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## The Mission to Seafarers honours individuals and companies leading seafarer welfare at inaugural Seafarers Awards



International seafarer welfare charity, The Mission to Seafarers, announced the winners of its inaugural Seafarers Awards at a Dinner in Singapore on 11th May. The Award winners, chosen by judges Capt Kuba Szymanski – Secretary General of InterManager, Marlon Roño – President and CEO of Magsaysay People Resources Corporation, Esben Poulsson – Chairman of The International Chamber of Shipping, and The Revd Andrew Wright – Secretary General of The Mission to Seafarers, represent seafarers and operational staff in the maritime industry who made a significant contribution to the welfare of others. Servet Akturk a Pumpman with Zenith Maritime hailing from Turkey received an award for his significant contribution to the welfare of his fellow crew aboard the tanker Good Lady. A talented woodworker, Akturk has contributed greatly to the social life onboard his vessel by making a pinball table for the crew and new equipment for the onboard gym. He also makes personal gifts for specific individuals and writes poetry. Akturk was nominated for this award by his Chief Officer who has seen the impact that his hobby has had on the rest of the crew. The next award went to a Captain whose approachable and considerate leadership has supported his crew directly and positioned him as a true role model to his officers and others within his company, Via Marine Philippines. Capt Jonathan Adriatico's patient and good-humoured attitude has helped his crews grow and learn and has set an excellent example to other aspiring captains of the good that can be done in the

role. Capt Rajesh Unni was presented the award for the shore-based individual who had significantly contributed to seafarers' welfare. Capt Unni who is the founder and CEO of Synergy Group, has had a tremendous welfare impact both on specific individuals and on the wider seafaring community. In addition to the financial support and low-interest loans offered to seafarers and his direct action to support greater gender equality in the maritime workforce, the judges were also impressed with his personal generosity. As well as supporting a number of charities with donations, Capt Unni is a trustee of a cancer hospital in India, where seafarers receive free treatment, and a blood bank that seafarers can access free of charge. The award recognised Capt Unni's impressive lifetime commitment to the welfare of seafarers and his support to them through the issues they face. The company award was given to an organisation that, in its own words "understands that taking care of seafarers means development of the company and assurance of its future". MTM Ship Management was recognised for both the big and small contributions it makes to its seafarers' wellbeing. Vital contributions like providing health insurance to seafarers and their families and sponsoring employees children through English proficiency courses sat alongside a caring attitude, such as open feedback sessions and recognising birthdays and anniversaries with cards and gifts. MTM has truly created a compassionate community between their shore-based and seafaring employees. Finally, the Secretary General's special award for outstanding service to seafarers went to Peter Cottrell. Serving seafarers in Africa for over 20 years and always coming back to his mantra "will what I am about to do benefit seafarers?", Cottrell has worked to create the best possible environment for seafarers, often at significant personal expense. Joining the Mission as a volunteer in 1998, Cottrell soon joined the local committee and has since played a fundamental role in the strategic change and governance of the Mission as it regionalised to cover the African continent. The Reverend Canon Andrew Wright, Secretary General, The Mission to Seafarers commented: "Seafarers are so often overlooked or undervalued for the vital part they play in the everyday lives of people everywhere. Away at sea for months at time it can be all too easy for individuals and organisations to fall into the trap of 'out of sight, out of mind'. The recipients of today's awards challenge that in every way, making a real difference personally and professionally to the welfare of seafarers. It has been particularly moving to see how the contributions of one individual can change the fortunes of so many, be that one crew or a whole organisation. These people and organisations should be role models to all the rest of us in the maritime industry." Jan Webber, Director of Development, The Mission to Seafarers added: "This was an amazing evening honouring truly remarkable contributions to seafarer welfare from around the world. Capt Rob Walker, chairman of the Mission in Singapore, put huge amounts of time and dedication into making this event a success and it will have a remarkable ongoing impact to seafarers in Singapore. Over 140,000SGD has been raised by the event, which will go towards funding the Mission in Singapore. This could not have been possible without Shell and BHP Billiton, our gold sponsors, North P&I Club, The China Navigation Company and Singapore Organisation of Seamen our silver sponsors, and our drinks sponsor, HFW."