AMOSUP makes history with human ship wheel
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Sailing Forward
As we reach this new milestone, the Union continues to fulfill its vision and commitment of improving the life of the Filipino seafarer.

The President’s Message

Seafarers’ power at its best! That’s what we did in our recent commemoration of AMOSUP 55th Anniversary.

As we gathered Union members and our brothers and sisters in the maritime profession for a record setting formation of the human ship wheel, we have shown to the world our strength and unity in the industry. Indeed, such colossal formation of the vessel’s steering wheel has surely landed us in history – setting a record even worthy of distinction into the Guinness World’s list.

It was also a record of sort when thousands of members and their families almost filled the 15,000-seat MOA Arena for a rock concert during that night of 11 November. The star-studded anniversary night really entertained most of us in the crowd, making this milestone one of the most memorable celebrations AMOSUP has organised in recent memory.

We would like to extend our thanks to those who joined in the human ship wheel project as a major activity in celebrating our foundation day.

We are proud of the more than 2,200 seafarers and maritime cadets who took part in accomplishing such historic display of unity and empowerment.

This remarkable accomplishment strengthens our firm desire to maintain the Philippines position as the world’s seafaring capital. With all your help, we can make it happen and make our country proud.

The fact that we could organise and execute such a gigantic human formation signifies that we can achieve whatever we want to accomplish in the future. Our bountiful, competitive human resources that employers rely on in maintaining and running their merchant fleet will still be as unfailing over the next many years.

The five and a half decades of the Union’s existence covers a history of fulfilling the membership’s social needs from collective agreements with maritime employers. As we vow to top what we’ve already achieved, we see the next several years as an opportunity of continuing services in the field of seafarers’ welfare and other advocacies by the Union.

For instance, the resumption to service of our newly renovated Sailor’s Home serves as an example. The accommodation services now provide more space to house our guest members. We have bigger plans for AMOSUP members.

As we reach this new milestone, the Union continues to fulfill its vision and commitment of improving the life of the Filipino seafarer. Our goals of providing the membership with welfare and benefits have remained AMOSUP’s priority in finding the best for their interests.

We are proud of our accomplishments over the last 55 years of the organisation’s existence. But we are also humble in the knowledge that we owe these successes to the membership and support of our social partners such as the shipowners and shipmanagers.

We also would like to thank the general secretary of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) Stephen Cotton for attending and supporting our celebration. Steve joined in all the festivities the Union held for this memorable event.

At the same time, this milestone never failed us to recollect the deeds of our great inspirational source – our founder and former president Capt Gregorio S. Oca. His dedication and commitment in improving the life of the Filipino seafarer has placed the Union into a commitment for such an advocacy. Because of this we are also continuing the legacies of Capt Oca in the field of seafarers’ welfare and benefits over the next 55 years or maybe more.

Happy Sailing Forward!

Dr. Conrado F. Oca

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Photo: Stimula Productions
Union’s main accommodation services resume operation

Newly renovated Sailor's Home now provides spacious facilities for about 300 seafarers

AMOSUP's main accommodation facilities for members have resumed operation after almost a year-long reconstruction.

Located across the Union's headquarters in Intramuros, Manila, the newly reopened Sailor's Home now provides more spacious facilities to accommodate about 300 seafaring guests at a time.

Apart from the spacious accommodations, bays for the laundry areas have been added in which coin-operated washing machines have now been installed.

The recent restoration of the Union's four-storey transient facilities marked its second refurbishment since it was built in 1993.

The first overhaul of the former three-storey building, which then had a capacity of 99 beds, was done in 2004 when it expanded to its current four-storey facility to accommodate more seafarers.

AMOSUP's needs for temporary accommodation for their embarking and disembarking members including those undertaking training in Manila have increased over the years.

Holy mass and the blessing of the facilities marked the ceremonial resumption of the newly refurbished seafarers' Home.
Such requirements have resulted in the construction in 2012 of another 400-capacity building – the Sailor’s Home Annex – next to its operational hub or the Seamen’s Centre building.

Holy mass and the blessing of the facilities marked the ceremonial resumption of the newly furnished seafarers’ Home.

Both the main Sailor’s Home and the Annex Home have always been fully accommodated as hundreds of members checking-in for temporary stay mostly come from various provinces across the country.

For instance in 2013, seafarers who checked-in at its Annex facilities consisted of 46% mariners from various parts of Mindanao, 30% from Luzon and 22% from the Visayas. Most of them were embarking and disembarking crewmen. Others were undergoing training for upgrading courses or reviewing for the next professional exam in line with seamanship requirements.
An officer and a seafarer’s wife

Wives and mothers agree that raising children and performing other domestic chores simultaneously is a daunting task. A mother of two toddlers and a marine engineer as well, C/E Nina Sue Da Silva shares her own travails and feelings as professed by a mariner’s better-half

For a female seafarer and a seafarer’s wife at that, some say my travails and other experiences ashore are quite unique that could be worth sharing. My husband has also been a seafarer for more than five years now. He said he first saw me on Facebook because of a common friend. As fate would have it, we became classmates in one of the training classes. And that was the first time I met him. He was then a 4th Engineer and I was already a 2nd Engineer. It only took a brief courtship that resulted in what we now consider a blissful union with two adorable kids—a girl and a boy.

