

Asia Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies Forum – 13th Session
Meeting Statement

The Asia Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies Forum (APHoMSA), convened its 13th meeting from 9 to 12 July 2012 in NhaTrang, a famous seaside city of Viet Nam.

More than 70 participants attended the meeting from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and observers from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP-ISC).

The Vice Minister of Transport, H.E. Mr Nguyen Van Cong and Mr Tran Son Hai - Vice Chairman of the People's Committee of Khanh Hoa Province and the Deputy Administrator, Mr Bui Thien Thu of the Vietnam Maritime Administration –Vinamarine - joined other dignitaries in welcoming delegates to the meeting.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the leaders and senior officials of regional maritime administrations to meet and share ideas, knowledge and best practices on issues relating to maritime safety, security, marine environment protection and technical cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.

1. Participants reaffirmed the importance of APHOMSA, noting the seniority and experience of delegates and the importance of the forum in building a better understanding of common maritime issues and the value of sharing information between countries in the Asia Pacific region.
2. Participants acknowledged the importance of the maritime sector to trade and economic development in the Asia Pacific and the projected increase in shipping activity into the future. APHoMSA members account for some 40 percent of global population, 54 percent of global GDP and 44 percent of global trade. These countries represent 40 percent of the total worldwide fleets and around half of the world's seafarers.
3. Participants from the island states of the Pacific reminded the forum that clean seas were critical to sustaining their rural communities – their 'oceansupermarket'.
4. Participants agreed that robust partnerships with the private sector are critical to the conduct of the work of maritime regulators. Areas where administrations need to work particularly closely include marine pollution response, search and rescue and effective implementation of international maritime conventions.
5. Maritime accidents continue to challenge administrations. At the same time, the general public is increasingly concerned by maritime incidents resulting in pollution, damage to marine environments and the livelihood in coastal communities.
6. A key matter for discussion was the Maritime Labour Convention which is nearing entry into force. APHoMSA members were encouraged to take the necessary measures for implementation within their own countries and benefited from learning about some States approach to implementation of the Convention. Information on the use of tripartite mechanisms involving union and industry associations, an increased focus on seafarer

recruitment, placement management systems and development of collective bargaining agreements to assist with domestic implementation of the Convention were discussed.

7. Training in port State control and evaluation of training activities and adherence to the rules and procedures for inspections has helped to identify substandard ships, while also highlighting concerns with detention rates of ships within the region. Enhanced flag state control measures were cited as examples of additional ship safety controls. These include pre-sailing inspections, more intensive inspections, improvements to seafarer qualifications and timely and regular communication between regulators, classification societies and shipping agents.

8. Discussions on marine search and rescue activities emphasised the importance of communication and the need for enhanced cooperation between agencies including staff exchanges among search and rescue centres. A serious challenge is to keep pace with emerging technologies. Some participants expressed a desire to have more practical and desktop exercises overseen by search and rescue experts. Opportunities for visits to rescue centres in the region were encouraged.

9. Vessel traffic services and information systems for enhancing the safety of navigation are of key interest to the forum. Such systems are capable of integrating a variety of navigation technologies and decision support tools to provide increased capability for safer and more efficient flow of maritime traffic.

10. The meeting acknowledged the importance of VTS training and guidance provided by the IMO and noted the request for IALA to consider exploring an auditing framework to facilitate the accreditation of VTS services that complied with common international standards.

11. Participants noted the need for continued participation and cooperation amongst users and stakeholders in order to support the work of the Cooperative Mechanism in promoting navigational safety and environmental protection of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The meeting was also briefed on the surveillance, control, alert and response systems and databases used by Chile; recovery efforts by Japan to repair 95 per cent of the 156 aids to navigation damaged by the catastrophic tsunami in March 2011; and on management of maritime safety infrastructure and navigational channels around the coastline and within central Vietnam.

12. APHoMSA participants were reminded of the problems caused for the maritime sector by instances of piracy – both within and beyond the Asia Pacific. They recognised the need for cooperation at the international and regional levels to deter piracy and appreciated the contribution to the meeting by ReCAAP who updated APHoMSA on their role in combating piracy.

13. It was recognised that incidents in the maritime sector are global in nature, often with flow on tensions between development activity and environment protection. The importance of engaging and raising awareness in local communities to help avoid these tensions was highlighted.

14. In line with promoting more environmentally friendly shipping, participants noted initiatives that were designed to go beyond the IMO's mandatory requirements and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions from shipping.

15. Technical cooperation and capacity building remains a high priority for APHoMSA members. Participants were encouraged by the level of technical cooperation within the Asia Pacific and the new programs and initiatives introduced by IALA and IMO. These

include developments under the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Program and the establishment of the World Wide Academy, a new capacity building arm of IALA in late 2011. Under the World Wide Academy, technical cooperation will be driven by awareness raising, assessment of needs, analysis of requirements and recommended actions under a four year master plan and annual action plan.

16. APHoMSA members recalled their agreement at the previous meeting in Jeju, the Republic of Korea, to develop a regional technical cooperation strategy. The meeting welcomed the work done by the correspondence group to develop the strategy and that it will also be useful to assist the IMO to identify priority regional projects for their Integrated Technical Cooperation Program in the Asia Pacific region.

17. On the future of the forum, participants noted the value of APHoMSA over the years since its inception as a high level forum which provides valuable networking and information exchange opportunities. Given the size of the maritime sector in the Asia Pacific and the role of the APHoMSA forum, it was recognised that there is an opportunity to bring a strong regional voice - a shared view - on issues of common interest to APHoMSA members to other related meetings and processes such as the IMO and APEC. The forum particularly encouraged a wider membership and participation of Pacific Island countries.

18. Noting the time APHoMSA has been in existence, it was agreed it would be timely to re-examine the terms of reference and operations of APHoMSA. A discussion paper on possibilities for the future of APHoMSA will be prepared by a correspondence group, led by Australia, and presented at the 14th APHoMSA.

19. The meeting expressed appreciation to Australia for their offer to host the next meeting of APHoMSA. Members will be advised of the date and venue of the next meeting.

20. Participants extended special thanks to Vinamarine of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for successfully organising, hosting and running the 13th Asia Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies Forum.



Mr Bui Thien Thu

Meeting Chair, 13th Asia Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies Forum

11 July 2012

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