ASA calls for the soonest solution to possible conflicts between the Hong Kong Convention and the Basel Convention and encourages the EU-SRR to be aligned with the HKC in the first instance. ASA supports the reduction of regional measures and ensures global policy coherence to promote the development of the ship recycling industry in the direction of greening, standardising, and improving the quality of ship recycling, and to build a green shipping circular system.



At the ASA AGM, **Mrs Eleanor Keukura Roi**, Vice-Chairperson of ASA and CEO of Cook Islands Ship Owners Association (CISOA) was appointed as the 35th ASA Chairperson. She said “I am deeply honoured to be nominated as the next Chairperson of the ASA. I would like to thank ASA members and Secretariat for their dedicated leadership and tireless efforts in strengthening ASA’s voice across the global maritime stage. Building on this strong foundation, I look forward to working closely with our members to deepen regional collaboration and drive forward our shared priorities in connectivity, sustainability, and digital transformation.”

Mr Yukikazu Myochin, President of Japanese Shipowners’ Association (JSA) was also appointed as the Vice-Chairperson of ASA.

The next ASA AGM will be held in Cook Islands tentatively within May 2026.

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Editor’s Note:

The ASA is a voluntary organisation of the shipowners’ associations from ASEAN, China, Cook Islands, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea, representing around 50% of the world merchant fleet.*

**The Federation of ASEAN Shipowners’ Associations (FASA) consists of associations from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.*

The ASA provides a major platform for Asian shipowners to build consensus on issues of concern to both the Asian and global maritime industries, which is also crucial to world trade, its supply chains and the prosperity of major Asian trading partners. Between ASA AGM meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by five Standing Committees:

The Seafarers Committee (SC), the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee (SILC), the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee (SNEC), the Shipping Policy Committee (SPC), and the Ship Recycling Committee (SRC).
