



International Labour Conference – 94th (Maritime) Session,  
Geneva, 2006  
Conférence internationale du Travail – 94<sup>e</sup> session (maritime),  
Genève, 2006  
Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo – 94.<sup>a</sup> reunión (marítima),  
Ginebra, 2006

14



## ***Provisional Record*** ***Compte rendu provisoire*** ***Actas Provisionales***

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*Les interventions prononcées dans une autre langue que l'anglais, l'espagnol ou le français sont transcrites dans la langue choisie par le pays concerné aux fins de la correspondance officielle avec le BIT.*

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### **Sixième séance**

Mardi 21 février 2006, après-midi

*Présidence de M. Schindler*

*The sitting continues with delegates' statements.*

*La séance se poursuit avec les discours des délégués.*

*La sesión continúa con las intervenciones de los delegados.*

### **Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (cont.)**

### **Rapports du Président du Conseil d'administration et du Directeur général: Discussion (suite)**

### **Informe del Presidente del Consejo de Administración y Memoria del Director General: Discusión (cont.)**

Sr. GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ (*Gobierno, España*)

La delegación gubernamental española quiere, en primer lugar, agradecer a la presidencia del Consejo de Administración y a la Dirección General de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, las labores desarrolladas desde el Acuerdo de Ginebra de 2001,

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que han permitido que hoy estemos aquí para adoptar el nuevo Convenio refundido sobre el trabajo marítimo.

En un mundo cada vez más globalizado, el sector marítimo es la representación más genuina de todo lo bueno, y también de lo más negativo, que los procesos de globalización traen consigo. Si la era de la globalización se distingue por el crecimiento exponencial del comercio en su participación en la renta global; por el gran aumento de los flujos de capital extranjero; por la integración de los mercados financieros; por el aumento de los incentivos a la inversión y reducción de lo que se percibe, y digo de lo que se percibe como «rigideces» reguladoras y, finalmente, por una reorientación de la política fiscal, todas estas características se han venido dando desde hace ya tiempo en el mundo marítimo, que de este modo ha sido pionero, y han afectado gravemente a su estructura y, principalmente, han podido alterar los derechos de la gente de mar tan duramente conquistados.

Es nuestra opinión que contra el fenómeno de la globalización no se puede luchar, es un proceso que parece imparable y al que ningún Estado, de forma aislada, puede hacer frente. Pero sí estamos convencidos de que hay que reconducirlo o sobre el que se debe actuar para evitar los aspectos más negativos o los que puedan inducir a una reducción de la seguridad económica y, por ende, del trabajo decente, base de un mundo mejor.

Y en este sentido dos son los instrumentos con los que poder actuar en este proceso: los organismos internacionales y el tripartismo. Sólo en base a organismos supranacionales se puede hacer frente a unos complejos procesos mundiales que pueden desarbolar la clásica y muy limitada acción estatal. Sólo en base a una acción coordinada en instancias que superen la limitada capacidad de reacción estatal puede ponerse coto a las consecuencias negativas de la mundialización económica. Finalmente, solamente los organismos internacionales tienen las capacidades necesarias para reconducir un proceso que no tiene en sí mismo que ser negativo.

Y en este contexto tenemos la experiencia acumulada de casi un siglo de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo que, además, a esta experiencia añade el otro instrumento que vemos eficaz: el tripartismo, la comunicación e interrelación entre gobiernos, empleadores y trabajadores, que desde mi Gobierno, que ha hecho una apuesta clara por el diálogo social como instrumento de una política social más avanzada, se considera la manera más adecuada de llegar a acuerdos que incidan de forma eficaz, duradera y progresista en esa sociedad globalizada.

De esta forma, es nuestra convicción que el acuerdo que se adopte en esta Conferencia sobre el nuevo Convenio sobre el trabajo marítimo tiene en su germen esas características necesarias para incidir en la sociedad mundial al que va dirigido: el haber nacido en el seno de un organismo internacional tripartito, lo que unido a su propio contenido va a conseguir los frutos de eficacia, duración y avanzada política social que procuramos y que ansía el sector, como así lo ha demostrado en todas las sesiones y reuniones preparatorias, incluidos los esfuerzos realizados en estos últimos 15 días para conseguir llegar a un acuerdo aceptable por todas las partes interesadas, porque todas ellas forman, son, el sector marítimo.

No quiero terminar sin referirme a la propia estructura del Convenio que se debate, que es toda una innovación en los documentos surgidos de esta Organización, y que ha contribuido, posiblemente, a que el texto sometido a votación vaya a tener el apoyo absolutamente mayoritario de esta Conferencia y, esperamos, que sea el camino para llegar a nuevos acuerdos que la sociedad «global», y el sector marítimo inmerso en ella, nos va a ir demandando en el futuro, pues es mucho todavía lo que queda por hacer a favor de un trabajo decente en el mundo del mar y ahí mi Gobierno y, estamos seguros, nuestros armadores y marineros, impulsarán y/o apoyarán todas las medidas que en este sentido surjan en el seno de esta Organización.

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Finalizo con el deseo de que el proyecto se vea aprobado por esta Conferencia y prontamente ratificado por todos los Estados Miembros.

M<sup>me</sup> AMELINE (gouvernement, France)

Les travaux de cette Conférence et l'adoption de la convention qui en résultent marqueront l'histoire de l'OIT en constituant la première réponse globale et intégrée pour un secteur essentiel de l'économie mondialisée. Ceux qui ont partagé l'ambition de ce projet et la responsabilité de le mener à bien doivent être aujourd'hui remerciés pour le travail accompli. Ils ont fait progresser de manière significative l'action de l'OIT en consolidant les acquis de son action passée et en ouvrant la voie à un système normatif adapté à notre temps.

La France se réjouit de ce résultat qui rencontre trois éléments essentiels de son action internationale en matière de travail: l'affirmation de la primauté du droit, la capacité d'innovation du tripartisme, la pertinence du multilatéralisme. Ces trois orientations doivent toujours constituer la base d'une action qui a pour ambition de répondre aux enjeux et aux défis du monde contemporain.

Dans sa volonté de soutenir ce progrès social et humain, la France entend prolonger son action pour créer les conditions indispensables à une application réussie de cette convention. Ce travail commence dès aujourd'hui. Il doit d'abord permettre d'identifier l'ensemble des outils nécessaires pour la mise en œuvre de tous les volets de ce nouvel instrument. A cet effet, la mise en place d'un réseau de formation accessible à tous les acteurs concernés ne doit pas être retardée. Cette formation concerne autant les inspecteurs de l'Etat du port que ceux de l'Etat du pavillon, sans oublier les partenaires sociaux dont le rôle est déterminant pour la réussite de l'ensemble du dispositif. La France veillera particulièrement à ce que, grâce à la coopération technique, ce réseau permette l'accession du plus grand nombre de pays à des actions de formation efficace.

