

VOLUME 13 | ISSUE 46 | JUNE 2025

SAILING FORWARD

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' AND SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES



Unions and employers agree **wage hike** for seafarers

ILC adopts amendments to the MLC, 2006

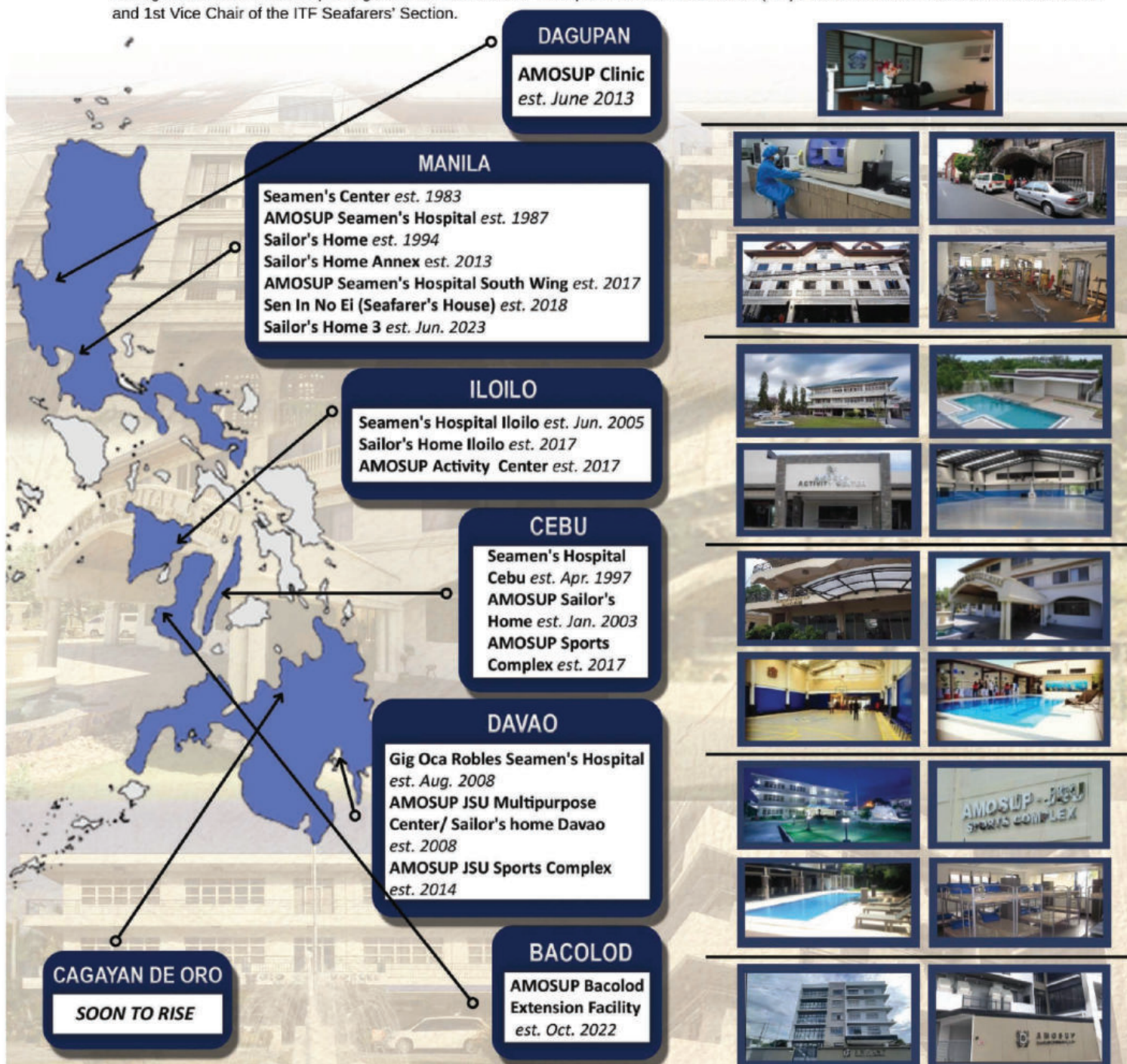
All Aboard Cebu!
AMOSUP Info Caravan 2025 Empowers Seafarers in Central Visayas



ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' AND SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

The Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) was established in 1960 by Master Mariner Captain Gregorio S. Oca. He saw a bright future for Filipino Seafarers and to make his vision a reality, he pioneered the negotiation for welfare benefits and advocated the upgrading of seafarer education and training in the country. Captain Oca dedicated his life to championing the rights and welfare of Filipino Seafarers.

AMOSUP's strong partnership and collaboration with industry stakeholders bound by Collective Bargaining Agreements is at the core of the Union's extensive and holistic welfare programs and services. For over 60 years, AMOSUP has cultivated a harmonious and constructive synergy with ITF-affiliated unions, companies/shipowners and international maritime employer groups in ensuring that members are accorded with the best benefits they deserve for their vital role and contribution to the industry. AMOSUP also actively engages in national, regional and global forums to champion the protection and advancement of Filipino seafarers' rights and welfare, having the Union's leadership designated as International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Executive Board Member for Asia Pacific and 1st Vice Chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section.



From the President

Happy International Day of the Seafarer!

Greetings of solidarity to our seafarers, their families, our social partners and all the stakeholders in the maritime industry. It brings me great pride to share with you the many victories, milestones, and inspiring stories that reflect our collective commitment to uplift the lives and dignity of Filipino seafarers.

We begin with truly welcome news: the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) has successfully agreed to a significant increase in seafarers' wages over the next couple of years. This is a hard-earned victory for all of us as we recognize the crucial role you play in keeping global trade afloat and reaffirming our dedication to fair and just compensation and working conditions.

Equally significant are the recently adopted amendments to the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC, 2006) by the Special Tripartite Committee. These amendments aim to further strengthen seafarer protections and working conditions. AMOSUP will continue to work alongside industry stakeholders, our government, and social partners to ensure these changes translate to tangible improvements at sea and ashore.

In line with our advocacy for education and professional development, we celebrate the successful Cross-Cultural Exchange Program and the enriching Symposium held at Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP). These efforts broaden the perspectives of our cadets and promote collaboration across borders. We also honor the MAAP Equestrian Class of 2024 and the recent graduates of Valharenas Class of 2025. We are proud of you! Your discipline and drive set the course for a promising future for you in our ever-evolving industry.

We are deeply moved by the story of one of our own – a former messman who rose through hard work and determination to become an officer. His journey is a testament to the value of perseverance and the importance of the support systems we continuously strive to strengthen.

A highlight of this issue is the well-deserved recognition given a prominent figure in our institution: none other than the Executive Vice President of AMOSUP and President of MAAP, Vice Admiral Eduardo Santos, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the PMA Alumni Homecoming. His leadership and vision have elevated the maritime education of our cadets at MAAP and inspired countless seafarers, including our most successful alumni who are making waves in different parts of the world.

As we push for better standards, the SAFETY4SEA Manila Forum reminded us of the urgent need for seafarer welfare and future-ready skills. Our special report on the vanishing shore leave of seafarers also sheds light on a critical issue that demands industry-wide attention.

AMOSUP continues to engage directly with our members through initiatives like the Information Caravan in Cebu, the Alagang AMOSUP talk series, and our regular outreach through Radyo Pilipinas. Our Data Privacy Team and HR Summit 2025 workshops across our branches show our continued investment in internal excellence and service to our members and dependents.

The growing momentum for championing seafarers' rights and overall welfare, including a landmark pledge by public and private stakeholders supporting the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, is proof of what we can achieve through unity and advocacy.

Finally, we proudly celebrate progress in gender equality. The promotion of the Philippines' first female Coast Guard pilot to Commodore, along with the Department of Migrant Workers' support for aspiring women seafarers, mark historic steps toward a more inclusive maritime workforce.

Let us stay the course as we move towards the 65th Anniversary of AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF on 11 November 2025. Together, we are anchored in strength, and sailing into the future with a shared commitment to dignity, excellence, resilience and boundless opportunities for seafarers.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinong Mandaragat! (Long live the Filipino seafarers!)

In solidarity,



Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF


Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President, AMOSUP

Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines

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Cover: Seafarers at work

ILC adopts amendments to the MLC, 2006

By: Camille Simbulan

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has officially adopted the new amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC), addressing key issues on seafarers' rights and overall welfare.

The amendments to the convention's standards, with the goal to keep it relevant to current maritime issues affecting seafarers' working and living conditions onboard, were approved at the 113th Session of the International Labor Conference (ILC) in June, and will come into force in December 2027.

The MLC amendments were first adopted at the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC, 2006) convened on April 7-11, 2025 at the International Labor Organization Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The MLCSTC was a dynamic collaboration between and among governments, ship-owners, and seafarers' organizations to make significant social progress for seafarers—the lifeblood of the global maritime industry.

The amendments agreed



by all parties include **strengthened provisions addressing shipboard violence and harassment, shore leave, repatriation, recognition of seafarers as key workers, fair treatment of seafarers on marine incidents, and improved access to medical training.**

While the Seafarers' Group welcomed these important gains for seafarers, and expressed appreciation of the engagement and cooperation of the governments and shipowners' group on

the agreed amendments, it highlighted that **there is a need to address seafarers' work and rest hours, and the maximum period of service onboard**, citing a report published by the World Maritime University, *Quantifying an Inconvenient Truth* (2024), which revisits an earlier report presented to STC in 2021 – *A Culture of Adjustment - Evaluating the implementation of the current maritime regulatory framework on rest and work hours*, which revealed that seafarers view fatigue as a

significant challenge to their safety, health and well-being and that the existing regulatory framework is ineffective in alleviating fatigue at sea.

In her closing remarks on behalf of the Seafarers' Group, Sascha Meijer Pieneman said, "Seafarers are not robots. They are human beings, hard working to deliver for their families, but also for their employers."

"But progress was made, so it was a good week. We sincerely thank everybody in this room and online who has contributed to improve-

ments of the MLC and thus to better protection and rights for seafarers," she added.



The Seafarers' Group was capably led by its 2nd Vice Chair, Mark Dickinson, General Secretary of Nautilus International, and ITF Assistant Secretary Fabrizio Barcelona. The group also included delegates from various ITF affiliates, such as AMOSUP, represented by the Union's Vice President for Internal Affairs, Atty. Jesus "Jojo" Sale. AMOSUP's Head of Comms and Special Projects for Women and Young Seafarers, Camille Simbulan, also attended as the Young Transport Workers' Representative of ITF's Seafarers' Section. 🇵🇭

A Harassment-Free Ship

The new amendments to the MLC, 2006 include significant changes that seek to address shipboard violence and harassment, such as amendments to the Code relating to Regulations 1.4, 3.1, 4.3, 5.1.

