

OPENING ADDRESS BY MR KHAW BOON WAN, COORDINATING MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL SAFETY@SEA CONFERENCE ON 30 AUGUST 2016, AT GRAND COPTHORNE WATERFRONT HOTEL, 9.30AM

Mr Kitack Lim, Secretary-General of International Maritime Organization (IMO),

Professor Richard Lim, Chairman, National Maritime Safety at Sea Council,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. I am very pleased to be here for the inaugural International Safety@Sea Conference, given the criticality of the topic not just to the maritime community but the sea-travelling public.

MPA's Safety Efforts Have Shown Results

2 And even more so for Singapore, as we are located along one of the world's busiest waterways, with approximately 1,000 vessels in our port at any one time.

3 As such, Singapore has always placed strong emphasis on safety at sea. Although we have been doing relatively well, we want to do better. That is why the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, or MPA, launched the Safety@Sea campaign in 2014, to raise awareness and inculcate a safety-first culture at sea.

4 Since then, MPA has invested significant effort in various initiatives to build a strong safety culture. The efforts have yielded results. There was only one incident in 2015, a 75% fall in incident rate compared to 2014.

5 But we are not there yet. The collision earlier this month involving a tanker and a container vessel in Singapore waters is a stark reminder. We have to continue to spare no effort to improve safety at sea.

Stepping up Efforts to Enhance Safety at Sea

6 Hence, we are working on several new initiatives.

7 First, to help mariners navigate safely through the Singapore Strait, MPA has jointly developed a safety video with the maritime authorities of Indonesia and Malaysia. This should help those who may be less familiar with navigating the Singapore Strait and to the Port of Singapore, in particular those who are doing it for the first time. We will share the video shortly after this.

8 Second, to reduce the incident risk for smaller vessels, Singapore has made it mandatory for all power-driven harbour and pleasure craft within our waters to be fitted with IMO-compliant Automatic Identification System-B (AIS-B) transponders and electronic chart systems. With this, ocean-going vessels will now be able to

track even small harbour and pleasure craft on its electronic charts, and vice-versa. To support the initiative, MPA is funding the cost of equipment and installation on harbour and pleasure crafts registered before 1 July 2016. The exercise has begun and will be completed by 1 January 2017.

9 Third, learning from the *Sea Prince* incident last year, MPA has worked to improve the servicing and maintenance of safety equipment on board passenger ferries. MPA has also increased the frequency of inspection for regional passenger ferries. To raise passengers' awareness of safety procedures on board ferries, MPA is producing a safety video to be shown at ferry terminals for passengers' viewing while they wait to board their ferries.

Encouraging the Sharing of Knowledge and Best Practices

10 Your support and your commitment to safety are key to the success of the various initiatives. Riding on the success of Safety@Sea Campaign, I am pleased to inform that MPA will be establishing a 'Community of Practice' – a collaborative platform for international maritime administrations and other non-governmental organisations to come together to share knowledge and best practices.

11 This Community of Practice will complement existing forums such as the Co-operative Mechanism and Tripartite Technical Experts Group that adopts an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to ensuring safe, efficient and secure navigation in our part of the world but is applicable worldwide. I encourage all of you to participate actively in the Community.

Conclusion

12 Safety is a shared responsibility. I hope this conference and the various initiatives will strengthen the partnership between MPA and other stakeholders towards improving safety at sea.

13 And on this note, let me wish all of you a fruitful conference. Thank you.

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