Il conviendra aussi de produire des guides de conduite simples pour anticiper l'effort à produire pour l'application du nouvel instrument dans toutes ses dimensions. Enfin, un système de veille sur les conditions de l'application de la convention devra permettre, comme cela est prévu dans son texte même, de conduire son adaptation au fil du temps. Toute cette action constitue une occasion unique de moderniser le droit social maritime; la France est d'ores et déjà engagée dans cette entreprise. Monsieur le Président, les travaux de cette Conférence ouvrent de nouvelles perspectives pour l'action de l'OIT. Nous souhaitons que ce succès soit mis au service d'un renforcement de la réflexion plus générale conduite de façon concomitante sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation. L'association du progrès humain et du développement économique est un axe majeur pour conduire cette action. C'est ce qu'illustrent de la manière la plus pertinente les travaux qui viennent d'être conduits. La méthode utilisée, les résultats obtenus ouvrent la voie à d'autres chantiers pour le développement du travail décent. Vous pouvez compter sur la France pour s'engager avec les moyens nécessaires dans la réussite de ces nouveaux rendez-vous.

Mr. OCA (Worker, Philippines)

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Filipino seafarers who man the world's merchant fleets throughout the oceans and seas of the globe, allow me to express our deep and sincere appreciation for the privilege of speaking before this distinguished assembly on this historic occasion when delegates of Member Governments, seafarers and shipowners are finally considering the adoption of the maritime labour Convention, 2006, which shall be a single and comprehensive seafarers' bill of rights.

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It has been a tremendous honour for me to have participated in this intensive tripartite consultation and negotiation over the last four years, beginning with the High-level Tripartite Working Group and culminating in this session of the Conference. As reported by the Director-General, we went through many difficult challenges, which had called for clear innovative thinking and creative solutions to enable us to go forward. At this session of the Conference, I believe we succeeded in overcoming those challenges by trying to build true tripartite consensus. This is evidenced by the precise, well-balanced and carefully crafted provisions of this Convention, which we hope will firmly establish seafarers' rights, while affording competent authorities reasonable flexibility in fully implementing them. Thus, at the designated time, I will register, on behalf of Filipino seafarers, our wholehearted support for the adoption of the proposed consolidated maritime labour Convention, as finalized at this session of the Conference.

Turning now to other aspects of the Director-General's Report, I am pleased to note that the Report also focused on the problem of attracting and retaining seafarers in the maritime sector. I share in the observation of the Director-General in his Report that "it is also important to promote employment and to help ensure that such professions as seafaring are viewed as attractive careers, in view of the essential role of shipping in world trade". The Director-General's Report sufficiently summed it up by stating that "the maritime sector knows it can no longer ignore that it is in competition with other sectors – others ways of life – for the best people".

In the Philippines, there is now emerging a disturbing declining trend in the number of enrolments for marine deck and engineering degree courses. Consequently, the number of graduates from maritime schools has also been decreasing on an annual basis over the last five years. Inquiring into the causes of this development, we learned that many students who started out in maritime degrees had later transferred to other degree and training courses because of the perception that there are better prospects for career advancement in other fields, such as nursing, caregiving and information technology, for which there is an equally high global demand. I think it is important for all stakeholders to counter this by developing and establishing a clear and progressive international maritime career path, which all seafarers can access equally, so that the global maritime sector will be able to continue to attract the best people for the world's merchant shipping. And certainly the ILO could play a considerable role in making this possible.

Finally, we also note that this issue is linked to the issue of seafarers' education, training and professional development, particularly the growing shortage of maritime officers, as mentioned in the Director-General's Report. More recently, it has been estimated by the International Shipping Federation that with these current trends, there will be a global shortage of around 27,000 merchant marine officers and engineers by the year 2015. Certainly, the Philippines, as a major seafaring nation, is in a position to help fill this growing gap in maritime professionals through the solid tripartite approach which the Philippine Government and social partners have already institutionalized. Philippine stakeholders are trying to address this situation through the proposed establishment of a computer-based "walk-in" system of professional licensing examinations for marine deck and engine officers. This should answer the perennial concern of many professionally unlicensed Filipino seafarers who do not have the opportunity to take the government examination, which is administered annually on a limited basis, but who are nevertheless competent and qualified to become maritime officers. This is also consistent with the Director-General's recommendation to strengthen and improve the continuing professional development of seafarers.

Mr. BAČIĆ (Government, Croatia)

Allow me, first of all, to express the appreciation of the Croatian Government for being able to participate in this, in many aspects, historical session of the Conference.

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Many important multilateral treaties have been developed under the auspices of the ILO so far, providing standards that enable better working and living conditions and protection of the social rights of seafarers.

However, the challenges of the twenty-first century demand a new approach. These challenges have been recognized by the International Labour Organization and are reflected in the Report of the Director-General.

Maritime transport, which covers almost 90 per cent of the total world transportation of goods, is global in essence. Global industry requires global “rules of the game”. Standards which, as has been stated, are globally applicable, easy to understand and, as much as possible, uniformly enforced. At the same time, a decent working environment, decent living conditions on board ships and the appropriate health and social protection of seafarers are not only vital preconditions for safety at sea, but are also vital preconditions for the future of the seafarers’ profession. An educated and motivated crew is the key factor of quality shipping in the twenty-first century.

For the realization of the quality shipping concept, the close and continued cooperation of the ILO and IMO is crucial and very important in encouraging its future development.

When, in 2005, we developed a Croatian maritime strategy, we made a commitment, among other things, to achieve the following goals relating to seafarers: to maintain the highest standards of education, training and certification of seafarers; to apply the highest applicable standards of safety at work, as well as the highest applicable living and working conditions on Croatian flag vessels; to apply an equal insurance and pensions system to all seafarers engaged international trade, irrespective of the flag of their ship of engagement; and to promote the seafarers’ profession.

These goals should be attained by the implementation of the set of measures defined in the strategy. For its success, the active participation of the social partners is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we have an interest in seeing that both a shipowners’ association and a seafarers’ trade union participate in the legislative process and in defining other matters relevant to the shipping industry and seafarers. This cooperation has so far been fruitful and constructive.

One of the important measures derived from the strategy is the ratification and implementation of ILO instruments. In that context, in 2005 we ratified the Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers Convention, 1996 (No. 179). On that basis, a new regulatory framework relating to recruitment and placement agencies will be developed. Croatia has around 35,000 seafarers, almost 85 per cent of which are sailing on board foreign-flag ships and are employed by different agencies. Therefore, through the implementation of this Convention we are defining terms and conditions, as well as monitoring and controlling all services involved in the recruitment process.

