THE HUMAN ELEMENT

IMO Sec Gen Kitack Lim vows to give priority to this area of the maritime industry during his term
MARITIME ACADEMY OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

KAMAYA POINT BRGY. ALAS-ASIN, MARIVELES, BATAAN, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (02) 784-9100 FAX (02) 741-1006 MOBILE NO. (0917) 533-8263
Website: www.maap.edu.ph E-mail: info@maap.edu.ph

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

CENTER FOR ADVANCE MARITIME STUDIES

COURSES OFFERED:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARINE TRANSPORTATION (MARINE SUPERINTENDENT)
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING (TECHNICAL SUPERINTENDENT)
TESTING ASSESSMENT CENTER OF TESDA

MAAP Profile

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 Officer's 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 Mariners Management Association of Japan, the Norwegian Seafarer's Union, the International Maritime Employers' Committee, the Danish Shipowners' Association, the Norwegian Shipowners' Association, and the Japan 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.
The President’s Message

We were fortunate to have the IMO secretary general himself as the guest-of-honour in our recent Day of the Seafarer event. IMO celebrates the seafarer’s day in June yearly, and Secretary-General Kitack Lim chose to pay a visit and party with us in Manila for the event this year.

This only shows how the IMO, which regulates international shipping, places such great importance on the Philippines by recognising its vital role as a major source of seafarers to the world’s merchant fleet. He knows that without the seafarers it will be impossible to run international shipping which moves 90 percent of world trade. He knows how valuable seafarers are in maintaining safety of life and property at sea including the protection of the marine environment.

His visit also shows how the IMO is committed to put emphasis to the importance of the human element in enforcing its regulations and conventions. The 2010 STCW Manila Amendments is an example which he underscored as a challenge for the country where seafaring plays a significant role in meeting all of its requirements. Having announced some of the IMO priorities for the shipping world, we also expect that he will include some emphasis on seafarers’ welfare that are necessary to the shipboard personnel and their families.

Seafarers’ welfare is the hallmark of AMOSUP’s existence in the pursuit of taking care of its members. Various entities have pursued high standards in the provision of support to our seafarers. And the Union is no exception to those who provide help and access for services to seafarers. As they say those who go above and beyond for such endevour get rewarded.

We thank the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) for the award it bestowed to AMOSUP – the Dr Dierk Lindemann Personality of the Year Award (Organisation Category) for 2016 – and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) for the Timonel Award, both of which the IMO Sec-Gen himself presented. Indeed, these awards set the benchmark for standards of welfare to seafarers across the industry.

In terms of welfare provision, our partnership with the All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU) is also a prime example of AMOSUP’s continuing support in the area of accommodations for union members. The recent ground-breaking ceremonies for the construction of another mariner’s home in Malate, Manila makes it the fourth in a series of transient accommodations that were built for seafarers since 2006. Soon we will launch the newly finished Iloilo Activity Centre where union members in Western Visayas can enjoy sports and recreational activities while on vacation.

Relative to benefits, AMOSUP recently launched an information caravan cum forum to update the membership of their welfare and Union services. It also apprised them of significant maritime laws in the profession such as the Maritime Labour Convention, the STCW Manila Amendments compliance and the anti-bullying guidelines. In conjunction with this, our website now features a new design. The new portal is a reflection of the Union’s commitment in helping members get access to the programmes and services by delivering needed information ranging from the list of requirements for membership application to privileges of seafarers and their families.

Happy Sailing Forward!

Dr. Conrado F. Oca

Sailing Forward 3
SEPTEMBER 2016

3 The President's Message
10 Union launches info caravan, forum
13 HIV/AIDS info for seafarer’s in new well being app
14 Capt. Belen: Prepare to rescue seafarers from other ship
16 JSU-AMOSUP in new accommodation venture
21 Seafarers market remain strong amidst slowdown in other sectors
22 Summer at AMSOSUP Seamen's Cebu
26 AMOSUP launches its Tele health project
28 Department of Surgery: Delivering services for more complex procedures
30 Asian Seafarers Meet
32 Norwegian-Asian Seafarers Meet
36 AMOSUP Davao team building kicks off
38 Piracy drops to 21-year low
41 A journey with partners in the seafaring industry
44 MLC: Making a difference?
46 Quote in Action

Leandro G. Dalisay
Editor

Anna Liza Ibarra
Editorial Coordinator

Roes Veluz
Graphic Artist

Jun Danao
Photo Editor

Editorial Office
Seamen's Centre
Cabildo cor. Sta Potenciana Sts.
Intramuros, Manila

Tel. Nos. 527 8491 to 98
Email: s_center@amosup.org

www.amosup.org

AMOSUP Board Officers and Members

Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President

VAdm. Eduardo Ma. R. Santos, AFP (ret.)
Executive Vice President

Capt. Felixberto I. Rebutes
Vice President

Atty. Emmanuel E. Partido
Business Agent

Johnny M. Oca, Jr.
VP for International Affairs

Atty. Jesus P. Sale, Jr.
VP for Internal Affairs

Members (Officers)
Capt. Emilio T. Saavedra
Capt. Januario L. Lansang, Jr.

(Ratings/Unlicensed)
O/S Edilberto Tanayan
MTRMN. Joel T. Sevilla
O/S Emel P. Rodriguez

About the cover:
IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim

4 Sailing Forward
Day of the Seafarer: Reap of awards for AMOSUP this 2016

Page 6

IMO’s Kitack Lim: Human Element is one of priorities

Page 18

AMOSUP’s New Website launched

Page 24

AMOSUP’s Ilo-ilo Activity Center

Page 34
Day of the Seafarer:
Reap of awards for AMOSUP this 2016

This year’s Day of the Seafarer’s celebration has been a memorable one for AMOSUP.

Firstly, the Union had the chance of receiving several awards, namely the Timonel Award conferred to AMOSUP president Dr Conrado F Oca, the Dierk Lindemann for Welfare Personality of the Year for Organisation and an award from the Department of Labour and Employment. Secondly, the IMO secretary-general Kitack Lim presented the awards himself for the first two prizes as he joined in the celebration in Manila as the country’s guest-of-honour last 24-25 June.

MARINA’s Timonel Awards are bestowed to individuals, organisations and corporate entities recognised for their valuable contribution to the maritime industry and to the flag administration’s national and international development endeavour.

In accepting the Timonel Award, Dr Oca reminded “all of us serving the maritime industry have our own little roles to play to make the lives of the multitude of Filipino seafarers, especially our Union members better, more secure, safe and protected.”

He thanked MARINA administrator Dr Max Mejia Jr for the “untiring service to the maritime industry” in the short period that he led the agency to “new heights and in satisfying the difficult and demanding global maritime standards.”

Outstanding contribution to seafarers

The Dierk Lindemann Welfare Personality Award for Organisation, which the London-based ISWAN-hosted, is given to individuals and organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to seafarers’ welfare.

Dr Oca expressed appreciation to the panel of judges responsible for choosing AMOSUP to receive the award as he shared an anonymous quotation for mariner’s working life: “Miles from home for months on end, seafarers can find themselves in distant ports faced with all manners of difficulties ranging from isolation to loneliness, to the emotional strain of life away from family and friends.”

The Union president shares the well-regarded award with AMOSUP’s 100,000 general membership and
From top left (clockwise): Talent show winner from NYK-TDG Maritime Academy, Mariners at the Day of the Seafarer, Seafarers queue for the celebration’s giveaways, Cadets man the event’s entrance hall, Dr Oca receives the Dr Dierk Lindemann Personality of the Year Award for Organisation from IMO sec-gen Kitack Lim and ICS vp Gerando Borromeo, Left page: SMX Convention Centre lobby, Dr Oca receives the Timonel Award from Sec-gen Lim and MARINA deputy administrator Gloria Bañas

Next pages (clockwise): Medical test at the event, Cadets in talent show, VAdm Edd Santos and Panel of judges
Power of social dialogue

The DOLE award is in recognition of the Union’s valuable contribution to the Department in generating employment and promotion of more jobs to the seafaring industry.

In having the award, Dr Oca recalled how his late father Capt Gregorio S Oca implanted the power of social dialogue with the government and employers. The AMOSUP founder and former president “never hesitated to engage the maritime social partners about the burning issues of the day that affected the seafarers in general, and his members in particular.”

