



# The Establishment of the Asian maritime Safety and Security Organization(AMSSO)

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## **The Establishment of the Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization (AMSSO)**

**Keiji HABARA<sup>\*</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of the Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization (AMSSO) will provide technical and scientific assistance for Asian and Pacific countries in the proper development and implementation of legislation on maritime safety, security on board ships, and pollution by ships under the leadership of the maritime nation of Japan, drawing from the example of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). AMSSO will contribute to the enhancement of the overall maritime safety system in Asia and the Pacific, especially to ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) member states, as EMSA does for the EU. Its goals are to reduce the risks of maritime accidents, the loss of human lives at sea, and marine pollution from ships in the practical operation of maritime risk management system. In general terms, AMSSO will provide technical and scientific advice for Asian maritime authorities in the field of maritime safety and prevention of pollution by ships in the process of updating and developing new legislation, monitoring its implementation, and evaluating the effectiveness of the measures in place. The main areas where AMSSO will be active are intensifying the PSC (Port State Control) regime, auditing the recognized classification societies, developing a common methodology for the investigation of maritime accidents, and establishing an Asian vessel traffic monitoring and information system. In addition, AMSSO will contribute to the process of evaluating the effectiveness of legislation by providing the member states with objective and reliable information and data on maritime safety and on ship pollution. The basic task of AMSSO will organize and structure the system of maintaining maritime safety standards by Asian countries.

**Keywords:** AMSSO (Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization), Asia, EMSA, Maritime, safety, security

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

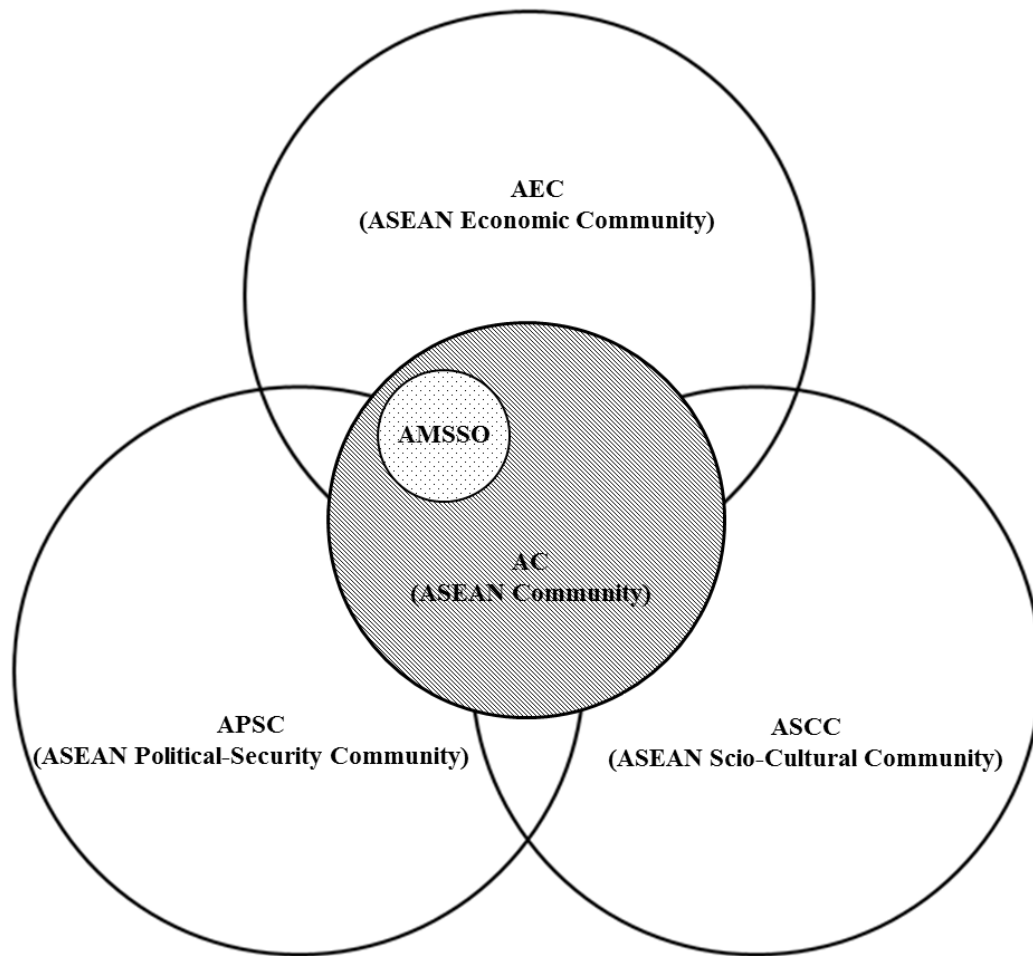
The economic growth of the Asia-Pacific countries has been benefitting ASEAN shipping. By all forecasts, the Asia-Pacific region will continue to remain a growth area in the years ahead. A single regional common market of ASEAN countries will be created under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015.