For the sake of our own flag State performance, but also as a maritime labour-supplying country, the Croatian Government pays particular attention to maritime education, training and certification. The continuous development of education standards is one of our major tasks.

Recently developed studies have shown that the decline in interest in the seafaring profession is significant. Therefore, apart from promoting other activities, the Croatian Government has adopted a programme through which scholarships for education in maritime schools will be subsidized. In addition, we have agreed to allocate subventions to co-finance the costs associated with carrying out the apprenticeships for these services.

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Consultation with other social partners and other responsible ministries has been initiated with a view to ratifying Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185). This Convention is crucial for the improvement of maritime security, but also for facilitating shipping activities by avoiding unnecessary delays for ships and for the protection of seafarers' rights in respect of access to shore leave and transit. In that context, in principle we look positively towards possible ratification. We believe that the establishment of technical cooperation programmes would further encourage States to become parties to this instrument.

It has been proven on many occasions that only carefully defined and balanced standards developed through lengthy consultations with all those involved will ensure broad acceptance. This is equally so in the implementation process, where the dialogue with the social partners is a key element.

The Convention before us presents a balanced, user-friendly, global set of standards which we believe will significantly contribute to the well-being of seafarers. The certification of ships in accordance with ILO standards is an important step forward in the elimination of unfair competition and substandard shipping, and in the promotion of quality shipping. We therefore endorse the adoption of this consolidated Convention, which is the result of hours and hours of devoted work on the part of the social partners and government representatives, with the competent and professional assistance of the International Labour Office. The spirit of cooperation in which this Convention has been prepared for adoption leaves us with optimism for its timely entry into force.

Sr. AZKUE (trabajador, España)

Nos sentimos en la obligación, como ciudadanos españoles, de pedir disculpas desde esta tribuna al capital griego Apostolus Mangouras, capitán del buque Prestige, hundido en nuestras costas, disculpas por el maltrato al que fue sometido tras el naufragio, por parte de las autoridades españolas.

Su detención, su encarcelamiento, la petición de nueve años de cárcel para el capitán, no son más que un ejemplo de la criminalización, a la que se refiere la Memoria del Director General, en este caso por un gobierno que llevó este hecho a límites insospechados.

Exponemos en esta asamblea la idea de cómo aplicar en el sector marítimo la «Estrategia global de prevención de la salud y de la seguridad en el trabajo», con factores que contiene el informe.

¿Dónde están nuestros gobiernos, qué hacen los mismos para que realmente se incorporen jóvenes de ambos sexos en nuestras flotas? ¿Piensan de verdad que la pérdida de los buenos marinos de la Unión Europea no afecta más que al trabajo a bordo?

Los servicios básicos de la administración marítima, con inspecciones de los buques que arriban a nuestros puertos, las sociedades estatales de seguridad marítima y salvamento, el control de la seguridad marítima, el control de tráfico en la salvaguarda de la navegación y en la lucha contra la contaminación, la aplicación estricta de las normas que se van aprobando en la OMI, son quehaceres de los Estados que mermarán si los países de amplia tradición marítima dejan de tener marinos formados.

Y los servicios que prestan nuestros Estados son básicos en lo que nosotros entendemos como la estrategia global de prevención de la seguridad y la salud. Hemos trabajado sobre la seguridad y la salud a bordo, y lo señalamos, pero a nadie se le escapa que a diferencia de las soluciones que la propia OIT indica para las empresas en tierra,

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asignando un papel esencial a la legislación nacional, los buques son centros de trabajo que no saben de banderas, salvo en el uso de la «conveniencia económica» de las mismas.

Por ello, afirmamos que no existirá una estrategia global aplicable en el sector que no se base en el desarrollo de medidas de la OIT y de la OMI y de los gobiernos en tierra para encarar lo primordial de la seguridad: la vida de los trabajadores.

Pensarán que no debemos confundir la labor de la OMI y de la OIT, pero la referencia a la necesaria cooperación que se recoge en la Memoria del Director General debe enriquecerse con una participación directa de las organizaciones sindicales en las delegaciones gubernamentales de la Organización Marítima Internacional y/o en las deliberaciones previas a las reuniones.

Comenzábamos la Conferencia Marítima con un minuto de silencio por las víctimas del Al Salam Boccacio 98. A nosotros no nos valen los minutos de silencio que no conlleven compromisos de trabajo, esfuerzos e inversiones para que estos naufragios no vuelvan a suceder.

Nuestro compromiso con las víctimas se refleja en una resolución en la que instamos a los países desarrollados a volcarse para que todos dispongan de medios de búsqueda y salvamento, compartiendo la tecnología y los conocimientos técnicos, tanto en tierra como en los buques.

Todas las tragedias en la mar han conllevado exigencias de seguridad marítima y compromisos de los gobiernos. Hemos dado máquina avante naufragio tras naufragio. Que la lejanía de las víctimas no nos haga olvidar nuestras obligaciones.

El Convenio limita al título lo que decimos sobre siniestros marítimos, y es preciso avanzar en la OIT en una estrategia global de prevención y salud de los marinos a bordo y en tierra, defendiendo la vida de los tripulantes y de los usuarios de la flota, trabajando conjuntamente con la OMI y con los gobiernos, y formando buenos marinos, con buenos convenios y en buenos buques. Todo esto hasta lograr un STOP a la muerte en la mar.

Queremos por último felicitarles por los trabajos realizados estos últimos años, que culminarán, como no puede ser de otra forma, con la adopción en esta Conferencia del Convenio (refundido) sobre el trabajo marítimo, 2006. Nos encontramos hoy ante un Convenio único para un sector globalizado que debe dar ejemplo a otros sectores en este mundo globalizado, y el próximo debe ser el de la pesca, para nuestros hermanos en la mar.

Creemos de verdad que los marinos se merecen este Convenio marítimo. Ahora toca a los gobiernos mover ficha. ¡Ratifiquenlo, hagan posible un trabajo en mejores y más seguras condiciones para la gente de mar!. ¡Dignifiquen su trabajo!. ¡Dignifiquen en el mundo la figura de nuestros marinos!.

Sr. CASTRO (trabajador, Argentina)

A menudo cuando se producen incidentes marítimos relacionados con la contaminación del medio ambiente, los marinos se hallan en situaciones de particular vulnerabilidad, en gran parte debido a la superposición de jurisdicciones de los Estados de la bandera, del puerto, del costero y hasta de la nacionalidad, lo que los puede colocar frente a leyes, procedimientos legales e inclusive idiomas que muchas veces no entienden. Como dramática contrapartida cada vez son más los armadores, operadores y charteadores que se valen de cualquier medio a su alcance para limitar en todo lo posible su exposición a responsabilidades legales y financieras.

