

UNICPO Abstract- Wednesday 25 June, 2008, 10:00- 13:00- Segment 4,
Discussion Panel “Focus on People at Sea”
International Labour Standards and Decent Work: Taking account of the “people factor” in an integrated approach to improved maritime security and safety
Presentation by Cleopatra Doumbia Henry, Director,
International Labour Standards Department,
International Labour Office, ILO, Geneva

This presentation considers the recent International Labour Organization (ILO) initiatives aimed at addressing the situation of “people at sea” and maritime safety and security through decent work for seafarers and fishers. An effective international and national system is highly dependent on the workers who have to implement it and they must be the focus of concern. Decent working conditions on board ships and fishing vessels are essential to ensuring maritime security and safe operation of ships and fishing vessels. It is also an aspect of implementing State obligations under Article 94 of the 1982 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. A number of key strategic areas, such as improved flag State implementation and audits and expanded port State control have been identified by General Assembly and other bodies for action to improve maritime security and safety. The ILO has also taken specific steps to focus on these strategic areas and to integrate and “mainstream” maritime labour concerns into the international ship safety and security and environmental protection regime.

The ILO recently adopted three major Conventions and a Recommendation and a Code of Practice that all interact, to some extent, with maritime security and safety issues

- the Seafarers Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003;
- the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006
- the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007
- 2004 IMO/ILO Code of Practice on Security in Ports

The presentation outlines the role of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, particularly in connection with help to ensure ship safety. In connection with maritime security it stresses the importance of the revised Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention (No. 185), which was adopted to complement the action being taken in the framework of the IMO (e.g., the ISPS Code). Convention No. 185 provides security while facilitating the professional movement of seafarers and enabling shore leave. It establishes an effective multilateral system of identification for the purpose of ensuring both the welfare of seafarers and the smooth operation of the shipping industry. Shipowners can encounter significant operating difficulties if seafarers cannot travel to join or leave ships. Seafarers can suffer considerable hardship if they are not permitted to go ashore after weeks or even months at sea. The new Seafarers’ Identity Document allows port States to satisfy themselves that the holders of this document are genuine seafarers through “positive verifiable identification” meeting contemporary security concerns. The Convention also requires each ratifying country to put in place a comprehensive security regime for ensuring that these documents are only issued to genuine seafarers presenting no security risk. The ILO and IMO have also developed a Code of Practice for Security in Ports and related training materials.