Under the recruitment and placement Guideline B1.4.1—Organizational and operational guidelines, a new paragraph was added on **measures to prevent and address violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, in recruitment and placement processes.**

Women's needs like **sufficient menstrual hygiene products** were included in the amendment to the Code relating to Regulation 3.1 – Accommodation and recreational facilities.

The amendment to the Code relating to Regulation 4.3 – Health and safety protection and accident **prevention includes additional paragraphs on the prevention and elimination, including through prohibition in law, of shipboard violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and sexual assault, with due regard to the Violence and**

Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), as well as strengthened provisions on occupational safety and health, investigations and international cooperation.

Moreover, amendment to the Code relating to Regulation 5.1 – Flag State responsibilities further improved Standard A5.1.5 – On-board complaint procedures, which **safeguards against the possibility of victimization of seafarers for filing complaints, as well as witnesses and whistle-blowers.** 🇵🇭

All Aboard Cebu! AMOSUP Info Caravan 2025 Empowers Seafarers in Central Visayas

By: **Lara San Juan**

Photos courtesy of: **AMOSUP Cebu**

April 04, 2025 | Mandaue City, Cebu “*Maayong buntag ug malipayong pag-abot kanin-yong tanan sa AMOSUP Info Caravan 2025!*” (“Good morning and a warm welcome to all of you to the AMOSUP Info Caravan 2025!”), greeted Dr. Teody Alcantara, Medical Director of AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Cebu.

Active seafarers from Central Visayas gathered at the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Cebu’s Ground Floor Multi-Purpose Hall for a full-day event jam-packed with meaningful exchange of information, services, and support provided by the union, key government agencies, and social partners.

This year’s caravan forms part of the union’s ongoing 65th anniversary celebration. According to AMOSUP President Dr. Conrado F. Oca, it is both a tribute to the union’s history and a step toward a more empowered maritime future.

“As we celebrate AMOSUP’s 65th founding anniversary on November 11 this year... we honor our visionary founder, Captain Gregorio S. Oca who built our robust organization from the ground up,” Dr. Oca said in his welcome remarks. “We continue his extraordinary

legacy as we strengthen our union’s efforts to further drive our progress while moving towards a more sustainable, just, and inclusive future for our seafarers.”

Throughout the day, representatives from government agencies such as MARINA, DMW, OWWA, SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG provided updates and answered questions on seafarer-related policies and benefits. Booths were also set up along the halls to cater to seafarers, including on-site services like Pag-IBIG’s issuance of Loyalty Plus Cards and the SSS e-Wheels mobile service.

MARINA Regional Director

Annabell Lagas emphasized the country’s continued maritime leadership and the government’s ongoing reforms. “Based on the Department of



Migrant Workers' data and MARINA's 2023 Statistical Report, the number of employed Filipino seafarers significantly increased from 345,517 in 2021 to 578,626 in 2023," said Dir. Lagas. "The Philippines continues to rank as the world's top supplier of seafarers, reflecting our strong global presence and competitiveness."

She also highlighted key developments under the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers (RA 12021), such as the planned Office of the Deputy Administrator for Human Element (ODAHE) and MARINA's digital transformation via the MARINA Integrated Seafarers Management Online (MISMO) system, which now processes around 3,000 seafarer certifications daily.

One of the event's highlights was the keynote speech by ITF Manila Inspector Chief Engineer Arvin Peralta, followed by sessions led by AMOSUP union service units in a talk show format—bringing together local representatives from the Seamen's Hospital, Sailor's Home, Slop Chest, AMOSUP ID Center, Provident Fund, and Welfare and Mutual Benefit Plan (WMBP) who shared updates and services available to members.

Adding to the significance of the event, Senator Raffy Tulfo, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Migrant Workers, visited AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital Cebu and toured the union's key facilities like the hospital, activity center and Sailor's Home. He also attended the afternoon session of the Info Caravan and



engaged directly with seafarers to discuss their feedbacks on the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers. This open dialogue provided an opportunity for seafarers to raise concerns and seek clarifications on wage allotment, percentage shares, and protection against abusive practices.

Senator Tulfo emphasized, ***"Kausapin ko po yung mga agency na sana magkaroon ng uniformity at wag sila gagawa ng sarili nilang batas na walang naka indicate doon sa Magna Carta."*** (I will talk to the agencies to ensure there is uniformity and

that they do not create their own rules that are not included in the Magna Carta.) He also highlighted the importance of financial management for seafarers, stressing that proper financial management must be implemented as well.

"AMOSUP thank you tinulungan niyo kami sa senado na mabuo yun Magna Carta for seafarer and sana yun partnership natin will not end, tuloy-tuloy lang po para sa kapakanan ng ating mga seafarers," (AMOSUP, thank you for helping us in the Senate to finalize the Magna Carta for seafarers. I hope our partner-

partnership will continue —let's keep moving forward for the welfare of our seafarers.) Sen. Raffy Tulfo said.

In the latter part of the program, AMOSUP's Legal Counsel and Administrative Secretary Atty. Alex Ragonjan addressed key provisions of the RA 12021 and emphasized the importance of providing seafarers with accurate information about the newly enacted law. Meanwhile, AMOSUP Legal Counsel and Data Protection Officer Atty. Henry Zamora shed light on the issue of ambulance chasing, educating the seafarers on how to identify and protect themselves against misleading claims and legal exploitation.

The event was made even more exciting through the generous support of Duty Free Philippines Corporation, which thrilled attendees with raffle draws and prizes. Another segment featured the AMOSUP Contact Center and AMOSUP official social media channels, encouraging members to stay connected with the union, seek assistance when needed, and keep updated with the latest announcements, programs, and events.

Also in line with the union's upcoming 65th anniversary, the "65 for 65 Campaign" was also introduced which is an initiative aimed at strengthening AMOSUP's presence and deepening its engagement with its community, its members and maritime stakeholders across various platforms.

As the program concluded, AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital Cebu Medical Director Dr. Teody Alcantara delivered his

closing remarks, emphasizing the union's unwavering commitment to the welfare of Filipino seafarers.

Through the AMOSUP Info Caravan, the union continues to bring its services closer to seafarers and their families. This year's successful rollout in Central Visayas marks a significant step in strengthening connections with our members in the region. The next Info Caravan in 2026 is set to take place at AMOSUP Gig Oca Robles Seamen's Hospital in Davao City. 🇵🇭



Atty. Alex Ragonjan
Legal Counsel and Administrative Secretary
AMOSUP



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SF 11



AMOSUP participates in key global maritime meetings

By: *Camille Simbulan*

The Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF), led by its President, Dr Conrado F Oca, actively participated in a series of maritime meetings in Barcelona, Spain this May, joining global union leaders at the first in-person meeting of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Seafarers, Dockers and Fair Practices committees since the historic 46th ITF Congress in Marrakech in 2024.

AMOSUP joined ITF President Paddy Crumlin, General Secre-

tary Stephen Cotton, and other union leaders from ITF affiliates worldwide, to deliver the congress vision through a comprehensive workplan that will chart the course enabling the ITF and its affiliates to uphold workers' rights and fair practices within the maritime industry and across the global supply and value chains.

At Seafarers' Section Committee, discussions focused on strategic priorities, updates on the executive board, and various initiatives, such as ITF's work on just transition in maritime. The section committee also reviewed the

outcomes of global forums, including the Joint ILO-IMO Tripartite Working Group to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element (JTG SIHE), the Fifth Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labor Convention, 2006 (MLCSTC), and the Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Manning Commission (JMC) wage negotiations.

Significantly, the JMC negotiations in April reached a bipartite agreement to raise the ILO minimum monthly basic wage for able seafarers from US\$673 to US\$690 by 1 January 2026,

US\$704 by 1 January 2027, and US\$715 by 1 January 2028.

Other topics included areas of collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the launch of the ITF Women Seafarers network and website, seafarers' mental health, and various initiatives of the ITF Seafarers' Trust to promote the holistic wellness of seafarers.

Meanwhile, the Fair Practices Committee addressed implementation of congress resolutions, updates on the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) 2025 cost negotiations, ITF agreements, the Flag of Convenience (FOC) campaign, the Marrakech policy implementation, global supply chains, and

the upcoming Maritime Roundtable (MRT) and Worldwide Inspectors Seminar (WWIS) in Cyprus in September.

During the FPC session, **AMOSUP's President, Dr. Conrado Oca, reaffirmed the union's stand in support of the International Bargaining Forum (IBF).** "It remains the only international collective bargaining mechanism in the world, and we recognize that it has been instrumental in uplifting the lives of seafarers over the last 25 years," he said. Dr Oca further noted that in 2023, the IBF agreed to the 6% wage increase for 250,000 seafarers.

Dr Oca currently sits as the 1st Vice Chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section, while AMOSUP Administrative Secretary, Atty.

Alex Ragonjan was re-elected as the Vice Chairperson of the ITF Cruise Ship Task Force.

Beyond the ITF Maritime Meetings in Barcelona, AMOSUP has maintained a strong presence on the international stage. Earlier this year, it participated in the Asian Seafarers Summit Meeting (ASSM) and Norwegian/Asian Seafarers' Committee (NASCO) meetings in New Delhi, India in February, as well as the IBF Negotiations in Singapore, ITF Executive Board Meeting in London, and the Fifth Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labor Convention, 2006 (MLCSTC) in Geneva last April.



Unions and employers agree wage hike for seafarers

By: Camille Simbulan



“Malaking tulong po sa pamilya, at saka sa amin... Maraming salamat po sa ginagawa ninyo para sa mga seafarer. (It’s a big help for our families, and for us. Thank you for all that you do for seafarers.)” – a heartfelt message from a Filipino seafarer upon hearing the news about the positive outcome of the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) in Singapore last month, which concluded with a 5% wage increase for seafarers.