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La opinión pública hace sentir cada vez más su peso, e incidentes como los del *Erika* y el *Prestige* y el desastre del 11 de septiembre han extremado las presiones sobre la industria naviera. Recientemente, algunos países han adoptado políticas sumamente agresivas para la persecución de posibles infractores, implementando programas que incentivan las denuncias y penalizando severamente a empresas y tripulaciones.

Con frecuencia, el capitán de un buque involucrado en un incidente es perseguido casi automáticamente, y los marinos son fácilmente utilizados como chivos expiatorios. La vida en el mar y, sobre todo, la profesión de capitán, tienden a tornarse muy poco atractivas y, sin duda, la creciente criminalización agravará la escasez de marinos, especialmente la de oficiales bien entrenados, ya que será difícil para los jóvenes capacitados adoptar la decisión de ingresar a una industria en la que los deberes y responsabilidades aumentan desproporcionadamente y les podrían llevar a ser penados criminalmente por actos sobre cuya comisión no han tenido incidencia directa.

En los casos del *Tasman Spirit* y del *Prestige* resulta muy difícil aceptar que las detenciones pudieran obedecer a presuntas responsabilidades criminales y no a una solapada intención de obtener mayores compensaciones de las compañías de seguros o a la necesidad de encubrir cuestionables acciones de las autoridades.

Creemos firmemente que varios Estados se han excedido o desconocen las previsiones del Convenio MARPOL y de la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Derecho del Mar, especialmente en lo que respecta a su artículo 230 que establece que estos hechos sólo podrían motivar sanciones de tipo pecuniario, con la única salvedad de los actos intencionales.

Cuando se debate la criminalización es imprescindible discernir entre las detenciones de aquellos que efectivamente han quebrantado la ley, y las de quienes no han hecho otra cosa que seguir los dictados de sus deberes profesionales y que, en caso de probarse errores de juicio, no deberían ser pasibles de otras sanciones que las que surjan exclusivamente de los ámbitos administrativo y/o profesional.

Los numerosos incidentes relacionados con la polución que injusta y arbitrariamente tuvieron como víctimas a marinos, han llevado a la OMI y a la OIT a reconocer la necesidad de proporcionarles una protección especial, por lo que han creado un Grupo de Trabajo mixto especial de expertos sobre el trabajo justo a los marinos en caso de accidente marítimo, que dentro de tres semanas celebrará su segunda reunión.

El concepto de trato justo debería cubrir todos los escenarios posibles, incluyendo la contaminación del medio ambiente, la seguridad marítima, la seguridad de la navegación, los delitos contra personas en alta mar tales como robos, asaltos o asesinatos, y los tráficos ilegales de armas, estupefacientes o personas.

Es imperioso contar cuanto antes con directrices que atiendan a la realidad cotidiana de los marinos y garanticen que éstos puedan gozar efectivamente de sus derechos y libertades individuales, y que tengan en debida cuenta la polución accidental y todas aquellas situaciones en que los marinos sean detenidos o impedidos de dejar un país extranjero aun sin que existan cargos en su contra.

Y para los casos en que resulten acusados de haber cometido un acto ilícito intencional, se deben adoptar medidas que, en correspondencia con la Carta Internacional de Derechos Humanos, aseguren que, en la práctica, sus derechos procesales no sean conculcados.

Tanto los gobiernos como los actores de la industria deberían extremar sus esfuerzos para asegurar que, en el futuro, todos los marinos cuenten, entre otras cosas, con las



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siguientes garantías: protección contra detenciones arbitrarias y sin cargos; tratamiento humanitario antes y durante todos los períodos de detención; derecho, en caso de detención, a ser plena y puntualmente informados de los cargos que existan en su contra; derechos a asesoramiento y representaciones legales adecuados; derecho a un proceso legal justo y sin demoras injustificadas; derecho a no declarar; no excedencia de los marcos establecidos por la Convención sobre el derecho del mar y el Convenio MARPOL, y derecho a una compensación cuando la detención resulte ilegal.

La gente de mar es protagonista insustituible de la actividad naviera. Bregar por el desarrollo de su trabajo en condiciones decentes, dignas y justas no debe ser sólo una reivindicación sectorial, sino una tarea que deberían encarar todos aquellos que reconocen la necesidad de incrementar la legitimidad de una actividad que, si bien es eminentemente comercial, no está desprovista de notorias implicancias sociales.

#### M. BOURBIA (gouvernement, Algérie)

Il importe de souligner l'importance et la pertinence du sujet de ce débat général. La délégation algérienne vous renouvelle, à vous Monsieur le Président, aux vice-présidents et aux membres du Bureau, ses vives félicitations.

Elle est satisfaite du choix porté sur votre personne par l'ensemble des délégations tripartites ici présentes pour présider aux destinées de cette session. Il plaît à notre délégation de relever que ce choix n'est pas fortuit. Il puise ses racines dans les qualités remarquables dont vous avez fait montre à la faveur de la conduite des travaux des Conférences précédentes. Le Groupe de travail de haut niveau de la Conférence technique maritime préparatoire ont permis de faire progresser le processus d'élaboration et de concertation autour du projet de convention du travail maritime consolidée.

Il est incontestable qu'un travail gigantesque et de haute qualité a été réalisé depuis 2001. C'est à cette date que le coup d'envoi a été donné pour une refonte des instruments internationaux régissant le secteur maritime.

Parvenir à réunir en un seul instrument les dispositions de plus de 60 conventions et recommandations dont l'élaboration et l'adoption se sont étalées sur près d'un siècle, soit quatre-vingt-cinq ans, relève de la gageure. Cette convention, en elle-même, est un véritable défi au regard de la complexité de l'œuvre et de la diversité juridique, économique, sociale et institutionnelle des pays dans lesquels cet instrument est appelé à s'appliquer.

Il est le fruit d'un très long et laborieux processus, qui a associé au sein de l'Organisation internationale du Travail les Etats Membres et les partenaires sociaux, armateurs et gens de mer dans un dialogue social exemplaire. L'appui des experts du BIT a été très significatif et irremplaçable.

Le projet de convention sur le travail maritime autour duquel nous sommes réunis aujourd'hui représente pour nous tous un instrument majeur. La portée qu'il revêt et son universalité engendreront des retombées positives pour une protection efficace des gens de mer.

Les rapports présentés par le Directeur général du Bureau international du Travail et par le Président du Conseil d'administration du BIT sont d'une qualité exceptionnelle. Ils sont pertinents dans leur contenu et dans l'analyse qu'ils font de la situation du secteur maritime.