In those occasions then POEA administrator and later DOLE secretary Linda Dimapilis-Baldov, whose sound advice Capt Oca valued most, staunchly advocated for stronger tripartite institutions and mechanisms in the maritime sector as a means of resolving those issues and problems.

“Every day, millions of seafarers, a third of them Filipinos, are sailing around the world transporting all kinds of fuel, materials and manufactured goods, ferrying passengers and vehicles, supporting maritime activities and other industries from one point of the globe to another,” said Dr Oca.

He stressed that it is the duty of unions like AMOSUP to “fight for seafarers’ rights, uphold their dignity and improve their working and living conditions on board. Truly, we are thankful that in this huge task, we are being supported by the DOLE and the POEA.”

Talent show and display stands

The awarding ceremonies and celebrations held at the Manila Hotel and SMX Convention Centre on seafarers’ day consisted of musical entertainment, a talent show and exhibits, attracting about 3,000 attendees including seafarers and their families and cadets.

Marine cadets such as those from the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) did their best in the group dance/singing talent show. In the end, the presentation of the NTMA Creative Waves from NYK-TDG Maritime Academy won the contest.

“It is the duty of unions like AMOSUP to fight for seafarers’ rights, uphold their dignity and improve their working and living conditions on board.”
Maritime organisations and companies had their own display stands that gave away t-shirts, relevant literatures and other free items which delighted the seafarers and their families.

Seafarers and their families visited a range of company stands in the exhibition area, including a Health and Well Being zone, sponsored by the UK P&I Club, to pass through for basic medical tests and medical advice from volunteer doctors and nurses. The GASFI-sponsored Children’s Zone also let seafarers and their families take part with their kids learning and reading activities.

Awards value high standards of support to seafarers worldwide

The aim of the ISWAN Awards, which is the sixth since it was launched in 2010, has always been to recognise and reward seafarers’ centres, shipping companies, organisations, ports and outstanding individuals who provide consistently high standards of support to seafarers worldwide.

The International Seafarers Welfare Assistance Network (ISWAN), which hosts the Awards, notes the seafarers are “the unsung heroes who make international trade possible, and work in a career with little recognition outside the maritime world. Theirs is a hidden life, and a hard one.”

A life at sea is not like any other job, but seafarers still deserve to have access to the same basic welfare standards as in any other industry, says ISWAN executive director Roger Harris. “Those who can offer help, friendship, and access to services deserve to be acknowledged and those who go above and beyond, rewarded.”

ISWAN wants to set a benchmark for standards for welfare across the industry, encouraging and improving the welfare of seafarers worldwide. Harris says: “We are indebted to the industry specialists who have formed our judging panels this year. The standard of entries was very high and determining the winners was an extremely challenging task.”

Other recipients who have provided exceptional services for the welfare and wellbeing of seafarers were presented, which formed part of ISWAN’s celebrations in the Philippines for the IMO Day of the Seafarer.

Other awardees include:
- Judges’ Special Award: Duckdalben International Seamen’s Club
- Shipping Company of the Year: Anglo-Eastern Ship Management and MF Shipping Group
- Port of the Year: Bremerhaven
- Seafarers’ Centre of the Year: Stella Maris, Barcelona
- Dr Dierk Lindemann Welfare Personality of the Year Award (individual): Reverend Stephen Miller
The one-day event primarily updates AMOSUP members of benefits and services. It also apprises them on the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, the STCW Manila Amendments compliance and the anti-bullying guidelines.

Arm yourself with knowledge. Be aware, protected, and updated with relevant information about the Union, the maritime industry and all pertinent issues affecting the Filipino seafarer.

AMOSUP’s holding of the first Info Caravan and Forum 2016 seeks to address such issues and by the looks of it, the event was a resounding success with more than 300 union members and maritime cadets turning up. The event filled the 8 Anchors Cultural Center to capacity at the Seaman’s Village in Dasmariñas, Cavite last June 30.

With a mission to update seafarers of the changes in the industry and amendments in maritime conventions, the event will continue to other regions of the country that will include Batangas, Iloilo, Cebu, and Davao.

“This is part of our effort to spread awareness and bridge the information gap between the Union, the government and the seafarers,” says AMOSUP President Dr Conrado F Oca. It also honours the spirit of tripartism his late father and AMOSUP founder Capt Gregorio S Oca championed for decades.

Bridging gap between Union, social partners

The one-day event primarily updated AMOSUP members of the union benefits and services. It also provided updates on the Maritime Labor Convention 2006, also known as the seafarers’ bill of rights; the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) 2010 compliance by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA); and the anti-bullying guidelines by the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF).

The information caravan is free and exclusive for union members, their families, or their representatives. Organised by Seafarer Asia, the project will run through Cebu, Iloilo, and Davao as well.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac discussed POEA’s new and existing programs for seafarers. He also spoke in behalf of Labour Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz on the MLC.

In February 2006, the International Labor Organisation (ILO) adopted the MLC 2006 dubbed as the Seafarers’ Bill of Rights. Since then, it serves as a protection for the world’s 1.5 million seafarers. It reached the minimum requirement of 30 countries for enactment after Philippines had it ratified in 2012. By August 2013, the bill has been for strict compliance by the Port State Control even in countries that has not ratified it yet. Under the bill, crew-centered attributes onboard is under tight scrutiny including common malaises, crew fatigue and rest hours.
MARINA Public Information Officer-in-charge Herbert Nalupa talked about the changes in MARINA to better serve seafarers including plans for more satellite offices and many more. The transition period given is about to cease in 2017 and it seems that MARINA has just been able to fully accomplish its obligations as the all-encompassing maritime administration.

The convention had major revisions concerning new trainings and requirements for maritime safety, security, and anti-pollution that every seafarer needs to be aware of, which the info caravan aims to update them on.
Being Aware

AMOSUP’s Legal Department through Atty. Alexander Ragonjan made sure that the attendees know their union benefits and privileges. Atty. Maximo Abad of the Provident Fund discussed how the pension scheme works and Dr. George Pile gave the participants a rather detailed information about the Seamen’s Hospital and how for years it was able to be of help to AMOSUP members and their dependents who get sick or needed immediate medical attention.

Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) Administrator Cdr Gerlo Elchico gave a preview of MAAP and how it carved a name for itself in maritime education and training. For his part, Seamen’s Village Assistant Administrator James Blanco showed a very uplifting presentation about all the facilities and support group inside the Village.

Health Futures Foundation President and former Health Secretary Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan got everyone up to their feet with his “Resetang Walang Gastos” (free prescription) that includes exercise tips, and healthy diet and habits to stay fit on board. He also talked about HIV awareness along with ITF-Philippines representative for HIV awareness Jebsen Rederri Gamido who shared tips on how to live a normal life albeit being HIV positive.

ITF Representative Rodrigo Aguinaldo delivered the new ITF Anti-bullying guidelines with a video showing the effects of bullying onboard ships. The work on eliminating this hazard onboard with the new anti-bullying guidelines was jointly developed by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the ITF.

ITF general secretary Steve Cotton early this year said: “Bullying and harassment in the workplace are unacceptable wherever they happen – but they have a particular horror at sea, where those affected may be isolated and alone, hundreds of miles from home. Until now there has been a lack of practical common sense guidelines and we’re delighted that we have been able to work side by side with the ICS to address this need.”

The event was hosted by Jose Raul Lamug of AMOSUP and Binibining Pilipinas second runner up Jehza Mae Huelar, who is also a daughter of a seafarer.
HIV/AIDS info for seafarers in new well being app

Seafarers can now easily access up-to-date information and guidance about HIV/AIDS on their mobile devices, thanks to a new wellbeing app launched by the ITF.

The free app is available for both Android and iOS devices. It provides the basic facts on HIV/AIDS – how it is transmitted, what the symptoms are, how you can prevent being infected and what treatment is available.

It also gives examples of workers who have challenged the stigma around the disease, and sets out the international and national rights of a HIV-positive worker.

Additionally, it separates the facts from the fiction about the disease, with 12 ‘myth busters’. For example, many people believe that a person with HIV can no longer work. The app explains that this is false – that an HIV positive person is as qualified as anyone else for any type of employment. Being infected with the virus does not alter one’s capacity to function as well as everyone else.

ITF maritime co-ordinator Jacqueline Smith said: “Seafarers – like many transport workers – are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. We hope this app will help them understand more about the disease and be able to find information quickly and easily, whether they’re at sea, in port or at home. We want to help seafarers keep themselves and their families safe.”

