

Report of the UN Secretary-General on Oceans and Law of the Sea, 2014

SUBMISSION BY ILO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The world's oceans and seas make a significant contribution to international trade and global food security. Their contribution, however, is dependent on the labour of the over 1.5 million seafarers and nearly 40 million fishers that make their livelihoods at sea.
2. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has always recognized the importance of seafarers and fishers, and is particularly well-positioned to address the social aspects of the uses of the world's oceans and seas.
3. The primary focus of the ILO in the shipping and fishing sectors recently has been on the promotion of international labour standards and guidelines. Three ILO Conventions are of particular importance to the law of the sea in this regard – the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), and the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188).
4. The MLC, 2006, sets out comprehensive rights and protection at work for the world's seafarers, and secures economic interests in fair competition for shipowners. It entered into force on the 20 August 2013, and has been ratified by 56 member States representing more than 90 per cent of the world gross tonnage of ships.
5. The Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185) has been in force since the 9 February 2005, and has been ratified by 24 ILO member States. The objective is to facilitate entry by seafarers into the territory of member States for the purposes of shore leave, transit, transfer or repatriation. It is recognized that identity documents will improve maritime security as well as access to shore facilities and shore leave, which are vital elements of seafarers' general well-being.
6. The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), was designed to ensure decent work for all fishers with regards to their conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health (OSH) protection, medical care and social security. The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) will come into force 12 months after the date on which the ratifications of ten ILO member States, eight of which are coastal States, have been registered with the ILO. As of 28 June 2013, the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), has been ratified by four ILO member States; Argentina (15 September 2011), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4 February 2010), Morocco (16 May 2013), and South Africa (20 June 2013).
7. The ILO, working with other UN system specialized agencies, and other international organizations, is aiming to eliminate forced labour trafficking in the maritime sectors, particularly in the fishing sector. Such efforts should be a high priority in the United Nations system, bearing in mind its impact on the sustainability of the marine environment (e.g. links to IUU fishing).

8. Information on recent and upcoming ILO activities to promote the ratification and implementation of these critical international labour standards may be found in the ILO's full submission as well as on the ILO website at www.ilo.org. UN OCEANS and the UNICPO process may provide excellent vehicles for drawing greater attention to efforts to address problems concerning working and living conditions in the maritime sectors.