A number of seafarers from the Asia-Pacific region are on board ships of the merchant fleet of the world. Nurturing excellent seafarers in the Asia-Pacific region greatly affects the development of marine transport in their home countries and, at the same time, largely contributes to the safe navigation of vessels, assurance of safety at sea, and protection of marine environment in the oceans of the world. In view of these circumstances, Japan is actively promoting international cooperation in the education of seafarers for the purpose of making wide use of the expertise in maritime sciences for international cooperation and contributing to nurturing seafarers in developing countries.

In the Asia-Pacific region, piracy, drug smuggling, nuclear arms trafficking, human trafficking, maritime terrorism, and illegal migration are also of particular concern. Because of the complexity of its regional security and maritime situation, the Asia-Pacific region is where maritime cooperation is most necessary and important. In recent years, continuous efforts in maritime cooperation and mechanism building have been addressed. Moreover, new innovative breakthrough is needed.

It is now essential that AMSSO (Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization) should be established as the Asian's own maritime regulatory agency, having same role and function as EMSA (European Maritime safety Agency), which provides the service of European safety, security, and prevention of pollution at sea by many activities to coordinate, share knowledge, and assist European member states, the European Commission, and the maritime industry. The work undertaken by AMSSO will be to enhance the quality of shipping, strengthen maritime safety, and achieve clearer oceans, together with the education of seafarers and training staff, in Asia-Pacific region. AMSSO will ensure the navigation system and security measures in Asian waters to meet international maritime safety and security standards, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the rising trend of economic integration in the region. (See Fig. 1)

AMSSO corresponds to EMSA in EU to develop maritime safety and security in Asia. In contrast to EMSA, analogous name is AMSA (Asian Maritime Safety Agency). However, AMSA is found to be the acronym of Australian Maritime Safety Agency, namely, Australian coast guard. Therefore, final title is decided to be AMSSO.



**Fig.1 The Position of AMSSO in the ASEAN Community**

## **2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY (EMSA)**

### **2.1 The Foundation of EMSA**

Many authorities, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), have dealt with maritime safety issues for many years. However, marine risks were brought sharply into focus with the sinking of the oil tanker Erika off the coast of France in 1999, followed by the sinking of the Prestige off the coast of Spain in 2002. These disasters led to the decision to set up a new EU body that could act as the technical and operational arm of EU decision-makers. This organization would tackle the many different maritime safety problems identified both at the time and in the future.

With this in mind, the EMSA was established in 2003. EMSA has been tasked with providing technical support and advice for the European Commission and EU member states in certain key safety areas, and monitoring the ways in which different member states and organizations are implementing EU legislation. In addition, EMSA

has been given operational tasks in the fields of oil-pollution response, satellite monitoring, and the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) of vessels.

The overall goal is to make a significant contribution to progressively improved safety in EU waters. To accomplish this, EMSA cooperates with many different interests, particularly with European institutions, member states' authorities, international bodies, and the maritime industry.

EMSA's task is significant, given the scale of EU involvement in maritime transport. The 27 EU member states have 1,200 commercial ports and 100,000 km of coastline. Since 2003, EMSA has been working on prevention, enforcement, and response. To realize this, EMSA assesses the practical implementation and impact of existing EU rules. EMSA also provides the European Commission and EU member states with the necessary assistance and expertise to properly apply Community legislation in all fields of maritime safety.

The IMO is the global legislator. It is a United Nations agency that brings together 168 states of the world to determine how best to ensure safe, secure, and clean shipping in the competitive environment of a global industry. The participant states represent their national interest, namely their fleets of merchant vessels, and are generally described as flag states. All EU member states are represented at the IMO, which has its seat in London. The IMO sets the rules that determine how ships are built, maintained, operated, crewed, and ultimately disposed of. At the EU level, the European Commission takes the international rules determined at the IMO and translates them into laws that are binding and enforceable. This demonstrates the high level of commitment that the European Commission and the EU member states have towards maritime safety issues.

