LIBERIA CLASSIFIED AS “LOW RISK SHIPS” FOR NEW PSC INSPECTION REGIME

LIBERIA has been confirmed as one of only eleven flag states which to date have met the criteria set by the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control for participation in its New Inspection Regime for Low Risk Ships, which will replace the existing PSC regime on January 1, 2011. Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of LISCR, says, “We welcome the Paris MoU endorsement of Liberia as a safe and responsible maritime administration.”

ADNOC NEWBUILDING JOINS LIBERIAN FLEET

The most recent addition to the fleet of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), the 36,863 dwt handysize bulk carrier Shah, has joined the Liberian-flag fleet. The Shah is the first of fifteen new ADNOC vessels scheduled for delivery over the next eleven months. It will join the fleet of ADNATCO-NGSCO (Abu Dhabi National Tanker Company – Natural Gas Shipping Company Limited) and will be used primarily to carry bulk cargoes such as sulphur for ADNOC and its group of companies, but will also be traded in the open market. The delivery of the vessel by Hyundai MIPO Shipyard in South Korea signifies the beginning of a major expansion of ADNOC’s fleet of tankers, bulk carriers and container vessels. ADNOC is among the top ten oil and gas companies in the world.

Liberia continues to lead the way on MLC and ISM/ISPS training

Liberia is fully committed to supporting ratification of industry-wide conventions and to implementing fully ratified IMO and ILO conventions. Furthermore, it does not do this in a vacuum. It goes to great lengths to ensure that its staff are fully trained in how to help shipowners and operators achieve and maintain compliance with such conventions, and has an enviable, independently verified record in this regard.

The Registry recently conducted its first course covering the Liberian application of MLC, 2006 inspections in Piraeus. This was the first in a series of courses planned in preparation for the eventual entry into force of MLC, 2006. The Registry’s Alphard Romero and Cedric D’Souza instructed thirty attendees on the five titles of MLC, 2006 and led practical workshop exercises for conducting inspections.

In November, the Registry completed its second MLC, 2006 Inspector Course in Singapore. Alphard Romero and Cedric D’Souza once again conducted the lectures and workshops for the 25 delegates in attendance. This course also featured a special guest speaker, the Rev Canon Kenneth Peters, Director for Justice and Welfare for the Missions to Seafarers, who provided a well-structured and well-received presentation on crew welfare.

Liberia has also been a leading proponent in the ratification and implementation of the ISM and ISPS codes, and was the first ship registry to combine audits for the two instruments, thereby saving owners time and money whilst achieving swift compliance.

The Registry recently conducted an ISM/ISPS course in Piraeus, in conjunction with its MLC, 2006 Inspector Course. The Harmonised ISM and ISPS Codes Lead Auditor course marks the second occasion in which the Registry has conducted a full course combining into one session the modules for the two codes.

The course consists of lectures and case study workshops covering the theoretical and practical application and techniques for conducting ISM/ISPS flag state audits, as well as Liberian Marine Investigation procedures. Capt. Mick Caulkin, of Reg4ships, conducted the ISM/ISPS Codes and Investigation procedures workshops, while Alphard Romero of the Liberian Registry covered the Liberian application portion of the course. Fourteen nautical inspectors were certified as Liberian Auditors upon completion of the course and passing the final examination.
I is the shipping industry using the right measurements to assess flag state performance, and have we identified the relevant stakeholders? Do pressures on owners and operators to reduce expenses or to obtain commercial advantage ever conflict with regulatory oversight? Of course they do. The key point is, how will the flag state respond?

What about the other stakeholders? Financiers need to be able to rely on an established regulatory system to protect their interests. A basic necessity is the security of a bank lien. Most European and North American banks simply do not trust their mortgages with certain jurisdictions and therefore reject a number of flags where financing is involved. A flag’s financial statutes have to be tested, internationally.

Insurance underwriters need a competent assessment of the condition of the vessel, but there seems to be a general reluctance by underwriters to voice strong opinions about flag state performance. There is very little dialogue between flags and underwriters.

The proliferation of shipyards has made regulation more difficult. Standard-shopping is prevalent and quite often shipowners are forced to make decisions in the name of price about the likes of construction features and class and flag.

Port authorities and the governments of coastal states generally act in the public’s best interests, but there is an undeniable motivation by politicians to simply be seen to be doing something, however ill-advised. The failure of the flag state is a large contributor to unilateral legislation and increasing regulatory oversight.

Criminal prosecutors have a growing vested interest in the regulation of shipping. Accidents that were traditionally civil matters are now prosecuted as personal crimes. Is it possible for a flag state to intervene and exert its sovereignty? The answer should surely be ‘Yes’.

