THE PHILIPPINES hosts the 31st ASEAN Maritime Transport Working Group Meeting in the island of Boracay from April 6 to 8, 2016. Composed of the ten nations of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), delegations from these member nations flock to the island to deliberate on the agenda of enhanced interconnectivity and interdependence on the opening of maritime highways within the region. Issues up for discussion and review are on environmental protection, sustainable development of ports, roll-on-roll-off (RO-RO) shipping routes and networks security, information sharing and open communications, migration, and establishment of maritime infra- and supra-structures, among others. Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) Administrator Dr. Maximo Q. Mejia Jr serves as chair of said working group. Dr. Angela Png, Director of International Division, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore serves as co-chair of the meeting.
Open registry for ships is a viable option—Atty. Pia

MARINA OVERSEAS Shipping Service Director Atty. Jean Ver Pia pronounces that an open registry of ships would be viable for the country as it will attract foreign-owned ships to enjoy tax cuts and other benefits.

“This is part of a good package that will place the Philippines on the map as a country that also provides, among other services, the benefit of procuring or enlisting skilled Filipino maritime workers, on-board ships or land-based,” explains Atty. Pia.

The MARINA lawyers group convened at the MARINA board room to set in place a congressional agenda regarding concerns on the Philippine ship registry. Presiding over the group, Atty. Gloria Victoria-Bañas tasked all lawyers to actively participate in the said undertaking so as to provide strength and support to a drafted bill on the Maritime Code. Atty. Victoria-Bañas also stressed the need to focus on promoting the flag and to present a more attractive registry to diffuse the alarming rate of ships flagging out.

The MARINA, in undertaking measures to address the declining rate of ship registry, has recently amended MARINA Memorandum Circular No. 182 or the “Rules in the Acquisition of Ships under Presidential Decree 760, as amended, and providing herewith the Implementing Rules under Chapter XV of the 1997 Philippine Merchant Marine Rules and Regulations (PMMRR) on Registration, Documentation, Licensing of Ships for International Voyages” by providing simplified requirements and rules rationalized for ships registered under the Philippine flag.

According to the latest data of MARINA, the Philippine Ship Registry continuously declines. Since 1988, the Philippine ship registry has dropped to present level of 25% to 117 of what used to be 467.

Theory and practice expert and resource speaker Professor Proshanto K. Mukherjee was invited last February to a Seminar and Workshop on International Ship Registries to discuss the different kinds of ship registration system and the legal and practical implications of each.

Taking breadth from said seminar and workshop, the lawyers group take the lead in reviewing maritime laws and ship registries. The Overseas Shipping Service, meanwhile, will act as support group.

The ASEAN Maritime Transport Working Group (ASEAN-MTWG) elevates all the studies and findings already discussed to the Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM), which, when all issues have been satisfied, will then raise their conclusions to the ASEAN Transport Ministers (ATM) and other ASEAN coordinating bodies. The ASEAN-MTWG is the group tasked to conduct further study on findings that need in-depth agreement with India.

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MARINA technical personnel attend intensive design, construction training

TECHNICAL PERSONNEL from all regions, including the central office of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) attended the Training on the Design and Construction of Boats Using Fiberglass-Reinforced Plastic (FRP) for three days, March 16 to 18, 2016. The training program is part of providing sturdier and safer means of transport of passengers and cargoes on sea.

“We are primarily a sea-going people; we move a lot and do business using inter-island transport systems, even during our ancestors’ days,” Shipyards Regulation Service (SRS) Director Engr. Ramon C. Hernandez said. “As part of MARINA’s thrust of promoting a culture of safety at sea, we have conducted planning, preparation, and analysis.

By the end of this conference, the body shall come up with a final report that will be considered and adopted for the Senior Transport Officials Meeting. The Philippines shall host three more Maritime Transport Group meetings within six months of interval, until 2017.

Dialogue partners include India, Japan, China and Republic of Korea. Other meetings that coordinate and come up with strategic plans, policies and best practice systems are the following: ASEAN Port Association; Federation of ASEAN Shipowners Association; ASEAN-India Maritime Transport Cooperation; ASEAN-Japan Cruise Promotion Strategy; Philippine-Japan Meeting on the Implementation of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) in ASEAN ports; Representative from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) of Japan for the ASEAN-Japan Transport Partnership Work Plan 2015-2016; Port Technology Group Meeting with Japan; Representatives from Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) of the Republic of Korea; Bilateral meeting with Indonesia on ASEAN RO-RO route; Development Study for Inland Improvement with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) and Thailand; dialogue partners to further improve linkage among countries in the Mekong region; ASEAN-Japan Port Security Expert Meeting; ASEAN-China Maritime Consultation Meeting; Global Task Force and Project Inception Meeting; the ASEAN Secretariat; country coordinators of the ASEAN Economic Community; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); International Maritime Organization (IMO); and the IMO-Global Initiative for South East Asia.
Welcome 31st ASEAN-MTWG delegates!

DELEGATES FROM all over Asia, the Pacific and South East Asia are welcome to the 31st Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Maritime Transport Working Group Meeting slated April 6 to 8 on the Island of Boracay in Aklan, approximately 315 kilometers south of the Manila. Roughly 70 to a hundred delegates from maritime transport of the regions mentioned will attend the convention, including delegates from countries with current transport cooperation dialogues, in a bid to coordinate maritime economic enhancements towards the ASEAN integration.

MAIN ITEMS ON THE ASEAN-MTWG AGENDA

I. OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN-MTWG

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

III. BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

IV. DECISIONS / FOLLOW UP REQUIREMENTS FROM THE 40TH SENIOR TRANSPORT OFFICIALS MEETING (STOM), 21ST ASEAN TRANSPORT MINISTERS MEETING, AND OTHER ASEAN COORDINATING BODIES

V. THE KUALA LUMPUR TRANSPORT STRATEGIC PLAN

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF MARITIME TRANSPORT-RELATED MEASURES UNDER THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC) BLUEPRINT AND THE KUALA LUMPUR TRANSPORT STRATEGIC PLAN

VII. COOPERATION WITH ASEAN TRANSPORT-AFFILIATED PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

VIII. TRANSPORT COOPERATION WITH DIALOGUE PARTNERS, INCLUDING ASEAN-MARITIME CONSULTATION WITH CHINA

IX. IMO-ASEAN PARTNERSHIP

X. OTHER MATTERS

XI. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

XII. CONSIDERATION & ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

THE OFFICIAL logos used for the 31st ASEAN-MTWG are the ASEAN logo (used with permission from the ASEAN secretariat) with the event name, venue and date. Meanwhile, Maritime Industry Authority Administrator Dr. Maximo Q. Mejia Jr directed the creation of the Philippine logo that will also be used to brand the event with local colors. The logo features a compass rose depicting the forward direction the maritime transport industry in the Philippines is taking; a vinta (local sailboat found in the southern part of the country), and a swash of wave the vinta rides on. Maritime Philippines is the theme portrayed and “We Move the World,” its tagline, is a statement that captures the essence of the strong seafaring industry.