

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR “GLOBAL SHIPPERS FORUM”

Introduction

The Tripartite Shippers' Group (TSG) is recognized in the international world of freight transportation and trade as the voice for shipper groups whose respective members are responsible for making and purchasing transportation services on behalf of their respective companies. Originally comprised of organizations from three major trade regions of the world, the TSG today represents numerous shipper groups whose central focus centers on policies and industry practices that impact the movement of international commerce.¹

Since that first year in 1994, the TSG has met annually around the globe to discuss issues of topical importance and make known its views and recommendations to both government and industry decisionmakers.² The main vehicle for conveying these messages have been through the issuance of “joint declarations” at the conclusion of each annual meeting.

These declarations have served to represent the TSG's positions on a wide variety of subjects including, but not limited to: economic deregulation of the freight ocean liner industry; calculation and implementation of ocean carrier surcharges; maritime cargo liability reform; congestion/infrastructure; and, supply chain security.

Vision/Purpose/Name

To be effective and to more accurately reflect the make-up of this group, it has become clear that world trade may no longer be characterized in terms of geographic size or scope. While the name, “Tripartite Shippers' Group” served for many years in defining shippers (through their national organizations) in the three major trading regions of the world, it has become evident that in the early 21st century -- trade and transportation continues to expand beyond those areas. Today Latin America/the Caribbean; Africa; and, the Middle East are just examples of some of the places where trade is now generated or flowing. New and emerging countries and the markets they serve are no longer restricted by national boundaries and today enjoy the benefits that comes from technological advances in both transportation and communications. Today every corner of the world is accessible and may take advantage of conditions which at one time were not possible.

This is why the members appointed at the 2005 meeting in San Francisco, CA – USA are formally proposing changing the name of the organization to the “**Global Shippers' Forum (GSF)**.”³ This recommendation incorporates the reality that trade and transportation are inextricably linked and that shippers regardless of geographic origin must have a forum through which common views may be shared, discussed, debated, and then advocated to national policy makers. These positions are designed with the purpose of enacting local, national, and international laws and regulations which will lead to greater competition and business principles which will permit harmonization of international transport critical for efficiently run supply chains.

Communications

Effective global communications in any business is an essential tool in achieving success. Today the internet provides one of the best methods for freight shippers around the world to communicate on matters of immediate interest and concern. But as events and circumstances are placing increased demands on everyone's busy schedules, one of the best means for tracking new trends and freight transport initiatives as well as appreciate the views of shippers is through a recognized web-site. The GSF is pleased to announce the permanent establishment of: Globalshippersforum.org. Now anyone connected with international freight transport may access ideas, thoughts, latest government policies, questions and general information on a variety of subjects.

¹ The organizations were: the European Shippers' Council; the Japan Shippers' Council, and The National Industrial Transportation League.

² These meetings have traditionally been rotated among venues in Europe, Asia and North America.

³ Nicolette van der Jagt – ESC; Ted Kawamura – JSC; John Y. Lu ASC; and, Peter J. Gatti, NITL.

We would propose placing the GSF network under the common management and control of the members of the GSF. On this site members in any one of 5 regions: Africa; Asia/South Pacific; Europe/Middle East; North America; and, South Central America (including the Caribbean) may place up to date information and links to other web-sites that will alert other shippers and other sectors of the international freight transportation community on matters of topical importance.

Now in addition to the annual “Joint Declarations”, the Global Shippers’ Forum can serve as a real-time living source and resource of information pertinent to world transportation and trade.

Advocacy

Since its inception, one of the foundations on which the TSG has excelled is its ability to communicate positions and policies on a wide variety of subjects all of which have important ramifications for the international movement of freight. With each annual meeting, this process starts with a formal meeting of the members. The meetings are predicated on an agenda of issues that is developed by the host group in cooperation with the other organizations.

Each shipper group then prepares short background working papers in advance of this meeting for the purpose of summarizing, and identifying the status of the issue in a specific group/or region. This procedure allows the group to maximize the effectiveness of the discussions with an objective of reaching a consensus that may then be included in a public announcement setting forth the results of that meeting. This announcement has traditionally taken the form of a “Joint Shippers’ Declaration” signed by each participating organization.

One of the most important activities following the issuance of the Joint Shippers’ Declaration is communicating the positions adopted in the document.

Traditionally each organization will share the declaration with its national trade media as well as government authorities. The support (or opposition) by the TSG on specific issues helps evidence shipper unity which in turn will provide the chances for a favorable outcome.

On several occasions the TSG has issued joint communiqués (such as Press Releases) setting forth the collective views of the group on topical pending issues. There have been other instances where the TSG members have appeared before forums, met with government officials, and communicated views consistent with the jointly accepted positions of the TSG.

We believe that continuing to speak out on these positions and policies will help advance a greater appreciation for the work of the group and its impacts on international supply chains.

Annual Meetings

The purpose of these meetings have been to permit “in person” sessions where member delegates can candidly discuss topical issues of common interest and concern to the shipper community. Typically these meetings are held in the month of September and are predicated on agendas that are agreed-to in advance of the actual meeting.

To equalize the workload involved in the organization and execution of the annual event – a rotation process has been established to convene this meeting. Starting in Europe (Brussels) in 1994, subsequent meetings have been held in:

- 1995 – Tokyo, Japan
- 1996 – Washington, DC (USA)
- 1997 – Dumblane, Scotland

1998 – Kobe, Japan
1999 – Vancouver, Canada
2000 – Haifa, Israel
2001 – Yokohama, Japan
2002 – New Orleans, LA (USA)
2003 – Margaux, France
2004 – Shanghai, China
2005 – San Francisco, CA (USA)
2006 – Antwerp, Belgium

These meetings help facilitate a better understanding and recognition of the national and regional issues confronting the international shipper community.

Membership

The strength of any organization is its membership and clearly this group is no exception. Since the first meeting over a decade ago, the TSG has grown from the aforementioned organizations whose principal members are proprietary owners of freight and responsible for making transportation decisions on the part of their respective companies. Despite the growth of the group which now represents nearly a dozen separate trade groups whose leadership and membership is tied to the private sector, the group remains dedicated to organizations whose members represent commercial customers whose main activities center on business relationships with their suppliers to move freight both domestically and internationally.

While member organizations to the group (TSG/GSF) may individually represent other freight transport sectors (third parties, logistics companies, suppliers) their major focus must be centered with the concerns and priorities of cargo interests who have or share responsibility in determining how and in what means freight moves.

Over the years, the TSG has recognized that in several countries, groups known as “shippers’ councils” are in actuality operating as “arms” of the national government whose purpose is to serve entities engaged in the transport of commercial freight.

TSG membership is based on groups that are principally organized and committed to serving the commercial interests of transportation decisionmakers from the private sector. They are largely self-supporting and are not functioning as a direct emissary of a national government.

Future Goals

Another objective of the GSF will be to identify future challenges, policies and goals which will be necessary for the long-termed viability of shippers in the commercial freight transport industry. Recognition of new developments and needs will enable the GSF to be pro-active in meeting the demands for not only today, but well into tomorrow.

Respectfully submitted,

Asian Shippers’ Council

Canadian Industrial Transportation Association

European Shippers’ Council

Japan Shippers’ Council

The National Industrial Transportation League