

Hong Kong Shipowners Association
67th Annual General Meeting
22 November 2023

Chairman's Message

I still vividly remember around the same time last year when I was drafting the Chairman's Message, that I did not have the faintest idea of what it would be like for 2023. Having said that, I did have the wishful thinking that things would resume back to normal in Hong Kong, and that a lot more business visitors would come to the city to visit and participate in the events organised by the Hong Kong Shipowners Association (HKSOA).

What a difference a year makes.

This has been a challenging but rewarding year for the Association and the shipping industry as a whole, in view of the pandemic and geopolitical tensions. Despite these difficulties, I am very happy to say that our Association and our members have demonstrated resilience, adaptability and innovation in navigating through the stormy waters and seizing the opportunities that emerged. We have continued to uphold our vision and mission of promoting and protecting the interests of the Hong Kong maritime industry, and to enhance Hong Kong's role as an international maritime centre.

It has also been a busy year for myself and the HKSOA secretariat:

- In March we successfully organized, among other celebration events, the 65th Anniversary Gala Dinner, which was well attended and joined by many members and guests from Hong Kong and other parts of the world, further promoting member networking and international partnerships.
- We hosted and participated in various events and arranged trips outside Hong Kong to enhance our visibility and influence in the local, regional and global maritime arenas. I envision that the Association will continue to live up to our reputation as the "Voice of Asia" by maintaining close contact and partnership with the various global maritime bodies, to facilitate information and technical exchange, especially on environmental and regulatory issues.
- With the HKSOA as the new (rotational) Chair Association for the Asian Shipowners' Association, preparation work for the AGM and the ASA Shipping Forum 2024 cum gala dinner is already under way. I am sure that it will be another mega event in Hong Kong in May next year, fostering vibrant interactions among the ASA member associations and our fellow HKSOA members.

As my tenure as the Chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the members of the Association for their trust in me and their unwavering support. It has indeed been an honor to serve as the Chairman and represent this big shipping family.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat, led by the Managing Director Sandy Chan, for their can-do spirit and hard work this past year. I am very proud to hear that many of our government and business contacts were completely surprised to learn that the HKSOA has so few people in the Secretariat, especially when they look at the number of quality events that have been organised by the Association. So keep up the good work, Sandy and team.

I am confident that the Association will continue to grow and prosper under the leadership of the new Chairman. Our industry is never short of challenges, and it is crucial for members of the Association to act together, with shared values and a common purpose. The dedication, expertise, and unity of our members have always been our greatest strengths. I am certain that we will continue to uphold the values of our Association and steer it towards greater heights.

I wish the new Chairman, the Executive Committee and the various Sub-Committees, the best of luck in tackling these upcoming challenges, as the HKSOA strengthens our advocacy role and consolidates Hong Kong's position as a "super-connector" between East and West.

Wellington Koo
Chairman