

Pacific Forum on Domestic Ferry Safety

30 October to 2 November 2012, Suva, Fiji

ACTION PLAN

Acknowledging and recognising the importance of shipping to Pacific Island countries and territories, we, the participants of the Pacific Forum on Domestic Ferry Safety, held in Suva, Fiji, from 30 October to 2 November 2012, agree to invite the stakeholders (governments, maritime administrations, shipowners/operators, training providers, maritime industry associations, shipbuilders/repairers, etc.) in the region, to take actions as follows:

1. Encourage the implementation and enforcement of applicable provisions of conventions/regulations, including adopting the Pacific Islands Maritime Laws (PIMLaws – SPC model legislation and regulations), into national legislation as appropriate with a view to ensure harmonisation of maritime legislation within the region.
2. To ensure that legislation is user-friendly, easily understood, enforceable, accessible to all and includes appropriate penalties severe enough to encourage effective implementation.
3. Urge the periodic review and continued development and improvement of relevant guidelines on surveying, maritime training, legislation and regulations, and domestic ship safety programmes, including adequate training, accreditation and regulation of surveyors to meet standards set by their respective states.
4. Develop and implement effective passenger control and accountability mechanisms.
5. Urge the adoption of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between maritime administrations for a consistent regional approach to accident investigation based on principles of the Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (Casualty Investigation Code - available at www.imo.org).
6. To encourage stakeholders to develop safety management systems for domestic ferries and passenger vessels that include, but are not limited to, key elements such as:
 - training in operational matters, including planned maintenance;
 - safety awareness programmes and pre-departure safety briefs for passengers;
 - clear communication and the provision of necessary information, including weather forecasts, to support ship masters;
 - effective communication between masters, surveyors and ship owners to facilitate proper ship inspections and surveys; and
 - stability guidance information, including availability of stability books to masters.
7. Recognising the importance of providing incentives and subsidies for procurement of new vessels, stakeholders should work together to support the domestic ferry industry by providing incentives to facilitate the acquisition of fit for purpose ships.

8. Encourage the development of adequate infrastructure, particularly in the areas of docking, slipping and passenger terminals to ensure the sustainable and safe operation of domestic ferries and other passenger carrying vessels.
9. Encourage the exploration of means to reduce the excessive cost of servicing lifesaving and fire fighting equipment, such as establishment of life saving appliance (LSA) and fire fighting equipment (FFE) service stations.
10. The sharing of best practices and resources across all stakeholders and through regional associations such as the Pacific Islands Shipowners Association (PISA).
11. Based on the concept of corporate social responsibility, the stakeholders need to encourage the development of long-term maritime personnel retention policies that are supported by continuous training programmes.
12. Encourage the development of national and regional search and rescue (SAR) response and communication plans, that include familiarisation programmes and the use of appropriate technology and tools such as:
 - voluntary community organisations that work alongside national SAR services to provide community awareness and increase search and rescue capacity and capability; and
 - high and low level technology for communicating locations of incidents and tracking survivors.