

C178 - Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Convention, 1996 (No. 178)

Preamble

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office and having met in its Eighty-fourth Session on 8 October 1996, and

Noting the changes in the nature of the shipping industry and, as a consequence thereof, the changes in seafarers' working and living conditions since the Labour Inspection (Seamen) Recommendation, 1926, was adopted, and

Recalling the provisions of the Labour Inspection Convention and Recommendation, 1947, the Labour Inspection (Mining and Transport) Recommendation, 1947, and the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976, and

Recalling the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, on 16 November 1994, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the revision of the Labour Inspection (Seamen) Recommendation, 1926, which is the first item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention for flag State implementation only;

adopts, this twenty-second day of October of the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six, the following Convention, which may be cited as the Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Convention, 1996:

PART I. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Article 1

1. Except as otherwise provided in this Article, this Convention applies to every seagoing ship, whether publicly or privately owned, which is registered in the territory of a Member for which the Convention is in force and is engaged in the transport of cargo or passengers for the purpose of trade or is employed for any other commercial purpose. For

the purpose of this Convention, a ship that is on the register of two Members is deemed to be registered in the territory of the Member whose flag it flies.

2. National laws or regulations shall determine which ships are to be regarded as seagoing ships for the purpose of this Convention.
3. This Convention applies to seagoing tugs.
4. This Convention does not apply to vessels less than 500 gross tonnage and, when not engaged in navigation, vessels such as oil rigs and drilling platforms. The decision as to which vessels are covered by this paragraph shall be taken by the central coordinating authority in consultation with the most representative organizations of shipowners and seafarers.
5. To the extent the central coordinating authority deems it practicable, after consulting the representative organizations of fishing vessel owners and fishermen, the provisions of this Convention shall apply to commercial maritime fishing vessels.
6. In the event of any doubt as to whether or not any ships are to be regarded as engaged in commercial maritime operations or commercial maritime fishing for the purpose of this Convention, the question shall be determined by the central coordinating authority after consulting the organizations of shipowners, seafarers and fishermen concerned.
7. For the purpose of this Convention:
 - (a) the term **central coordinating authority** means ministers, government departments or other public authorities having power to issue and supervise the implementation of regulations, orders or other instructions having the force of law in respect of inspection of seafarers' working and living conditions in relation to any ship registered in the territory of the Member;
 - (b) the term **inspector** means any civil servant or other public official with responsibility for inspecting any aspect of seafarers' working and living conditions, as well as any other person holding proper credentials performing an inspection for an institution or organization authorized by the central coordinating authority in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 3;
 - (c) the term **legal provisions** includes, in addition to laws and regulations, arbitration awards and collective agreements upon which the force of law is conferred;

(d) the term **seafarers** means persons who are employed in any capacity on board a seagoing ship to which the Convention applies. In the event of any doubt as to whether any categories of persons are to be regarded as seafarers for the purpose of this Convention, the question shall be determined by the central coordinating authority after consulting the organizations of shipowners and seafarers concerned;

(e) the term **seafarers' working and living conditions** means the conditions such as those relating to the standards of maintenance and cleanliness of shipboard living and working areas, minimum age, articles of agreement, food and catering, crew accommodation, recruitment, manning, qualifications, hours of work, medical examinations, prevention of occupational accidents, medical care, sickness and injury benefits, social welfare and related matters, repatriation, terms and conditions of employment which are subject to national laws and regulations, and freedom of association as defined in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948, of the International Labour Organization.

PART II. ORGANIZATION OF INSPECTION

Article 2

1. Each Member for which the Convention is in force shall maintain a system of inspection of seafarers' working and living conditions.
2. The central coordinating authority shall coordinate inspections wholly or partly concerned with seafarers' working and living conditions and shall establish principles to be observed.
3. The central coordinating authority shall in all cases be responsible for the inspection of seafarers' working and living conditions. It may authorize public institutions or other organizations it recognizes as competent and independent to carry out inspections of seafarers' working and living conditions on its behalf. It shall maintain and make publicly available a list of such institutions or organizations.

Article 3

1. Each Member shall ensure that all ships registered in its territory are inspected at intervals not exceeding three years and, when practicable, annually, to verify that the seafarers' working and living conditions on board conform to national laws and regulations.
2. If a Member receives a complaint or obtains evidence that a ship registered in its territory does not conform to national laws and regulations in respect of seafarers' working and living conditions, the Member shall take measures to inspect the ship as soon as practicable.

3. In cases of substantial changes in construction or accommodation arrangements, the ship shall be inspected within three months of such changes.