I consider my husband an exceptional provider as we are truly fortunate, having met all our expenses and other obligations. Practically speaking, we have not experienced financial difficulty. In so many ways, I can describe my partner as an ideal husband, gifted with a sense of optimism, a loving person, highly knowledgeable and generous. But like any other officers on board ship, he can be strict at work, maybe but that’s natural to those who have short temper and disciplinarian. Nevertheless, they’re all part of his imperfections.

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As a wife, I have learned to be more patient and understanding with him. Our journey as a couple has not been a bed of roses. However, we constantly take adjustments and try to make reflections in every misunderstanding that sometimes happens to improve our relationship. We argue on some issues, though they are more related to work, especially about marine engines. At work, he has shared and sometimes asked me about things when they need troubleshooting, but at the end of the day we could still manage to put aside our pride and learn to love each other more.

Our relationship is now apart by the distance of both sea and land since I stopped sailing. I gave birth twice via Caesarian section without my husband. He was probably sailing off to the Pacific seas when I was experiencing the painful effect of getting incised on my abdomen. He called me through satellite phone to check on my condition. However, his absence while I was in labour pain and post-natal blues was truly depressing. I went through all these pains alone — waking up anytime and feeding my baby, among others. I am sure all wives and mothers will agree with me that raising children single-handedly is a huge task, especially for working mothers like me.

When our eldest son was admitted to the hospital my husband was not around to watch over him. I had the adrenaline rush to carry our son from the 11th floor of a condo unit to the taxi cab by myself to bring our son to the nearest hospital. It seemed like I was floating on thin air while sincerely wishing that my husband would pop up in front of me and gather me in his arms, assuring me of our son to get well.

However, it would be too self-centered if I only look at my own sacrifices. I know that my husband has his fair share of sacrifices and frustrations for not being around during those trying times. Sometimes he talked about how he felt so helpless for not being able to give us an emotional lift. Sometimes he shared that he missed how our children grew up and how he wished he could playback the hands of time and see us from the time I gave birth. And that made me heartbroken and in tears.

I sympathise with my husband as he has to adapt to the working and living conditions with different nationalities on board. When on vacation, the reality hits that he has to leave again for another six months or more to be out for a living overseas. It is more painful every time he leaves us, which gives us tears. That is why each time when he is ready to depart he prefers us not to accompany him to the airport. He has abhorred seeing our children hugging him, shedding tears and waiting for goodbyes.

Another painful reality is that when all is set and you feel excited on the supposed day he will be home, only to be deferred because his reliever never came. He should be home now for instance. Actually he signed on in November last year and until now no news on his reliever. Unfortunately, the office can send his replacement on the next trip which is on the following month. It was the longest time we have waited. Every day I wish he will be home soon.

Sometimes, I think positively that God may have reasons of his extension so that he can spend with us Christmas and New Year this year.

One of the saddest experiences is when my husband was not around during the first birthdays of our children. I am really sensitive to this because I consider it as one of the significant days in their lives. He failed to experience again the wonderful event with us. But glad that he did not miss their christening.

Normally, every wife asks this question: “Do I trust my husband when he is away on board?” For me my heart does. My man is a good and decent person and a wonderful husband and father, and I love him. I thank God for him every day. And most of all, my heart trusts him because I completely trust his love for me. Though, my mind sometimes disagrees with my heart. Seeing seafarers when I was sailing was sometimes disturbing. What if my husband is doing this, and why? Maybe because I saw too much of what was actually happening in many marriages around us. I am too realistic for my own good. So realistic in fact that I can’t give my husband my unquestioning faith because I can’t ignore what I know about men, which is their human nature and what happens in the real world.

But in the end, I am just so blessed my husband fills me with love that always makes me feel secure.

I want my husband to know that I am neither blind nor insensitive to all his sacrifices for our family. I want him to remember that the thousands of miles and vast ocean that separate us will neither diminish nor taint my love for him. Proudly, I let the whole world know that if we go back in time, I will still choose him and he will always be in my heart. As I once told him, I may not be a perfect wife to him and mother to our children, but I am trying every possible way I could to be the best that he could ever have.

All these had kept our marriage more meaningful. We will soon be celebrating our wedding anniversary without him again and we hope to count more years. We might have missed out on many important occasions of our life together, and I may not say this as often as I should. But let me tell him this that I love him and he will always be a hero to me and to our children.
AMOSUP president Dr Conrado F. Oca and EVP VAdm Eduardo Ma R Santos (AFP, ret) led the kick-off ceremonies during the industry’s celebration of the Maritime Week last September at the Seafarers’ Monument on Baywalk, Malate, Manila. The ceremonies were highlighted by a holy mass and wreath-laying to the Monument that was followed by a fluvial parade of lifeboats from the AMOSUP-MAAP training ship Kapitan Felix Oca, simultaneous with flower offering at the Manila Bay. Flowers meant to remember seafarers who died in accidents at sea. The Union’s social partners led by Filipino Shipowners’ Association president Roy Alampay and Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council president Ed Manese joined the kick-off ceremonies for the weeklong celebration.
ME WEEK

EREMONIES
Western Union remits aid for MAAP cadets

The company’s monetary endowment is part of its corporate social responsibility to society and future clients.

A private firm has endowed financial aid to a number of cadets from the AMOSUP-managed Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) for the midshipman’s expenses while taking their classes at the academy.

