Resolutions Adopted by the 28th Session of the International Labour Conference

(Seattle, June 1946)
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Resolutions Adopted by
the International Labour Conference
at its 28th Session

I

Resolution concerning Incomplete Delegations
(Adopted on 20 June 1946)

Whereas it is incumbent upon each Member State, under paragraph 1 of Article 3 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, to be represented at the Conference by a complete delegation; and

Whereas the representation at the Conference of Member States by incomplete delegations tends in effect to destroy the equilibrium between the different groups, which is characteristic of the machinery of the Conference and is essential to its proper working,

The Twenty-eighth Session of the International Labour Conference, in accordance with a proposal made by its Credentials Committee, invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to undertake a study of the question of the representation of Member States at the Conference by incomplete delegations with a view to appropriate measures being taken to secure the representation at the Conference of Member States by complete delegations.

II

Resolution concerning Continuous Employment for Seafarers
(Adopted on 27 June 1946)

Whereas regularity and continuity of employment are of the utmost importance to all workers; and

Whereas seafarers have in the past suffered particularly from the lack of this essential guarantee; and

Whereas in time of war systems promoting regularity and continuity of employment for seafarers were organised and operated with notable success by a number of countries; and
Whereas the results of other systems furthering continuous employment for seafarers have demonstrated the desirability of extending to all seafarers the opportunity for regular and continuous employment; and

Whereas it is eminently desirable that systems should exist to provide seafarers with regularity and continuity of employment in time of peace,

The Conference

1. Strongly urges all States Members to consider the desirability of instituting, after consultation with the representative organisations of seafarers and with the shipowners or shipowners' organisations concerned, such systems, taking into account practices and arrangements normally in force in the respective States and in accordance with the following general principles:

(a) The general purpose should be to provide for the establishment and maintenance of national schemes for promoting regularity and continuity of employment of seafarers and in so doing to consider the possibility of providing for the payment of allowances to seafarers during intervals between periods of normal employment;

(b) Each national scheme should apply to seafarers who are nationals of or domiciled in the country in question and are ordinarily engaged in that country for service in seagoing ships, with such limited exceptions as regards men and ships as may be considered essential by the competent national authority;

(c) Seafarers and shipowners should undertake to collaborate fully in such a national scheme and to accept all the obligations compliance with which may be necessary for the proper working of the system;

(d) The competent authority should make such arrangements as may be necessary to co-ordinate the national scheme with any existing unemployment insurance system in the country.

2. Expresses the hope that the question of promoting regularity and continuity of employment for seafarers in accordance with the principles outlined above should at an early date be considered by a maritime session of the International Labour Conference with a view to the adoption of a Convention on the subject.

3. Invites all States Members to inform the International Labour Office of developments regarding the promotion of schemes referred to above.
Resolution concerning Seafarers' Organisations

(Adopted on 27 June 1946)

Whereas the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation lays down as a principle of special and urgent importance the adoption of which will confer lasting benefits upon the wage earners of the world "the right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers"; and

Whereas the Declaration of Philadelphia reaffirmed as one of the fundamental principles of the Organisation that "freedom of expression and association are essential to sustained progress" and recognised the solemn obligation of the Organisation to further among the nations of the world programmes which will achieve, among other objects, "the effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining, the co-operation of management and labour in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency, and the collaboration of workers and employers in the preparation and application of social and economic measures"; and

Whereas several of the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation concerning seafarers already either make it obligatory upon ratifying States to consult shipowners', officers' and seamen's organisations on the preparation of regulations and to associate them in the administration of a number of matters affecting the shipping industry, or recommend that this should be done; and

Whereas the experience of the countries in which the principle of mutual recognition of organisations of shipowners and seafarers and collaboration between them and, in appropriate cases, with governmental authorities concerned has been longest established and most effectively applied has demonstrated the value of the principle in promoting the efficiency of the shipping industry, avoiding unnecessary friction and enabling the industry to cope with its labour problems effectively and reasonably,

The Conference

Affirms the principle that shipowners and seafarers of all ranks and grades in all countries have a right to organise themselves in voluntary, self-governing associations, free from compulsion or improper influence from outside, and subject only to the observance of such formalities as may be required by national laws or regulations, which formalities should be consistent with the principle of freedom of association;
Emphasises the need for mutual recognition as between organisations of shipowners and seafarers and the value of collective bargaining between stable and representative organisations as a means of achieving satisfactory regulation of hours of work, wages, holidays and other conditions of employment;

Urges Governments to consult such stable and representative organisations on the drafting of all laws and regulations affecting their members and to collaborate with the organisations, so far as may be reasonable and practicable, in securing the effective application of such laws and regulations; and

Recognises that it is desirable that such organisations should, so far as may be reasonable and practicable, having regard to national practice, be associated with the organisation and administration of institutions (such as, for example, employment offices, social insurance systems, conciliation and arbitration machinery and training schemes) in which both shipowners and seafarers have a common concern.