Ces rapports nous ont permis de mieux nous imprégner du dossier et de la nécessité de nous pencher prioritairement sur les conditions de travail dans ce secteur vital de

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l'économie mondiale. L'actualisation des normes internationales du travail permet l'adaptation à l'évolution du monde vers la mondialisation.

Ce processus engagé par l'OIT constituera pour l'avenir un de ses domaines de prédilection. Nous nous réjouissons des actions entreprises par notre Organisation en faveur de la promotion du travail décent qui dépasse le simple fait d'offrir un emploi. Le travail décent s'inscrit dans une stratégie globale favorisant l'épanouissement et l'accès au bien-être des travailleurs.

L'Algérie, faisant sienne cette préoccupation, s'est engagée dans une politique de développement économique et social à même de garantir à sa population un travail décent.

A ce titre, la période 2000-2005 a été caractérisée par une reprise de la croissance induite par les effets des différents programmes d'équipement et d'investissement.

Il y a quelques mois, le Président de la République, Son Excellence Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a été l'invité d'honneur de la 93<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence internationale du Travail. Dans cette prestigieuse enceinte, il a présenté «l'expérience algérienne en matière de démocratisation et d'emploi, notamment des jeunes dans le contexte des réformes structurelles visant à généraliser ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler l'économie du marché».

En effet, de 2,2 pour cent en 2000, le taux de croissance de l'économie nationale a culminé à 6,9 pour cent en 2003, pour se stabiliser autour de 5 pour cent pour les années 2004-05.

Cette progression de la croissance s'est traduite par une diminution du taux de chômage qui a chuté de 29,5 pour cent de la population active en 2000 à 15,3 pour cent en 2005.

Ce projet de convention, à l'adoption duquel notre Conférence doit s'acheminer vraisemblablement, est déterminant à bien des égards. Il contribuera notamment à l'amélioration des conditions d'emploi et de travail des gens de mer. Désormais, ceux-ci bénéficieront d'une protection sociale qui leur permettra d'exercer leur difficile métier dans des conditions d'équité, de sécurité et de dignité, auxquelles ils ont droit.

La convention sera aussi déterminante par les clarifications qu'elle apporte en termes de droits, de devoirs et de délimitation des responsabilités de chacun.

Des femmes et des hommes sont venus, pour la plupart d'entre eux, de pays lointains. Ils apportent ainsi leur enthousiasme, leur technicité et leur expérience au service de cette grande cause qu'est la fixation des normes de travail dans le secteur maritime. Le fruit de leur labeur sera, nous l'espérons, un instrument qui prendra en compte les préoccupations, les inquiétudes et les espoirs de toutes les délégations.

A cet égard, notre délégation se fait un agréable devoir de les saluer très chaleureusement et de leur témoigner sa sympathie.

La délégation algérienne voudrait faire part de ses remerciements aux membres de la Commission paritaire maritime, aux membres du Conseil d'administration, aux cadres du BIT. Ils n'ont cessé de ménager des efforts pour que prenne forme ce projet d'instrument. Vous avez largement contribué à sa finalisation. Nous espérons avoir le privilège de l'adopter dans les prochains jours.

Nous remercions les partenaires sociaux qui ont su défendre avec tact leur point de vue et leurs positions. Le climat a été d'une totale convivialité et l'ambiance empreinte de confiance et de franchise.

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La délégation algérienne vous remercie pour votre aimable attention.

Mr. CONSTANTINIDES (Government, Cyprus)

The consolidation and updating of the ILO maritime instruments has been a Herculean task. It is also a landmark development of which every one of us should be proud.

To justify the above, I will start by taking you back two and a half thousand years, to a time of Athenian naval supremacy in the fifth century B.C. That was the time when a vastly outnumbered fleet of tiny ships routed the enemy fleet at the battle of Salamis. Had history gone the other way, world victory would have been very different.

The difference in the two opposing fleets was in the quality of the men on board. The Athenian ships were powered by free citizens, free oarsmen, eligible to participate fully in the functions of the State; they were even eligible to be elected to the highest office of State, that of President of the Supreme Court. The huge enemy vessels, by contrast, were manned by mercenaries and slaves.

Today, we live in a highly technology-oriented world where technological advancement, in every aspect of our lives and our activities, occurs at a fast pace. One might reasonably think that with the brilliant pieces of equipment and aids to navigation that are abundantly available today, maritime transport should be considered a straightforward, safe and environmentally friendly operation in all respects. We all know, however, that in real life this is not so. The decisive factor between success and failure of modern technology is overwhelmingly the human factor. Human beings do not behave like machines, however sophisticated. They think, they have senses and emotions, they have needs – physical, intellectual, spiritual – and every individual is different from the rest. Thus, we see bulk carriers breaking up, ending their lives in disgrace, even while loading their cargoes in port; we see ships tragically losing their battles with the unpredictable whims of Poseidon because their designers have optimized their cost rather than their strength, or because surveying standards were compromised; we witness the proliferation of collisions despite the abundance of land-based, satellite and ship-borne aids to navigation.

It has been persistently claimed that the vast majority of marine casualties and accidents are attributable to the human element: Cyprus has embraced the thesis that you may have a safe ship only if you have a happy crew. Responsible owners also realize that they may expect maximization of their profits only if the seafarers employed by them feel that they are fairly treated, that their work is recognized and that they are provided with incentives to further improve their performance.

When ships consisted of wood, oars and sails, the decisive factors in winning the battle with the sea were dedication, determination, seamanship, discipline and enthusiasm. When one combines these attributes with competent leaders, the outcome is a certain recipe for success.

All the above gives us a crystal-clear message. We may expect to navigate safer seas only if we return to traditional values: seamanship, better training of seafarers, and a substantial improvement in their living, working and social conditions, so that confidence and pride in their professions can be restored. Cyprus firmly believes that the new Convention will indeed play an instrumental role in advancing and achieving these goals.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has built up a relationship of cooperation and constructive dialogue with the national shipowners' associations and the labour unions, and has made great strides in advancing labour issues by linking serious labour

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breaches with the IMO's International Safety Management (ISM) Code. In this respect we are particularly pleased to see that our interpretation of the ISM Code has also been recognized by the Conference.

My Government, having appreciated fully the catalytic potential of the new Convention to bring about a substantial improvement in the living and working conditions of seafarers, has committed itself to contributing generously to the project on decent work for decent pay of the ILO Sectoral Activities Programme. Within the framework of that programme, the first regional seminar on the better understanding and implementation of the new Convention will be held in Cyprus.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the leadership of the International Labour Organization, as well as the President and the Officers of the Conference, for their tremendous work and their tireless efforts which have resulted in this remarkable achievement – the conclusion of the consolidated and updated Convention. Congratulations are also due to the delegates and the leadership of the social partners whose willingness and perseverance have led to this important goal.

