Maritime Security & Safety:  
**Focus on people at sea**

Jon Whitlow,  
Secretary of the Seafarers’, Fisheries  
and Inland Navigation Sections

International Transport Workers’ Federation – ITF

United Nations Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and  
the Law of the Sea  
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International Transport Workers’ Federation - ITF

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**International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)**

- Global union federation for transport workers  
- 700 unions in 150 countries  
- Seafarers, Fisheries, Inland Navigation, Road, Rail,  
  Civil Aviation and Tourism Services  
- 130 ITF maritime inspectors worldwide
Safety and security issues confronting seafarers

- Industrial Context
- Challenges facing seafarers and fishers
- Substandard operators
- Life at sea (SIRC report for ITF Seafarers’ Trust)
- Regulation
- Concluding comments

Industrial Context

- Shipping: Motor of the global economy carrying 90% of world trade
- Shortage of suitably trained seafarers
- Importance of ‘decent work’
- Shipping & Fisheries: particularly hazardous sectors, special categories of workers
- Fundamental rights under threat
Challenges facing seafarers

- Trend towards dehumanising the job
- Reduced Manning levels
- Faster turnarounds in port
- Long terms of voyage
- Increased pressure (criminalisation)
- Problems with shore leave and access to facilities
- Risk of piracy and armed robbery

Substandard Operators

- Abandonment
- Non-payment of wages
- Recruitment fees
- Lack of employment contracts
- Unsafe vessels, poor maintenance
- Inadequate supply of provisions
SIRC report for ITF  
Seafarers’ Trust

Findings on shore leave:

- 64% (N=2,160) of respondents to the survey had not had shore leave during the previous eight weeks
- 36% (N=1,353) who had had shore leave during the period said their leave lasted for 2 hours on average

http://www.itfglobal.org/seafarerstrust/welfarerpt.cfm

Life at Sea

Findings on communication:

- Although all vessels had email facilities on board:
  - Only 16% (N=555 of a total of 3,527) of seafarers had access to email
  - Only 3% of ratings had access to email
Life at Sea

Seafarers descriptions of their life:

‘being in prison’
‘isolated’
‘lonely’
‘a sacrifice to provide better conditions for loved ones’

Regulation

• Importance of jurisdiction
• Inadequacy of cover for the ‘human element’
• Critical but invisible work force
• Need to enforce fundamental human rights for people working at sea
Concluding comments

It is vital to ensure:

• Decent work for seafarers & fishers
• Real and effective flag States
• Access to shore leave and port based welfare
• Access to communication facilities
• Respect for the people that underpin world trade

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www.itfseafarers.org

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