Other wellbeing issues will be added to the app in due course.

“This app will help them understand more about the disease and be able to find information quickly and easily, whether they’re at sea, in port or at home”

NORWEGIAN unions’ donation

Impressed with the way AMOSUP manages and runs its own hospital for its members, the Norwegian Maritime Unions (NMU) have extended donations of some PhP110,000 to AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Manila. The hospital, which is being expanded with the ongoing construction of the South Wing Building of the medical facilities in Intramuros, is expected to be operational once constructed. NMU’s Johnny Hansen handed over the symbolic cheque donation to AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca and Seamen’s Hospital medical director Dr George Pile during the conclusion of the Norwegian/Asian Seafarers Committee meeting in Manila last 22nd June 2016. NMU consists of the Norwegian Maritime Officers’ Association (NMOA), the Norwegian Union of Maritime Engineers (NUME) and the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union (NSU).
Capt Belen: Prepare to rescue seafarers from other ship

The 2016 Bagong Bayani Awardee of Grieg Star never turns his back on commitment to save fellow mariners in distress at sea.

His decisiveness and readiness to respond once duty calls described how Capt Paulino Belen became this year’s recipient of the Bagong Bayani Awards as the ‘Outstanding Employee’ for the sea-based sector last June.

The story that led to his commendation began on board the Norwegian general cargo ship Star Stind on the night before Christmas Eve of 2015. Swelling seas as high as nine to 10 metres due to bad weather made it hazardous to cross the Atlantic Ocean that night. On the bridge of the 46,428 dwt vessel stood Capt Belen, observing the dark waters. The Grieg Star-owned ship at the time was en route to the Netherlands as it had some time left in Wilmington in North Carolina.

“We were 32 miles from land when we got the message from Falmouth Rescue Centre. A 60ft race yacht was in trouble, 170 miles from the shore,” the Captain detailed their position to his company’s news blog.

With about 30 years of experience as a seafarer, Capt Belen is no stranger to aiding people in distress at sea. He has helped other seafarers in trouble before. However, taking charge of a rescue operation was new to his task.

After he came in contact with the two men on the distressed yacht, he called someone from his shipping company for advice. After briefing the Grieg headquarters about the situation Capt Belen was told to proceed. The Filipino captain had been cautioned that he should know what he was doing.

He said that due to the weather the vessel steamed to a speed of only three knots. “It would take us 10 hours to get to the yacht, I gathered the crew to discuss how we should handle the situation and told them to prepare all the needed equipment. Thereafter, I told them to take a rest. We knew we would need all our strength in the coming hours,” stressed Capt Belen.

To begin the rescue, Capt Belen commanded his crew to lower a rescue. “We saw a lot of flashing lights from the yacht; on top of the boat we saw its captain. As we approached, the helicopter was about to run out of fuel, so they had to leave. It was all up to us.”

A chopper was said to have attempted a rescue as it continuously circled the yacht in distress, but bad weather prevented it from carrying out the operation. The difficult rescue prompted Capt Belen that it’s his call to proceed. “I’ll do it, it is my duty,” the Master narrated in the company’s news blog.

The Star Stind arrived near the yacht at about 0600H on Christmas Eve. Another ship also appeared in the area, but unable to execute the cargo net along the shipside to make it easier for the two men of the yacht to climb the Stind. They also prepared ropes along the ship deck.

“It was tricky to approach the boat, and I was afraid we would crush them. We tried to throw them a line, but they failed to grab it. At that moment we had gone so far that I had to order the ship to turn for another try. But as we started to turn back, the two yacht
men thought we were leaving them, and they started shouting: “Why are you leaving! Please help!”

So the Star Stind made a second attempt, and the Captain had to make it sure this time as they just had the last line plus a few life rings left. Closing his eyes and sending a prayer to the Lord for help, they tried the last line left.

“We hit one of the two sailors from the yacht with the rope. He tied the end around his waist, and we got him onboard. But his friend vanished into the sea. We knew we had very little time, and one of my crew threw a life ring out into the dark sea, just hoping he would be close enough. Amazingly enough when the last man from the yacht came up from the sea, he (the other one) came up just under the ring!”

After completing the rescue operation, they learned that the two men had been stranded for 17 hours from the disabled yacht in the North Atlantic in heavy seas that day in December.

Capt Belen continued: “It was amazing to be able to rescue them. Of course I was a bit worried, but at the same time I was confident we would be able to handle the situation and stay calm.”

He has advised that “when you are working as a seafarer, you will come across situations like this. My advice is to study them. Prepare yourself. Read about what others have done, talk to other seafarers. Rescuing other seafarers is something you may have to do.”
JSU-AMOSUP in new accommodation venture

Similar projects that have been completed include the Mariner’s Home Building that was built in 2006, followed by the Mariner’s Home Annex in 2011, and with the Mariner’s Home Annex II in September this year.

The partnership between Filipino and Japanese maritime unions in providing welfare accommodation with brothers in the profession continues, with the construction of another mariner’s home.

The recent groundbreaking ceremony of Mariners Home Annex III in Malate, Manila is the fourth in a series of accommodations to be provided by AMOSUP and the All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU) to members.

The soon-to-rise Mariner’s Home 3 on Agoncillo St will have eight floors with a minimum 400-bed capacity, It will house for the first time an 80-seat theater-auditorium and a maritime library.

There will also be a gym, a study and computer room, clinic and cafeteria and recreational area. AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca said this recent endeavor highlights once again the “strong relationship between JSU and AMOSUP while underscoring the close and long-term cooperation of Philippine and Japanese maritime social partners.”

As constant as the stars and as ceaseless as the tides that guided mariners throughout history, Dr Oca says this cooperation has brought to reality many benefit programmes that are continuously being enjoyed by Union members. Similar projects that have been carried out include the Mariner’s Home Building that was constructed in 2006, followed by the Mariner’s Home Annex in 2011, and with the Mariner’s Home Annex II later in September this year.

The Mariner’s Home facilities have been providing thousands of transient seafarers with clean, decent, secure and very affordable accommodations during the last 10 years. And with many more members clamouring to avail themselves of the Union benefit programme, JSU recently decided to begin work on Annex 3.

AMOSUP have been very grateful for the assistance and confidence of the JSU and other Japanese maritime stakeholders. “We shall continue to extend our continuing understanding and sincerest
friendship with Japanese and Filipino employers IMMAJ and PJMCC so that together we will be able to promote the continued stability of employment of Filipino seafarers on board Japanese-owned and managed vessels.

JSU-AMOSUP held the groundbreaking ceremony and laying of time capsule for the construction of Mariner’s Home III last 16 July. JSU president Yasumi Morita, members of the manning industry and officials from government in the Department of Labour and Employment and Department of Transportation attended the event.

Department of Trasportation (DOTr) Undersecretary for maritime Phillip Judan said it was just proper that seafarers be given the service accommodation since employers entrust their ships to them. He praised the cooperation between Japan and the Philippines on the area of union welfare. Mr Judan noted the two countries deal with a lot of projects on a government to government level at the DOTr. For instance, most of the Department’s vessels in its search and rescue operations have been sourced from Japan.
IMO’s Kitack Lim: Human element is one of priorities

The secretary-general says the requirement of the global fleet for qualified and competent manpower is increasing. The challenge is the need to attract the young to the industry as the need for new recruits also rises, Andy Dalisay writes

He has vowed to make “the human element” a priority area during his tenure at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Such priority refers to seafarers’ professionalism and competence as they are responsible to move world trade, including safety and security of life at sea, and protection of the marine environment.

No wonder IMO secretary-general Kitack Lim easily decides as to which event to go to when fairly presented with colliding major maritime events by member states. For instance, as in recent affairs in Panama and the Philippines.

Panama hosts the world’s largest ship register and a waterway that just completed its $5.3 billion expansion to accommodate bigger ships. Whilst the Philippines provides the largest resource of seafarers manning those ships transiting the Canal.

Mr Lim disclosed that last 25th June he had an outstanding invitation as a guest for the opening of the newly expanded Panama Canal, when more than 10,000 miles away, the leading provider of manpower to the world’s merchant fleet would be celebrating the Day of the Seafarer, which the IMO marks yearly.

He was apparently caught over a choice between man and machine, the two maritime components wanting to showcase
their achievements in the industry. Guess which event he went to? You would not be reading this story had he preferred Panama.