The pay raise will be rolled out in two phases: a 3.5% increase starting January 1, 2026, followed by an additional 1.5% on January 1, 2027. Death and disability benefits under the current IBF Framework will also

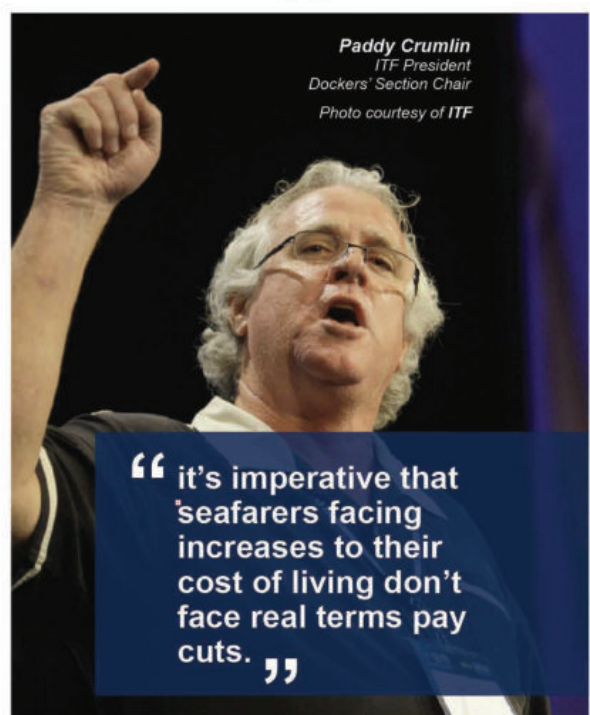
be raised in line with the wage hike.

In a press release, the International Transport Workers’ Federation said, the IBF, a global framework that generates the world’s largest Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), facilitated the negotiation. The agreement impacts over 400,000 seafarers onboard 11,000 ships, involving nearly 500 maritime employers alongside the ITF and its global network of maritime unions, including the Associated Marine Officers’ and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines (AMO-SUP-PTGWO-ITF).

President of the ITF and Dockers’ Section Chair, Paddy

Crumlin, stressed, “it’s imperative that seafarers facing increases to their cost of living don’t face real terms pay cuts.”

Paddy Crumlin
ITF President
Dockers’ Section Chair
Photo courtesy of ITF



“ it’s imperative that seafarers facing increases to their cost of living don’t face real terms pay cuts. ”

Crumlin also recognized the difficult circumstances seafarers have faced in recent years, from the COVID-19 pandemic, to ongoing geopolitical tensions and economic challenges globally. "Seafarers have persevered and endured, and they deserve every cent of the pay rise that's rightly coming their way," he added.

AMOSUP President and ITF Seafarers' Section 1st Vice Chair, Dr. Conrado Oca, who served as ITF's Spokesperson at the IBF, noted that while negotiations were challenging, the final agreement represents a balanced and fair outcome

"I'm happy to say that this is an outcome that is good and fair for seafarers, who need a pay rise that reflects the changes we've seen in their cost of living. Alongside this, it's vitally important that we keep the profession as attractive as possible to seafarers and potential new recruits as we face an ongoing recruitment and retention crisis,"

he concluded.

Representing the Joint Negotiating Group of mari-

time employers (JNG), IMEC Chairman Captain Belal Ahmed, acknowledged the challenges faced by the global maritime industry and the world trade as a whole, but he reiterated that the core principles of the IBF intend to ensure that "we protect and foster a sustainable shipping industry. The agreement we reached puts us in good stead whilst at the same time awarding a fair pay increase to seafarers that play such a crucial role and keeps their remuneration package attractive."

Toshihito Inoue, Chairman of IMMAJ, also recognized the tough negotiations due to the rising costs affecting both seafarers and the employers, but he expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the talks, "I thought The ITF and the JNG discussed in good faith and tried to explore every avenue to reach an agreement that would be accepted by both sides. I am happy we finally clinched the deal."

The successful IBF negotiations came a month after the landmark bipartite agreement between the seafarers' and shipowners' groups at the International Labor Organization (ILO) Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission (JMC), to update the current ILO global minimum monthly basic wage for an able seafarer from US\$673 to US\$690 by 1 January 2026, US\$704 by 1 January 2027 and US\$715 by 1 January 2028. 🌐



Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

The vanishing shore leave of seafarers

By: *Andy Dalisay.*

Shore leave, once a cherished respite for seafarers, is now teetering on the brink of extinction.

A recent survey conducted by the ITF Seafarers' Trust (ITFST) and analyzed by the World Maritime University (WMU) reveals a stark reality: nearly 70% of seafarers rarely or never go ashore during their contracts. More than a quarter of seafarers did not get any shore leave at all and a third only got ashore once or twice during their entire contract, based on an average of 6.6 months onboard, WMU concluded.

The survey from nearly 6,000 seafarers found that only 26% of respondents managed to take shore leave during their contract period, and 19.8% went ashore just once.

ITFST said, ship officers were "least likely to get shore leave, and seafarers on offshore vessels and tankers were the least likely to get ashore. Across all respondents, even

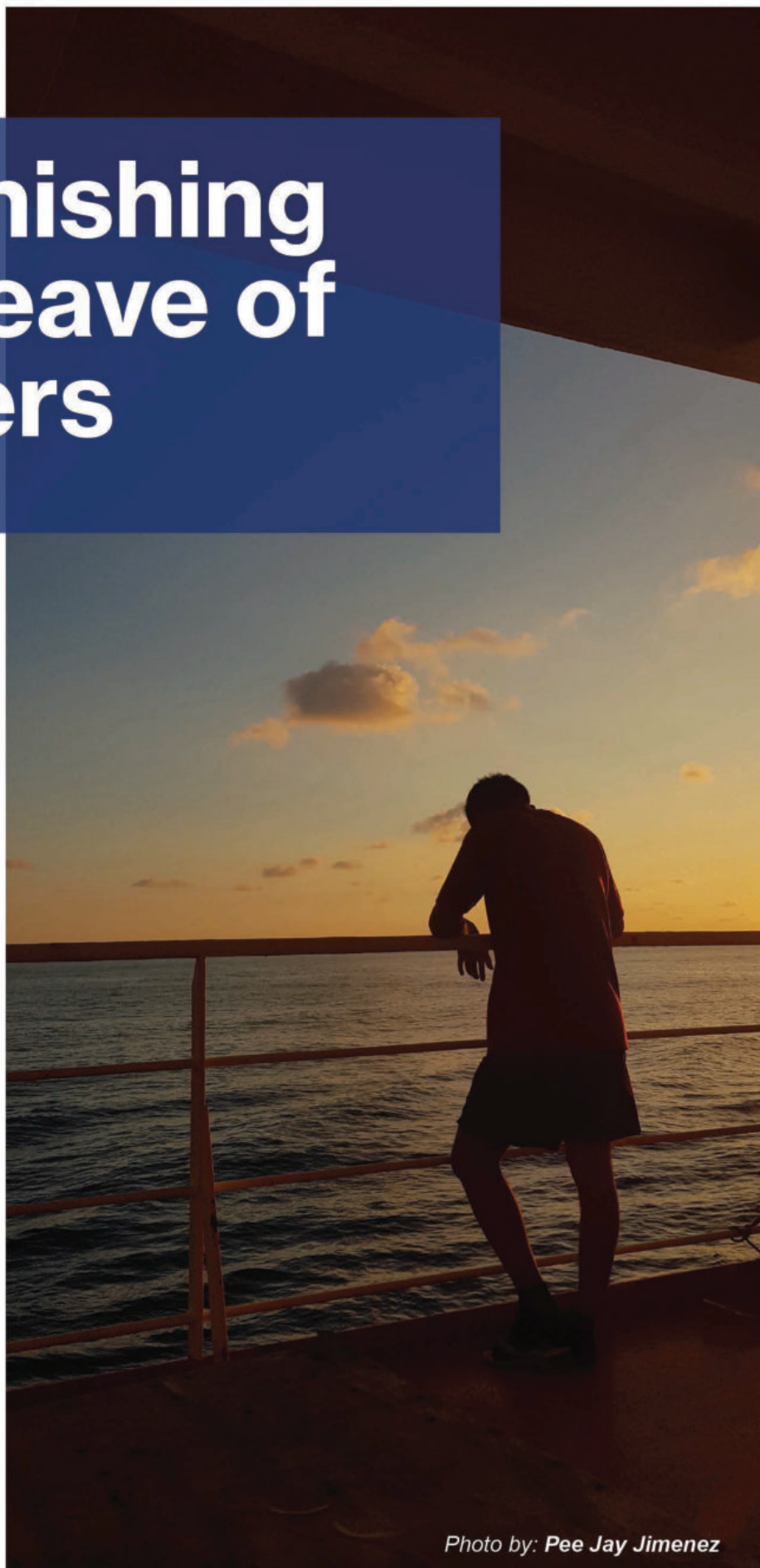


Photo by: *Pee Jay Jimenez*

when seafarers did get shore leave, 47% were able to spend less than 3 hours ashore and overall, 93.5% spent less than 6 hours ashore.”

Historically, shore leave has been an integral part of maritime life, offering seafarers a chance to step away from the confines of their vessels, reconnect with the world and recharge. However, modern maritime operations have introduced barriers that make shore leave increasingly rare.

The study identifies several key obstacles which include:

- **Port restrictions:** Bureaucratic hurdles, security measures, and local regulations have tightened access to shore leave, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **High workloads:** Onboard responsibilities often leave little time for seafarers to disembark.
- **Quick turnarounds:** The pressure to minimize port time has further reduced opportunities for shore leave.
- **Transport costs and distance:** The financial and logistical challenges of reaching shore facilities add to the difficulty.

The report also includes feedback from seafarers themselves, showing a strong depth of feeling evident from their responses to the open questions. A Turkish deck officer, after 4.5 months on board a tanker, reported: “As a deck officer, most of the time, our shore leave is based on our

port watch schedule and chief officers’ approach to officers; while having 6 on 6 off watch it is almost impossible to go out without making another officer take your watch for a couple of hours, and after you are back in port you have to take night watch which makes it hard to stand. [...]”

An Indian deck officer, after six months on board stated: “I have been working in the shipping industry since 2006. I have noticed that all the ports have slowly found ways to deny shore leave to the ship’s crew. If they can’t say NO! straight-away, then they will impose heavy charges so that everyone automatically refuses to go ashore. Plus, the workload and the commercial pressure on senior officers are so much that they find it difficult to go ashore. Generally, oil/chemical refineries where our tankers go for loading or discharging are far away from the cities. There is nothing close by where we can go and relax a bit, have some nice food or go shopping. There are ports which force us to use boats for shore leave, and those boats are very expensive and unaffordable! After a long sailing, we feel exhausted, and it’s our right, I think, to get a shore leave.”

