

Seafarers' Advisory Board (SAB) 2023

Notes of Meeting

Date	:	21 December 2023 (Thursday)
Time	:	2:30 p.m.
Venue	:	Conference Room C, 21/F, Marine Department Headquarters, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong
Chairman	Mr. WONG Sai-fat	Deputy Director of Marine (1), Marine Department
Members	Mr. NG Ngai Wing, Jammy	Superintendent of Mercantile Marine Office, Marine Department
	Mr. LIANG Lok-man, Raymond, JP	Assistant Commissioner for Labour
	Capt. CHUNG Tung-tong	Merchant Navy Officers' Guild-Hong Kong
	Capt. Vinay SINGH	Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Ltd
In-attendance	Mr. AU YEUNG Kam-lung	Amalgamated Union of Seafarers, Hong Kong
	Mr. CHEUNG Sai-teng	Hong Kong Seamen's Union
	Mr. Y M CHENG	Senior Marine Consultant (Policy), Marine Department
	Mr. KUANG Zhijian	Senior Surveyor / Seafarers and Examination (1), Marine Department
	Capt. L P YANG	Orient Overseas Container Line Ltd. (stand-in for Mr. XIAO Bu-zhou)
Absent with Apology	Capt. Vikrant GUSAIN	Hong Kong Shipowners' Association
	Mr. XIAO Bu-zhou	Orient Overseas Container Line Ltd.
Secretary	Ms CHOY Ying-suet, Icis	Executive Officer (Local Vessels and Examination), Marine Department

(1) Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all members and representatives to the meeting.

(2) Agenda Item 2: Confirmation on Notes of Last Meeting (23.6.2022)

2. Since no comment was received from members before / during the meeting, the notes of last meeting were endorsed.

(3) Agenda Item 3: Implementation of Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) in Hong Kong SAR - Occupational Safety and Health (SAB Paper No. 3/2023)

3. **Mr. Y M CHENG from MD** tabled SAB Paper No. 3/2023. He reported that since the ratification of the MLC which was extended to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in December 2018, MD had not come across any cases of seafarers working on board Hong Kong ships and/or shipping companies operating / managing Hong Kong ships that had difficulties in implementing the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and accident prevention policies and programmes.

4. From the statistical data of the OSH protection status on Hong Kong ships outside HK waters, it was noted that there was a continuous decrease in all cases of accidents reported in 2022 when compared with the figures of previous two years. However, there was a rebound in fatal accidents in 2022 after decrease in 2021 and among them, where four deaths were caused by falling from height. Although the review concluded that the legislation and the appropriate measures applied to Hong Kong ships for the policies and programmes of OSH and accident prevention were effective and should be maintained, the Chairman urged members to take appropriate action to remind their seafarers the risk of falling from height in work.

5. **The Chairman** expressed his appreciation to both shipowners' organisations and seafarers' organisations for the concerted efforts in raising the safety awareness of seafarers working on board HK ships.

6. **Capt. Vinay SINGH** enquired whether there was any comparative data with other flag States. **Mr CHENG** responded that there was no such data available from other flag States.

7. **The Meeting** observed no further comments from the floor and the item was thus endorsed.

(4) Enhancement of Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme (SGTIS) in 2023

8. **Mr. KUANG Zhijian from MD** presented the enhancement of Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme (SGTIS) which has been launched on 1 December 2023. Some salient points of the enhanced scheme applicable to Hong Kong youngsters at different phases of their maritime career development are highlighted below:

Phase 1: Monthly subsidy increased from HK\$6,000 to HK\$10,000

A monthly subsidy of HK\$10,000 would be provided to a deck or engineer cadet on sea-going vessels for a maximum period of 18 months (for deck cadets) or 12 months (for engineer cadets) plus an examination subsidy.

Phase 2: Maximum subsidy period increased from 6 months to 9 months

A monthly subsidy of HK\$3,000 for a maximum period of 9 months would be provided to a deck or engineer cadet who is preparing for the Marine Department Deck Officer Class 3/ Marine Engineer Officer Class 3 Examination ashore after the completion of cadetship.

Phase 3: No change

A monthly subsidy of HK\$6,000 would be provided to a holder of Deck Officer Class 3/ Marine Engineer Officer Class 3 Certificate of Competency issued by the Marine Department who is still working in the relevant department on sea-going ships as a cadet, for a maximum period of 6 months.

Phase 4: Newly introduced phase

A one-off financial incentive of HK\$40,000 would be provided to applicants who pass the examination and obtain Deck Officer Class 2/ Marine Engineer Officer Class 2 Certificate of Competency recognised by the Marine Department and a one-off financial incentive of HK\$80,000 to those who pass the examination and obtain Deck Officer Class 1/ Marine Engineer Officer Class 1 Certificate of Competency recognised by the Marine Department; of which 70% of the incentive will be payable after the applicants have acquired 12 months of post-qualification sea service on sea-going vessels.

9. **Mr. KUANG** further reported other training programmes including “Yu Kun” Training Programme organised by the Hong Kong Seamen’s Union (HKSU) in collaboration with the Dalian Maritime University (DMU), Summer Onboard Cadetship Programme. Mercantile Marine Office of MD has also been coordinating with training institutes for basic training and issuing Seafarer Employment Registration Book to facilitate students joining the shipping industry before graduation.

10. **The Chairman** expressed that the Government has worked closely with the industry and training institutes to promote the maritime industry and encourage more young people to join the industry. Apart from arranging visits for different schools and organisations, the Department also organised regular career talks for young people to let them learn more about the work of the Department as well as the diversified career paths in the maritime industry.

(5) Any Other Business

(i) Seafarer Psychological Support Project Proposal “CREW CARE”

11. **Capt. CHUNG** tabled a Seafarer Psychological Support Project Proposal “CREW CARE” under-planning by the Hong Kong International Seafarer Services Centre. This scheme would be free of charge with no religious background to address the mental health issues of seafarer. It would involve a kick-off sharing session, case counselling sessions and onboard/onsite visit for emergency case.

12. **The Chairman** thanked Capt. CHUNG for sharing this proposal as this proposal would give psychological support to seafarers.

13. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.

Secretariat
Local Vessels and Examination Division
Marine Department
February 2024