Day of the seafarer

“I discussed the two invitations with my colleagues as to which way should I go – Panama or the Philippines,” Mr Lim said, as both major events are matters of importance to commercial shipping. He stressed that the event in the Philippines was a “matter of seafarers issues and their welfare,” saying they include working condition, safety and fair treatment of crew and other issues related to human element.

In Manila, Mr Lim enjoyed the warm welcome and hospitality of the Filipinos. He became pre-occupied on the eve of the occasion which included courtesy calls at the Foreign Affairs department and attending the International Seafarers’ Welfare Awards 2016 as the guest-of-honour. He spent the next full day with Filipino seafarers, their families and maritime stakeholders at the SMX Convention Centre.

A seafarer himself

Born in Masan, Gyeongsangnam-do, one of the major port cities in the Republic of Korea, Mr Kitack Lim studied nautical science at the Korea Maritime and Ocean University (KMOU) in Busan, graduating in 1977.

The IMO sec-gen also worked on ships as a Korean naval officer and with merchant ship of Sanko Shipping. He joined the Korea Maritime and Port Administration in 1985, while continuing with further studies at the Graduate School of Administration at Yonsei University where he obtained his master’s degree. He also completed his doctoral programme for international law at KMOU, completing course work in 1998.

Mr Lim began attending IMO meetings as part of Republic of Korea’s delegation in 1986, actively participating in maritime safety and environmental protection issues. From 1992, he engaged in activities to promote maritime safety through effective implementation of IMO conventions in his country and other IMO member states in the Asian region. He was elected chairman of the Tokyo Memorandum on Port State Control in 2004.

In 2006, Mr Lim was appointed as Maritime Attache, minister-counsellor at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in London and led all IMO work for Korea, serving as deputy permanent representative to IMO up to August 2009. Mr Lim was then appointed as director general for Maritime Safety Policy Bureau at the headquarters of Land Transport and Maritime Affairs (LTMA).

He led the delegation of the Republic of Korea to the IMO Assembly in 2009. In March 2011, Mr Lim was appointed commissioner of the Korean Maritime Safety Tribunal. In July 2012, he assumed the position of president of Busan Port Authority. He was elected secretary-general of the IMO in June 2015, taking up his post in January 2016.

“This country has made huge collective investments in maritime education and training facilities”

Over 2,500 seafarers and their families and maritime cadets participated in the event. Organised by International Seafarers Welfare Assistance Network (ISWAN) led by its executive director, Roger Harris who said: “It was an amazing day. The event surpassed all our expectations, and we are grateful for the presence of IMO secretary-general,” who spoke in the event.

“We need to focus on communicating amongst stakeholders with IMO member states both developed and developing countries, particularly with their seafarers. I’d like to focus on better communication with the seafarers,” Mr Lim told the crowd. His recent trip to Manila was his first in Asia since the secretary-general took his post at the UN specialised agency last January.
He also noted the slowdown of the shipping market over the last months, but he stressed to recognise the great contribution of seafarers worldwide, their sacrifices and the dedication of their families.

“Without the seafarers we cannot maintain international shipping,” he said, noting that a third of them come from the Philippines.

The Manila Amendments

In Mr Lim’s recent Philippine trip, he did not fail to tackle the most significant IMO convention that is mostly associated with the human element. That Convention has also established Manila as a landmark in IMO shipping regulations with the 2010 Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Amendments. He said the international standards that govern seafarers’ competency and training are enshrined in the 2010 Manila Amendments of the STCW Convention. “And I cannot stress enough the importance of this instrument that makes maritime safety and all that flows from it.”

“all systems are in place” in meeting the deadline. “This country has made huge collective investments

“The challenge now is to how to attract the young to the industry as the need for new recruits is rising”

in maritime education and training facilities,” he told attendees to the Day of the Seafarer, saying: “It shows how committed you are to remain the so-called crewing capital of the world.”

But looking ahead, the IMO Sec-Gen says the requirement of the global fleet for qualified and competent manpower is increasing. The challenge now is to how to attract the young to the industry as the need for new recruits is rising.

Mr Lim sees the investment the Philippines made in building its training infrastructure will surely help, pointing out that shipping companies also need to ensure that they have properly structured training and crew development in place.

He also cited the importance of women as a future source of seagoing shipboard personnel. “It must be stressed that the shipping world cannot afford to ignore such rich and still largely untapped quality recruits.” However, he reminded that their welfare must not be overlooked, referring to female seafarers who represent only 2% of the global marine manpower.

Mr Lim apparently underscored that shipping provides an alternative career for women, saying “young people today have a greater choice than ever before. To make shipping attractive (to women) you need to ensure they can feel confident for the job.”

They are joining a profession in which they and their families are being proud and adequately rewarded of their contributions to the industry, the IMO sec-gen said.

He noted that the maritime industry is now entering the last few months of transition period for the 2010 Manila Amendments to take into full effect, which is Jan 2017. “There is no doubt that meeting the requirements of the 2010 Manila Amendments has been a challenge and one big special significance in the country where seafaring has such an important role,” said Mr Lim.

He has been assured though by his host from MARINA (the Maritime Industry Authority) that
Marine employment remains strong amidst slowdown in other sectors

The offshore market has been experiencing contraction as other sources of gas and petroleum such as inland rigs and shale are flooding the market with their outputs, hence driving prices down.

Despite the slowdown in the shipping industry over the last several months, the seafaring sector has registered strength in terms of deployment across all types of vessels.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reported positive growth in 2015 in bulk carriers, passengers, containers, tankers, even tugboats. Last year’s figures are a continuation of the performance in 2014, with 401,826 seafarers deployed, representing a 22% growth from the 367,166 seafarers deployed in 2013.

For the past three years, there has been an increasing trend in terms of deployment of not just ratings, but Filipino officers as well, the POEA said. The increase in hiring of officers could be attributed to partnerships and cooperation between the government and the private sector and seafarer groups, while promoting the quality of education and skills training of the maritime human resources.

The seafaring sector has sustained a significant contribution to employment of many Filipinos overseas. For every 10 OFW, one is a seafarer. And for 2015, Manila deployed a daily average of 965 Filipino seafarers to foreign-flagged ships.

“There is so much to be thankful for in terms of the efforts that we have exerted to make the Philippine seafaring industry what it is today - a driver of growth for our country,” said former Department of Labour and Employment secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz during DOLE’s Appreciation Ceremony with Maritime Social Partners at the Manila Hotel last June.

However, she said the sector needs to contend with certain needs and changes in the global maritime, which when not addressed, can affect the global competitiveness of the country’s seafaring industry.

These include the growing competition among labour-supplying countries and the stagnant performance of the shipping industry. Apart from China and India, Myanmar and Nigeria have been known to have been getting a fair share of the marine labour market over the years.

Setbacks in certain sectors due to global economic crisis pull down the overall growth the maritime industry generates. Last year Greece, for instance, which depends on its maritime industry and employs thousands of Filipino seafarers under its flag faced problems with capital flight, and had to freeze monetary transfers to secure viability of its domestic funds.

Fortunately, the shipping industry in Greece was quite resilient despite the country’s economic downturn. Another most prolific global economy China, which relies on the chain of delivery and import of goods through shipping, is said to be experiencing a slowdown in its international dry bulk shipping.

The POEA cited the stagnant offshore shipping sector in relation to the maritime labour market. The offshore market has been experiencing contraction as other sources of gas and petroleum such as inland rigs and shale have been flooding the market with their outputs, hence driving prices down. Prolonged low prices for certain products can mean lower productivity and income which, in turn, has led to closure of establishments related to oil production.

Meanwhile, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), which holds 90% share of the global cruise shipping industry, reported stellar performance and 482,000 more beds. Also, $1 billion worth of new cruise ships and a forecast of 23 million passengers remains the bright spot in global crewing in terms of expansion and growth.

Secretary Baldoz said most of these are “all forecasts and perceptions that may shift to our advantage. After all, every piece of market information is meant to be a looming challenge to seize opportunities, to cooperate and remain on top as the decent prime source of maritime labour needs of the world.”
Summer at AMOSUP Seamen's Cebu
By STANLY PAUL LUTAO

The season is not just all about honing skills. It can be just about anything that involves taking advantage of the time when children do not have school classes to attend to

Summer can mean a lot of things to everybody; majority would think of sand rubbing in between toes, waves hurrying rushing to meet the shore and saline winds blowing the sun-kissed skin. This picturesque scene of spending summer at the beach seems to be everybody's liking. For us in AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital (ASH) Cebu, summer means significantly different. As everybody is busy packing up their bags, hitting the shores or hiking up the mountains, the ASH community has come up with a list of exciting activities that would make summer a worthwhile experience for everyone.

