In response to the increasing shortage of seafarers to man Japanese ships, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan decided to exempt qualified foreign seamen from the examination requirements for working on board Japanese commercial vessels.

The exemption will initially cover second and third mates and those occupying engineering positions. The coverage may later be expanded to include other positions.

The Ministry will identify training institutions and maritime colleges and universities from the Philippines, Vietnam and 14 other countries whose graduates will be eligible for this exemption.

May 17, 2011