## **2.2 The Basic Concept of EMSA**

The EMSA, based in Lisbon, is one of the European Union's decentralized agencies. EMSA provides technical assistance and support for the European Commission and member states in the development and implementation of EU legislation on maritime safety, maritime security, and pollution by ships. EMSA has also been given operational tasks in the field of oil-pollution response, vessel monitoring, and long-range identification and tracking of vessels.

## **2.3 The Effective Role of EMSA**

EMSA has become the leading provider of fast, accurate, and comprehensive information on ship movements in Europe. EMSA also monitors European ships operating worldwide. Ships and their cargoes can now be monitored more effectively than in the past, and there is a more consistent approach across all EU seas. The following organizations, institutions, or agencies deal with and need information on vessel traffic to achieve a high level of maritime safety:

- EU member states are the main stakeholders. Their competent authorities need to

ensure that ships in and around EU waters satisfy safety and environmental requirements. Their coast guards need full information on the position of ships in order to intervene in case of incidents.

- Port authorities want to know the location of ships that will arrive from other parts of the world so that they can better plan operations. Customs authorities need similar information to plan their checks and controls.
- Security authorities want to identify suspect ships that might be involved in the planning of illegal activities. This includes the activities of broader control administrations who want to identify vessels carrying illegal immigrants as early as possible.

## **2.4 The Functions of EMSA**

EMSA was set up in 2002 in the wake of the Erika and later the Prestige oil-tanker disasters, which caused considerable pollution along the northwestern European coastline. The primary role of EMSA is to provide technical assistance and support for the European Commission and EU member states in the proper development and implementation of EU legislation on maritime safety, security on board ships, and pollution by ships. To reach this goal, EMSA inspects organizations involved in the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of ships to ensure that they are complying with the EU legislation in force.

In addition, EMSA has an EU-wide ship-monitoring role. This involves the development and operation of the Safe Sea Net system, which uses a risk-based approach in tracking ships and their cargoes in EU waters. It also involves the operation of the Clean Sea Net system, which uses remote-sensing satellite data to create radar images that can be used to identify oil slicks in EU waters.

In the event of a pollution disaster, EMSA has contracted a fleet of pollution-response vessels in different locations around the coastline, which EU member states can request at any time. EMSA also has a role in ensuring that maritime accidents are investigated in a consistent and effective way. Finally, EMSA provides support, including training, for new EU member states in order to familiarize them with EU legislation, procedures, and operations. As a body of the European Union, EMSA sits at the heart of the EU maritime safety network and collaborates with many industry stakeholders and public bodies in close cooperation with the European Commission.

## **3. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE ASEAN MARITIME TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AEC (ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY)**

### **3.1 The Main Goal of ASEAN Maritime Transport**

In Asia and the Pacific region, the main goal for maritime transport is to establish

an integrated, competitive, and seamless maritime transport network, paying explicit attention to promote maritime safety, security, environment, and user-friendly ports.

The three specific goals are:

- to accomplish an integrated, efficient, and competitive maritime transport system,
- to develop a safety navigation system and establish an advanced maritime security system in line with international standards, and
- to create Eco-Ports and ensure environment-friendly shipping.

The following actions will be pursued to implement the above goals.

In order to create an integrated, efficient, and competitive maritime transport system, ASEAN needs to revitalize its efforts to establish an ASEAN Single Shipping Market (ASSM) by accelerating the formulation of the basic strategy for an ASSM and by developing a relevant framework for the implementation of strategies. In addition, the AMS (ASEAN member states) need to enhance the capacity of the 47 designated ports of the ASEAN Port Network.

As a vital step to enhance the connectivity of the archipelagic ASEAN, efficient and reliable shipping routes including roll-on roll-off (RORO) routes, need to be established. As this is a new initiative for the ASTP (ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan), studies need to be conducted to develop a master plan and feasibility studies for an ASEAN RORO network.

The tourism industry, including the cruise-ship industry, is regarded as promising in the archipelagic ASEAN and it is expected to play a central role in enhancing people-to-people connectivity. A study on cruise infrastructure, with reference to the related initiatives that will be stipulated in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP), will also be conducted.

Safety and security have been and will remain the crucial elements of ASEAN maritime cooperation. For this purpose, the ASEAN Near Coastal Voyage (NCV) limits need to be reviewed as per the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW Convention).