For over three years, since its inception, the Captain Gregorio Oca Summer Clinic has become the reason why children of member seafarers and hospital employees are excited about summer. This year has a full basket of activities for the children of seafarers and employees of AMOSUP. The summer sports clinic gleefully commenced on April 4, 2016 at AMOSUP Sports Complex with almost 300 kids in attendance.

Since then until its closing on May 28, these children signed-up under different skill enhancement activities which included sports,
speech and music. Parents came to the AMOSUP Sports Complex office for the registration. Free classes spanned from Mondays to Fridays with basketball scheduled every Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The rest of the week, on the other hand, were dedicated for swimming, guitar lesson, table tennis, speech and communication, and badminton.

The latter was newly added to the roster of these exciting and fun-filled activities meeting the committee’s goal of adding one new discipline each year. The activity ran for over a month. On its culmination, participants and their family members gathered to witness the awarding ceremony where winners of the different activities, as well as coaches received their recognitions for giving their best and to make the summer clinic a successful and rewarding activity.

Summer is not just about honing skills. It can be just about anything that involves taking advantage of the time when these children do not have school classes to attend to.

It is that time of year when we, at Seamen’s Hospital – Cebu, provide free circumcision to all children of seafarers and employees during “Operation Tuli.” Parents who would like to take advantage of this service can sign up their son’s name at the Out Patient Department for either a Tuesday or a Thursday schedule. Aside from this, the hospital has extended this opportunity to some local communities through its partnerships with local government units. This year, two successful runs of surgical drives were held at Brgy. Umapad Mandaue on 08 April 2016 where a total of 185 children were given free circumcision. On 27 May, another batch of 38 boys were able to take advantage of the free service at San Roque, Talsay City, Cebu.

While summer is indeed a time for kids to take a break from school, we at Seamen’s Hospital think that learning does not stop at all. The Gig and the Amazing Sampaguita Foundation, Incorporated (GASFI) continues its advocacy to propagate the love of reading. Several GASFI activities were held in different locations accommodating a good number of children. The kids had a chance to have a read-aloud session with the GASFI coordinator and volunteers about chosen stories.

Also, books were distributed to these kids for free. These activities were heartily enjoyed by 200 kids in Brgy. Umapad Covered Court on April 8, 2016 while they were waiting for their turn for the “Operation Tuli.” It was also a simultaneous event with “Operation Tuli” on 27 May at San Roque, Talsay City where 50 kids received different children’s books and enjoyed a read-aloud session with the GASFI group.

Finally, a week before classes started, an amazing 200 kids of Brgy Mantuyong and Guizo were given an opportunity to open their hearts and minds to love reading and learning. The GASFI group went to the Cebu International Cultural Center which was a temporary relocation site for families who were victims of a recent fire disaster. These children went home with happy hearts and wide smiles painted across their faces as they took with them a wonderful experience of seeing the world from a different perspective while enjoying their books and school supplies.
AMOSUP redesigns website

The new platform is loaded with new features that help deliver information on the Union’s services and welfare programmes for members.

AMOSUP has introduced new formats and designs to its website.

The launch of the new website is an endeavour to optimise a means of communication that members and social partners can easily access as AMOSUP looks forward to maximising this channel of communication. It is organised by topic and provides multiple ways for people to find what they need in a convenient manner.

The new website is a reflection of the Union’s commitment in helping members get access to the programmes and services by delivering needed information ranging from the list of requirements for membership application to privileges of seafarers and their family.

As part of the Union’s objective to provide critical information on the seafaring profession, laws and regulations, the new website has extensive content which members can download or view from their device.

The site features a vibrant design and a clean layout to guide visitors through the various welfare services AMOSUP provides. The website is structured so visitors can more quickly and easily navigate the site, thus eliminating the number of clicks needed to locate the desired information.

The change of the website is very timely for recent developments in internet technology have radically transformed by enabling visual media and data processing to be accessed more quickly from any device imaginable. Such features of technology are a good way to distribute news among members about the programmes and events hosted by the Union and its partners in the seafaring industry.

The goal of the website is to deliver information easier, so members can expect relevant content to be a top priority.
AMOSUP launches its Tele Health project

Through the system crew’s medical conditions on board can be managed better and minimise their unnecessary repatriation due to medical reasons:

In the past seafarers’ health care could only be assured ashore.

But now with the advent of modern communications, care duty to crew can be extended afloat, and can be readily available as an integral part to the ship’s emergency response.

With its goal of ensuring that union members receive quality health care, AMOSUP has launched a tele health service for its members working on board. The tele health system service is a facility in partnership with the Seamen’s Hospital to allow seafarers working on board to consult with the Hospital doctors on emergency medical issues.

Through the system crew’s medical conditions on board can be managed better and minimise unnecessary repatriation due to medical reasons. Tele health offers assistance to a ship officer – normally through the second officer or ship master – in the diagnosis and treatment of ill or injured crewmembers on board the vessel or offshore facilities where shore-based care is not possible.

In the first 15 days of operation since AMOSUP launched the project last June 2016 more than 30 patients aboard have been served, with cases ranging from pains (like ear, chest or back) to injuries due to accidents.

Most of the medical cases have been communicated through emails to the Hospital. Ships without email access are provided with the accomplished form that can be printed and sent by fax. If via phone call, the information required is dictated to the attending tele health service personnel on duty. Such information is used for easy verification and record keeping.

The AMOSUP tele health service station is located at the Out-patient Department of Seamen’s Hospital which maintains a doctor and a nurse on a three-shift schedule 24/7 dedicated to the system. However, the hospital can augment the manpower based on the volume of emails and calls being received.

The provision of long-distance medical care provides an opportunity that can be used to improve maritime health care.

In launching the system, AMOSUP and Seamen’s Hospital provide the technology, training, policy and evaluation components. Since it has multiple parts, a programmed and systematic approach is necessary to ensure its success.

The tele health system has been implemented following the implementation of the ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention (ILO/MLC) and the IMO’s Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Manila 2010 Amendments.

From 1 January 2012, oceangoing vessels and flag states have been required to “provide seafarers medical care as nearly as possible with the care they would receive ashore” and to “ensure by a prearranged system that medical advice by radio or satellite communication to ships at sea is available at any hour of the day or night”.

“With the advent of modern communications, care duty to crew can be extended afloat”
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.

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.

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.
Department of Surgery: Delivering services for more complex procedures

Dr David Geollegue Jr, Surgery Department chairman at AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital, looks back at how their operating room evolved from its modest home at the Pier area to the new hi-tech facility, performing so-called high-valued surgeries that used to be referred or transferred to other medical centres.

It all started in the early 1980s in a small two-storey health facility just before the very gates of the port of Manila. To cope with the ever increasing demand of AMOSUP members and their dependents for surgical care, a single operating theatre had to be created. The late Captain Gregorio S. Oca, the visionary that he was, spearheaded the construction of a bigger hospital complex inside Intramuros along Cabildo Street. A three-storey structure with two major operating rooms, two delivery rooms, a minor operating room and an endoscopy room.

From then on there was no looking back as the Hospital embarked on rapid recruitment of surgical specialists. Together with it came technology and facility improvements and acquisitions. In the field of general surgery in the early 1990s came the minimally invasive surgery. The Hospital acquired the technology and from then on open cholecystectomy or surgery of the gallbladder became a thing of the past at the Seamen’s Hospital.

In the late 1990s came younger and newly trained surgical specialists capable of performing more advanced and complex procedures in the field of general surgery utilising the latest technology in minimally invasive surgery. With this innovation and expertise that the Department now has at its disposal, it conceptualised a training program for surgeons in the field of minimally invasive surgery.

Today, the 55 graduates of the program can look back with pride that they became part of the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Department of Surgery. The technology used and the complement of surgical specialty services that the Department provides currently are varied. In general surgery, the Department through the years can deliver services required for more complex surgical procedures; Seamen’s Hospital can now ordinarily accommodate the so-called high valued surgery which used to be referred or transferred to other medical centres or facilities.

In the field of thoracic and vascular surgeries, the Department has on its staff three surgeons who can deliver services in these fields if needed, except heart surgery requiring a heart-lung machine. The department can practically provide the manpower needs of the specialty. Vascular access surgery for purposes of hemodialysis is done on a regular basis at the Hospital.

