



International
Labour
Organization

► **Current Developments on Maritime Matters**

Extracts of the General Report - Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), 95th Session, 2024

► Current Developments on Maritime Matters

In its previous reports, the Committee noted with deep concern the impact that situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic¹ and the war in Ukraine² had had on the protection of seafarers' rights as laid out in the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). The Committee had called on Governments to recognize seafarers as key workers acknowledging their pivotal role in the functioning of supply chains and recalled that it is precisely at times of crisis that the protective coverage of the MLC, 2006, assumes its full significance and needs to be most scrupulously applied. The Committee notes with deep concern that, in the last year, a number of seafarers have lost their lives and several merchant ships have suffered missiles attacks in the Red Sea, severely affecting the safety of the seafarers on board.

In this context, the Committee welcomes the unprecedented Resolution adopted in July 2024 by the United Nations Human Rights Council on Promoting and protecting the enjoyment of human rights by seafarers. ***Noting that the Resolution builds clear synergies between the work conducted by the ILO, the International Maritime Organization and the UN General Assembly regarding the need to adopt measures to strengthen the effective enjoyment of seafarers' human rights, including labour rights, the Committee wishes to highlight its main elements as follows and calls upon all ILO members States to step up their efforts in this regard:***

The Human Rights Council:

1. *Acknowledges* the obligation of States parties to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, to cooperate with each other for the purpose of ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention;
2. *Calls upon* States parties, shipowners' representatives and seafarers' representatives to enhance the enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, to ensure safe and decent living and working conditions for all seafarers;
3. *Calls upon* States and other relevant shipping industry stakeholders to promote and protect effectively the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by seafarers, including their right to life, right to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work, including safe and healthy working conditions, and right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
4. *Urges* shipping industry stakeholders to respect the right of seafarers to the opportunity to gain their living by work that they freely choose or accept, including decisions on whether to sail or continue sailing in high-risk areas³, and that the realization of this right should not negatively affect a seafarer's employment competitiveness or future deployment;
5. *Urges* States to continue efforts to eliminate all forms of forced or compulsory labour in the shipping industry;

¹ [General observation](#) adopted in 2020 on matters arising from the application of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, (MLC, 2006) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

² ILO, [Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations](#), Application of International Labour Standards, International Labour Conference, 111th Session, 2023, para.75.

³ In this regard, the Committee wishes to draw Governments' attention to Article 13 of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) according to which "a worker who has removed himself from a work situation which he has reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to his life or health shall be protected from undue consequences in accordance with national conditions and practice".

6. *Urges* all States Members of the United Nations to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers, in line with General Assembly resolution 75/17 of 1 December 2020, on international cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to support global supply chains;
7. *Encourages* States, consistent with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to ensure that business enterprises in the global maritime industry uphold the principle of corporate responsibility to respect human rights;
8. *Encourages* business enterprises in the global maritime industry to meet their responsibility to respect human rights, including by instituting a human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and enable remediation for any adverse human rights impacts of business operations;
9. *Urges* all stakeholders to step up efforts to advance gender equality and empowerment in the shipping industry by, among other things, capacity-building, collecting disaggregated data and promoting equitable hiring practices;
10. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to institute policies, measures and programmes to prevent effectively violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and assault, bullying and all forms of discrimination on-board vessels, in order to foster an environment where all seafarers, including women seafarers, are safe and their rights respected;
11. *Encourages* all shipping industry stakeholders to meaningfully celebrate the Day of the Seafarer every year on 25 June;
12. *Urges* stronger collaboration between States, shipowners' representatives, seafarers' representatives, the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to uphold and protect the rights and dignity of all seafarers all over the world.

The Committee further welcomes the forthcoming entry into force of the 2022 amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006 on 23 December 2024 and highlights the usefulness of the simplified process of amendments contained in this Convention to respond to the changing needs and challenges faced by the maritime sector. The Committee welcomes in particular the right of seafarers to social connectivity (internet) which represents a significant step forward in ensuring that seafarers can connect with their families and friends during the long periods on board and a necessary element to continue to attract and retain seafarers, in particular young seafarers and women. The Committee further welcomes the creation of a Global register of all deaths at sea which will allow the ILO to gather reliable statistics on these dire situations and inform the adoption of timely corrective measures. ***The Committee urges all ratifying Member States bound by these amendments to adopt the necessary measures to implement the new provisions taking into account that they contain significant concrete measures to further enhance the wellbeing of seafarers.***