Even though, in terms of carbon emissions, maritime transport is more environment-friendly than other modes of transportation, there is still room to make it more energy-efficient. Effective measures are required to accommodate and execute international standards in cooperation with international organizations such as the IMO.

## **4. THE REALIZATION OF AMSSO**

### **4.1 AMSSO's Tasks and Services**

Although shipping is the most important mode of transport in terms of volume, it does not come without risks. This is particularly true given the need to operate cost-efficiently, frequently overcome difficult weather and traffic conditions, and maneuver in restricted waters.

The primary role of AMSSO is to provide technical assistance and support for the member states in the proper development and implementation of IMO legislation on maritime safety, pollution by ships, and security on board ships. To do this, it inspects organizations involved in the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of ships to ensure that they are complying with IMO legislation in force.

The objectives of AMSSO as a regulatory agency are addressed through a matrix of mainly preventive but also reactive tasks in a number of key areas. First, AMSSO will be tasked with assisting in monitoring the implementation of IMO legislation relating to, among other things, ship construction and planned maintenance, ship inspection and the reception of ship waste in Asian ports, certification of marine equipment, ship security, the training of seafarers in Asian countries, and port state control. Second, AMSSO will operate, maintain, and develop maritime information capabilities at the Asian level. In parallel, a marine-pollution preparedness, detection, and response capability will be established, including a network of standby oil-spill response vessels and satellite oil-spill monitoring service (Clean Sea Net), with the aim of contributing to an effective system for protecting Asian coasts and waters from pollution by ships. Finally, AMSSO will provide technical and scientific advice in the field of maritime safety and prevention of pollution by ships in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the measures in place, and in the updating and development of new legislation. AMSSO will also provide support for, and facilitate cooperation between, the member states and disseminate best practices. AMSSO will organize the center of the maritime safety network and collaborates with many industry stakeholders and public bodies in close cooperation with the member states.

(See Fig. 2)

#### **4.2 AMSSO's Mission and Objectives**

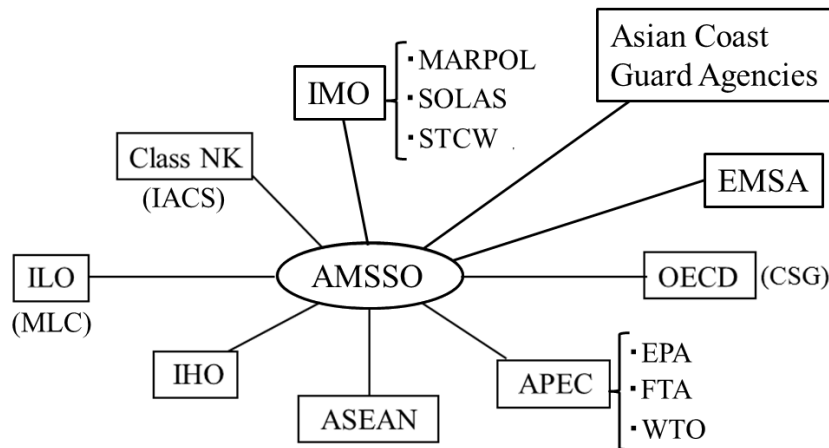
AMSSO will be established for the purpose of ensuring a high, uniform and effective level of maritime safety, and maritime security, as well as preventing and responding to pollution by ships in Asia and the Pacific under the effective maritime risk management system.

AMSSO will provide the member states with the required technical and scientific assistance and with a high level of expertise in order to help them:

- apply IMO legislation properly in the field of maritime safety, maritime security, and prevention of pollution by ships,
- monitor the implementation of the requirements for international conventions, and
- evaluate the effectiveness of the measures in place for resolving maritime matters.

AMSSO will provide additional operational means, upon request, to assist member states and to respond to marine pollution by ships in the Asia-Pacific region.