**Sr. CANZIANI (trabajador, Uruguay)**

Se me hace necesario comenzar este breve discurso refiriéndome a que aún hoy, transcurridos treinta años, continúa desaparecido el compañero marítimo Julio Correa, del Sindicato de Trabajadores del Mar, por causa del terrorismo de Estado que sufrimos por aquellos años. Hoy vemos que con este nuevo Gobierno se abre una puerta hacia el conocimiento de la verdad sobre el paradero de los cientos de detenidos desaparecidos en los años de la pasada dictadura.

Hecho este homenaje y reclamo por el compañero marítimo, quisiera referirme a la Memoria del señor Director General, sobre el sector marítimo. Es de destacar que el informe, siendo absolutamente global, retrata perfectamente la situación de nuestra industria marítima, ya que, como lo refleja muy bien la Memoria, hemos perdido nuestros buques y hoy tenemos una venta de servicios por parte de nuestros marinos que están navegando en buques de todo el mundo y fundamentalmente en buques de bandera de conveniencia. Es por esto muy importante para nosotros, como país, la aprobación de este Convenio refundido en esta reunión de la Conferencia, para que luego nuestro país comience la verdadera lucha por su ratificación con ley nacional. Este Convenio permitirá a nuestro Estado ponerse a la par del resto de los países, ya que podrá competir y controlar en igualdad de condiciones el efectivo cumplimiento de este Convenio en todos los buques que pasan por nuestros puertos.

Nuestro país ha ratificado los convenios internacionales SOLAS, MARPOL y STCW 78-95, y el Código PBIP. Por ello es esperable que apruebe el Convenio refundido. Como sucede en casi todos los países del mundo, en el nuestro también hay acciones antisindicales, y las mismas las denunciaremos en la OIT a través de nuestra Central de Trabajadores PIT-CNT, pero no puedo dejar de mencionar a la empresa Buque Bus, que discrimina a los trabajadores por su afiliación sindical y no integra la Cámara de la Marina Mercante uruguaya.

Nos despedimos de todos con la esperanza de una rápida ratificación del Convenio refundido a nivel mundial y nos comprometemos a trabajar por ello en nuestro propio país.

**Mr. ZIA-UR-REHMAN (Government, Pakistan)**

We have all worked hard for the last two weeks under the able guidance of Mr. Bruce Carlton. As Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Carlton has steered our discussion to a successful conclusion on a consolidated maritime labour Convention. I

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would like to thank Ms. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the International Labour Standards Department, for her work over the last five years in making this instrument a reality.

Pakistan appreciates the ILO's role in the formulation and adoption of this new international maritime instrument, the consolidated maritime labour Convention. The Convention firmly sets out rights and allows flexibility in implementing them.

Some have called this landmark instrument a seafarers' Bill of Rights that is globally applicable, easily understandable and uniformly enforceable. We sincerely hope that, unlike many ILO maritime legal instruments, this consolidated instrument will be widely ratified and implemented.

Pakistan has a large number of seafarers who are mainly employed on foreign flag vessels and, as a seafarer-supplying nation, we have been keenly interested in the successful adoption by consensus of the international instrument. We hope that the rights included in the Convention will be respected by all.

We appreciate the recognition by the Director-General, in paragraph 42 of his Report, of the enormous difficulties faced by seafarers and shipowners from certain countries, and the subsequent loss of jobs and businesses.

Being a seafarer-supplying country, Pakistan would like to put on record the massive difficulties being faced by its seafarers in joining or leaving their ships owing to the uncalled for and extremely restrictive measures adopted by various countries on issuing visas and granting shore leave, particularly in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy. There is a global shortage of quality officers to man modern ships. These restrictive measures place a serious burden on the owners and seafarers, as well as on the safety of ships, thus making seafaring an unattractive profession in our part of the world.

Security issues are of utmost concern to us. In Pakistan, we have taken serious measures to address such concerns. However, if onerous procedures and unnecessary restrictions are allowed to continue, there will obviously be negative effects on the rights of seafarers. This is an area which the ILO must address with the greatest seriousness.

Pakistan is among the first countries to issue seafarers' identity documents (SIDs), in accordance with the ILO Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), to enhance the security and safety of our seafarers and ships. We have already initiated work for early ratification of this Convention. The ILO has recognized and appreciated our work regarding SIDs.

We are also working hard to bring about changes in our retraining perspective as the marine academy under the control of this Ministry is being upgraded.

In addition to two tamper-free identities, every Pakistani seafarer also carries a computerized and machine-readable national identity card (NIC) and passport. Our SIDs, NICs and passports are linked to a secure national database. These measures should go a long way towards ensuring the authenticity of our seafarers' documents.

Pakistan fully appreciates and recognizes the seafarers' demand for decent, safe and secure working and living conditions.

Recognizing its obligation under the new consolidated Convention, Pakistan is taking steps to create a separate Ministry of Ports and Shipping. And I would use this platform to state that the new Convention should develop foolproof mechanisms to ensure implementation of its provisions.

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Efforts should also be made to ensure that the major partners in the shipping sector be involved to ensure smooth implementation of the provisions of the new Convention across the world.

The Convention should also provide some mechanism to provide relief to those countries which are signatories to the Convention, vis-à-vis those countries which have not ratified it.

I would like to refer to paragraphs 122-125 of the Director-General's Report, which call for fair treatment of seafarers with reference to some environmental disasters arising from major oil spills. Pakistan acknowledges the ILO and IMO stance on the criminalization of seafarers.

When the crew of the *Tasman Spirit* was involved in the biggest environmental disaster in the history of Pakistan, its crew was lodged in a comfortable environment until the finalization of legal proceedings. The crew were also allowed to live with their families and repatriated honourably. The environment disaster resulted in widespread damage to our ecology and loss of many jobs of people working on the beachfront. We sincerely hope the international community will exercise its influence to get us the compensation for those affected.

We are confident that under your leadership this meeting will be successful in achieving the purpose for which we have gathered here.

Mr. SPRANGERS (Employer, Sweden)

Having read through the Director-General's Report in general, the parts on seafarers' education, training and professional development in particular, I would like to offer the following observations on these issues.

Under the tripartite consensus, the issue of developing standards for training of certain ratings, namely able seafarers (ABs), has been transferred to the IMO for further consideration and development. This is a proper and functional development of the work within the ILO, giving this august body more time to focus on social issues and allow the IMO to develop the more operational aspects of seafaring.