Western Union, the financial services and communications company, endowed the cost of PhP26,000 to each of the 25 MAAP cadets as part of the US-based company’s celebration of their 25th anniversary in the Philippines.

Western Union is said to be turning its sight to helping the youth in its corporate social responsibility as the firm hopes to promote education and training to the deserving students.

“I’ve dreamt of helping my parents, and having this sponsorship by the Western Union to be a really big help for them... It’s like I’ve helped them in my own little way... make them feel proud of me,” said one of the cadets during the company’s presentation at the awarding ceremony on board the AMOSUP training ship Kapitan Felix Oca last 03 October.

Western Union president and CEO, Hikmat Ersek, said the company recognises the importance of the cadets’ education and their future role as seafarers in the movement of goods.

“You do change people’s lives day by day by moving their products to make their lives better,” Ersek told the cadets, saying: “That’s what we do at Western Union. We move money for better life.”

He said Filipino seafarers remitted about $5.5 billion to the Philippines last year. Portion of this remittance was channeled through Western Union. “Seafarers changed a lot of people’s lives, and that’s what you’re gonna do in the future.”

In every shore, the passion to help the community is evident in the company’s project that has touched the lives of persons or families.

Ersek stressed that the company’s grant hopes to contribute to the cadets schooling and push them to have better lives after school. Ersek personally handed the cheque to each of the 25 cadets at the ceremony on board KFO.

MAAP president VAdm Eduardo Ma R Santos (AFP, ret) thanked the company for the endowment fund, saying the money would be a great help to the

“The company’s grant hopes to contribute to the cadets and push them to have better lives after school”
MAAP grabs Manese Futsal championship

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) grabbed the recent championship cup of the 2nd Miguel Manese Futsal Festival at the Mariners Sports Complex in Malate, Manila.

Alabuelo and the Meralco teams respectively took the first runner up and second runner up awards of the tournament, which was organised by the Los Borrachos Football Club.

Los Borrachos chairman, Atty Noli Partido, also awarded a raffle prize of Nike ball to a Meralco player.

Other officers present during the awarding ceremony included Carlo Ventosa, Martin Manese, Gary Rabano, Louie Lacson, Banjie Tantoco, Paulo Sanchez and Paul Rafael.
Seafarers and cadets actual formation of the maritime industry’s emblem generates a record 2,276 persons partaking and an area of 41.45m x 38.38m in sizes

The largest human image of a ship steering wheel! That’s what AMOSUP did when the Union gathered seafarers and cadets on its way to a record number of people forming a ship wheel at a single venue to celebrate its 55th founding anniversary last 11th November.

The largest maritime union in the Asia-Pacific, AMOSUP showcased its seafaring power to the world by organising and executing the formation of the ship steering wheel at the concert ground of SM Mall of Asia (MOA) in Pasay City.
Large screen on stage monitors how the giant fish formation takes shape.

Hundreds of cadets and seafarers lined up for their turns to be featured in the historic event (top and lower photos).

The participating cadets were equally maintained by participants from the maritime cadets of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP).
The 2,276 Filipino seafarers and maritime cadets bravely endured the scorching heat of the mid-day sun to achieve such a human formation of the vessel's symbolic part.

The participating seafarers were equally matched by participants from the maritime cadets of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), which is also managed by AMOSUP. Cadets from the NYK-TDG Maritime Academy and Fettui University also took part in this endeavour.

The assembly measuring 41m x 38m of ship wheel formation was the first ever in the industry. It "showed and symbolised unity and strength in number through this world record attempt," according to AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca.

Stressing that the Filipinos is the number one supplier of seafarers, Dr Oca said that "with all your help, we aim to maintain this ‘Number One’ status in the years to come. We are Filipinos, know that we can make this happen and make our country proud."

The ship or boat wheel, whose image has been imprinted on letterheads and has appeared as logos of countless maritime-related entities, is used steer the vessel to change course. And with the rest of the steering mechanism it forms part of the helm.

The organisers structuring of the traditional ship wheel, which has eight cylindrical spokes joined at a central hub, took almost more than an hour to completion. While the enormous figure was in progress, event host Maresciel Yao and her cohort made continuous annotations as both participants and the crowd watched the big screen on stage of the concert ground, monitoring how the gigantic formation took shape.

Closed circuit television and drone camera recorded the full process – from actual head counting of both seafarers and cadets making their way to the area, until it was finally completed.

This attempt for a world record was the day’s major attraction on the ground for the Union’s anniversary.
which was preceded by a plethora of activities and programmes that sustained the momentum for both participants and the crowd as they anticipated the big event. The preceding programmes consisted of a silent drill by MAAP cadets, anniversary sponsor activities, AMOSUP hash tagging on Facebook, raffle draws and dedication booths.

It was a long and exciting day for this year’s celebration of the Union’s 55th anniversary. As early as 0900H, various booths manned by employees from the different service departments of AMOSUP got themselves busy in accommodating the registration of participants. Member IDs and those of non-members were verified and issued barcode numbers which they would use later for the head count for their entry to the ship wheel formation area.

Hundreds of cadets and seafarers lined up for their turns to be listed for the historic event. And the traditional holy mass was also celebrated to thank God Almighty for all the blessings received and the Union’s achievements during its five and a half decade of existence.
This attempt for a world record was the day’s major attraction on the ground for the Union’s anniversary, which was preceded by a plethora of activities and programmes that sustained the momentum for both participants and the crowd as they anticipated the big event.