Katie Higginbottom, the head of ITFST said, “This survey confirms our fears. Seafarers are not getting shore leave because it hasn’t been prioritized as essential for crew well-being and the safety of the vessel. This is about setting the scene, and it is stark.” She’s hoping that the findings will “**promote discussion and acknowledgement that seafarers deserve a break from the vessel. Action must be taken to preserve the possi-**

bility of shore leave.”

Higginbottom points out in a press statement that the report is clear: The industry faces “systemic and multifaceted” problems.

She suggests that all stakeholders, “**from flag States to port States, agents to shipping companies and seafarers themselves, need to collaborate to ensure that this vital component of life at sea is maintained and expanded.** All parties need to recognize that, unchecked, the current regime risks the extinction of shore leave as a viable concept, reinforcing the strains on an already pressurized work force.” 🌐



SAFETY4SEA Manila Forum: Urgent call for seafarer welfare and future-ready skills

Photos courtesy of
FAS Maritime

The 2025 SAFETY4SEA Manila Forum, convened at the Sheraton Manila Hotel on April 3rd, amplified critical concerns regarding seafarers' well-being and mental health, urgently advocating for sweeping industry reforms.

The assembly of maritime leaders and experts underscored the imperative to equip seafarers with the evolving skills and robust support systems necessary to navigate the dynamic challenges within maritime safety, technological advancements, and the unique demands of contemporary seafaring.

Discussions at the forum spotlighted the **intensifying pressures confronting seafarers**, including **stricter regulations**, **rapid technological transformations**, and the **significant emotional toll of prolonged periods away from home**.

These factors were identified as key challenges impacting the overall welfare of those serving at sea.

Atty. Iris Baguilat, President of Döhle Seafront Crewing (Manila), asserted that while robust technical training and strict regulatory compliance remain foundational, **the cultivation of essential soft skills and mental resilience has become equally paramount**. She emphasized that preparing



crews for the intricacies of modern shipping necessitates a holistic approach extending beyond traditional maritime education.

Reinforcing these concerns, Marville Cullen Espago of the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) revealed a troubling surge in seafarers seeking mental health support. Notably, family-related stress, often exacerbated by constant digital connectivity, emerged as a significant contributing factor. Experts cautioned that while readily available high-speed internet aims to bridge geographical distances, it can inadvertently expose seafarers to real-time personal crises, fostering feelings of helplessness and augmenting psychological strain.

The lived experiences of seafarers were brought to the forefront during an insightful session featuring active crew members. They openly shared their realities onboard, raising pertinent issues concerning job security, prospects for career advancement, and the critical need for enhanced support systems during their time at sea. Their compelling testimonies urged companies to transcend mere regulatory compliance and prioritize crew welfare through the provision of accessible and effective mental health and well-being programs. Industry leaders at the forum collectively stressed that while safety standards continue to progress, the human element must remain central to maritime operations.

Capt. Nicolo Terrei of the I.M.A. Assessment and Training

Center passionately advocated for a significant expansion of maritime training. He called for an educational paradigm shift that integrates leadership development, adaptability skills, and robust crisis management training alongside traditional technical expertise. This, he argued, is indispensable for adequately preparing seafarers for the increasingly complex and demanding nature of their roles and the new ships they will operate.

Presca Lee of the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) underscored the **critical importance of continuous learning** to ensure the sustained competitiveness of Filipino seafarers. "By strengthening our education and frameworks and providing continuous learning opportunities, **we ensure that our seafarers are equipped with the knowledge, new skills, and competencies necessary to excel in a rapidly evolving maritime landscape,**" Lee stated. She also conveyed Marina's appreciation to Safety4SEA for fostering crucial dialogue and collaboration within the industry, emphasizing

ing the unified pursuit of maritime excellence, safety, and sustainability.

Marlon Rono of the Magsaysay Group provided a comprehensive overview of the current state and future of crew management in the Philippines. He highlighted the nation's demographic advantage with a young population and a significant number of students enrolled in maritime studies. However, he also pointed out a critical bottleneck: "Only 16 percent of the 2022-2023 graduating class were able to secure onboard training in 2023. This translates to only 36 percent of maritime graduates ultimately pursuing a seafaring career, leaving 64 percent without the opportunity to gain onboard experience." Rono outlined key challenges including limited shipboard training slots, insufficient partnerships with shipping companies to provide new training opportunities, and the high cost associated with training. He proposed three fundamental pillars to sustain and elevate the Filipino seafarer legacy: empowering people, embracing innovation,

and leading with purpose.

As the maritime industry actively adapts to more stringent environmental regulations and the increasing integration of automation, seafarers remain at the forefront of these transformative changes. Experts at the SAFETY4SEA Manila Forum firmly asserted that investing in the welfare of these essential workers is not merely an ethical obligation but a strategic imperative. Ensuring a resilient, well-supported, and highly competent maritime workforce, equipped with the necessary new skills, ready to operate new ships, and empowered through innovative new training methodologies, is paramount to navigating the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities that lie ahead for the future of shipping. The forum served as a powerful reminder that the industry's readiness for the future is inextricably linked to its unwavering commitment to the well-being and continuous professional development of its seafarers. 🌐



Landmark pledge amplifies the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers

Photos courtesy of: FAS Maritime

The Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) Convention Hall, served as a stage for a significant event in maritime. Stakeholders, the government and seafarers representatives and groups galvanized by the singular purpose of championing Filipino seafarers rights convened to ceremonially sign the **"Pledge of Commitment"** for the full

implementation of the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers (Republic Act No. 12021) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). This event affirmed the supreme and indispensable importance of this legislation for the countless Filipino men and women who navigate the world's oceans.

Leading maritime stakeholders, including Döhle Seafront, CF Sharp, Synergy Group, Philippine Transmarine Carriers Inc.

(PTCI), Marlow, OSM Thome, and Anglo-Eastern, alongside other members of the ALMA Maritime Group, stood united with key government agencies. The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) joined forces with the core advocates for seafarer well-being: the unions, maritime academies dedicated to their training, and various advocacy groups. Their collective presence underscored one unwavering truth: the Magna Carta is paramount.

The significance of the venue itself, the AMOSUP Convention Hall, resonated deeply. For decades, AMOSUP's very existence dedicated to ensuring that the rights and welfare of Filipino seafarers are not just considered but protected. The choice of this location for the signing ceremony served as a



symbol of the unwavering commitment to the Magna Carta's core mission: the absolute prioritization of the Filipino seafarer and their rights and protection.

The Magna Carta, it was stressed repeatedly, transcends the realm of mere legal statute; it is the fundamental charter upon which the future security, fair treatment, and overall well-being of Filipino seafarers must be built and fiercely defended.

Representative Ron Salo, the principal author of this landmark legislation spearheaded the signing. His leadership underscored the legislative recognition of the paramount importance of these maritime frontliners. He was joined by a powerful coalition of government officials, including Migrant Workers Undersecretary



Felicitas Bay, Assistant Transportation Secretary Villamor Ventura Plan, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) Administrator Sonia Malaluan, Assistant Solicitor General Thomas Laragan, and Presidential Human Rights Committee Undersecretary Severo Catura – their unified presence a clear testament to the government's unwavering prioritization of Filipino seafarers' rights.

The Pledge of Commitment garnered the unqualified support of crucial maritime organizations, including the Association of Licensed Manning Agencies (ALMA) Maritime Group, Joint Manning Group (JMG), Filipino Association of Maritime Employers (FAME), Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA), Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), Magsaysay Maritime Corp., Philippine Coastwise Shipping Association, Inc. (PCSA), United Filipino Seafarers (UFS), Philippine Transmarine Carriers (PTC), SeaFam International, and seafarers groups including

Amosup members. Their collective affirmation underscored an industry-wide consensus: the Magna Carta is the non-negotiable foundation for the treatment of Filipino seafarers.

Salo emphasized the paramount and indivisible responsibility of all maritime stakeholders to uphold the rights, welfare, and intrinsic dignity of every single Filipino seafarer. He articulated that the Magna Carta champions an essential fairness that extends to maritime employers and shipowners, but its primary and unwavering focus remains the protection and empowerment of the seafarers themselves.

A critical aspect highlighted was the **Magna Carta's robust framework designed to eradicate the exploitative practice of ambulance-chasing – a menace that has, for far too long, threatened the livelihoods of Filipino seafarers** through baseless and exorbitant injury claims. **The Magna Carta stands as an unyielding shield against such injustices**, unequivocally prioritizing the genuine well-being and job



Are seafarers' salaries reduced because of R.A. 12021?

WHAT THEY SAY

Some seafarers have expressed concern over Section 6 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 12021 or the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, which requires seafarers to make an allotment of 80 percent of the basic wage plus fixed overtime, payable once a month to the designated allottee in the Philippines.

But one of the authors of R.A. 12021, Kabayan Representative Ron Salo, clarified in a statement that the allotment

provision has always been a part of a seafarer's Standard Employment Contract (SEC). *"80% lamang ito ng kanilang tiyak at regular na bahagi ng sahod ng seafarer, at hindi kasama ang mga bonus, incentive pay, o iba pa nilang tinatanggap* (The allotment is just 80% of their guaranteed and regular salary, and does not include the bonuses, incentive pay, or other earnings of the seafarer)," he said.

In a consultative meeting with seafarers' unions, seafarers'

wives and other industry stakeholders, the Senate Committee on Migrant Workers Chairperson, Senator Raffy Tulfo, refuted the fake news spreading on social media that seafarers' salaries are reduced due to the enactment of the Magna Carta. AMOSUP's Atty. Henry Zamora also explained that seafarers can even designate themselves as the allottee. "The power of control over the salary remains with the seafarer," he said. 🇵🇭

security of these indispensable maritime professionals above all else.

Government representatives echoed this unwavering commitment, offering resolute assurances that the rights and welfare of seafarers would be protected and promoted with utmost diligence. **Assistant Solicitor General Thomas Laragan pledged the full legal might of the Office of the Solicitor General to steadfastly defend the sanctity and full implementation of the Magna Carta.**

Iris Baguilat, Chairman of ALMA, affirmed that the Magna Carta will elevate the standards of protection and welfare for seafarers, acting as a vital reinforcement of their rights and security, with their well-being as the paramount concern.

The Magna Carta of Filipino

Seafarers serves as a cornerstone law, seamlessly integrating the principles of the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006 and the Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention into the national legal framework. This alignment underscores the Philippines' unwavering commitment to the highest international maritime standards, with the Filipino seafarer's welfare as the central and non-negotiable tenet.