With shipping being one of the most globalized industries there are, and this has been so since man first set sail, training and education is a global issue for most parties involved in shipping.

The shipping industry, together with the maritime institutions, trains a substantial number of seafarers every year, ranging from basic safety training to quite advanced dynamic positioning training for offshore vessels and rigs. The industry prides itself in quickly picking up the needs expressed by various operators and subsequently converting these wishes into practical training.

As shown by the last update of the ISF/BIMCO Manpower Survey, officers continue to be a sought after labour force, specifically the ones with special skills or experience whilst there is still a surplus of ratings. In some countries, procedures have been adopted to provide a fast-track training opportunity for experienced ratings, and maybe this could be one of the ways forward to achieve a balance in the demand and supply of seafarers.

The industry definitely wishes to retain experienced ratings and officers at sea, and one way of doing that is obviously by making the industry as attractive a workplace as possible.

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Some quite ambitious recruitment projects are under way in several of the member States represented here today.

Obviously, training positions for ratings as well as officers must be made available in order to ensure that the next generation of seafarers enters the industry well prepared and properly trained both at the academies and by their future colleagues who today serve on board our vessels.

As the acting Chairman of the ISF Manning and Training Committee, a task I perform with pride, I can assure you that the shipping industry today is well aware of the effort required to ensure that we can provide our vessels with a new generation of skilled and well trained seafarers in the years to come.

With the rapid development of IT and communication standards, the time when every ship has access to the Internet and all the functions that follow with this, training through distance learning using CBTs and direct links to the training academies, is not far away. This system is already being pursued in quite a few countries around the world.

Not only does this mean that new skills can more readily be acquired by the individual, but it also provides the opportunity for advanced computer-based simulator training whilst on board ship. This of course gives the seafarer an excellent opportunity to train in advanced cargo-handling calculations, operative ship-handling or technical problem solving, without any element of risk involved.

The demand on seafarers when it comes to technical and operational skills, as well as management skills for the senior officers, is constantly rising. This means that the modern seafarer must be prepared to spend more of his or her leave period doing advanced training or just simply mandatory repeater courses – there is a fine balance here between professional development and the well earned leave period for rest and recuperation.

In conclusion, I would say that the present system, where ILO deals with the more social side of seafaring and IMO with the training side of it, constitutes a good balance. I am sure that the future deliberations within the ILO/IMO Joint Committee on Training will carry on with that very effective division of duties to the benefit of all the involved parties.

Obviously, all of us want the ships on our oceans to be well built and professionally handled and maintained by well-trained and well-motivated crews.

Mr. KOLTSIDOPOULOS (Employer, Greece)

I would like to thank the Director-General of the International Labour Office for the initiative to present us with the Report on the activities of the Organization in the maritime sector and on recent international developments affecting its operations. It is an excellent piece of collective work which provides us all with “food for thought” as well as with useful updated information to help realize the needs of this industry in the new century.

I take the opportunity of this Report to reiterate our concerns regarding the tendency of criminalization of our seafarers nowadays, as well as the need to safeguard their fair treatment in view of the growing use of criminal proceedings against them following maritime accidents. First of all, no one should ignore the social, economic, political and strategic importance of shipping, which efficiently and effectively serves more than 90 per cent of world trade. In this context, we have to defend and support the indispensable servants of this industry, i.e. the seafarers. People on board and ashore as bearers of specialized maritime know-how remain the industry’s most valuable asset. The shipping industry of the twenty-first century needs seafarers of the highest quality, well motivated and with high morale. Unfortunately, criminal sanctions for accidental pollution, such as

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those imposed by the recent legislation in Europe and in other parts of the world will have a negative impact on the morale of seafarers, who may fear for their future when they see their colleagues branded as criminals following an accident.

“Master mariners” have been turned into “master criminals”. None has forgotten the prolonged imprisonment without trial and the exorbitant bail settlement required for the Prestige’s Captain, Mr. Mangouras. This treatment was an indictment of basic human rights and is tarnishing the image of the seafaring profession at a time when the shipping industry is lacking qualified seafarers; for this reason it is deploying global campaigns to attract new recruits to the seamen’s profession. In other words, they will discourage the high-calibre people that shipping really needs from choosing a seafaring career. Moreover, criminalization will discourage seafarers from cooperating fully and openly with casualty inquiries and accident investigations. Therefore, there is an urgent need to move away from the current syndrome of confrontation and blame.

Measures which indiscriminately penalize the whole seafaring community – the good along with the rogue – will result in well-qualified and committed seamen being discouraged from continuing their shipping careers. What the industry really needs is able, adequately trained and motivated seafarers, aware of, and willing to assume, their responsibilities. Shipping needs a climate of understanding, cooperation and respect for the seafarers, given the arduousness and complexity of their work. And in this environment, we should cooperate to display the maximum care for and respect of the marine environment.

It is noteworthy that the entire shipping community – shipowners, seamen’s organizations, port organizations, oil interests, States with maritime tradition – was united in an unprecedented coalition to oppose the adoption of a piece of regional legislation by the European Commission, i.e. the directive on criminal sanctions, which goes beyond international conventions by providing sanctions for accidental pollution incidents.

Concluding this short intervention, I would like to welcome, on behalf of the shipowning community, the resolution recently adopted by the ILO Governing Body, as well as by the IMO Assembly, regarding the fair treatment of seafarers. In particular, we really welcome the recommendations of this resolution to all States:

- to respect the basic human rights of seafarers involved in maritime accidents;
- to investigate maritime accidents expeditiously to avoid any unfair treatment of seafarers;
- to adopt procedures to allow the prompt repatriation or re-embarkation of seafarers following maritime accidents;
- to record instances of unfair treatment of seafarers in the event of maritime accidents.

Finally, we fully agree that the issue should be kept in the agenda of both Organizations for further assessment.

Sr. SALAZAR LÓPEZ (trabajador, México)

En nombre de la delegación de la gente de mar de México me permito manifestar lo siguiente:

La OIT decidió en 1919 que las cuestiones relativas a la gente de mar serían examinadas en reuniones marítimas especiales de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, las cuales han sido hasta hoy el ámbito de discusión y de diseño de la normatividad relativa



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al sector. Esta labor ha permitido la adopción de 39 convenios, 29 recomendaciones y un protocolo relativos a la gente de mar.

El caso de México es especial, ya que se trata de uno de los países con mayor número de convenios marítimos ratificados. Esto no es una casualidad si consideramos que se trata de un país marítimo por vocación y por naturaleza, con más de 11.000 kilómetros de litorales que lo hacen un país marítimo por excelencia. En la actualidad formamos parte de la lista blanca de la OMI, condición que nos permite mantenernos a la vanguardia en América Latina con el mayor número de formación de oficiales de la marina mercante. Lo anterior compromete a los actores tripartitos nacionales a participar en la redacción del Convenio que se ha presentado.