As the ship wheel was completed, participants were given a five-minute countdown to stay in their postings, unmoved as soldiers on a drill waiting for the next command. That’s also the time measurement was done and cameras angled the colossal figure from the air to the ground.

Voila, the human ship wheel formation generated a record number of 2,276 seafarers and cadets partaking, measuring 41.45m x 38.38m in size.

Raffle draws gave away various prizes such as mobile phones, microwave ovens, washing machines, grocery-packs and cash prizes.

Seafarers and maritime cadets who joined in the ship wheel formation exclusively got the chance to win four motorcycles and PhP100,000 in cash, which the Union raffled away.

Dr Oca and the London-based ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton, who was in town to celebrate with AMOSUP, personally handed the prizes to the lucky participant seafarers and cadets.
THE ART OF HUMAN SHIP WHEEL FORMATION

Photography by Jun Danao
Venue: Mall of Asia concert ground

Seafarers (in white t-shirts) and maritime cadets (in blue) assemble in preparation for their entry to the formation site.

Site gets ready for the big event.

Start to stand on their figured spots.

Seafarers turn to get in.

...as their barcodes shot upon for the headcount.

Slowly gets their way into shaping the ship wheel.

White and blue participants ready to join together.
Maritime cadets queue up first to enter the formation area.

Participants barcode numbers get shot for the headcount as their respective stubs drop off for the raffle prizes later.

Formation gets to shape...and amalgamate.

Final head count.
Thousands enjoy night of rock to commemorate Union’s 55th year

AMOSUP members and their families nearly filled the 15,000-seat MOA Arena to celebrate the momentous event.

Thousands of AMOSUP members, including their families and guests joined a night of fun, rocking away in a concert to mark the Union’s 55th anniversary at the MOA Arena last 11th November.

A number of talents from the local showbiz and entertainment industry performed at the anniversary night with their rousing concert feats, hosted by Binibining Pilipinas beauty queen Tina Marasigan and radio host DJ Chacha.

Performers, namely, The 5th Gen, first X Factor Philippines grand winner KZ Tandingan, rock star Amai Pheda and the female-rock band Aegis stirred and thrilled the crowd who almost filled the 15,000-seat Arena.
to celebrate the AMOSUP founding anniversary.

Guests were also treated to a dinner. The night’s affair capped the whole day celebration in which the Union earlier organised the historic ship wheel formation at the MOA open ground. Other celebratory activities were also carried out as AMOSUP members and their dependants came to enjoy.

Various friends abroad from fellow maritime unions and social partners such as shipowners and ship managers arrived in town for the occasion to celebrate with the Union.

“A fifty five years of working together to uplift the lives of Filipino seafarers who sail all over the world! 55 years of love, care and compassion for our hardworking seafarers,” declared AMOSUP president Dr Conrado F Oca in his message to the crowd.  

“As we celebrate 55 years, and hopefully, 55 more years of a trusted partnership, we have bigger plans for all AMOSUP members.” the AMOSUP president said.
As we celebrate 55 years, and hopefully, 55 more years of a trusted partnership, we have bigger plans for all AMOSUP members,
Apart from the song numbers, the crowd also received updates on the various continuing programmes AMOSUP is implementing not only focussed on seafarers’ welfare but caring initiatives for their community members and the environment as well.

Stephen Cotton, the general secretary of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), was proud to join in the celebration. In his message, Cotton said: “The outstanding services AMOSUP provides – first under its founder, Gregorio Oca, and now under Conrad Oca – are among the best in the world. The training offered at such an academy as MAAP is first-rate. And its legal and medical services look after the needs of both their male and female members.”

“I have heard today what the union means to seafarers and cadets in the Philippines and I am so proud that AMOSUP belongs to the ITF family,” Cotton stressed.

Fellow maritime unions from the ITF family who attended the celebration went on stage to present their gifts such as the leaders from the Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union, Singapore Organisation of Seamen and the three Norwegian maritime unions (the Norwegian Maritime Officers’ Association, Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers, and the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union). The Norwegians presented a “symbolic cheque” amounting to PhP55,000 markedly intended for the “equipment of (AMOSUP) new hospital wing.”

One of the celebration’s highlights was the announcement of the winners of the singing competition where talented Union members vied for AMOSUP’s “Seakit Ka Marino Showdown.” A series of elimination rounds were done prior to the finale in which seven finalists had been screened for the night’s result.

The seven finalists joined in unison to back up Journey’s lead vocal Arnel Pineda in a Tagalog medley that was followed by their rendition of the old rock hit “Nosi ba lasi” of another rock artist Sampaguita. The finalists included Kit Cazañas, Roel Gianchard, Arman Tejada, Richard Hidalgo, Bernard Valle, Julito Labajo, and Julius Bingil.

Showdown champion Julito Labajo took home the cash prize of PhP50,000, while first and second runner-ups received PhP30,000 and PhP15,000, respectively, including PhP10,000 as consolation for each of the non-winners.

Lucky members and employees in attendance also received prizes from raffle draws that included four units of motorcycles and one-time cash of PhP100,000.
Talented Filipino seafarers recently showed off their singing ability when they competed for ‘Seakat Ka Marino Showdown’ as part of celebration of AMOSUP’s 55th founding anniversary.

Seven remaining finalists vied in the finale where the winner was announced last 11 November at the MCA Arena.