APEC : Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation  
 ASEAN : Association of South-East Asian Nations  
 Class NK : Nippon Kaiji Kyokai  
 CSG : Consultative Shipping Group  
 EMSA : European Maritime Safety Agency  
 EPA : Economic Partnership Agreement  
 FTA : Free Trade Agreement  
 IACS : International Association of Classification Societies  
 IHO : International Hydrographic Organization  
 ILO : International Labour Organization  
 IMO : International Maritime Organization  
 MARPOL: International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from the Ships  
 MLC : Maritime Labour Convention , 2006  
 OECD : Organization for Economic Co-operation and development  
 SOLAS : International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea  
 STCW : International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers  
 WTO : World Trade Organization

**Fig.2 Main International Organizations and Agencies related to AMSSO**

### 4.3 System for Maritime Education, Training, and Certification of Seafarers in AMSSO

The number of seafarers holding certificates issued by various countries are increasing, and assuming increasingly senior officer functions. For safety reasons in particular, it is important to know whether their qualifications meet the minimum international required standards as laid down by the STCW Convention. AMSSO's mission will visit labor-supplying third countries to assess the maritime education and certification systems based on international STCW standards.

Maritime administration will involve the implementation of the STCW Convention as well as Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions (maritime universities, nautical schools, and training centers). Such visits are in-depth and comprehensive.

In support of these activities and to prioritize inspections, the development of the STCW information system should be continued. The system will include descriptive information on maritime education and training systems in member states and third countries that provide labor for the fleet, results of AMSSO's inspection visits as regards third countries, and information on fraudulent certificates and numerical and statistical information on the number of seafarers who have certificates of competency

and endorsements issued by Asian member states.

#### **4.4 The Concept of AMSSO**

AMSSO, as a body of the ASEAN member states plus major maritime countries in Asia and the Pacific, will fully recognize the importance of effective collaboration with many different interests, particularly between Asian and international institutions, AMSSO member states' administrations, and the maritime industry. AMSSO's activities can be broadly described as:

- to provide technical and scientific assistance for AMSSO member states and the Pacific countries in the proper development and implementation of IMO legislation on maritime safety, pollution by ships, and security on board ships,
- to improve cooperation with and between AMSSO member states and the Pacific Rim in all key areas of maritime business management, and
- to carry out operational tasks in oil-pollution preparedness, detection, and response.

#### **4.5 Fundamental Factors of the Construction of AMSSO**

The Philippines is the largest source of the world's seafarers. The Philippines supplies approximately 200,000 seafarers, of whom nearly 70,000 are competent officers to the global shipping fleet, which employs about 1.5 million seamen. Furthermore, the Philippines is the home of nearly one third -30 percent- of seafarers working on foreign flag ships and also has a large domestic fleet with nearly as many seafarers working on Philippines flagged ships. Thus, the Philippines plays a pivotal leadership role in the seafarer recruitment and placement services regulated and operated in accordance with the MLC (Maritime Labour Convention) 2006 requirements. In Manila, there are many main offices or branches of International organizations and institutions related to the United Nations. Therefore, under these circumstances, Manila in the Philippines is the proper place to locate the headquarters of the AMSSO for the practical convenience of operation in Asia with the close maritime relationship between Japan and the Philippines.

In Japan, ship operators/ship owners, shipbuilders, and shippers as three primary parties in shipping industry have all been established independently and maintained successfully. These three industries all have a close and systematic relationship with each other and cooperate seamlessly for effective and successful results as maritime clusters in Japan. This maritime business structure cannot be seen in other maritime nations around the world. Thus, Japan has the competence to take the leadership of the AMSSO.

Detailed structure of the AMSSO is as follows: (See Fig. 3)

- Appropriate location of headquarters: Manila, Republic of the Philippines

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- Main office: Naha (in Okinawa) and Kobe, Japan
- Main branches: Busan, Korea; Yangon, Myanmar; Singapore
- Presumable Executive Director: Captain Koichi AKATSUKA, Vice President of International Federation of Shipmasters' Association (IFSMA) and Japan Captains' Association
- Presumable primary member states: ASEAN +  $\alpha$   
Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, China, Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, etc.
- Cooperative member states: United States, Canada, Russia
- Available institutions and cooperative organizations:
  - IMO (International Maritime Organization)
  - MAAP (Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific)
  - IMMAJ (International Mariners Management Association of Japan)
  - PJMCC (Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council, Inc.)
  - AMOSUP (Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines)
  - AJSU (All Japan Seamen's Union)
  - ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation)
  - IFSMA (International Federation of Shipmasters' Association)
  - ASF (Asian Shipowners' Forum)
  - FASA (Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations)
  - JSA (Japanese Shipowners' Association)
  - MLIT (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism)
  - JTCA (Japan Transport Cooperation Association)
  - MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)
  - SECOJ (Seamen's Employment Center of Japan)
  - JMC (Japan Maritime Center)
  - Class NK (Nippon Kaiji Kyokai)
  - IACS (International Association of Classification Societies)
  - NIST (National Institute for Sea Training)
  - JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)
  - JCG (Japan Coast Guard)
  - ADB (Asian Development Bank)
  - The Nippon Foundation
  - OPRF (Ocean Policy Research Foundation)
  - Japan Marine Science Inc.
  - The Tokyo MOU (Memorandum of Understanding):
    - Port State Control organization in the Asia-Pacific region
    - IAMU (International Association of Maritime Universities)
    - EUAI (East Asian University Institute), Waseda University