The Hospital also takes care of pediatric surgical diseases and even performs complex pediatric surgical cases. Gone were the days when such challenging surgical procedures have to be transferred to other medical facility like surgical conditions involving the new-born.
“Seamen’s Hospital can now ordinarily accommodate the so-called high valued surgery which used to be referred or transferred to other medical centres.

To cope with the ever changing challenges of a continuously increasing patient load the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital in Manila has embarked on an expansion project to further improve the operating room complex, together with the other service areas of the hospital. In 2015, it acquired a nearby adjacent location and started construction to make the dream come into a reality. Through the years, one can look back with great satisfaction and pride and say that indeed this was the dream of a man who had tremendous vision.

From top (clockwise): The OR’s surgical activity, an eye surgery equipment, a laparoscopic tower machine, an anesthesia machine monitor.

Left page: Dr David Geollegue Jr
SUMMIT MEET. AMOSUP recently hosted the 33rd Asian Seafarers’ Summit meeting at its Convention Hall in Manila. More than 70 delegates, representing various seafarers’ unions from 10 Asian countries attended the meeting on 22nd June 2016. The summit meeting tackled the implementation of emergency communication flow and support system for maritime incidents and cases of abandonment of seafarers. AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca welcomed delegates, whilst conference chairman JSU president Yasumi Morita presided over the whole day discussions. Delegates later proceeded to The Manila Hotel for dinner and entertainment.
NORWEGIAN-ASIAN SEAFARERS MEET.
The 25th Norwegian-Asian Seafarers’ Committee (NASCO) meeting convened at the AMOSUP Convention Hall in Manila last 23rd June 2016. Some of the issues tackled included updates on cabotage rules where delegates from different union provided insights about cabotage in their respective countries. Other areas of concerns were collective agreements (CBA)such as future negotiations and proposals for changes in CBA and wage increase. Norwegian Seafarers Union president Johnny Hansen presided over the NASCO meeting. Kirsti Hauge presented updates on the FOC campaign in Norway where the Norwegian unions regularly receive requests for assistance and complaints on wages and working conditions on substandard vessels onboard FOC ships. Delegates later attended the “Appreciation Ceremony for Maritime Stakeholders” by the DOLE at the Manila Hotel where the Norwegian Maritime Unions received an award in recognition of their valuable support to the Philippine government in the generation of employment and promotion of decent jobs in seafaring. The Norwegian Maritime Unions are composed of the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union (NSU), Norwegian Maritime Officers’ Union (NMOU) and Norwegian Union of Maritime Engineers (NUME). Norwegian Unions representative in Manila, Ms Illyn Lachenal of Fil-Nor GAIN, received the award.
Iloilo Activity Centre: Hub for members recreations in the region

The Centre is a one-stop facility where seafarers can look forward to a host of sports and recreational activities such as basketball, swimming and other fitness exercises in the gym.

A MOSUP members and their families in Western Visayas will now have their own venue for events and recreation with the recent completion of the Union’s Iloilo Activity centre. The Centre can also provide transient accommodations for members, a mini grocery and offices to facilitate the administration of their welfare.

Located just a few metres away from the Union’s Seamen’s Hospital in Mandurriao, Iloilo City, the AMOSUP Iloilo Activity Centre underscores the commitment of the organisation to provide members with quality welfare and benefits available to their families.

The centre also houses a 43-bed capacity sailor’s home that can accommodate male and female seafarers, complete with laundry and locker rooms, a game room and a kid’s playroom.

The slop chest, which stores grocery items, is something that members can also look forward to when seafarers want to purchase the family’s basic needs at competitive prices. The activity centre has its own function room and snack bar that can accommodate some 120 persons.

AMOSUP has also built separate structures to lounge and worship with the gazebo, a patio and a chapel.

The recent construction of the 5,780 sq m activity complex follows similar facilities that the Union currently provides in Davao, Cebu and Manila. Apart from the new recreational hub, each of these service areas have also their own Seamen’s Hospital that cater to active Union members and dependants.

The centre is a one-stop facility where members can look forward to a host of sports and recreational activities such as basketball.
From top (clockwise): Activity centre’s façade, swimming pool, game room, kids’ play room, receiving area, chapel.

Left page: Sailor’s home, function hall, basketball court.
AMOSUP Davao team building activity kicks off

BY KATRINA ISABELLE V. GALLEBO, RN

It serves as a powerful tool to unite us as a group, develop our strength and address our weaknesses. It creates a positive stance and increase our sense of belonging, especially for the young members of the institution.

Laughter and cheers echoed through the magnificent greenery of Eden Nature Park as the first team building activity of Gig Oca Robles Seamen’s Hospital (GORSH) stirred to life on the 21st day of May 2016. The most anticipated event materialised through the efforts of our ever dynamic human resource manager Gillian Ranises.

GORSH’s head, Dr Richard John C Pecson, graced the event with a total of 49 participants from different departments of the hospital who joined and shared funny and happy experiences during the said activity. The employees from nursing, engineering, administrative, dietary, records and pharmacy departments showed their best and unleashed their competitive beast mode.
and game master, Mr. Leonel Ochia. The games were fashioned to enhance our social relations and somehow defined our roles within the team.

In one of his talks, Dr. Pecson, encouraged us to be thankful to the AMOSUP heads for allowing us to experience this "once in a lifetime opportunity to have a day off" from work and to escape tensions in the workplace.

The activities left the participants sweltering and gasping for air as the event drew to a close, but the genuine smile painted on everyone's face can never be erased.

Mr. Mark Cagatin, RN, MAN, Nursing Supervisor, said he became more inspired to work now that he has shared good memories with his colleagues. He added, "I commend the implementers of this event for coming up with this enjoyable activity. It is well-known that we are experiencing scarcity especially in the nursing department wherein we have to juggle the nurses' schedule which is exhausting at times. This activity is an answered prayer not only for me but for the entire team who work so hard to serve AMOSUP members and their dependents."

Truly, a team-building like this helps in boosting our social skills. It serves as a powerful tool to unite us as a group, develop our strength and address our weaknesses. It creates a positive stance and increase our sense of belonging, especially for the young members of the institution.
Piracy drops to 21-year low

Two main factors are recent improvements around Indonesia, and the continued deterrence of Somali pirates off East Africa, says IMB

Piracy and armed robbery at sea has fallen to its lowest levels since 1995, despite a surge in kidnappings off West Africa, according to a new report from the International Chamber of Commerce’s International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

IMB’s global piracy report shows 98 incidents in the first half of 2016, compared with 134 for the same period in 2015. When piracy was at its highest, in 2010 and 2003, IMB recorded 445 attacks a year.

In the first half of 2016, IMB recorded 72 vessels boarded, five hijackings, and a further 12 attempted attacks. Nine ships were fired upon. Sixty-four crew were taken hostage onboard, down from 250 in the same period last year.

“This drop in world piracy is encouraging news. Two main factors are recent improvements around Indonesia, and the continued deterrence of Somali pirates off East Africa,” said Pottengal Mukundan, director of IMB, whose global Piracy Reporting Centre has supported the shipping industry, authorities and navies for 25 years.

“But ships need to stay vigilant, maintain security and report all attacks, as the threat of piracy remains, particularly off Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea,” he said.

Nigeria is the world’s piracy kidnapping hotspot. Despite global improvements, kidnappings are on the rise, with 44 crew captured for ransom in 2016, 24 of them in Nigeria, up from 10 in the first half of 2015. “In the Gulf of Guinea, rather than oil tankers being hijacked for their cargo, there is an increasing number of incidents of crew being kidnapped for ransom,” said Captain Mukundan.

The Gulf of Guinea accounted for seven of the world’s 10 kidnapping incidents, with armed gangs boarding vessels 30 to 120 NM from shore. Nigerian attacks are often violent, accounting for eight of the nine vessels fired upon worldwide. IMB says many further assaults go unreported by shipowners.

IMB reported two further kidnap incidents off Sabah, where tugs and barges were targeted. And in early June, a tug and barge was hijacked off Balingian, Sarawak in Malaysia and its palm oil cargo stolen.

Improvements have been made in Indonesia. IMB’s Piracy Reporting Centre has been working closely with the Indonesian authorities to improve security at sea and in ports.