The announcement was one of the Union’s anniversary celebration’s highlights in which the seven finalists joined to sing in unison with Arnel Pineda, Journey’s lead vocal, in a Tagalog medley.

Finalists included Kit Cazeñas, Roel Gianchand, Arman Tejada, Richard Hidalgo, Bernard Valle, Julito Labajo, and Julius Bingil. Showdown champion Julito Labajo took home the cash prize of P50,000, while first and second runner-ups received P30,000 and P15,000, respectively, including P10,000 as consolations for each of the non-winners.
A survey carried out by the ITF along with Seamen’s Hospital Society, International Maritime Health Association, and the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network, aims to improve health information and services available to women who work at sea.

AMOSUP surveyed a total of 65 women seafarers at its Seamen’s Centre and Seamen’s Hospital from mid-April to September 2015. From the 52 accomplished questionnaires, representing 80% of the total distributed forms, it has drawn analysis from the women respondents.

With an average age group of between 31-40 years old, 77% of the Filipino women in the survey worked as crew or ratings, with 61% of them in passenger or cruise ships. In terms of work assignment, 27% were at the hotel/reception/administration, 19% at the accommodation section and another 19% at the bar department. The result also showed that 54% of the participants handled supervision as part of their job, while the remaining 27% said that no supervision was included in their duties and responsibilities.

An individual’s health condition determines her functionality. Seafarer’s nature of work requires vigour and vitality. Thus, a good health is imperative for them to be able to perform their job well. Majority of the participants or 67% agreed that health challenges are work related. They ranked the top three health challenges from highest to lowest: joint pain or back pain, with 46%, followed by headache at 37% and 31% answered that stress/depression/anxiety was another big factor that affects their well being. Fifteen percent considered themselves healthy as they stated no health challenges.

Likewise, it is important to note that 60% declared that they had no issues in accessing healthcare whether on board or in port. According to 37% of the respondents, their primary purpose in accessing healthcare was to have a better understanding of their health needs while 29% would like to receive health information only. As for the rest, 13% believed that their driving force would be assistance on how to access.
healthcare. Likewise, a guaranteed confidentiality about one’s health condition would encourage the other 12% and 6% preferred to be attended by female physician.

In assessing healthcare, 42% of the respondents were interested in having routine wellness checks, 25% believed that vaccinations/immunizations and nutrition information were of equal importance. Since many of them answered joint and back pains as their top health challenges, 19% would like to be enlightened on this certain health condition. On the other hand, only 12% had blood pressure issues which could be attributed to the respondents’ age that was between 31-40 years old. As for their dental health, 13% would like to be checked or screened.

A good health is imperative for them to be able to perform their job well

With all the health challenges that seafarers face, 58% preferred to get information on health from the experts, the health professionals. Other sources of information such as reading materials in the form of leaflets, booklets and the like were favoured by 37%, while 21% said that information can be accessed thru online, apps or websites.

Furthermore, working conditions were among the factors that affect an individual’s well-being. A clean, orderly work environment is conducive for a worker’s health. In the survey, 98% of the respondents confirmed that sanitation was properly observed as sanitary bins were provided in the toilets. As regards to the issues on sexual harassment, 71% declared that bullying of a sexual nature was not an issue for them and the remaining 27% believed otherwise.

Women against violence. At least 87 personnel, mostly women, wearing orange tops and hats, gathered together and formed a ribbon image at the inner court of AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital in Manila last 25 November. The activity supports the yearly campaign spearheaded by the International Transport Federation (ITF) Women’s Committee in which it encouraged participation of all unions. Thousands of people have been offered support, information and practical help as unions around the world backed the ITF’s call to take action for World AIDS Day 2015 on 1 December.
DOLE: A dispute settlement system that is expertise, experience driven

Labour secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz says that’s what the industry needs to maintain the Philippines position as the crewing capital of the world.

The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) has urged the Philippines ship manning sector to develop a dispute settlement system that is driven by “industry expertise and experience.”

“This is what we must pursue to enable our Filipino seafarers to continually respond and adjust to the needs and challenges of the global maritime industry,” according to DOLE secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz, stressing that it is needed to maintain the Philippines position as the crewing capital of the world with dispute settlements aligned to international standards of seafarer protection.

Addressing the recent 2nd Philippine Manning Convention (Philmancon) at the Manila Hotel, Baldoz underscored the need to develop a dispute settlement system that is not only driven by expertise and experience, but also imbued with a strong sense of ownership by the social partners.

The convention was attended by about 400 delegates from various sectors in the ship manning sector that includes representatives from the unions, crew managers, training and review schools, P&I correspondents, shipowners, maritime lawyers and marine travel agents.

The DOLE secretary said she was pleased to receive reports from P&I representatives that disposition periods at the National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC) have “vastly improved from two to four years, down to six to nine months.”

Commending such an improving dispute settlement, Secretary Baldoz said that the disposition period will be further improved to just six-month time frame.

She told Philmancon delegates of the feedback she got about the “better quality of decisions” NLRC renders, which Ms Baldoz described as an indication of a “more balanced distribution of rulings (in labour disputes) between shipowners and seafarers.”
The combination of faster and balanced decision-making is good news because it addresses longstanding issues of bloated and excessive monetary awards, and delayed dispensation of justice,” Ms Baldoz noted.