This landmark legislation establishes comprehensive safeguards for seafarers throughout their demanding careers, both at sea and upon their return home. It guarantees fair compensation, access to crucial and relevant training, and vital social and welfare benefits, unequivocally prioritizing their needs. Key provisions, such as mandatory shipboard training and equitable

treatment in cases of illness or injury, directly address the unique challenges faced by these essential maritime professionals.

The unified pledge made within the halls of AMOSUP signifies more than just a formal agreement; it represents an unwavering commitment to the Filipino seafarer – the very lifeblood of the nation's maritime strength. The full and faithful implementation of the Magna Carta promises to usher in a new era of enhanced protection, unwavering dignity, and absolute security for these vital workers, solidifying the Philippines' standing as a global maritime leader built upon the unshakeable foundation of prioritizing its seafarers above all else. The resounding message was clear: the Magna Carta exists first and foremost for the Filipino seafarer. 🇵🇭



**From the
Crow's Nest**

From messman to officer: A seafarer's journey to his dream

By: **Andy Dalisay**.

Photos courtesy of: **Manuel Mendez**

For many seafarers, the journey from the lowest ranks to a high-ranking officer position is an arduous but rewarding path. Manuel Mendez, a 35-year-old Able Seaman (A/B), has spent 12 years navigating the high seas, steadily working his way up from a humble beginning as an O/S (Ordinary Seaman). Now, on the verge of obtaining his Third Mate ticket, his inspiring story is a testament to perseverance, resilience and the ever-evolving maritime industry.

Image: Manuel Mendez

Manuel began his career as a cadet on a Trans-Asia ferry, gaining hands-on experience in the domestic trade before setting his sights on international shipping. His first overseas job was as a messman, a role involving galley or kitchen and housekeeping duties. After four months of diligent work, he advanced to Ordinary Seaman (O/S), but progress was slow. Stuck in the same position for four contracts on different bulk carriers, Manuel made the bold decision to switch companies. It proved to be a pivotal move that led him to his current position as an A/B seafarer.

As an Able Seaman, Manuel's routine at sea is rigorous. His day starts at 0700H with a

quick shower before heading to his deck duties. The maintenance work includes painting, chipping and cleaning the ship's deck. He gets a break for breakfast and then resumes work at 1300H. His shift runs for six hours in the daytime and four hours at night, beginning at 2000H. While the job is physically demanding, Manuel takes pride in his responsibilities, knowing that every task contributes to the smooth operation of the vessel.

A Personal Loss

Life at sea comes with sacrifices, and for Manuel, the toughest challenge came in December 2023. While onboard in Europe, he received the devas-

tating news of his father's passing due to a heart attack. With no feasible way to return home, he made the painful decision to stay onboard and instead sent his three-month salary to help with the funeral expenses. *"Since kulang sa budget, pinadala ko na lang yung three-month salary ko para makatulong din sa paglilibing,"* (Due to budget constraint, I just sent my... to help in the interment), he shares. As the eldest of two siblings and a father of two himself, Manuel had to balance his grief with his duties at sea.

Being away from family for months at a time can take a toll on a seafarer's mental health. Manuel finds solace in calling

home.

“Nawawala ang pagod ko pag naka-kausap ko ang mga anak at misis ko. Nakakabawas din ng stress at lungkot,”

(Weariness dies out once I converse with my children and spouse. [They] also lessen stress and loneliness), he says. And thanks to advancements in maritime technology, seafarers aboard now have better access to mental health support. Manuel praises a well-being app provided by his company, which offers resources to help crewmembers navigate emotional challenges, decision-making and workplace conflicts.

“It’s a beautiful app,” he explains: “If I’m struggling with

something, it gives me options to process my feelings and choose the best course of action. When my father passed, it helped me cope with my grief.” The app also provides guidance on dealing with workplace tensions, such as handling difficult colleagues or bullying situations, ensuring a healthier work environment for all seafarers.

On the Cusp of a Promotion

Manuel is now close to achieving his dream of becoming a ship officer. In January 2025, he received a recommendation from his ship’s Master for Third Mate training and promotion. With only a three-month training course standing between him and his officer rank, he is eager to take the next step in his career.

continuous learning. “We also get trained on handling other types of ships such as LNG and methanol-run carriers since the company began switching from fossil fuel due to decarbonisation,” he explains. With environmental regulations tightening, alternative fuels like LNG and methanol are becoming key solutions for reducing emissions. Training on these new technologies ensures seafarers like Manuel stay ahead in their field.

During break ashore, Manuel embraces a simpler, more grounded lifestyle. He spends time gardening on a small piece of land he owns in Bohol and enjoys cooking for his family. His specialty? “Paksiw na isda,” a local fish stew. He also takes on household repairs and personally drops off his children at school, making up for the lost time spent at sea.

“With these [tasks], nakakabawi ako sa kanila” (...I can make up with them), he says, cherishing the everyday moments that reconnect him with his loved ones.

From messman to a soon-to-be officer, Manuel Mendez’s journey is one of perseverance and ambition. His story highlights the realities of life at sea—the hardships, sacrifices and firm determination to reach one’s goals. As he embarks on his next contract, he carries with him the hopes of one day commanding a merchant ship, proving that with dedication and continuous learning, the sea is full of opportunities for those willing to brave the waves.



Over the years, Manuel has worked on nearly a dozen vessels, mostly containerships under the France-based shipowner and logistics firm CMA-CGM, which operates in the Asia-Europe trade. His experience has not only honed his skills but also broadened his understanding of the maritime industry’s changing landscape.

With the maritime industry shifting towards cleaner energy alternative, Manuel understands the importance of



Commodore Christine Pauline Bergaño-Diciano
Photo courtesy of Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)

Malacañang elevates nation's first female PCG pilot to Commodore rank

In a significant move, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has approved the promotion of Captain Christine Pauline Bergaño-Diciano to the rank of Commodore, making her the Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) first female pilot to achieve this distinction. The promotion, effective May 14, 2025, came upon the recommendation of Department of the Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Vince Dizon.

A trailblazer in PCG history

Commodore Bergaño-Diciano, a proud member of the Coast Guard Officer's Course (CGOC) "A" Matatag Class 02-2001, was among the inaugural cohort of homegrown female officers in the PCG. Her

career has been marked by a series of significant "firsts" that have paved the way for women in the service.

She broke new ground in 2005 by becoming the first female Coast Guard Pilot, embarking on her inaugural flight mission the following year. Her aerial expertise proved crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, as she led numerous missions to transport vital medical supplies to remote communities across the archipelago.

Her leadership extended to operational roles, where she served as the first and only female PCG Air Station Commander under the West Philippine Sea (WPS) Oplan Matatag in 2010. Demonstrating her ascending influence,

she also assumed the pivotal role of Coast Guard Aviation Force (CGAF) Commander in 2022.

Championing Inclusivity and Women's Empowerment

Beyond her operational achievements, Commodore Bergaño-Diciano has been a fervent advocate for gender equality and inclusivity within the PCG. During her tenure leading the PCG's Gender and Development (GAD) unit in 2022, she championed the inclusion of the hijab into the uniform of female Muslim Coast Guard personnel, a move that garnered praise from the United Nations

Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Her advocacy during this period also extended to pushing for the integration of female rescue swimmers and drivers into the force. Currently serving as the Leadership and Doctrine Development Center (LDDC) Director, Commodore Bergaño-Diciano continues to promote women empowerment and greater inclusivity.

In this role, she oversees the development of doctrine and leadership frameworks, evaluates Coast Guard training, and manages training courses across PCG Satellite Training Institute.

A Career of Diverse Contributions and International Recognition

Commodore Bergaño-Diciano's extensive career also includes service in various critical Coast Guard units, such as the Coast Guard Education, Training and Doctrine Command (CGETDC), Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Human Resource Management (CG-1), Coast Guard Flag Office, Coast Guard Internal Audit (CGIA), Coast Guard Procurement (CGPS), and Coast Guard Logistics Systems Command (CGLSC).

She also held the position of Acting Superintendent of the Coast Guard School for Special Maritime Affairs (CGSS-MA) before her current designation. Her influence extends beyond national borders; in 2014, she made history again

as the First Asian Vice-President of the World Maritime University (WMU)'s Women's Association in Malmö, Sweden.

"Pilak Award" Recipient and Inspiring Words

Earlier this year, during the PCG's National Women's Month 2025 celebration, Commodore Bergaño-Diciano was honored with the prestigious "Pilak Award" for Natatanging Juana ng Tanod Baybayin ng Pilipinas, a testament to her commendable service to the Coast Guard.

Reflecting on her journey, Commodore Bergaño-Diciano offered a message of enduring wisdom and encouragement: **"Whatever you are working on – may it be in tactical and operational works and stra-**

tegic ingenuities, be perpetual learners. Success, after all, is being grateful for our meaningful journeys and our happy and contented disposition on the lifework, we honor daily. Life's journey requires introspect and self-transcendence. And there is no service so small. So, in all chances, choices and changes, own it. Practice mindfulness and embrace impermanence. Cultivate passion and compassion. Rediscover yourselves and grow from it. It is in the heart, kindness, grace, inspiration, love and all our faculties that we can support each other."

Commodore Bergaño-Diciano's promotion marks a significant milestone for the Philippine Coast Guard, symbolizing progress and the recognition of exceptional leadership and dedication. 🇵🇭



Image: Recognition Ceremony for the promotion of Commodore Christine Pauline Bergaño-Diciano

Photo courtesy of:
Coast Guard Education, Training and Doctrine Command

PCGMentors Coast Guard Education, Training & Doctrine Command



Navigating Equality: DMW Supports Future Women Seafarers

By: Justine Lapid
Photo by Justine Lapid

In celebration of the 2025 National Women's Month, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), in cooperation with the Philippine Association of Maritime Institutions (PAMI), held a special event titled "Empowering Future Women Seafarers: A Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar for Seafarer-Cadets" on March 21, 2025, at the DMW Central Office in Mandaluyong City. The event gathered female cadets from various maritime schools across the country and served as a vital opportunity to prepare them for their journey into the global maritime industry.

The seminar opened with welcome remarks from DMW Assistant Secretary for Pre-Employment Services Levinson C. Alcantara, followed by an inspiring message from PAMI President Sabino Czar C. Manglicmot II. Throughout the day, cadets were engaged in a series of informative sessions that tack-

led critical topics including the Code of Conduct and Standard Employment Contract by Mr. Jeremy Carneo of DMW Adjudication Bureau, practical Tips to Avoid Illegal Recruitment and Human Trafficking discussed by Atty. Rajeen Biasca of DMW Migrant Workers Protection Bureau, and Labor Attaché Saul T. De Vries from DMW Migrant Workers Office - Washington, D.C. on the importance of Digital Safety, Online Ethics, and The Laws Surrounding Child Pornography. The sessions also highlighted the special provisions for women under the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, providing attendees with a stronger understanding of their rights and protections as future maritime professionals.