Low-level theft to ships at anchor has been brought down by introducing designated anchorages with improved security. This has contributed to a fall in the number of incidents in Indonesia to 24 in the first six months of 2016, compared with 54 in the same period in 2015.

IMB also applauded the Indonesian Navy’s prompt response in recovering a hijacked product tanker, south of Pulau Serutu, off west Kalimantan in May, saying: “This is exactly the type of robust response required in response to such threats.” Nine pirates were apprehended and the crew of the tanker unharmed.

The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre is the world’s only independent office to receive reports of pirate attacks 24-hours-a-day from across the globe. IMB strongly urges all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected piracy and armed robbery incidents to the local authorities as well as the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. This first step in the response chain is vital to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle piracy. Transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organization can act as a catalyst to achieve this goal.
Good practice guide against piracy

The ISWAN Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme has issued an updated ‘Good Practice Guide for Shipping Companies and Manning Agents – humanitarian support of seafarers and their families in cases of armed robbery and piracy attack.’

The guide has been updated with the help of the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Maritime Bureau, the International Maritime Employers’ Council and the Oil Companies International Marine Forum.

The guide covers good practice in the support of seafarers and their families before, during and after an incident. It includes recommendations on planning, and also contains templates of leaflets, nominee forms and sample communications with families, as well as other information of more general use.

It is designed to supplement the existing processes of companies, and comes with the benefit of the experience of dealing with over 200 seafarers and their families who have been held captive by pirates.

Long term impact of piracy on hostages

Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP), a program of the One Earth Future (OEF) Foundation focused on reducing violence at sea, has released a new report titled "After the Release: The Long-term Impact of Piracy on Seafarers and Their Families." OEF’s Research Director Conor Seyle, Ph.D. delivered a main stage presentation exploring the findings of this multi-year research project at the ISWAN International Day of the Seafarer event in Manila at the SMX Conference Center on 25 June 2016.

The report, developed in partnership with ISWAN/MPHRP and supported by The TK Foundation, documents significant negative long-term impacts to seafarers who have been taken hostage following an act of maritime piracy. Notably, seafarers who had been held hostage were nearly six times more likely to exhibit symptoms like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. However, those impacts can be alleviated through training and programs focused on seafarer well-being.

According to Seyle, "Our research shows that piracy can leave lasting impacts on seafarers and their families, especially for those seafarers who had been held hostage. Seafarers are a psychologically resilient group. Most will recover with assistance and support, and the likelihood of recovery can be maximized by good training, planning and communication before an attack, support for families while seafarers are hostages and a process of reintegration and formal mental health support for hostages and their families once they have returned."

The report is based on interviews with 167 seafarers from the Philippines, 153 from Ukraine and 145 from India. Seyle went on to say: "Other negative events at sea can also cause similar impacts; full reporting of all violent incidents at sea is therefore needed in order to understand the true magnitude of this problem and to allow relevant stakeholders to design and implement programs to better support seafarers."
HOW TO JOIN:

- Remit the required upgraded Pag-IBIG I savings (at least Php600.00 per month).
- Visit www.pagibigfund.gov.ph
- Click the “Pag-IBIG Expanded Raffle Promo” banner/icon.
- Read the raffle promo mechanics and click the “I want to join now” button.
- Enter Pag-IBIG Membership Identification (MID) Number and required information.
  
  Note: The MID Number should be the same with the Pag-IBIG MID Number used in the remittance of upgraded Pag-IBIG I savings.

- Click the ‘Verify’ button.
  
  Note: In case the Pag-IBIG member does not have complete membership information with the Fund, he/she will be redirected by the system to the Pag-IBIG online membership registration system and is required to complete his/her records. After completing the membership information, go back to the raffle promo registration web page.

- Fill in the required information and then click the “Submit” button. A prompt message shall appear informing the member that he/she has successfully registered in the raffle promo. An email confirmation from Pag-IBIG Fund will be sent to the member.

- Online registration/joining to the raffle promo shall be done ONLY ONCE.

Promo period: May 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

Preliminary Draw: December 21, 2016

Grand Draw: May 1, 2017

and with special prizes EVERY MONTH!

Prizes include Two Winners of Php 500,000.00 each, Two Winners of Php 250,000.00 each, 20 units of MacBook Pro, 25 units of Samsung S-7 Edge and a Grand Prize Winner of 1 MILLION PESOS

For complete raffle mechanics:
www.pagibigfund.gov.ph

Pag-IBIG Fund HOTLINE:
(+632) 724 4244

Scan QR code:
I can still recall my first day of service as Administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. I was bent on bringing continuous process improvement and quality assurance initiatives that I started at DOLE as an Undersecretary. After a difficult phase-in process, we at the POEA were able to document our procedures and practices, thus bringing the POEA into a quality-assured environment.

These transparent frontline services later gained ISO-certifications, and now directly benefit local and international maritime industry stakeholders in terms of streamlined and transparent processes for accreditation of principals, enrolment of vessels, documentation of seafarers and issuance of the seafarer’s registration certificate.

Today, enhancements to these systems are continuously being undertaken through electronic technology systems implementation. This includes an established data sharing and inter-connectivity system with the Bureau of Immigration to provide a seamless service in the documentation of out-bound seafarers. With this connectivity, the BI can now validate the authenticity of the exit clearance or OEC presented by seafarers at the airport.

One of the most memorable and fulfilling engagements that I have made as Administrator of POEA for eight years and six years as DOLE Secretary was when we
“As I look back at what we have achieved thus far, we are thankful and very much aware that much of these successes became possible because of our close cooperation and cohesion as social partners committed to achieve decent and ethical employment for our seafarers.”

actively worked at the international arena to consolidate and harmonise all the separately existing international labour conventions to become the landmark ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

Having our country ratify the MLC, 2006 in 2012, as the 30th that made the Convention enter into force the following year, was yet another milestone. And just as important, the eventual effort to align and apply our domestic regulations with the principles of the Convention through Department Orders on decent working conditions and employment standards on board Philippine flag ships, safe and ethical recruitment of seafarers, accreditation of recognized organizations for purposes of administration and enforcement, and designation of the POEA as contact authority for on-board complaints, all for the sake of promoting the welfare of around 400,000 Filipino seafarers in domestic and ocean-going ships.

Through the Maritime Industry Tripartite Council (MITC), the DOLE has issued the necessary policies and guidelines governing the employment of Filipino seafarers on board Philippine-registered ships engaged in international voyage and those on the inter-island trade, including setting up the new labour law compliance system for the maritime industry, amendment of the standard employment contract (SEC) for seafarers on foreign flag ships, issuance of maritime occupational safety and health guidelines, standards for medical examination, and a national certification system for ships’ cooks, among others.

To further align our rules and regulations governing the recruitment and employment of seafarers with the standards prescribed by the MLC, 2006, as well as current global market realities and developments, I am happy to inform you as Chairperson of the POEA Governing Board that the Governing Board adopted the newly-amended set of POEA Sea-Based Rules and Regulations, which seeks to respond more effectively to the needs of the industry in the coming years.

The salient features of these rules include a more well-defined provisional and upgraded licensing system with higher capitalisation and escrow ceilings, streamlined requirements for ship accreditation and seafarer documentation (which means elimination of discretionary "pop-up" requirements by our front-line offices), setting up of shipowners’ or ship management representative offices here in the Philippines, rationalised adjudication procedures and an updated table of offences and penalties, a Code of Discipline for seafarers, and a more elaborate system of shipowner and manning agency awards and incentivisation. I wish to congratulate and thank our social partners for your active participation in the arduous rules review process, especially Board Member Felix M. Oca, the sector representative to the Board.

Alongside the amended Sea-Based Rules, the POEA Governing Board has also passed a resolution on ensured protection of seafarers faced with risks of piracy, and

Former DOLE Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz with AMOSUP evp Eduardo Santos and IMEC rep Michael Estaniel; Mr Manesa, Mr Mottia and Dr Oca.
education and training access for 2012-2014, namely, Disability and Dismemberment benefits which amounted to P30,829 million, while Death and Burial benefits to survivors amounted to P354,241 million; and the Seafarers Upgrading Program or Short-Term Upgrading Courses which benefited 46,762 seafarers, with P1.021 billion paid to accredited maritime institutions. The Skills-for-Employment Program, on the other hand, has benefiting 4,507 seafarers and their dependents, with P45.681 million paid to TESDA-accredited training institutions. In addition, OWWA has provided psycho-social counselling for Filipino seafarers who are victims of piracy and other sea disasters and their families, through the funding support of the All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU).