En el plano internacional, son diversas las razones que nos permiten afirmar la imperante necesidad de un instrumento internacional que proteja a 1.200.000 trabajadores del sector marítimo.

El Convenio refundido busca hacer frente a la desregulación laboral del sector, patente en el libre registro de embarcaciones, la búsqueda de paraísos fiscales, y la libre elección, contratación y despido de tripulaciones, así como en el incremento en un 80 por ciento de los accidentes de trabajo. Lo anterior ha redundado en el deterioro de las condiciones de trabajo y de la vida de los marinos, la reducción de las flotas de las naciones de tradición marítima en favor de los llamados registros abiertos o de conveniencia y, por si fuera poco, un incremento de los trastornos ambientales en los mares.

El proceso desregulatorio del sector brinda también la oportunidad para evaluar el papel real y potencial de los sindicatos marítimos frente al mismo. La mundialización del transporte marítimo parece haber tomado por sorpresa al conjunto de sindicatos nacidos en el contexto de las regulaciones estatales, de suerte que, ante la proliferación del libre abanderamiento y la consecuente reducción de las flotas nacionales, ante la liberación de los mercados de marinos subestándar y, finalmente, ante el crecimiento del intercambio de mercancías a escala mundial, las viejas estrategias sindicales de interlocución con navieros y gobiernos nacionales han quedado rebasadas.

Frente a este panorama, surge la valiosa participación de la OIT en crear condiciones de vida y trabajo dignas a bordo de embarcaciones, las cuales no han podido ser alcanzadas localmente. Por lo anterior, y especialmente si se desean alcanzar estos objetivos, la gente de mar de México hace un llamado a los gobiernos y a los sectores sociales para lograr la adopción y ratificación del Convenio marítimo refundido. Sólo de esta forma estaremos realmente avanzando hacia el mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida y de trabajo de quienes hacen posible el desarrollo internacional: los marinos del mundo.

En este contexto la delegación de los trabajadores de México hacemos un sincero reconocimiento de las labores realizadas por la representación gubernamental de México, que en los momentos más cruciales supo ser fiel a la tradición social de nuestro país, consagrada en la primera Constitución social del mundo.

Mr. LINDEMANN (Employer, Germany)

First, I would like to thank the Office for producing what I consider to be a balanced Director-General's Report. This exhaustive Report gives a good flavour of some of the challenges faced by our industry in a number of areas, including piracy and armed robbery, the criminalization of seafarers and labour issues.

I stand before you somewhat exhausted following two-and-a-half challenging weeks during which we have discussed the text of the proposed consolidated maritime labour

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Convention. For those people who have been in the system for as long as I have, this marks the end of a long process which followed the adoption of the Geneva Accord five years ago.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank colleagues in the Shipowners', Seafarers' and Government groups who have all worked tirelessly to turn this dream into a reality.

The new Convention should provide a clear codification of what is required by all parties, whether they are governments, shipowners or seafarers, to ensure good working practices within the maritime sector.

However, I must remind all parties that adoption of the Convention at the end of this week is not the end; it is just the beginning. Once adopted, we will need to work hard to ensure that it is not a book kept on shelves gathering dust, but that it becomes a tool which can be used to enhance working practices within the industry. For this reason, further work is required to ensure the development of appropriate port State control guidelines, and I can assure you that our team is ready to participate in tripartite discussions to make this a reality.

However, one must remember that there are also other challenges facing our industry which must be tackled and handled responsibly; these are mentioned in the Director-General's Report. They include piracy and armed robbery, the criminalization of seafarers and the fair treatment of seafarers following a maritime accident. I am grateful for the Office's past assistance in working with their counterparts in the IMO to ensure that these issues are properly debated and appropriate strategies adopted. We, the Shipowners' group, recognize the sensitive nature of these issues, particularly for governments, but believe it is essential that appropriate actions are taken in this regard.

We are well aware of the work being done to promote careers in the maritime sector and wish this work to progress, as we clearly need to ensure a future generation of quality seafarers. However, such work is clearly negatively impacted upon when incidences of piracy and unfair treatment of seafarers are mentioned in the press. We urge the Office to work closely with other United Nations agencies to ensure that diplomatic measures are taken to ensure that seafarers are fairly treated and can work in a secure environment without fear for their lives.

As part of the consolidated maritime labour Convention discussions, it has been agreed to transfer the responsibilities for training to the IMO, except the ships' cooks provision. This, I believe, makes a lot of sense, as it allows all technical training to be discussed at the standards of training and watch keeping forum. We, the Shipowners' group, believe that this also will free up the time of the ILO secretariat to start to take action concerning other matters proposed in the resolutions forwarded at this session of the Conference.

There are still many obstacles ahead if we are to meet the challenge of attracting more officers into the profession. We are going to have to be creative in our thinking as to how we can attract more women to the profession. Measures taken within the new Convention are one way in which we can start to achieve this objective. However, lots more work clearly needs to be done in this regard.

The growing emphasis on the importance of ensuring that the human element is taken into account in all major decisions is also covered by our resolutions. Here, we urge the Governing Body to convene a forum for exchanging information with the IMO to ensure clarity as to which issues are resolved in which forum, so that the organizations can work together on these important issues and not in divergent directions.

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We have already tried to ensure that the Joint Maritime Commission will be maintained as it is now written into the new consolidated Convention. However, the Shipowners' group cannot emphasize enough that we see this as a vitally important forum for our sector. The Joint Maritime Commission will continue to propose appropriate work that needs to be undertaken by this house for the benefit of our sector.

In summary, I am convinced that we are at the start of something good, yet challenging, for our industry, and we must all work together to ensure that the issues we face are handled responsibly together.

I look forward to continued active and constructive social dialogue in the coming years to ensure that we can all say that we are proud to be part of the maritime machinery and industry.

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## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Page

*Sixième séance:*

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion ( <i>cont.</i> ).....	1
Rapports du Président du Conseil d'administration et du Directeur général: Discussion ( <i>suite</i> ) .....	1
Informe del Presidente del Consejo de Administración y Memoria del Director General: Discusión ( <i>cont.</i> ) .....	1
<i>Orateurs:</i> M. González López, M <sup>me</sup> Ameline, N. Oca, M. Bačić, M. Azkue, M. Castro, M. Bourbia, M. Constantinides, M. Canziani, M. Zia-Ur-Rehman, M. Sprangers, M. Koltsidopoulos, M. Salazar López, M. Lindemann	