



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED TILL 25 NOV 2016, 7 P.M

Launch of Seafarers' Accommodation Scheme (SAS)

Singapore shipping companies that are currently facing a cyclical downturn are getting a helping hand from the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU, 新加坡高级海员联合会) in the form of 6,000 subsidised hotel rooms for the next 2 years to lighten their financial load. This Seafarers' Accommodation Scheme (SAS, 海员住宿计划) will cost the union S\$300,000 and aims to help shipping companies provide quality lodging at subsidised rates for their officers.

Guest-of-Honour, Minister in Prime Minister's Office and Labour Chief, Mr Chan Chun Sing announced the Scheme to some 1,400 tripartite partners and industry guests that included Special Guest Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister for Manpower, and Speaker of Parliament Madam Halimah Yacob at the SMOU 65th Anniversary Gala Dinner on 25 November held at the Resorts World Sentosa. The SAS can be utilised by the shipping companies that have Collective Agreement (CA) with SMOU.

Currently, shipping companies need to pay for their seafaring officers' lodging in Singapore when they are required to sign on/off a ship or for training. With the SAS, shipping companies are not only getting some financial relief but it ensures that the welfare of the seafaring officers will not be compromised.

SMOU General Secretary, Ms Mary Liew said, "The current shipping industry is facing some headwinds and is going through a cyclical downturn. Therefore, it is important that our union continues to rally around and proactively come up with creative and yet practical ways to help the shipping companies overcome this tough period. In fact, earlier this year, SMOU announced a S\$1.5 million one-off contribution to the shipping companies who have CA with us so that they can continue the shipboard welfare and training for the seafaring officers. Many of the shipping companies fed back that they appreciate this and are putting the contribution to use."

Captain William Tan, Director from Tai Chong Cheang Steamship (S) Pte Ltd said, "This subsidy comes as a welcome move amidst the shipping situation now, and it will assure our officers of reasonable accommodation options after they sign off in Singapore – a win-win situation for both the shipping company and the seafarers."



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SMOU has also been actively value-adding to the local maritime industry by working with the tripartite partners to develop training programmes to build the Singapore Maritime Core. Two of such training initiatives are the Tripartite Nautical Training Award and Tripartite Engineering Training Award Programmes to train Singaporeans to be Deck Officers and Marine Engineers respectively. Besides these, SMOU has contributed to the Labour Movement's NTUC Education and Training Fund by organising a fundraising golf that raised S\$650,000 this year.

The Union is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year and the gala dinner wraps up the end of its significant milestone with 1,400 guests from the industry, including over 50 overseas guests from Australia, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Ukraine, UK, and US.

Today, Singapore is home to more than 5,000 maritime establishments employing over 170,000 people. The maritime industry contributes to 7 per cent of Singapore's GDP.

Last year, Singapore was ranked as the top maritime city in the world, ahead of Hamburg, Oslo, Hong Kong and Shanghai in a report by a Norwegian consulting firm.