IMaRC (International Maritime Research Center)

Kobe University, Graduate School of Maritime Sciences

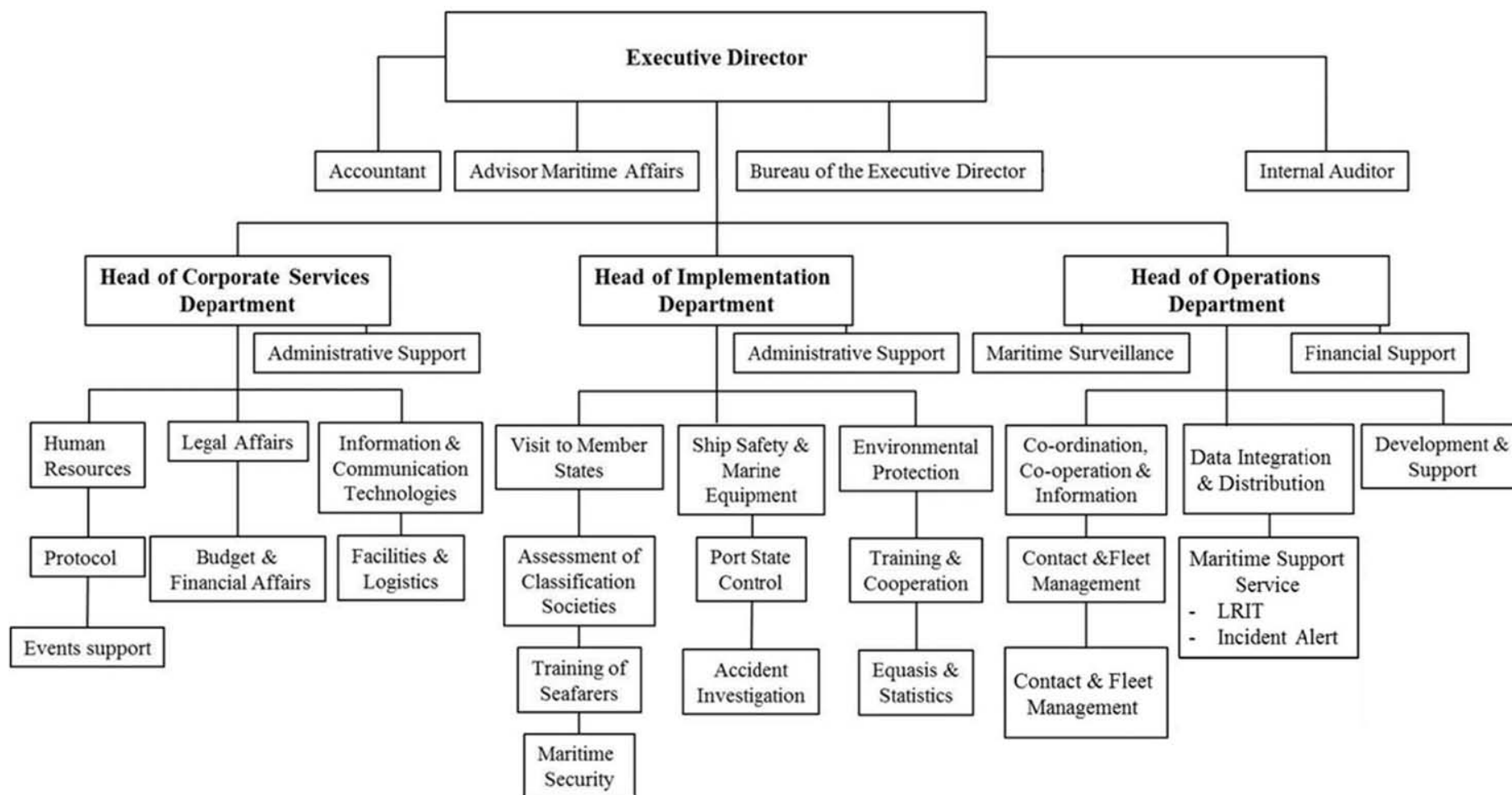
, etc.

