

SEDL to launch Hong Kong maiden voyage of CSCL-Asia

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The Secretary for Economic Development and Labour, Mr Stephen Ip, today (July 13) officiated at a ceremony to mark the Hong Kong maiden voyage of super-carrier "CSCL-Asia" at the Hongkong International Terminals in Kwai Chung.

CSCL-Asia, belonging to the fleet of China Shipping Container Lines Company Limited (CSCL), is currently the world's largest full container vessel with a capacity of approximately 8,500 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit).

Officiating at the ceremony, Mr Ip said the commencement of CSCL-Asia's maiden voyage in Hong Kong clearly demonstrated that Hong Kong's port facilities and container terminals could handle the largest container ships in the world.

Mr Ip welcomed CSCL's decision to register CSCL-Asia with the Hong Kong Shipping Register. Noting that CSCL-Asia was the first among five 8,500 TEU container vessels ordered by CSCL and that eight 9,600 TEU mega vessels had also been ordered to commence operation in the next few years, Mr Ip

hoped that CSCL would include these new vessels on Hong Kong's Shipping Register.

Mr Ip was pleased that Hong Kong's Shipping Register continued to attract top quality tonnage and had expanded considerably from 9.3 million tonnes in 1999 to the present level of 24 million tonnes.

In response to press enquiries on the question of safety of the Hong Kong Port, Mr Ip said the security of our port facilities and ships had been enhanced to prevent terrorist activities.

As a leading international hub port, Hong Kong complies with the international security requirements as enshrined in the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code which has been implemented since July 1.

"To date, all Hong Kong port facilities comply with the ISPS Code requirements. Almost all Hong Kong registered ships have adopted approved security plans, and nearly 80% of them have already been issued with international Ship Security Certificates," Mr Ip said.

Ends/Tuesday, July 13, 2004