

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Shippers' Meeting Joint Statement**  
**Wednesday, December 8, 2010**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**

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The 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Shippers' Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand on December 8, 2010, and hosted by the Thai National Shippers' Council. The meeting was attended by representatives from The Hong Kong Shippers' Council, Indonesian National Shippers' Council, Korean Shippers' Council, Macau Shippers' Association and the Thai National Shippers' Council.

The meeting serves as an annual discussion forum for delegates to exchange views and discuss new economic development opportunities and challenges that the industry is facing in the current global trade environment.

Dr. Chackrit Duangpastra, Director of the Bureau, Department of Trade Negotiation, Ministry of Commerce of the Royal Thai Government briefed the meeting about ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the roadmap of ASEAN logistics integration, which will become effective in the year 2015. With this new trade framework, ASEAN will have free flow of goods, services, investment, skilled labor and capital. Moreover, ASEAN intends to have deeper trade relations with its trading partners such as China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. 12 priority sectors, namely agro-based products, air travel, automobiles, E-ASEAN, electronics, fisheries, healthcare, rubber-based products, textiles and apparels, tourism, wood based-products and logistics will serve as the forerunners of ASEAN economic integration. For the logistics services sector, it will be liberalized in 2013 for both transport and non-transport services. New trade logistics facilitation in ASEAN such as National Single Window Entry, ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Inter- State Transport, joint work plan on economic corridors, etc is under development. To achieve this ambitious goal, closer dialogue and linkages between the public and the private sectors are needed.

After the presentation, the meeting discussed how shippers' councils could help the implementation of those trade frameworks and agreements in order to enhance trade between countries of respective shippers' councils. The shippers' councils agreed to work at a more micro level in order to foster closer cooperation of their members as well as in sharing information.

The meeting welcomed His Excellency Deputy Minister of Commerce, Mr. Alongkorn Ponlaboot, who gave keynote address on Thailand trade policy direction. Mr. Ponlaboot spoke of 4 main elements: strengthening and enhancing Thailand's regional presence through ASEAN First Policy; creating fair and balanced trade rules through multilateral forum such as WTO; seeking greater market access and cooperation through FTA and refocusing efforts to become business exporters. He also touched on Thailand's policies and measures on logistics development, which he has undertaken 3 major tracks of work include capacity building for logistics providers and operators especially SMEs; addressing regulatory barriers and providing practical and concrete logistics connectivity through local community involvement.

## **Freight Rate Trends in 2011**

The meeting observed that freight rates have been declining in the last quarter of 2010. Freight rates in 2011 should be even lower as more new tonnage will be delivered. The meeting also discussed the freight payment mechanism. At present Thai shippers are required to settle all freight charges in local currency. However Thai shippers should have the option to pay freight in either local currency or US dollar or other currencies, like other Asian economies in order to avoid unnecessary foreign exchange losses. In addition, the Withholding Tax which will inflate the cost for export from Thailand should be cancelled.

## **Rotterdam Rules**

The meeting discussed the Rotterdam Rules and agreed that it would still take some time before the Rules are fully implemented. The meeting agreed to continue monitoring the progress closely.

## **EU 24-Hour Rules**

The meeting expressed its concern on of the EU 24-Hour Rules which will be implemented on 01 January 2011. Shippers noticed that the data required under the rules are not entirely the same as those required by the US Government under the US 24-hour Manifest Rules. In addition, as 27 member states are involved, the execution will be much more complex. Shippers are especially concerned of the details of the rules as many are still unclear and further clarifications are needed. Shippers cautioned measures should be in place to ensure that shipping lines would be unable to take advantage from the rules and introduce unreasonable charges.

The meeting welcomed the Indonesian Shippers' Council to be a full member of Asian Shippers' Meeting.

The next meeting will be hosted by Indonesian Shippers' Council in Jakarta in November, 2011.

Signed on 08 December 2010 by

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The Hong Kong Shippers' Council

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