She assured that the DOLE is committed to address industry concerns on dispute settlement through development of guidelines by the Maritime Industry Tripartite Council (MITC) on Third Doctor Accreditation.

“The general idea is to refer to the ‘Third Doctor’ cases of conflicting findings by the ship owner’s and seafarer’s doctors. The Third Doctor shall be chosen from a roster of accredited doctors, who shall be known for their competence, probity and partiality,” according to the labour and employment chief.

The MITC is currently addressing issues on the finality of “third doctor” decisions and fees and costs to be shared by the parties to the dispute, with the possibility of finalising the proposal for POEA Governing Board consideration by early 2016.

The labour secretary also recognized the crucial role the seafarers undertake in the Filipino migration setting. “For every 10 OFWs, one of them is a seafarers,” she said. In 2014, the POEA posted a total of 401,628 seafarers deployed overseas, an impressive 21.53% growth from the deployment of 367,166 seafarers in the previous year.

“It is a testimony to the ever-growing demand by maritime fleets that carry people, raw materials, food supply, and finished goods to ports everywhere,” according to Ms Baldoz. She said that the deployment statistics for seafaring has registered a three-year increasing trend not just for ratings, but officers as well.

She further stated that the increase in hiring of officers could be attributed to partnerships and cooperative measures among the government, the private sector and the seafarer groups, to develop our supply of maritime manpower and promote quality education and skills training to meet the demand for competent seafarers.

Ms Baldoz also told convention delegates about her department and the tripartite social partners’ several initiatives to protect Filipino seafarers from the threat of piracy, with protective measures such as mandatory attendance of all seafarers to anti-piracy trainings; mandatory payment of double compensation and benefits for the duration of the vessel’s transit through an identified high-risk zone or in case of attack or capture and detention.
The ITF Helpline

As you are aware the ITF and its affiliated unions work together to fight for the rights and standards for all seafarers from around the world. To support seafarers the ITF has a global network of inspectors who are on the spot to go on board and deal with any problems that seafarers may have. For those areas of the world where we do not have inspectors available the Maritime Operations team (MOPs), based in the ITF office in London, will deal with the seafarers problems.

In the past a seafarer may not have known the contact details of the local ITF inspector or they may have tried contacting the ITF out of office hours and found no one was available. However, since July 2012 the ITF has operated a 24-hour Helpline service for seafarers, but it seems that some seafarers are not aware of it.

The ITF Helpline operates a 24-hours per day, 365-day per-year, multi-lingual service and can be contacted by telephone, email or SMS text.

Contact details are:

Telephone +44 207 940 9280
Email help@itf.org.uk
SMS Text line +44 7950 081 459

Please make a note of these contact details in case you need them at some time.

When you contact the Helpline the operators will ask you a number of questions including your contact details, the ship’s IMO number, name, type, and the flag it is registered under. They will ask about your location where the ship is going, your nationality and they will need a brief explanation as to what the problem or problems you have.

The Helpline Operators will then either refer your case directly to an inspector or to the MOPs team and they will contact you back as quickly as they can.

The ITF Inspectors, MOPs team and the ITF Helpline are all here to help protect seafarers’ rights and standards worldwide, please feel free to contact them whenever you need to.
Law signed to protect seafarers from excessive legal fees

Republic Act No 10706 or the ‘Seafarers Protection Act’ makes “unlawful for anyone to engage in ambulance chasing or act of soliciting from seafarers the pursuit of any claim against their employers for the purpose of recovery of monetary claim or benefit.”

RA 10706 puts a cap on the fees to be collected at 10% of the compensation awarded to seafarers or their families.

“As some unscrupulous individuals have taken advantage of the plight of our seafarers who met an accident, illness or death in the course of their service,” according to the new law, Filipino seafarers have become easy prey to ambulance chasers who charge exorbitant fees on the promise of huge monetary award.

Seafarers working on board ships overseas are known to be awarded hefty compensation and benefit packages due to risks involved while they work in high seas. This in turn makes seafarers easy prey for ambulance chasing, with legal practitioners having considerable interest in their monetary benefits. "While the Code of Professional Responsibility of Lawyers prohibits ambulance chasing, there is no direct statutory provision which expressly prohibits this abominable practice in the enforcement of labour rights.” Manalo explained.
World AIDS campaign: ITF working for no new infections

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) is putting prevention at the centre of its HIV/AIDS education work as it marked World AIDS Day last 1 December. It has entered partnerships with organisations globally as it aims for no new HIV infections.

Across the world ITF unions marked the day with activities including voluntary counselling and testing events, and prevention education.

ITF HIV/AIDS programme co-ordinator Dr Asif Alfal explained: “There were two million new HIV infections in 2014: our goal is zero new infections. Prevention, education and partnership are the key. For example we are facilitating the formation of a network of HIV positive seafarers in the Philippines. We already have a small group, and plan to cover the entire country. The Philippines has the highest number of seafarers in the world, so success here will have a big effect globally.”

In October, Magsaysay Maritime Corporation, agreed to collaborate with the ITF to promote awareness and boost job opportunities for HIV-positive Filipino seafarers. Magsaysay provides employment to 40,000 seafarers.

In Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ukraine and the Philippines the ITF is working with maritime academies. The aim is to reduce new infections by educating cadets about HIV before they board ships. Eighty percent of new graduate seafarers in the Philippines already receive in-depth training in HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through the ITF module.