#### **4.6 Enhancement of Maritime Security in Asia by AMSSO**

Since most Southeast Asian countries are maritime nations, maritime terrorism may account for several terrorist-related activities in the region. Maritime terrorism causes tremendous insecurity in Southeast Asia because most of the countries in the region depend on seaborne trade. The lack of strong regional land transport infrastructure in Southeast Asia compels trading states to rely disproportionately on air and sea transportation. In fact, half of the world's shipping activities pass through the waters of Southeast Asia. The Strait of Malacca alone carries more than a quarter of the world's maritime trade each year. More than 50,000 large ships navigate the strait annually, in addition, the 40–50 oil tankers that sail in the strait daily. Almost all ships that pass through the Strait of Malacca also pass through the South China Sea, which is considered one of the world's busiest maritime expressways. Therefore, shipping activities in Southeast Asia occur largely in the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea areas. Close to the South China Sea are the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea, which are important transport routes for trade and commerce in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific region. The Sulu Sea is separated from the South China Sea by the northwestern part of Palawan, whereas the Celebes Sea, also an important international shipping lane, is located in the western Pacific Ocean. It is forecasted that the tremendous growth in the cruise-line industry and the emergence of high-speed ferries will be the key developments in the maritime passenger transport business until 2020, and this will greatly increase shipping activities in Southeast Asia. The increasing trends of commercial shipping in Asia make the challenges of maritime terrorism in the region even more acute.

The main concern is the establishment of the regional cooperation system of maritime forces in the form of multilateral and multi-organizational coalition for the maintenance of maritime security and order. A regional cooperative coalition must be established for the maintenance of maritime security and order by multilateral maritime forces of navies or coast guards and maritime policies within the region. Such a measure will deter anticipated maritime terrorism and piracy to ensure safe navigation in major maritime sea lanes of the Asia-Pacific region in the Malacca and Singapore Straits and the Indonesian or Philippines archipelagic waters.

The world will be calling on Japan to establish this coalition and realize this initiative based on the competence of maritime industry infrastructure as well as maritime law enforcement force. Japan has one of the world's largest organization and power of maritime safety agency, carrying out technical cooperation for nurturing coast guard officers as capacity building of developing countries through JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency).



**Fig.3 Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization Chart** (adapted from the EMSA)

The activities of regional multilateral cooperation on maritime security and order are as follows:

Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)

- Working Group on Confidence and Security Building Measures
- Working Group on Maritime Security
- Working Group on Security Cooperation in the North Pacific
- Working Group on Comprehensive and Cooperation Security
- Working Group on Transnational Crime

International Seapower Symposium (ISS)

Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS)

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism

Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)