The various vetting systems that exist in shipping today each look at the condition and operation of ships from the commercial perspective of the charterer. Again, failure of the flag state is a major contributor to the development of the vetting process.

Classification societies are operating in an ever more hostile environment. The strengths and capabilities of class societies have led many flag states to delegate statutory functions to them, thereby achieving a significant amount of efficiency and cost-effectiveness for everybody. But, rather than delegating, too many flag states abdicate responsibility.

So far as the government of the flag state is concerned, we have to ask whether the maritime administration is sufficiently empowered, and properly funded and staffed, and whether the legislature is supporting it with regular updates to legislation, or alternatively whether it is a legacy bureaucracy that is mostly ignored until there is a crisis.

So how does your registry measure up?

Improving flag state performance

At the recent ICS conference in London, LISR COO Scott Bergeron delivered a well-received address on Improving Flag State Performance. The following is an extract from his presentation:

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So how does your registry measure up?
Liberia welcomes Round Table report on flag states

Liberia welcomes publication of the 2010 Shipping Industry Flag State Performance Table by the Round Table of shipping association, comprising BIMCO, Intercargo, Intertanko, the International Shipping Federation and the International Chamber of Shipping.

The Round Table believes that it is essential that standards of safety, environmental and social performance are maintained and enforced by flag states, in full compliance with international maritime regulations. The Liberian registry wholeheartedly shares those views, and is delighted that its outstanding record for, among other things, port state control performance, average vessel age, convention ratification and IMO participation are confirmed in the report by this prestigious organisation.

Copies of the report can be downloaded at: www.marisec.org/flag-performance.htm

Liberian Registry strengthened by new appointments in London and Tokyo

LISCR has appointed Jonathan Spremulli as general manager of its dedicated office in London, in succession to Stuart Williams. Jonathan joins from leading classification society RINA, where he was Group Quality Manager, based in Genoa, Italy. Prior to that he was with Lloyd’s Register for eighteen years as its Marine Training Manager in London following a number of roles, including a significant period in Asia surveying ships under construction. He is a chartered engineer with extensive seagoing experience as an officer with, among others, P&O Lines and Mobil Shipping.

Jonathan says, “I am delighted to be joining the Liberian Registry, which continues to enjoy remarkable growth while maintaining its independently acknowledged reputation for the highest standards of safety worldwide. It is a quality organisation, which does things the right way.”

In Japan, meanwhile, Nobuyuki Kanesaka san has been appointed Operations Manager of LISCR’s Tokyo office, in succession to Capt Yoshiyama san. He joins from Germanisch Lloyd, where his responsibilities included in-fleet surveys and newbuilding supervision. He is a qualified marine engineer with over thirteen years of seagoing experience and he has also been a guarantee and superintendent engineer with a leading Japanese shipyard. In addition, he is a fully qualified ISO, ISM and ISPS auditor.

LISCR Chief Operating Officer Scott Bergeron says, “The Liberian Registry believes that the appointment of key personnel who have proven and extensive experience of working in the shipping and certification sectors helps us achieve the ideal balance between management and seagoing experience that we and our clients value so highly. London and Tokyo are strategically important locations for international shipping, and therefore for the Liberian Registry. Jonathan and Kanesaka san between them have experience of the design, construction and operation of a wide range of vessels, and of dealing with masters, superintendents, surveyors and internal managers. As such, they are ideally suited for their new roles, in which they will add genuine value to the global service provided by the Liberian Registry.”

Jeanne is now a second home to Jeanne Vogt. Upon completion of her education and professional accreditation training, Jeanne moved from Berlin to Hamburg last year to work for a shipping company. In February 2010, she joined LISCR’s Hamburg office, where she is now enjoying her role as a maritime operations assistant.

Jeanne is involved in every aspect of the administration of the plan approval process at LISCR Hamburg, from collating requests and preparing letters of receipt, to submitting approval confirmations and invoices. She also prepares amendments to ship security plans and other documentation and issues dispensations if there is a problem with, for example, a crew member or a particular piece of equipment.

Jeanne thoroughly enjoys her job. “I love the great variety of my day-to-day responsibilities,” she says. “We are very busy and no two days are the same. And what I really like is the way that all the different LISCR offices work together to help each other, as part of the great LISCR family culture.”

Jeanne admits that she misses the family and friends she left behind when she moved from Berlin, but she is making new friends and enjoying life in Hamburg. “Like Berlin,” she says, “Hamburg is a very cosmopolitan city, with a varied and exciting pace to life, and I love being right on the water”. Outside the office, Jeanne is a keen swimmer, an activity which provides her with both enjoyment and physical exercise. And she continues to look at ways to improve her English language skills, impressive though they already are. To that end, she enjoys going to the cinema, and reading English language books.