

Concept Paper

Proposed ARF Workshop on Ferry Safety

Background

Domestic ferries, as a means of transport, play a vital role in the daily life of people living in countries with rivers, deltas, islands, archipelagos and lakes, where life without ferry transportation systems would be almost impossible. However, according to a conservative statistic based on reports of Worldwide Ferry Safety Association, 21,574 lives were lost due to ferry accident, an average of 130 deaths per incident and 1,541 deaths per year from 2000 to 2014, while around 70% of the accidents and fatalities happened in Asia, and over 50% of the accidents were in Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and China. To this end, International Maritime Organization (IMO) has responded with a series of specific technical cooperation programs in Asia almost every year since 2006.

China, with around 22,700 domestic ferries which transported more than 2 billion passengers every year, also faces big challenge of ferry safety. By the past 10 years, China has made a big progress in ferry safety by the joint efforts among relevant departments. Chinese government initiated a 3 years Concentrated Supervision Campaign on Ferry safety from 2005. Since then, the yearly ferry accidents has decreased from around 60 in 2005 to around 40 in 2009, and around 20 in 2014, the yearly fatality due to ferry accident has decreased from around 100 in 2005 to around 60 in 2009 and around 30 in 2014. Anyhow, the “Eastern Star (DongFangZhiXing)” passenger ship accident which happened on June 1, 2015, caused 442 deaths, warned us that there is still a long way to go in ferry safety issue in China.

In order to prevent ferry accidents, obtain IMO’s goal to reduce the current level of around 1,000 lives lost per year to half, it is very important to share experiences among countries in the region, and find out the root causes from catastrophic ferry accidents, establish an integrated and comprehensive management mechanism to enhance ferry safety. Therefore, China proposes to hold the Workshop on Ferry Safety under ARF, which aims to prevent ferry accident and reduce the lives lost through information sharing, capability building and regional cooperation.

Proposal:

It is proposed to convene a 2 days workshop in Guangdong, China, for implementation in the 2017/2018 inter-sessional year. The workshop is intended to enhance capacity building on enforcing applicable rules, promote the use of fit-for-purpose vessels, encourage safety culture and strengthen cooperation on ferry safety within ARF framework.

Specific Workshop Goals/Topics

1. Identifying the root causes leading to accidents and casualties, such as human error, weather, fire, not-fit-for-purpose ferry, etc.

2. Analyzing different parties' responsibility, such as Government departments, Local government, Non-government organization, Ferry survey organization, Ferry Company, Ferry crew, Passenger, etc.
3. Recognizing the bad practices, such as poor enforcement of rule (Government), overcrowding (Ship and Passenger), inappropriate vessel design and construction (Survey organization and Shipyard), bad maintenance on ferry (Crew and Ship Company), not-fit-for-purpose ferry and second-hand ferry management (Government, RO, Ship Company and Crew), etc.
4. Discussing new technology, like AIS, new material for life-saving appliance, etc.
5. Formulating comprehensive and integrated management mechanism for ferry safety and establishing a platform for experience sharing and regional cooperation on ferry safety.

Co-chair

China is seeking co-chairs from ASEAN countries and other members.

Language, Venue, Date, Duration

Language: English

Location: Guangzhou, China

Date: Q4/2017 or Q1/2018

Duration: Two days

Participants

Participants of the workshop would be officials and practitioners from maritime administrations and related agencies. Moreover, relevant international organizations such as the IMO and UNDP will be invited. Other stakeholders that related could also be invited.

Administrative arrangements

The host will bear the administrative costs of the workshop. Participants will be responsible for their own international travel, accommodation, and other costs as appropriate.

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