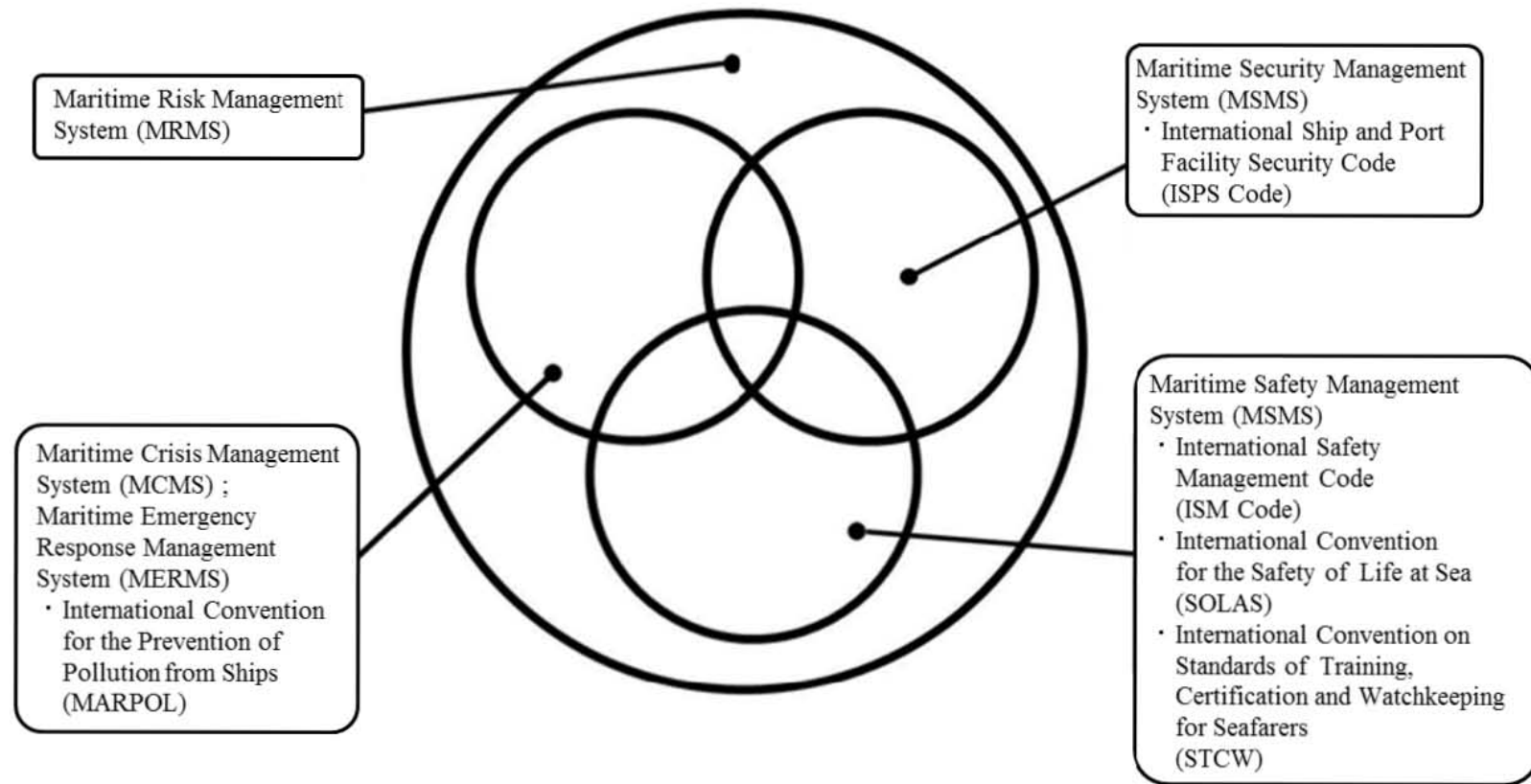
AMSSO helps promote regional cooperation on maritime security based on the AC (ASEAN Community) and provide conference tables for the parties or countries concerned in the maritime issues or disputes. (See Fig. 4)

## 5. CONCLUSION

Shipping is not only the backbone of the global economy but also a significant growth sector. The need to transport large volumes of goods, as well as large numbers of passengers, at competitive prices on board ships involves a certain amount of risk. Therefore, maritime accidents often occur, and the challenge of minimizing the frequency and severity of disasters is a constant and essential effort in maritime risk management.

The complexity of the Asian archipelagic coastline varies greatly from one country to another, and geographical features have a significant effect on the number and types of accidents that occur, particularly when the combination of weather and physical conditions is taken into account. It is important that the maritime community continue to pursue initiatives aimed at improving ship/cargo/pollution monitoring, accident response, and maritime safety as well as security.

The days of European maritime standards have almost ended, and the days of Asian standards have just begun. Connectivity and cooperation among Asian nations is definitely needed in establishing technology standards with the IMO. Shipbuilding industries in Asia provide over 80% of the world's ships. Nevertheless, it is difficult to make the voices of the Asian region reflected and realized in the IMO because of the power balance of European countries behind the scenes. Within the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), AMMSO should be developed as one of the necessary organizations to promote Asian maritime safety and security on the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). AMSSO will make easier for Asian countries to unite



**Fig.4 Maritime Risk Management System**

around their common task of dealing with maritime issues.

Ultimate final stage for future development is to establish the Asia-Africa Maritime Safety and Security Organization (AAMSSO) formed by the integration of African maritime countries based on the Asia-Africa Community or Union (AAC or AAU).

This paper shows my own original idea, which is not officially admitted with some correction and addition, based on the content that I presented the theme of 'The Establishment of the Asian Maritime Safety and Security Organization (AMSSO)' at the International Maritime Research Center in the Graduate School of Maritime Sciences, Kobe University on Thursday, December 20, 2012.

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