The ITF global initiative is to incorporate the HIV module in maritime academies in all the major seafarer supplying countries by 2018.

Transport workers are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The ITF is dedicated to raising awareness of this, and ending the stigma around HIV/AIDS.

Agent commits to HIV/AIDS initiatives

Following consultations with the ITF, Magsaysay Maritime Corporation has announced a number of forward-looking initiatives on HIV/AIDS and seafaring.

Magsaysay has agreed to collaborate with the ITF to promote awareness and boost job opportunities for HIV-positive Filipino seafarers.

The ITF will provide technical support to help Magsaysay make its pre-departure orientation sessions (PDOS) on HIV/AIDS more interactive and user-friendly, including inviting its PDOS trainer to the ITF’s HIV/AIDS training program in Cebu in February 2016.

The ITF and Magsaysay collaborated to observe World AIDS Day on 1 December. The ITF will provide its campaign materials for use in the agency’s head and branch offices, and Magsaysay will produce its own HIV poster and other materials for Fairmont Shipping vessels and training facilities.

“Our goal is zero new infections. Prevention, education and partnership are the key.”

The agency will also explore how to remove the barriers to employment face by HIV-positive seafarers, so that job opportunities depend on qualifications and medical capacity. It will review the placements of employed HIV-positive seafarers to see whether it would be appropriate to bring them on shore or within domestic tonnage to make it easier to access immediate medical care if required.

Magsaysay president Marlon R Roño said: “With over 700 new HIV infections a month in the Philippines, it is high time that we break the silence around HIV/AIDS and start taking proactive action.

“As a responsible employer dedicated to seafarers’ welfare, we will start a dynamic internal campaign to remove prejudice and fear of people who are HIV positive.”

ITF maritime co-ordinator Jacqueline Smith welcomed Magsaysay’s commitment and said the ITF looked forward to working with the company to keep Filipino seafarers safe from HIV/AIDS. She added that she hoped it would inspire other agencies to take similar action.

Know more about the campaign, visit: http://www.itfglobal.org/en/campaigns-solidarity/campagne/world-aids-day-2015/
Enhanced shore leave app for seafarers launched

The ITF Seafarers’ Trust is launching an enhanced version of its free Shore Leave app – the first app designed to help seafarers looking for reliable transport when in port.

Shore Leave only needs to be downloaded once, and after that all the contact details of seafarers’ centres all over the world are stored in the user’s smartphone and accessible offline, anywhere, anytime. It also includes all the contact details for ISWAN Seafarers Help, the 24/7 helpline for seafarers.

Luca Tommasi, Seafarers’ Trust project manager explained: “The idea of the original app was to transform the ISWAN seafarers’ centres directory into an interactive app that could be used offline. The response from seafarers was very positive and the app was downloaded over 10,000 times. That was a good result but we would like to reach 50,000 downloads; the aim is to have at least one seafarer on every vessel using Shore Leave, and getting the most out of their free time.”

The new version includes additional features, for example there is now the possibility for seafarers to leave reviews of seafarers’ centres.

Kimberly Karlshoej, head of the Trust said: “The new version of Shore Leave allows seafarers to rate the centres and to leave comments, so that other seafarers will be informed about the quality of facilities and services and know what to expect before visiting.”

Dave Heindel, chair of the Seafarers’ Trust Board of Trustees added: “Seafarers face all sorts of difficulty in going ashore. Having an app to get in touch with the right people all over the world will be helpful. Shore Leave is designed to give them the chance to get in touch with the local welfare providers and be just a couple of clicks away from a bus ride to the city, the shopping centre or a seafarers’ centre where they can relax and enjoy their free time.”

Peter Hinchliffe, secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping stated: “ICS always welcomes new tools to help seafarers have a proper and refreshing break. This new Shore Leave app will allow them to make the most of their limited free time.”

Shore Leave is available for free for Android and iPhone.
2nd batch of 2015 graduates march for their diplomas

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) has graduated its second batch of cadets belonging to the Class of 2015 last 04 December.

A total of 151 midshipmen obtained their four-year degrees in BS Marine Transportation and BS Marine Engineering in the commencement exercises held at the MAAP campus in Mariveles, Bataan. The first batch marched down ahead to receive their diplomas last May, with 255 senior cadets.

International Maritime Employers’ Council (IMEC) CEO Francesco Gargiulo graced the graduation exercises as its guest-of-honour and commencement speaker. He also led the inauguration of MAAP’s newly renovated classrooms and dormitories, together with the Academy president VAdm Eduardo Ma R Santos (AFP, ret) and AMOSUP president Dr Conrado F Oca.
Sailing Forward
“You do change people’s lives day by day by moving their products to make their lives better. That’s what we do at Western Union. We move money for better life.”

Western Union CEO Hitmot Ersek, on recognising the parallel importance of the role being played between seafarers and Western Union.

“The combination of faster and balanced decision-making is good news because it addresses longstanding issues of bloated and excessive monetary awards and delayed dispensation of justice.”

Labour and Employment Department secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz, referring to the quality of decisions the National Labour Relations Commission renders.

“I have heard today what the union means to seafarers and cadets in the Philippines and am so proud that AMOSUP belongs to the ITF family.”

ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton, on the quality of outstanding services AMOSUP provides to seafarers.

“At work, he has shared and sometimes asked me about things when they need troubleshooting, but at the end of the day we could still manage to put aside our pride and learn to love each other more.”