One of the most memorable parts of the event was a panel discussion featuring empowered women leaders in the maritime industry. Chief Engineer Elisza D. Chomi, an

AMOSUP member from Unitankers; 3rd Officer Grinabelle Chavez-Duran, President of TORM Shipping Philippines Inc.; and Deck Cadet Trisha Marie D. Doce shared their personal experiences and professional journeys. Their insights and stories offered valuable inspiration and encouragement to the aspiring seafarers in the audience.

Through this seminar, the DMW not only honored the strength and potential of Filipino women in maritime but also reinforced its commitment to providing them with the knowledge, support, and protection they need to succeed in their chosen careers at sea.

The program concluded with the awarding of certificates to the distinguished women leaders in the maritime industry, followed by an inspiring closing remark from Undersecretary Felicitas Q. Bay of the DMW Foreign Employment and Welfare Services.



By: *Lara San Juan*
Photo courtesy of *MAAP*

April 12, 2025 | Mariveles, Bataan — **AMOSUP introduces its role in seafarer welfare, commitment to protecting seafarers' rights and industrial relations to over 400 cadets of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) at the Center for Advanced Maritime Studies (CAMS) auditorium.** With the support of MAAP Vice President Engr. Felix M. Oca, the symposium commenced with a session led by AMOSUP Legal Counsel Atty. Mikki Escarilla, who discussed the history of

AMOSUP, its various service units and welfare programs, MAAP's role as the union's maritime education arm, and AMOSUP's advocacy against ambulance chasing.

The program also featured ITF Manila Inspector C/E Arvin Peralta, who introduced the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and discussed the issue of Flags of Convenience (FOC). Also, AMOSUP Communications Deputy for Internal Affairs Lara San Juan presented the

union's ongoing efforts to strengthen its communication platforms, including the AMOSUP Contact Center, official social media accounts, the Alagang AMOSUP radio program and other events and welfare services available to seafarers and their families.

To cap off the program, cadets actively participated in a lively Q&A session and received exciting prizes, making the symposium both informative and engaging. 🇵🇭



MAAP President VADM Eduardo Ma R. Santos Receives Prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at PMA Alumni Homecoming

By: 3CL Joshua Garcia

Photos courtesy of: Kamaya Point

Recognized for over five decades of outstanding leadership and service, Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) President VADM Eduardo Ma R. Santos AFP (Ret.) was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award (LAA) during the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Alumni Homecoming on 15 February 2025.

Looking back on his career, VADM Santos shared that this was his fourth Cavalier Award, a rare distinction among PMA alumni. "I'm an alumnus of PMA and a cavalier award is very precious. Not everybody gets a cavalier award. Many, even some generals have not really received a single award from the academy, I actually have three, that's the fourth. *Lifetime na kaya wala na, period,*" he stated.

His previous awards were for his roles as Port Manager in 1985, Flag Officer-in-Command of the Navy in 1998, and his contributions to PMA cadets while at MAAP.

With his experience in the navy, VADM Santos explained how his background in deck and engine operations gave him an advantage.

"That's a big advantage to me because I can explain to the deck officer what I understand from the engines which is something not all merchant officers are capable. I have the best of both worlds, to me that helps me a lot in trying to connect and relate to both navigators and engineers," he said.

He also advised young officers to stay open-minded, adaptable, and willing to learn.

"Your mind must always be open, not necessarily creative but just realizing that these are things that might help you in the future. **If you don't appreciate what's happening around you, you just turn around not realizing that there is something important,** there's a small detail there that should have helped you in what you're going to do," he remarked.

He stressed that being aware of new ideas and observing how others work can lead to improvement. At the same time, he reminded them to be flexible in decision-making, as shipboard conditions constantly change. The Lifetime Achievement Award is a testament to VADM Santos' commitment that continues to inspire future generations of maritime professionals and military officers. 🇵🇭

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: MAAP's Equeserions Class of 2024 sailing forward during Graduation Day

By: 1CL Roland Keith P. Ochavo

Photos courtesy of: Kamaya Point



MARIVELES, BATAAN – Forged into a new course and molded to be future maritime officers, the EQUESERIONS Class of 2024 held a momentous graduation ceremony on the New Parade Grounds of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), celebrating the achievements of 222 graduates, including 13 midshipwomen on December 03, 2024.

The event was graced by the Guest of Honor, Hon. Sonia B. Malaluan, Administrator of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), who commended the graduates for their hard work and dedication in pursuing careers in the maritime industry.

In her keynote address, MARINA Administrator Sonia Malaluan highlighted the important role of Filipino seafarers all over the world who keep global trade operating efficiently. Hon. Malaluan also acknowledged the quality of maritime education and

training that MAAP has been providing through the years along with world-class training facilities and equipment as evident to its graduates.

Further, Malaluan toured the modern facilities of MAAP and witnessed the demonstration of the latest technology/digital solutions being used in the Academy. Wreath-laying to pay respects to Capt. Gregorio Oca and tree planting were part of her official visit to the academy together with MAAP President, VAdm Eduardo Ma R Santos AFP (Ret) and MAAP Governing Board Chairman and AMOSUP President, Dr. Conrado F. Oca.

On the other hand, among the class' honorees, Ens. Carlo Benedict Alarde and Ens. Neil Consignado were recognized as Cum Laude graduates. Ens. Ryaniel Asister not only achieved Cum Laude status but also received the Professional Subject Award and the prestigious Chairman's Saber, which is awarded to the top graduate.

Ens. Gunio, Nathaniel received the President's Saber while Ens. Isam Butal was honored with the Leadership Saber, recognizing his outstanding leadership as Fleet Commander.

Other notable awards included:

- Languages and Social Sciences Award: Ens. Glendale Aries Cadeliña
- Math and Science Award: Ens. Adrian Dugenia
- Shipboard Training Award: Ens. Benedict Esmeria
- Journalism Award: Ens. Denvergil Morin
- Conduct Award: Ens. Jef Mirvan Peliño
- NROTC Award: Ens. Rey Selwyn Manalang

The ceremony highlighted the academic excellence and commitment of the graduates, showcasing their readiness to contribute to the maritime sector. With inspiring speeches and heartfelt tributes, the event not only celebrated their achievements but also set the stage for their future endeavors in maritime. 🌊

MARIVELES, BATAAN – Hats flew high at the hallowed ground of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) as the first batch of cadets from MAAP Class of 2025 marked the end of their academic voyage.

The new set of future maritime officers proudly joined the long line of Maritime Academy at the Graduation Ceremony on 27 May 2025. 174 first class midshipmen including 4 midshipwomen were conferred with their corresponding degrees of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) and Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (BSMarE).

Having aboard ship for at least 1 year during their shipboard training, members of the graduating class, led by the outgoing Fleet Commander, Midn 1CL Mendoza, Gerald Angelo, say they are eager to face the seven seas. “I am proud of my classmates and now on high morale as we will be reaping the fruits of our hard work. I share this milestone to our God, my parents, my underclassmen and especially to my classmates who were along with me in this journey,” he remarked.

The much-awaited graduation of the VALHAREANS Class of 2025 is the 23rd batch of men and women who entered the Academy aiming to be a marine officer someday. Now, they are officially a part of the Filipino seafarers’ community, and the wider global maritime industry. 🌐

VALHAREANS Class of 2025 1B graduates from MAAP

By: 1CL Roland Keith P. Ochavo
Photos courtesy of: Kamaya Point





In Gig Oca Robles Seamen's Hospital- Davao, with the vibrant and energetic Department Heads leading the way.

AMOSUP's Data Privacy Team Visits Branches Across the Philippines

By: Frances Israel

The year 2024 has been a transformative one for the AMOSUP Data Privacy Team, showcasing their commitment to advancing data privacy compliance and practical implementation across all branches of the organization. Building on the momentum from the successful Data Privacy Summit held at the AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital in Manila last July, the team launched an ambitious nationwide initiative to engage directly with AMOSUP Seamen's Hospitals and Clinics. This initiative aimed

to provide a deeper understanding of each branch's operational challenges and to reinforce data privacy compliance in a hands-on and collaborative manner.

Led by the Data Privacy Team—comprising Atty. Henry Zamora, Data Protection Officer of the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines and of AMOSUP Seamen's Hospitals and Clinics; Mr. Nixon Forteza, Network Administrator and Data Protection Officer of Mariners' Home Inc.; Ms. Kristine Meryl Auquico, Human Resources Officer and Data Protection Officer of Fil-Nor Gain; and Ms. Frances Ann Israel, Communication Officer and Compliance Officer for Privacy of Seamen's Hospital-Manila—the tour emphasized that data privacy is not merely about compliance but about embedding privacy-conscious practices into everyday operations.

Atty. Zamora underscored this point during the visits: "Data privacy is not just about ticking boxes or submitting reports to meet compliance requirements. It is about integrating privacy as a practice in everything we do. This means empowering every employee to take ownership of data protection in their day-to-day roles, ensuring it becomes a natural part of our organizational culture."

The nationwide initiative began with **Iloilo** on **October 10-11, 2024**, as the first stop. From there, the team visited **Gig Oca Robles Seamen's Hospital in Davao** on **October 26-27, 2024**, followed by **Seamen's Hospital Cebu** on **November 21-22, 2024**, and concluded at **AMOSUP Bacolod Extension Facility** on **November 27-28, 2024**.

The tour combined policy updates, quick compliance audits, and interactive work-

shops that engaged employees across all branches. These sessions focused on the latest updates to the Data Privacy Act policies while also offering employees a safe space to address challenges, share insights, and present creative strategies for compliance. While the topic of data privacy is serious and technical, the workshops brought employees together in a lighthearted yet productive manner, allowing for a mix of learning and collaboration.

This initiative highlighted a key point—compliance with the Data Privacy Act extends beyond checklists and audits. It involves creating a culture where employees are empowered to understand data protection in practice. This mindset shift was a consistent focus during their workshops and discussions.

The AMOSUP Data Privacy Team remains steadfast in their mission to prioritize accountability, collaboration, and practical application of data privacy policies. Their nationwide effort ensures that the AMOSUP community continues to lead by example, maintaining trust, transparency, and a commitment to the safety and protection of sensitive information.

