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ILO-IMO consultants with participants from Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, United Kingdom, Singapore, Greece, Indonesia, People's Republic of China and United States of America.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) have jointly developed a Code of Practice (COP) on Security in Ports. The COP provides a framework for ensuring wider security in ports. The ILO Governing Body and the IMO MSC 78 adopted the COP in March and May 2004, respectively, two months ahead of the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code on 1 July.

The COP is an initiative that the MPA and its training partner, ST Education and Training (STET), supports. And given Singapore's strong backing for staging events on maritime and port security, it became a natural venue for hosting the first regional COP Workshop. Holding the Workshop in Singapore underscores our international standing as a responsible state and member of the IMO in maintaining a safe and secure maritime environment for the seafarers and the industries.

Held from 21 to 23 Mar 05 at STET's premises, the course was conducted by Mr Marios Meletiou, ILO, Mr Frank Wall, IMO, in collaboration with Col (Retd) Michael Chen of STET and Capt Hans-Juergen Roos (Germany).

Said Mr Wall: "The COP complements the ISPS Code and the mandatory IMO measures that now apply to port facility. It builds upon security measures that go beyond ship-shore interface to cover the wider port area. Following the guidance given in the COP will further enhance port security and the safety of those using and working in ports."

Port security remains a major concern of the international maritime community, judging by the good turnout at the workshop. A total of 25 participants from 12 countries attended it. They included government officials, personnel from transport ministries, port operators, and union workers.

The Workshop highlighted the formation and work of the Port Advisory Security Committee and its tripartite partnership involving workers, employers and government representatives responsible for port security. The training also touched on the methods for assessing threats and reducing them as part of the overall port security planning process.

Mr Meletiou applauded the success of the Workshop. He commented: "This is the first presentation of the COP in this part of the world. Singapore is important because of its premium position in the maritime industry. The efforts in preparing the materials and lectures were painstakingly done and judging from the feedback by the participants, I am satisfied that the programme has been successful in proliferating the foundation of COP to the tripartite partners."

Mr Chen, whose team developed the entire training curriculum, said: "STET is privileged to partner the expert consultants from ILO/IMO in the design and conduct of the entire Workshop. As host, it presented excellent opportunities for us to showcase our capability in maritime security and to network with our counterparts from the other countries."

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