

An integrated global operation

By JØRN HINGE

PRESIDENT AND CEO, UNITED ARAB SHIPPING COMPANY (UASC)



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began his shipping career with the Copenhagen based East Asiatic Company (EAC) working in Europe and the Americas and was also instrumental in building-up the company's liner services between Australia and the Far East. In 1990 he was appointed CEO of a joint-venture between EAC and Ben Line of Edinburgh tasked with building container services between the Far East and Europe. He joined UASC as Chief Operating Officer in 1994 and is currently President and CEO for UASC as well as Chairman and a Director of several UASC subsidiaries.

The United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) was founded in 1976 by the governments of Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates linking the Middle East to the world. Today the company is headquartered in Kuwait with its corporate office in Dubai and regional offices in the UK, Singapore, UAE and USA as well as branches in over 72 countries throughout the world.

UASC owns over 380,000 containers and operates a fleet of 61 container ships (both conventional container and temperature controlled cargo ships) plying over 25 routes connecting the Middle East, Europe, the Mediterranean, the Indian subcontinent, the Far East, Australia, West Africa and the Americas. In total the company services over 200 ports worldwide. In addition to shipping, UASC offers customers a range of ancillary services including freight forwarding, land transportation, air cargo, chartering, ship and container repair and storage. With an authorised capital of US\$2.47 billion UASC is recognised as one of the most important and progressive shipping lines in the Middle East. We are capable of maintaining and expanding our stable shipping services to our customers' worldwide.

UASC is currently implementing an ambitious expansion programme to extend and upgrade existing liner services and to commence new services to meet our growing customer base. Our goal is to offer clients an integrated global transportation operation. In particular we are pouring substantial investments into our fleet capacity in order to reach a certain critical mass and to enable us to offer further services to our customers. We have nine 13,100 TEU (A13) container-vessels, amongst the world's largest, on order from Samsung Heavy Industries in Korea to be delivered during 2011 and 2012. The A13s will significantly improve our cost base and allow us to compete head-to-head with the shipping industry's major lines. The new A13s are equipped with the latest Waste Heat Recovery Systems (WHRS) which will reduce considerably the ship's carbon emissions, and contribute to reducing the carbon footprint. By bringing some of the world's most environmentally friendly container vessels into service, we are setting new green parameters in the shipping industry.

In addition to new vessels UASC has invested heavily in information technology systems and has created an internal Integrated Liner Management System, 'TRUST', which provides a platform for e-services across our global network, availing e-commerce and offering greater speed and reliability to our customers. UASC has been recognised as a regular winner of Lloyd's annual Schedule Reliability Star Performer award over the years – a performance we intend to maintain. To streamline our services, UASC pursued a strategy of acquiring local agents around the world and integrating them fully into our global operation. Recent acquisitions in France and Poland have been part of this process and allow us to have a stronger presence in these markets and offering a better service. These country operations will now be able to make full use of UASC's advanced worldwide systems which allows faster responses from customer service representatives through direct access to our global data base.

The State of Kuwait was a founder member and shareholder of the United Arab Shipping Company. In the early years UASC operations and core functions were centred on Kuwait. To this day we maintain our headquarters in the State. Down through the years Kuwait, along with the other founder shareholders, actively contributed to the growth and financial strength of UASC. Many UASC staff have lived for a considerable number of years in Kuwait and have embraced its culture and heritage. I believe that I am speaking on behalf of the majority of my colleagues when I say that we have established with Kuwait a special bond that makes us share every moment of the pride of the Kuwaiti people in celebrating their 50th anniversary of Independence. On behalf of all of us at UASC I would like to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the people of Kuwait and HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In our 34 years of existence, UASC has built on its solid foundation with sound performances endorsed and backed by the valuable support of our stakeholders, including the State of Kuwait. As we are optimistic for the next 50 years for Kuwait, we also look forward to UASC expanding and meeting its strategic objectives and remaining committed to linking Kuwait and the Middle East to the world.

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