As this nationwide journey continues, AMOSUP's Data Privacy Team will keep fostering collaboration and promoting understanding of the practical and proactive elements of data privacy across all its hospitals and clinics. 🌐



The AMOSUP Data Privacy Team with the committed and passionate Department Heads and Focal Personnel for Privacy of AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital-Iloilo.



With the proactive Department Heads of AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital-Cebu.



With the youthful and dynamic team driving excellence at AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital-Bacolod.

HR Summit 2025 Strengthens Inter-Branch Alignment and Workforce Development

By: Frances Israel

Photos courtesy of: Seamen's Hospital Manila



The Human Resources Alignment and Development Summit was successfully held from May 21 to 23, 2025, at the AMOSUP Sen'In No Ie Building. The three-day event brought together Human Resources personnel from across all AMOSUP branches in an effort to align practices, enhance collaboration, and further strengthen the systems that support the organization's most vital resource—its people.

The summit was graced by the presence of Dr. Conrado F. Oca, President of AMOSUP, who attended both the opening and closing days. His presence underscored the high level of support from AMOSUP leadership and the importance placed on human resource development within the organization. In his message, Dr. Oca emphasized the critical role of HR in upholding AMOSUP's mission

and vision, and he encouraged the participants to remain steadfast in their service to the union's members and dependents.

The opening remarks were delivered by Atty. Emmanuel Partido, Chief of the AMOSUP Legal Department, who highlighted the value of HR alignment in maintaining consis-

tency, compliance, and fairness across branches.

In attendance throughout the event were the HR staff from all AMOSUP hospitals and centers, as well as the Administrative Directors of the major branches: Ms. Ma. Elena Gysrell V. Jiloca, MBA, FPCHA (Manila), Ms. Macarena Oca (Bacolod),

Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF



Ms. Kristine Alarcon (Iloilo), Mr. Lee Joseph Y. Gonzales, MA. H.Ad. (Cebu), Ms. Joan Simangan (Davao)

On the first day, the Department Heads of AMOSUP Seamen's Center and Seamen's Hospital-Manila also joined to show their support and take part in the initial alignment discussions.

The summit's technical sessions were facilitated by the AMOSUP Legal Department, with insightful lectures from Atty. Alexander Ragonjan, Atty. Henry Zamora, Atty. Mikhaela Louise Escarilla, and Ms. Kristine Auquico. Key topics included labor law fundamentals, administrative due process, employee discipline, and relevant case studies.

Ms. Ma. Elena Gysrell V. Jiloca also led the discussion on the ongoing revision of the AMOSUP Code of Conduct, emphasizing the importance



of clarity, consistency, and adaptability in HR policies. The participants were engaged in workshops and case-based exercises designed to simulate real-life scenarios often encountered by HR officers.

On the third and final day, Dr. Richard John C. Pecson, Medical Director of Gig Oca Robles Seamen's Hospital, joined the event along with

Dr. Oca. The summit concluded with heartfelt closing remarks from Dr. George C. Pile, Hospital Director of AMOSUP Seamen's Hospitals and Clinics. He expressed full support for the initiative and emphasized the importance of building a unified and responsive HR system that truly reflects the values and goals of AMOSUP.

This HR alignment is also a significant step in AMOSUP's continuing efforts to enhance Data Privacy Compliance—ensuring that organizational systems are not only consistent and efficient, but also secure and privacy-conscious. More importantly, the summit reinforced AMOSUP's deep commitment to caring for the workforce that, in turn, serves its members and their dependents. By investing in people and processes, AMOSUP continues to strengthen the foundation of service and solidarity that defines its legacy. 🌐



HR staff from different branches were grouped together to encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing

“Alagang AMOSUP” is a radio segment on Radyo Pilipinas World Service that serves as an educational platform for AMOSUP members and their dependents. A recent episode featured the **AMOSUP Welfare and Mutual Benefit Plan (WMBP)**, one of the union programs of AMOSUP that **provides financial assistance and support to seafarers and their families**. Guest speakers Ms. Maureen Sadicon and Mr. Joaquin Alde, dedicated union staff from AMOSUP WMBP, shared valuable information on the program and how seafarers can maximize its benefits.

AMOSUP WMBP: Ensuring the Welfare of Seafarers and their families in Times of Need

By: Lara San Juan

According to Mr. Alde, WMBP is included in a provision in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), agreed upon by principals or shipowners and AMOSUP, to provide excellent service for its members and their dependents. A key advantage of the WMBP is that seafarers do not contribute

to the fund.

“**Para sa kaalaman po ng ating mga miyembro, ang naghuhulog ng WMBP ay ang principal. Ito ay hindi nanggagaling sa kanilang sweldo,**” Ms. Sadicon explained.

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LIVE IN STUDIO

MAUREEN SADICON | JOAQUIN ALDE

AMOSUP WELFARE AND MUTUAL BENEFIT PLAN OFFICERS



Alagang
AMOSUP

(For our members' awareness, WMBP contributions are made by the principal, not deducted from their salaries.)

The WMBP program offers financial assistance in various circumstances, particularly to seafarers and their families during times of loss. Mr. Alde emphasized, **"Ang programa ng WMBP ay nakaalalay sa mga miyembro nito at sa kanilang mga dependents, lalo na kung ang miyembro ay namatay on board."** ("The WMBP program provides support to its members and their dependents, especially in the event of a member's passing while on board.")

Seafarers' families may receive death compensation, ranging from ₱250,000, ₱210,000, or ₱170,000, depending on the CBA provision. Additionally, AMOSUP offers funeral service and airport assistance to ensure a dignified return of seafarers. Ms. Sadicon shared that they personally assist in transporting the remains from the airport to the funeral parlor.

Another benefit from WMBP is the Old Age Financial Assistance, **"Ito ang sikat na sikat na sa ating mga members, sila ay makakatanggap ng financial assistance na nakasaad sa kanilang CBA provision."** (This is very popular among our members,

they will receive financial assistance as stated in their CBA provision.) Ms. Sadicon further explained that this is available to members who have served at least five years with AMOSUP and are 55 years old and above.

The host further highlighted the importance of dependents being well-informed about these benefits, emphasizing that awareness is key to ensuring that families can access the support they are entitled to. By understanding these provisions, dependents can surely claim the assistance meant for them, even in the absence of the seafarer.

One inspiring story highlighted the power of sharing valuable information and the positive impact of AMOSUP's service: a seafarer's wife, after 20 years, learned from another seafarer's wife about the death benefit available through AMOSUP. She could hardly believe that such a benefit was available from AMOSUP. After processing the application, she was overwhelmed with gratitude when she realized the benefit her late husband's service she was entitled to.

"Yan po ang kagandahan kay AMOSUP! Hindi po fina-forfeit ni kung gaano man katagal na hindi ito na-apply. Basta benepisyo ni member, ibibigay natin,"

Ms. Sadicon added. (This is what's good with AMOSUP! We don't forfeit benefits, no matter how long it has been, as long as it's a member's benefit, we will provide it.")

Seafarers and their dependents can apply at AMOSUP offices in Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, and Davao, or they can apply via email. We encourage members, especially those in the provinces, to use the email option for added convenience.

In preparing the requirements, it is important to take note of these essential documents such as the seaman's book, sea service record, death certificate (if applicable), marriage certificate, and CENOMAR to verify legal beneficiaries. Mr. Alde also reminded the members to update their 201 file at the AMOSUP Records department to avoid issues when claiming benefits.

In conclusion, AMOSUP WMBP is more than just financial support, it is a commitment to prioritizing the welfare of seafarers and their families, providing the security and peace of mind they deserve during times of need. 🌊

For more information, members can contact AMOSUP through wmbp@amosup.org or visit AMOSUP branches in Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, and Davao. You can also watch the full interview on the AMOSUP Official YouTube Channel by searching for the "Alagang AMOSUP" playlist - Episode 19 | AMOSUP WMBP BENEFITS, ALAMINI!

Alagang AMOSUP: Pang-pamilyang Marino Project

By: *Shayne Lontoc*

Following the success of its first run, the **Alagang AMOSUP Pang-Pamilyang Marino Project** continues its mission of providing support and guidance for seafarer families on wellness, family relationships, and financial management. With the active participation of AMOSUP members and their dependents, the program serves as a safe space for open discussions and a source of empowerment for seafarers and their families.



Dr. Ronaldo Motilla



From left to right: Ms. Olivia Ilagan with a dependent

One of the seafarers' wives openly shared her concerns about managing finances.

"I want to save, but I'm a housewife with four kids. We need to pay for tuition and daily necessities. The allotment from my husband is just enough for us," she said. Ms. Olivia Ilagan, a financial expert, acknowledged this reality and provided practical budgeting and saving tips. She encouraged families to start saving a small amount consistently and to prioritize needs over wants.

“Start with whatever you can, even ₱20 or ₱50 a week, and increase it when possible. The amount might seem little, but it will grow overtime,” the expert advised. She also highlighted to explore additional sources of income like a small home-based business that a housewife can manage.

The wife expressed her deep appreciation for the advice. “I never thought of starting small. Now I understand, thank you for the tips. I can finally build our savings little by little,” she shared with a smile.

One AMOSUP member shared how loneliness had been affecting his well-being. “When I’m onboard I miss my family, and sometimes it gets really difficult.” Dr. Ronaldo Motilla, a psychologist and mental health expert provided effective strategies to cope with loneliness.

The expert also suggested to embrace their time at sea as an opportunity to explore new hobbies and interests like reading, exercising or learning a new skill. He encouraged the seafarers to build a strong support system with fellow crew members.

The seafarer was happy with the insights. “Thank you so much for this eye-opening advice. I didn’t realize how important it is to create a strong support system,” she said.

These heartfelt testimonials

prove that the Alagang AMOSUP Pang- Pamilyang Marino Project is a platform where seafarers and their families feel supported and guided. The profound gratitude expressed by participants is a proof of the program’s impact.

As AMOSUP continues this initiative, the program stands as a testament to the union’s commitment to the holistic well-being of its members and their dependents. The event is scheduled twice a month at the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital. 🌐



“Stay connected with loved ones,”

he said. He underscored the importance of maintaining a connection with family and friends to provide a sense of closeness and comfort.



In a week-long cross-cultural exchange program from March 19-25, 2025, the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) has brought together cadets from Japan's National Institute of Technology and MAAP. With 30 Japanese cadets (25 male and 5 female) and 60 Filipino cadets (50 male and 10 female) taking part, the program fostered friendship, mutual respect, and maritime collaboration across cultures.

