



HKSOA chairman applauds advent of Hong Kong Maritime Industry Week

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Just six months ago Hong Kong Maritime Industry Week (20-27 November) was no more than a glimmer in the eye of a few industry and government visionaries. Now there are just a few weeks to its fulfilment. One person among many who is looking forward to Hong Kong's largest maritime event ever is chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association, Sabrina Chao.

The driving force behind HKMIW has been the newly established Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board. Ms Chao says: "The establishment of the Maritime and Port Board was very timely. It was long overdue and very necessary if Hong Kong is to make it as an international maritime centre.

"We need this platform where government and industry can come together to propose ideas and exchange views about what the industry is facing and how the government can assist in propelling Hong Kong forward as an international maritime centre. The Hong Kong Maritime Industry Week is one example of how it can achieve this.

“Another example is the One Belt One Road initiative, which the Hong Kong Government has taken to its heart and, in many ways, is linked to our industry, and in this respect we are looking to achieve great things,” she adds.

In fact Ms Chao is herself playing an important role at HKMPB. She is currently the HKSOA representative on the Board and is also a member of the Manpower Development Committee and Maritime and Port Development Committee. At the same time HKSOA managing director, Arthur Bowring is serving on the Promotion and External Relations Committee.

“The purpose of the subcommittees is to drill down deeper in to the details of how we can help Hong Kong’s maritime position,” she says.

“So far this structure has served us well. We have held three very useful meetings in the space of six months.”

With 28 separate seminars, briefings, industry visits and cocktail parties being held during the week it might be difficult to express a preference. Ms Chao in fact has a wider vision of the week:

“I applaud the HKMPB for organising such a diverse programme in such a very short space of time. What I shall be looking out for is the kind of audience that attends. If I see a lot of new faces I believe this will be an excellent selling point when it comes to considering a repeat performance next year. This is the first time we have attempted this and the audience will be very important,” she says.

When it comes to advice for this highly anticipated audience, Ms Chao recommends they attend as many of the events as possible in order to get a flavour of the extraordinary talent and knowledge that is available in Hong Kong’s maritime community.

“If there is one industry that is truly global it is the maritime industry. In the past few years Hong Kong has not made much progress in raising its visibility internationally. In my opinion we have become a little too inward looking,” she says.

“Hong Kong’s advantage is its inherent internationalism. And we need to rediscover that international focus. I really hope that through the Hong Kong Maritime Awareness Week we can begin to achieve this. It is what we need to bring Hong Kong forward over the next 20 to 30 years.”

Ahead of Hong Kong Maritime Industry Week is Hong Kong Maritime Awareness Week (12-18 November). Started by HKSOA a few years ago, it’s a programme that is dedicated to raising awareness of the maritime industry among Hong Kong youth and is centred on the Maritime Museum.

Activities during Maritime Awareness Week will include on-board visits to a ship, maritime information stands, shipbuilding history and development exhibition, modern ship demonstration stand, bridge simulators, presentations from industry professionals, careers advice and the chance to explore and experience the vast treasure trove of rich and fascinating exhibits inside the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.