

PRESS RELEASE

MARITIME MANPOWER CONFERENCE – *SHOULD ASIAN SEAFARERS BE PAID ASIAN RATES?*

Singapore, 30 September 2005 – Asian maritime unionists urged for a review on maritime safety and seafarers' wages at the long-awaited Maritime Manpower Singapore Conference (MMS) earlier today.

The conference, attended by the movers and shakers from the international and local maritime industry, hosted a series of discussions on issues ranging from regional maritime safety and manpower training standards to the widening disparities between international and local maritime wages.

In his presentation to delegates at the MMS, Mr Thomas Tay, General Secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) said that Asian seafarers who have received proper training and qualifications by their flag states and have proved to be competent, would deserve the right to decide for themselves their wages.

The conference was opened by Guest-of-Honour, Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister, Prime Minister's Office and Deputy Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). Speakers in the conference included Brigadier-General Tay Lim Heng, Chief Executive of the Maritime Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), Mr David Dearsley, Secretary General, International Maritime Employers Committee and Mr Brian Orrell, the Chairperson of the International Transport Workers' Federation, Seafarers Section. The issues addressed by the speakers touched on Singapore's maritime manpower needs, promoting safety culture and wages and training for seafarers.

Organised by the Seafarers Training and Education Advisory Committee and managed by Wavelink, the third biennial conference, held in conjunction with the World Maritime Day, was indicative of the maritime industry's commitment towards managing increasing regulatory demands and promoting the safety culture of Asian seafarers.

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At present, there are more than 13,823 maritime officers working onboard Singapore ships of which, approximately 90% are Asian deck officers and engineers.

About STEAC

At the initiative of SMOU, a newly formed committee called **Seafarers Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC)** was formed on 5th March 2001. STEAC consists of members who are individuals coming from the key shipping industry. It looks into the future training standards for quality seafarers and the raising of resources and funds to meet those objectives. This is in line with the nation's aspiration to discharge its responsibility as a premier International Maritime Centre.

As an integral part of the shipping community, SMOU is committed to be responsive to the rapid changes in the maritime world and to help promote a high standard of maritime training for quality seafarers to remain relevant and to find gainful work onboard Singapore ships.

Members of STEAC are:

Chairman	:	Mr. Thomas Tay	Singapore Maritime Officers' Union
Co-Chairman	:	Mr. Teh Kong Leong	Singapore Maritime Foundation
Secretary	:	Capt. Nantha Kumar	Singapore Maritime Academy
Asst Secretary	:	Mr. Larry Chan	Singapore Maritime Officers' Union
Members	:	Capt. Francis Wee Ms. Mary Liew Capt Chong Chee Eng Capt. Jonathan Foong Ms. Ong Lee Lee Ms Arina Lee	Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore Singapore Maritime Officers Union Singapore Maritime Employee Federation SingClass International Pte Ltd Wavelink Event Management Wavelink Event Management

About SMOU

The **Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)** was established in 1951 to safeguard the interest and well-being of seafaring officers. The primary role of the organisation is to promote good industrial relations between members and their employers, improve the working conditions of members in the maritime industry through the terms and conditions of collective bargaining agreements negotiated on behalf of members and signed with shipping companies which employ them and to advance the cultural, recreational and educational aspirations of its members.

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About Wavelink

Wavelink Co-operative Ltd (Wavelink) was jointly founded by **Singapore Maritime Officers' Union** (SMOU) and **National Trades Union Congress** (NTUC) on 29 June 2000 in an attempt to venture into new frontiers and business opportunities. The Co-operative aims to promote opportunities for social interaction, cultural appreciation, healthy recreation and leisure activities on an economic co-operation basis, at the same time, create career opportunities for members in the maritime and/or other industries.

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