IV

Resolution concerning the Composition of the Joint Maritime Commission
(Adopted on 27 June 1946)

Having regard to discussions at previous sessions of the Joint Maritime Commission, 1942 and 1945, when the opinion was expressed that the composition of the Commission should be on a tripartite basis, with retention of the bipartite structure where expedient; and

Having regard to the desirability of securing the participation of a larger number of countries in the Commission than at present,

The Conference requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to review the constitution of the Joint Maritime Commission and in the light of its own experience and of that gained in connection with other industrial committees to consider the desirability—

(a) of reconstituting the Commission on a tripartite basis while continuing to provide for bipartite discussions wherever suitable or desirable;

(b) of amending the Standing Orders of the Commission so as to permit the respective groups as wholes to appoint the substitutes who shall take the place of regular members unable to attend the proceedings of the Commission.

The Conference further requests the Governing Body of the
International Labour Office to increase the number of regular members of the Commission from nine to twelve for each group.

V

Resolution concerning Safety of Life at Sea

(Adopted on 29 June 1946)

Whereas the Joint Maritime Commission meeting in 1942 urged that the paramount consideration in all matters of safety should be the safety of life of the seamen, and that consideration of expense should not be allowed to prevent the adoption of the most effective measures of protection; and

Whereas the need of safety at sea is no less imperative in peace than in war; and

Whereas the Joint Maritime Commission at its session in 1945 welcomed a proposal that a Diplomatic Conference be convened for the purpose of revising the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea adopted in 1929, and in this connection appointed representatives of the Commission to attend such a Conference,

This Conference notes with pleasure the arrangements which are being made with a view to calling the International Diplomatic Conference on Safety of Life at Sea and requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to suggest the participation not only of shipowners' and seafarers' representatives in the national delegation, but also of the representatives from the Joint Maritime Commission in a consultative capacity.

VI

Resolution concerning Ratification of Conventions

(Adopted on 29 June 1946)

Whereas the International Labour Conference held in New York in 1941 unanimously adopted a Resolution stating that “a speedy and satisfactory regulation of the economic and social position of seamen is . . . imperative for the future development of the shipping industry” and authorising the Director of the International Labour Office “to consult all interested organisations, institutions and individuals in order that at the end of the war plans will be available for the immediate regulation of economic and social conditions in the mercantile marine”; and

Whereas the war is now over and the International Labour Office has faithfully carried out the decision of the 1941 Conference; and
Whereas the international character of shipping requires simultaneous action on the part of the Governments if the decisions of this Seattle Conference are to be speedily and universally implemented,

This Conference

Recognising the many sacrifices made by seafarers and the great devotion with which they performed their duties during the war;

Considering that the earliest possible ratification of the decisions of this Conference is the most eloquent tribute which can be paid to the seafarers and the most convincing proof of the sincerity of the pledges made during the war;

Draws the attention of the Members of the Organisation to the importance of prompt and simultaneous ratification of the Conventions adopted at this Conference, so that the provisions of the Conventions may be put into operation by all Members at a very early date;

Requests all delegates to this Conference to urge upon their respective Governments the necessity of taking the steps referred to in the preceding paragraph.

VII

Resolution concerning Seafarers’ Compensation Claims arising out of the War

(Adopted on 29 June 1946)

Whereas merchant seamen bore the brunt of the inhumane warfare practised by the Axis Powers at sea during the Second World War; and

Whereas merchant seamen were treated as prisoners of war by belligerents,

The Conference urges

That special consideration should be accorded to compensation claims of Allied merchant seamen arising out of inhumane warfare at sea or detention as prisoners of war.

VIII

Resolution concerning the Future of the Maritime Department of the International Labour Office

(Adopted on 27 June 1946)

Whereas the Maritime Department of the International Labour Office, which has rendered such signal service to merchant seamen
in connection with the Conventions and Recommendations bearing on conditions of work and life at sea, has so far devoted but limited attention to the interests of fishermen, whose industry also comes within the scope of the Department.

This Conference requests the International Labour Office, in consultation with the interests concerned, to make the necessary studies and preparations with a view to considering the possibility of the adoption of an International Fishermen's Charter setting out, on the lines of the International Seafarers' Charter, minimum standards of wages and working conditions, continuity of employment, social legislation, etc., for the industry.

IX

Resolution concerning Seamen's Welfare in Ports

(Adopted on 27 June 1946)

Whereas it is considered desirable to promote seamen's welfare in the ports of all seafaring countries and for this purpose especially to take advantage of the experiences made by the organs which have been working in this field during the war,

This Conference requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office—

(1) to investigate the effect of the Recommendation concerning seamen's welfare in ports, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Twenty-first (Maritime) Session in Geneva, 1936, and for such purpose to ask all Governments to report what they have done or intend to do towards improving the conditions for seamen when visiting ports;

(2) to consider the question of promoting seamen's welfare in ports on the basis of international reciprocal co-operation.

X

Resolution Conveying the Thanks of the Conference to the Authorities and People of the North West

(Adopted on 29 June 1946)

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation, having met in its Twenty-eighth (Maritime) Session in the City of Seattle, Washington, 6-29 June 1946, resolves on behalf of the delegations of the thirty-two countries represented to extend their thanks and appreciation to the authorities and people of the State of Washington, of the City of Seattle and of other cities
in the North West for the hospitality, kindness and courtesy shown to the members of the Conference.

The work of the Conference was arduous, difficult and of extreme importance not only to seamen everywhere but to all the peoples of the world. Much was achieved, and the City of Seattle will long be remembered as the place where it was accomplished. Those participating in the Conference will never forget this generous and fair city, and their deepest thanks go out to those who made them welcome and who worked so hard to make their task easier and the Conference the success that it has been.