Article 4

Each Member shall appoint inspectors qualified for the performance of their duties and shall take the necessary steps to satisfy itself that inspectors are available in sufficient number to meet the requirements of this Convention.

Article 5

1. Inspectors shall have the status and conditions of service to ensure that they are independent of changes of government and of improper external influences.
2. Inspectors provided with proper credentials shall be empowered:
 - (a) to board a ship registered in the territory of the Member and to enter premises as necessary for inspection;
 - (b) to carry out any examination, test or inquiry which they may consider necessary in order to satisfy themselves that the legal provisions are being strictly observed;
 - (c) to require that deficiencies are remedied; and
 - (d) where they have grounds to believe that a deficiency constitutes a significant danger to seafarers' health and safety, to prohibit, subject to any right of appeal to a judicial or administrative authority, a ship from leaving port until necessary measures are taken, the ship not being unreasonably detained or delayed.

Article 6

1. When an inspection is conducted or when measures are taken under this Convention, all reasonable efforts shall be made to avoid a ship being unreasonably detained or delayed.
2. If a ship is unreasonably detained or delayed, the shipowner or operator of the ship shall be entitled to compensation for any loss or damage suffered. In any instance of alleged unreasonable detention or delay, the burden of proof shall lie with the shipowner or operator of the ship.

PART III. PENALTIES

Article 7

1. Adequate penalties for violations of the legal provisions enforceable by inspectors and for obstructing inspectors in the performance of their duties shall be provided for by national laws or regulations and shall be effectively enforced.
2. Inspectors shall have the discretion to give warnings and advice instead of instituting or recommending proceedings.

PART IV. REPORTS

Article 8

1. The central coordinating authority shall maintain records of inspections of seafarers' working and living conditions.
2. It shall publish an annual report on inspection activities, including a list of institutions and organizations authorized to carry out inspections on its behalf. This report shall be published within a reasonable time after the end of the year to which it relates and in any case within six months.

Article 9

1. Inspectors shall submit a report of each inspection to the central coordinating authority. One copy of the report in English or in the working language of the ship shall be furnished to the master of the ship and another copy shall be posted on the ship's notice board for the information of the seafarers or sent to their representatives.
2. In case of an inspection pursuant to a major incident, the report shall be submitted as soon as practicable but not later than one month following the conclusion of the inspection.

PART V. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 10

This Convention supersedes the Labour Inspection (Seamen) Recommendation, 1926.

Article 11

The formal ratifications of this Convention shall be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration.

Article 12

1. This Convention shall be binding only upon those Members of the International Labour Organization whose ratifications have been registered with the Director-General of the International Labour Office.
2. It shall come into force 12 months after the date on which the ratifications of two Members have been registered with the Director-General
3. Thereafter, this Convention shall come into force for any Member 12 months after the date on which its ratification has been registered.

Article 13

1. A Member which has ratified this Convention may denounce it after the expiration of ten years from the date on which the Convention first comes into force, by an act communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration. Such denunciation shall not take effect until one year after the date on which it is registered.
2. Each Member which has ratified this Convention and which does not, within the year following the expiration of the period of ten years mentioned in the preceding paragraph, exercise the right of denunciation provided for in this Article, will be bound for another period of ten years and, thereafter, may denounce this Convention at the expiration of each period of ten years under the terms provided for in this Article.

Article 14

1. The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall notify all Members of the International Labour Organization of the registration of all ratifications and denunciations communicated by the Members of the Organization.
2. When notifying the Members of the Organization of the registration of the second ratification, the Director-General shall draw the attention of the Members of the Organization to the date upon which the Convention shall come into force.

Article 15

The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for registration in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, full particulars of all ratifications and acts of denunciation registered by the Director-General in accordance with the provisions of the preceding Articles.

Article 16

At such times as it may consider necessary, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall present to the General Conference a report on the working of this Convention and shall examine the desirability of placing on the agenda of the Conference the question of its revision in whole or in part.

Article 17

1. Should the Conference adopt a new Convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new Convention otherwise provides -

(a) the ratification by a Member of the new revising Convention shall ipso jure involve the immediate denunciation of this Convention, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 13 above, if and when the new revising Convention shall have come into force;

(b) as from the date when the new revising Convention comes into force, this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification by the Members.

2. This Convention shall in any case remain in force in its actual form and content for those Members which have ratified it but have not ratified the revising Convention.

Article 18

The English and French versions of the text of this Convention are equally authoritative.