Further, the new OWWA Charter under Republic Act 10601 signed by President Benigno S Aquino III on 10 May 2016 and which took effect on 31 May, has included strengthened representation of the social partners through an additional member of the Board of Trustees for the seafarer sector which will now have two representatives and a new member of the Board representing the private manning sector. This new development is expected to improve the policies and programs of OWWA for our seafarers even more, with the greater participation from these two sectors.

May I also take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the strong commitment of the industry in working with the government in ensuring a continuous supply of highly qualified seafarers. In terms of our reintegration program for our seafarers, I am happy to inform you that the National Reintegration Center launched a program that encourages seafarers to start their own entrepreneurship business. The program on “Business Plan Competition” will provide training on business plan preparation and seed money to start up a business undertaken by beneficiaries of the program.

Aside from these accomplishments, I wish to outline a road map for the future. To address serious concerns on the issue of medical liability claims of seafarers, the MITG Overseas Seafaring Committee is working on the finalization of guidelines in the implementation of a third doctor medical arbitration system before the end of the year, even as they are also studying the possibility of setting up an industry-led arbitration system that will provide a more effective dispute settlement system for the industry.

As I look back at what we have achieved thus far, we are thankful and very much aware that much of these successes became possible because of our close cooperation and cohesion as social partners committed to achieve decent and ethical employment for our seafarers. I am confident that with your continuing support and commitment to our shared goals for the industry, we shall be able to positively respond to future challenges.

Last June 7th, the Bagong Bayani Foundation, of which I am the Honorary Chair, conferred the 2016 Bagong Bayani Awards to outstanding OFWs, which included individuals and groups of Filipino seafarers for their outstanding achievements and extraordinary acts of assistance.

I am certain that because of the competence and heroic deeds of these Filipino seafarers, you are equally proud of the brand of service that our workers give to your ships, and that each Filipino crew member is an asset to your respective organisations.

I have journeyed with you, dear partners in the seafaring industry, for quite some time and I must say it was a very eventful and worthwhile journey. Owing to the dynamic movements in the industry, I could say that the future will provide more challenges that we all could hurdle together. So much have been done, yet so much more can still be accomplished.
**Convention Update**

**MLC: Making a difference?**

ITF maritime project and campaigns leader **Katie Higginbottom** reflects on inspectors’ experiences of using the Maritime Labor Convention

The picture is mixed on whether there's been a measurable improvement in conditions for seafarers since the MLC came into force.

On the one hand, ITF inspectors’ reports show that the same old problems recur - non-payment of wages, breaches of employment agreements and substandard conditions on board. Panama, by far the biggest flag state and the second to ratify the MLC, has the largest number of problems. This would suggest that they still haven’t got enough resources in place to deal with the number of vessels flying their flag.

And there are still plenty of opportunistic shipowners with a hand-to-mouth approach to the finances. This means that if someone delays in the payment, the whole operation falls apart, leaving no safety net for the crew. The MLC is supposed to put these operations out of business but it needs a consistently diligent approach to enforcement to work as it should.

Shipowners who claim there's no need for an ITF agreement on board MLC-certified ships show a willful or fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between the purpose of the MLC and a collective bargaining agreement. The MLC comes from the International Labour Organisation, where governments, employers and workers all have a voice. It is a compromise they agree to safeguard the basic rights of seafarers but in a way that is both flexible enough for widespread ratification and that prevents unfair competition between shipowners.

Shipowners who want to eliminate the ITF from the picture are the ones that see an opportunity to undercut their business rivals. They're usually the same bosses who patronize their workers by saying “you don’t need to be organised because we’re good employers”. The ones that say this never are.

On the other hand, there are many important positives from the MLC.

There's now much more cooperation between ITF inspectors and port state control and flag state representatives tasked with enforcing the convention. ITF inspectors are recognised as the experts when it comes to wages and agreements and in most cases all parties see the mutual benefits of working together.

There's also a growing awareness among seafarers that they can speak out and claim their rights under the convention. The MLC gives them, and the ITF inspectors representing them, an internationally recognised legal basis for demanding decent conditions.

A really big step forward for seafarers is the amendments expanding the convention’s coverage of financial security in the case of abandonment and claims for death and long term disability. They were agreed in June 2014 and are expected to come into force in early 2017.

Flag states will be required to have in place either insurance or some sort of fund that is directly accessible to seafarers if they're abandoned by a shipowner or company. If the seafarers are not repatriated, have no provisions on board or the owner has severed ties and not paid wages for two months, the insurance will kick in. It will cover the costs of repatriation, essential needs such as food,
Seafarers and their families ensured of protection in cases of abandonment, death, and long-term disability

ILO member States have confirmed the amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention ensuring better protection to seafarers and their families in case of abandonment, death, and long-term disability.

Two years after an overwhelming approval at the 103rd International Labour Conference (ILC), it has been confirmed that the Amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2008), adopted in 2014, will enter into force on 18 January 2017.

Ratifying Members had been given until 18 July 2016 to formally express their disagreement with the 2014 Amendments. There was wide support for the new provisions, with just two Governments stating that they shall not be bound by the amendments, unless and until they subsequently notify their acceptance.

The 2014 Amendments establish new binding international law to better protect seafarers against abandonment and provide for compensation for death or long-term disability - two crucial issues for the shipping industry.

When they come into force, in January 2017, the 2014 Amendments will require that a financial security system be in place to ensure that shipowners ensure compensation to seafarers and their families in the event of abandonment, death or long-term disability of seafarers due to an occupational injury, illness or hazard. Mandatory certificates and other evidentiary documents will be required to be carried on board to establish that the financial security system is in place to protect the seafarers working on board.

“A really big step forward for seafarers is the amendments expanding the convention’s coverage of financial security in the case of abandonment and claims for death and long term disability.”

water and fuel, and up to four months’ outstanding wages. It should make it much harder for rogue companies to walk away from their responsibilities and it will force flag states to be more vigilant about who they accept on their registers.

The new measures regarding shipowner liability in the treatment of contractual claims aim to eliminate pressure on seafarers to accept less than their due. They should alleviate hardship by requiring interim payments where a process of assessment is necessary. As with the abandonment requirements, seafarers (or their families) will be able to make direct claims, and ships will have to make all the contact details readily available on board.

It’s essential now that seafarers themselves take full advantage of the MLC by becoming expert in their own entitlements and claiming them.

For up to date information on MLC developments see: www.itf.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention

(Reprinted from ITF Seafarers’ Bulletin)
"Prepare yourself... Rescuing other seafarers is something you may have to do."
Greg Star’s Capt Paulino Belen, on his advice to seafarers who might come across distressed brothers in the marine profession.

“We need to focus on communicating amongst stakeholders with IMO-member states both developed and developing countries, particularly with their seafarers. I’d like to focus on better communication with the seafarers.”
International Maritime Organisation secretary-general Kitack Lim, on the significance of the human element as one of his priorities in international shipping.

“Together with it came technology and facility improvements and (equipment) acquisitions.”
Seamen’s Hospital Surgery Department chairman Dr David Geolgue Jr, as he looks back on how the AMOSUP medical facilities evolved from its modest home at the Pier area.

“All of us serving the maritime industry have our own little roles to play to make the lives of the multitude of Filipino seafarers, especially our Union members better, more secure, safe and protected.”
AMOSUP president Dr Conrado F Oca, on receiving the Dr Dirk Lindemann Welfare Personality Award for Organisation.

“One of the most memorable and fulfilling engagements that I have made as Administrator of POEA for eight years and six years as DOLE Secretary was when we actively worked at the international arena to consolidate and harmonise all the separately existing international labour conventions to become the landmark ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.”
DOLE secretary Rosalinda Dimapili-Baldos, on some of her achievements at the Department over the last 14 years in government.

“But ships need to stay vigilant, maintain security and report all attacks, as the threat of piracy remains.”
International Maritime Bureau director Capt Pottengal Mukundan, on the recent report of the drop in piracy incidents for the first half of 2016.
JSU - AMOSUP
MARITIME MUSEUM & SPORTS COMPLEX

SPORTS COMPLEX

MUSEO

MARINO

814 J. Nakpil  corner P. Hidalgo Lim Streets, Malate, Manila
Telephone: +632 353 8180  E-Mail: museomarino@yahoo.com