Chief Eng’l Nina Sue Da Silva, relating a snippet that reflects misunderstanding on issues that sometimes happen to couples who work together within the same profession.

“showed and symbolised unity and strength in number through this world record attempt.”

AMOSUP president Dr. Conrado F. Oca, on the first ever human ship wheel formation at the Union’s 55th anniversary commemoration on 11 November at the Mall of Asia (MOA) concert ground.

“The numerous alarming stories about the deleterious practice of some lawyers and/or other individuals who charge seafarers unconscionable legal fees from a range of 30% to a soar of 60% led ANGKLA to persistently move for the bill’s immediate passage.”

ANGKLA Partylist Rep. Jesulito A. Manalo, on the signing into law of Republic Act No. 10706 or the “Seafarers Protection Act.”
Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific - Kamaya Point
Associated Marine Officers’ and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines-PTGWO-ITF

Welcome Aboard!

Courses Offered:
- BSMT - Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation
- BSMarE - Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering
- BSMTE - Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and Engineering

MAAP Profile
Testing Assessment Center of TESDA

Geographic destiny has given the Filipino the innate talent to be an excellent seafarer. To enhance this natural skill, the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) was established on January 14, 1998. The Academy stands on a 103-hectare property in Kamaya Point, Mariveles, Bataan.

The Associated Marine Officers’ and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) founded by the late Capt. Gregorio S Oca, capitalized and developed the Academy. The new AMOSUP President, Dr. Conrado F. Oca, heads the Academy’s board of governors. The board is comprised of representatives from the private sector, the International Transport Workers Federation, the Filipino Association of Maritime Employers, the International Transport Workers Federation, the All Japan Seamen’s Union, the International Mariners Management Association of Japan, the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union, the International Maritime Employers’ Committee, the Danish Shipowners’ Association, the Norwegian Shipowners’ Association, and the Japanese Shipowners’ Association.

MAAP conducts shipboard training aboard T/S Kapitan Felix Oca, a 5020 DWT dedicated training ship capable of accommodating 180 midshipmen and 9 instructors in 30 air-conditioned cabins and six berths.

Our Curricula
MAAP students are all scholars who are entitled to free tuition, board and lodging. They receive a comprehensive, up-to-date and well-rounded education that fully complies with the requirements of STCW 95 and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). To ensure the highest standards of quality, MAAP adheres to a Quality Standards System that has been certified to comply with ISO 9001 version 2008, the Det Norske Veritas (DNV) Rules for Maritime Academies, and the Productivity and Standard Board (PSB) of Singapore.

The Academy offers three main programs: the Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT), Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (BSMarE) and the Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and Engineering (BSMTE). The curricula for the three courses were designed with the help of the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York. Courses are four-year courses with sea phases scheduled in the third year.

The BSMT curriculum requires a total of 192 units: 152 at MAAP, 40 practicum/shipboard units on board T/S Kapitan Felix Oca and/or a shipping company sponsorship.

The BSMarE curriculum requires a total of 193 units: 153 at MAAP, 40 practicum/shipboard units on board T/S Kapitan Felix Oca and/or a shipping company sponsorship.
AMOSUP Seamen’s Center
Hub of Operations
1963

ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS’
and SEAMEN’S UNION
of the PHILIPPINES

Seamen’s Hospital - Manila
1987

Seamen’s Hospital Annex
Manila - On-going

Sailor’s Home - Manila
1964

Sailor’s Home Annex
Manila - 2013

Seamen’s Village - Cavite
1993

8 Anchors Cultural Center
Seamen’s Village Cavite
2013

Slop Chest - Manila
2006

Professional Career Development Center
Manila - 2005

Maritime Academy of the
Asia and the Pacific
1998

T/S Kapitan Oca
MAAP Pier - Batan
1997

Seamen’s Training Center
MAAP Campus - Batan
2000

AJSU - AMOSUP Campus
MAAP - Batan
2009

Seamen’s Hospital - Cebu
2005

Sailor’s Home and Slop Chest - Cebu
2003

Cebu Sports Complex
2012

Seamen’s Hospital - Iloilo
2005

G.O.R. Seamen’s Hospital
Davao - 2008

JSU - AMOSUP
Davao Activity Center - 2013

Davao Sports Complex
Davao City

Iloilo Multi-Purpose Centre
Iloilo City

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS
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• Maritime Academy of the Asia and the Pacific (+63 2) 741 1024 / 527 2110
• Seamen’s Training Center (+63 2) 741 1024 • Professional Career Development Center (+63 2) 527 2110 / 528 0954 • Seamen’s Hospital (+63 2) 527 8116-20 • Sailor’s Home Manila (+63 2) 527 3605 • Slop Chest - Manila (+63 2) 527 2109 • Seamen’s Village (+63 63) 973 0370
• JSU-AMOSUP Mariner’s Home - Manila (+63 2) 521 5180 / 600 0461 / 600 0463 64 • Seamen’s Hospital - Cebu (+63 32) 346 2598
• Sailor’s Home - Cebu (+63 32) 236 9928 • Slop Chest - Cebu (+63 32) 236 9928 • Seamen’s Hospital - Iloilo (+63 33) 321 3523
• AMOSUP-JSU Multi-Purpose Center - Davao (+63 32) 234 7165 • G.O.R. Seamen’s Hospital - Davao (+63 82) 234 7164