

Agreed Minutes of
the 8th Republic of Korea – United States Maritime Bilateral Meeting
August 7, 2024

Delegations from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Maritime Administration of the United States of America (U.S.) met at the U.S. Maritime Administration in Washington, DC, on August 7, 2024. The ROK Delegation was led by Director General of the Shipping and Logistics Bureau, Si-Won Lee and the U.S. delegation was led by the Maritime Administrator, Ann C. Phillips.

The Korean delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries (MOF), Republic of Korea Embassy, Korea Shipowners' Association (KSA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Seafarer's Network (APEC SEN), and the Korean maritime industry. The U.S. delegation included representatives from the Maritime Administration (MARAD), United States Coast Guard (USCG), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Federal Maritime Administration (FMC) and U.S. Department of State (DOS).

The meeting began with introductions of delegation members on both sides. Both the U.S. and the ROK expressed concern about the Red Sea Crisis, ongoing challenges to the global supply chain, as well as the need to expand the maritime workforce in both nations. The U.S. expressed its thanks for the warm welcome given during the visit of the training ship *Golden Bear* to Busan.

The first agenda item was a discussion about the National Maritime Strategies of both countries, led by the U.S. The U.S. led off by discussing the process currently underway to develop a new National Maritime Strategy. The U.S. also noted the ongoing efforts to fund maritime infrastructure projects across America, with \$500 million in projects available this year.

The ROK expressed hope for the continued success of the U.S. policies. The ROK outlined their current National Maritime Strategy, including policies to strengthen the competitiveness of the maritime industry, policies to respond to global supply chain uncertainties, and policies to expand and improve port infrastructure.

The ROK then discussed Cranes, Cybersecurity, and Technology. The ROK noted that, like the U.S., most ship-to-shore cranes in the ROK were made in China, and that they are currently implementing cybersecurity measures.

The U.S. discussed recent USCG assessments of ship-to-shore cranes. While there were no indications of compromise, the USCG did have concerns regarding cyber hygiene in ports across the country. Best practices include multi-factor authentication (MFA); network segmentation; and limited access. USCG has also issued a Maritime Security Directive to owners and operators of cranes manufactured by companies in China requiring them to take specific cyber risk management actions.

The second agenda item was decarbonization in the shipping field, led by the ROK. The ROK explained the status of green shipping corridors between the ROK and the U.S., including the completion of pre-feasibility studies for two corridors (Busan-Seattle for container ships and Ulsan-Seattle for ro-ro ships), and invited the U.S. to jointly present the progress of this project and implementation roadmap at COP29 in Azerbaijan in November 2024 and at the 10th Our Ocean Conference in Busan in April 2025. The ROK also expressed its desire to cooperate with the U.S. in establishing reasonable implementation standards for the decarbonization at the IMO level.

In response, the U.S. agreed with the ROK's proposal for a joint presentation at COP29 in November 2024 and at the 10th Our Ocean Conference in Busan in April 2025, and expressed that the U.S. agrees with the ROK on the need for cooperation on IMO-related issues.

MARAD provided a description of its Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance (META) program, which works to improve maritime environmental sustainability. MARAD works with other US Government agencies to support the research, demonstration, and development of emerging technologies, practices, and processes. The U.S. fully supports zero-emission efforts in the maritime industry. There is a multi-agency effort ongoing to decarbonize the US maritime industry. MARAD actively supports DOS on Green Shipping Corridor efforts.

The next agenda item was Mariner Welfare and Safety, led by the ROK. The ROK noted that they have a seafarer's innovation plan to foster and maintain mariners. The ROK has implemented improved paid leave policies and is working to improve internet access aboard vessels. The APEC Seafarer's Excellence Network (APEC SEN) hopes to continue to strengthen mariner health and wellbeing through cooperation with the U.S. APEC SEN is planning another conference on maritime workforce advancement next year.

The U.S. noted that both countries share concerns about a shortage of trained mariners and shared the same goals of improved welfare, retention and training and education. MARAD discussed the recent workshop on Mariner Work-Life Balance. Some suggestions were the need for improved internet access at sea; improving on-board recreational facilities; better access to mental health care resources; and maintaining a good rotation of crews. MARAD is also working closely with the USCG to promote mariner safety and quality of life. It was also noted that the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is eagerly awaiting the arrival of a professor from the ROK.

The discussion then moved on to Supply Chains, led by the U.S. The U.S. noted the ongoing work of the Department of Transportation Office of Freight. One initiative is the ongoing development a freight logistics optimization software package. The software was tested related to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse, and it assisted in predicting impacts to the supply chain.

The ROK noted that, like the U.S., they have recently experienced increased instability in ocean freight rates. Also, in order to maintain seamless maritime transportation in the event of an emergency, the ROK operates a National Essential Ships system, similar to MARAD's Maritime Security Program (MSP). Instead of foreign seafarers being restricted from boarding these vessels, shipowners are compensated for losses caused by the restrictions.

Following that, the Korea Shipowners' Association (KSA) presented the challenges that Korean shipping companies face when calling on U.S. ports. First, KSA expressed concern about the supply chain impacts of a potential International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) strike at U.S. East and Gulf Coast ports. The U.S. agreed that recent public comments implied a work stoppage, but agencies across the U.S. Government were encouraging continued negotiation between the two private parties.

Also, KSA had requested a discussion of the crew visa process. CBP noted that visas are legally required but that the visa requirement can be waived on a case-by-case basis caused by an unforeseen emergency. Such cases require demonstration of intent to depart the U.S. – generally an airline ticket back to the crewmember's home country. CBP noted that they would be willing to discuss specific technical issues in another meeting. Both countries agreed to communicate through the embassy in the event of an emergency in this regard.

The next agenda topic was Strategic Ports, led by the U.S. DOS noted that there are many existing programs and initiatives to help countries develop their ports. DOS would be interested in working with the ROK on port infrastructure projects. The ROK noted that they have a similar program to promote international port development programs, with over 50 projects completed.

The final topic on the agenda was FMC topics, led by the ROK. The ROK noted that they were aware of the role FMC plays in shipping and they hoped that FMC carries out their regulations in a harmonious manner so that shipping companies and cargo owners can achieve mutual growth. FMC discussed new regulations that have been issued and expressed optimism that FMC's regulations would improve clarity for both shipping companies and cargo owners. FMC also explained that the FMC is currently monitoring the new Gemini contracts in the shipping industry to ensure that they are not creating unfair practices. With regard to FMC's recent designation of the Korean shipping company HMM as a Controlled Carrier, the ROK asked FMC about its impact on HMM. FMC responded that HMM is exempt from almost all substantive regulations under the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the ROK and the USA signed in 1957.

The ROK invited MARAD to visit Korea again in 2025 to continue these productive discussions.

Done in Washington, D.C., August 7, 2024.



Lee Si-Won

Director General of the Shipping and Logistics Bureau

Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries

Republic of Korea



Ann C. Phillips

Administrator

Maritime Administrator

United States of America