The event was also graced by the presence of esteemed maritime leaders who expressed their continued commitment to fostering strong bilateral ties

between the Philippines and Japan. Among the distinguished attendees were Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) President Dr. Conrado F. Oca, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Admiral Gil Gavan, Mr. Samuel Batalla of the MARINA STCW Office, Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council Inc. (PJMCC) President Capt. Emmanuel Regio, along with All Japan Seamen's Union (AJSU) board members and International Mariners Management Association of Japan (IMMAJ) deputies.

Photo by: Phillip Gayag-a



Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

United in Passion for Seafaring: Cross-Cultural Exchange Aboard MV Kapitan Gregorio Oca

By: Lara San Juan



Photo courtesy of: MAAP

A highlight of the program was the joint training voyage from Mariveles to Coron and back to Mariveles, a journey that not only exposed cadets to ship-board life, but also deepened the core values of camaraderie and respect as they learned, worked, and lived together at sea. From ship handling to cultural exchange activities onboard, every nautical mile brought them closer to unity.

For 18 years, this initiative spearheaded by AMOSUP, IMMAJ, and AJSU has played a crucial role in cultivating future maritime officers for the Japanese fleet.



Photo courtesy of: MAAP



Photo by: Phillip Gayag-a

VAdm. Eduardo Ma R. Santos, AFP Ret.
President
MAAP

In his welcome remarks during the closing ceremony, MAAP President VAdm. Eduardo Ma. R. Santos, emphasized the program's enduring impact:

"Since 2007, we have sent MAAP cadets to Japan for training onboard the training ship... 220 cadets have participated in the program so far. Thank you for visiting MAAP and for sharing your experience, your insights, and your friendship with us."

He added, "The Filipino people

have always held a deep respect for Japanese discipline, innovation, and work ethic. But beyond that, we also value the warmth and camaraderie that you have brought to this program. Your presence here is a reminder that we may come from different cultures, but we are united by a shared passion for the sea, for maritime excellence, and for global cooperation."

The week was filled with joint drills, language exchange, teamwork activities, and



Photo courtesy of: MAAP



Photo courtesy of: MAAP

meaningful conversations that excelled cultural boundaries. One of the highlights of the program was the cadets' testimonial speeches which were insightful, heartfelt, and full of gratitude.

“Through this exchange, we strengthen mutual understanding and this has allowed us to share our culture... I could tell you right now that Filipinos and Japanese are similar in a lot of ways. We learned to appreciate the beauty of our differences, but also the power there is in unity. **Our passion for seafaring united us.**”

- MAAP Engine cadet Neil Andrew Piolino.



Photo courtesy of: MAAP

Deck Cadet Julaica Amor Sarrosa expressed heartfelt appreciation for their Japanese counterparts, “Thank you for the patience and kindness as we navigated language barriers and cultural differences over the past four days. I will truly appreciate and cherish these memories we have together.”

From the Japanese delegation, heartfelt messages were shared: “I trust that if we don’t forget the respect of each other, we can make a better future together. In the future, I hope to be united with you on board.” - Tami Syugo, Toyoma College

“The sunset I saw on the bridge was particularly memorable. We were always together and became the best of friends. Thank you so much for such a wonderful experience.” -Shiho Sawada, Toyoma College

“Through this training, I improved my English and learned a little Tagalog. I will make use of the training in the future as a maritime engineer. Thanks very much!” - Yuya

Suzuki, Yuge College

Shunsuke Isogai of Oshima College, meanwhile, humorously shared in Filipino, “*Ang mga Pilipino ay napakabait at masayahin. Mabuhay Japanese-Filipino shipping industry!*” (Filipinos are very kind and joyful. Long-live Japanese-Filipino shipping industry.)

The warmth and dedication of MAAP cadets did not go unnoticed by Dr. Tomotaka Homae, professor at Toyoma College, “The MAAP cadets assisted our students very well... They studied together, played together, prayed together, and ate together. I strongly believe that these students are going to reunite on ocean-going life vessels as deck officers or engineers in the near future.”

The event was also honored by the presence of Mr. Shinichi Tanaka, Acting President of AJSU who shared, “By spending time eating together and learning from each other, all of you from both the Philippines and Japan were able to actually better illustrate in your

mind what it is like to work on board.”

And finally for the closing remarks, Mr. Toshihito Inoue, Chairman of IMMAJ, marked a historic milestone, “This is also the first time for Japanese female candidates to participate in the program. I’d like to especially thank the MAAP female cadets from the IMEC campus for their support.”

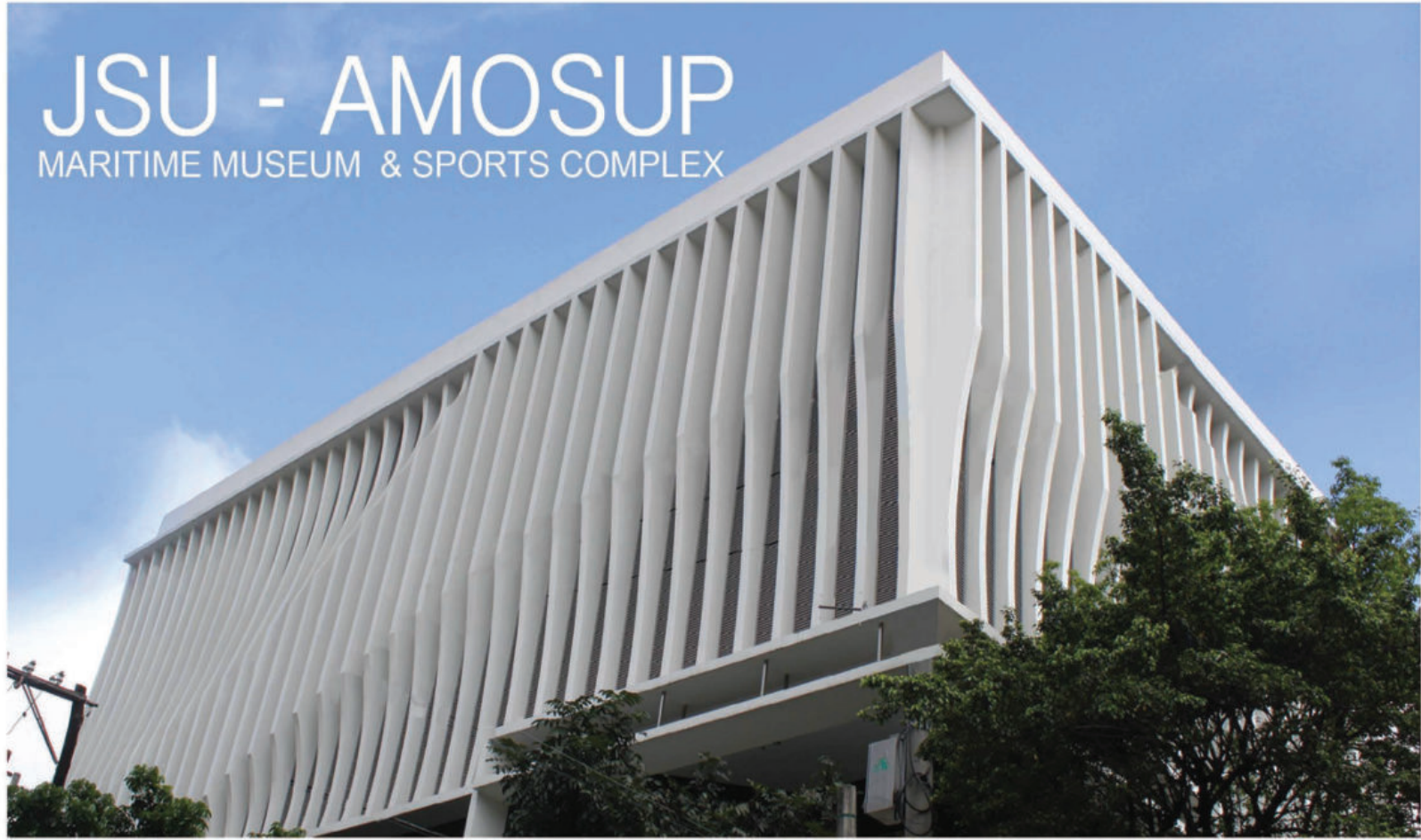
Mr. Inoue also left the cadets with two lasting reminders:

“Be confident about yourself and never be afraid of failure... The other one you should remember is never forget to be grateful—to your school, your mentors, and most of all, to your families.”

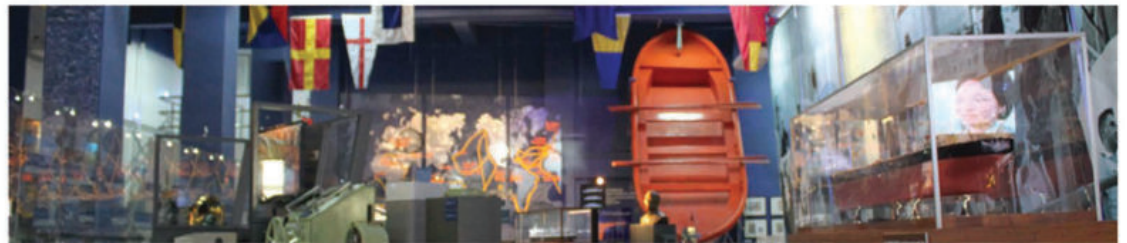
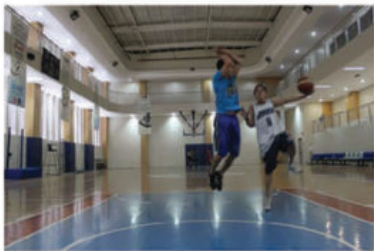
As the program concluded, it left behind not just memories and photographs, but also a renewed spirit of partnership. The Cross-Cultural Exchange Program 2025 proved once again that maritime training is more than skill-building, it is about fostering global citizenship, respect, and lasting friendships. 🌐

JSU - AMOSUP

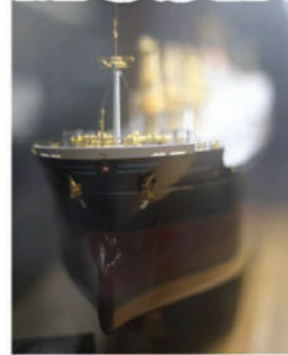
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“ Looking back...”

Sailing forward.”

- Dr. Conrado F. Oca

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