



Governing Body

355th Session, Geneva, 17–27 November 2025

Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section

LILS

International Labour Standards and Human Rights Segment

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Second item on the agenda

Report of the fifth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee established under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (Geneva, 7–11 April 2025)

Report of the Chairperson to the Governing Body, in accordance with article 16 of the Standing Orders of the Special Tripartite Committee

Purpose of the document

As required by the Standing Orders of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC), the Chairperson of the fifth meeting of the STC (7–11 April 2025) presents his report on the working of the Convention. The Governing Body is invited to: take note of this report and of the resolutions adopted at the meeting; endorse the STC's requests related to the work of the Joint IMO/ILO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element (JTWG) and their transmission to the International Maritime Organization as per the relevant resolutions; adopt the amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC presented in the appendix; reappoint the Chairperson of the STC for the three-year period 2025–28; and convene the sixth meeting of the STC (see the draft decision point in paragraph 35).

Relevant strategic objective: Set and promote standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as strengthen tripartism and social dialogue. Strong, modernized normative action for social justice.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: A new version of the Standing Orders of the STC should be made available including any amendments adopted by the Governing Body.

Financial implications: Financial arrangements relating to the sixth meeting of the STC in 2028 and the meetings of the JTWG

Follow-up action required: The Office will follow up as required based on the decisions adopted by the Governing Body.

Author unit: International Labour Standards Department (NORMES).

Related documents: [ILC.113/D.1](#); [GB.343/LILS/4](#); [GB.346/LILS/3](#).

► I. Introduction

1. At its 346th Session (October–November 2022), the Governing Body decided that the fifth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC) established by the Governing Body under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), ¹ would take place from 7 to 11 April 2025 at ILO headquarters. ²
2. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format and attended by a total of 416 participants, of whom 37 per cent were women.
3. In accordance with article 16 of the [Standing Orders](#) of the STC, the Chairperson of the Committee is to report to the Governing Body “... on the working of the Convention. The report may contain recommendations to the Governing Body on action to be taken to ensure the effective, efficient and, to the extent deemed expedient, uniform implementation of the Convention.”
4. The STC dealt with all the matters on its [agenda](#) in an efficient manner and reached agreement on important issues through constructive and high-level tripartite discussions, as reflected in the [final report](#) of the meeting. The report of the Chairperson highlights the outcome of the meeting with respect to each agenda item as well as follow-up action covering developments until 30 September 2025.

► II. Consideration of proposals for amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006

5. In accordance with Article XV, paragraph 4, of the MLC, 2006, the STC considered 16 proposals for amendments ³ to the Code of the MLC, 2006, concerning a number of provisions of the Convention. Five of these proposals were submitted jointly by the Seafarers’ and Shipowners’ groups, five by the Seafarers’ group, one by the Shipowners’ group and five by a number of governments.
6. Following discussions of all 16 proposals, the STC adopted 7 amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006, by an overwhelming majority. ⁴
7. The first amendment relates to Regulation 2.5 (Repatriation) and is intended to ensure that Member States facilitate the repatriation of seafarers in a manner that excludes discrimination on any grounds.
8. The second set of amendments relates to Regulation 2.4 (Entitlement to leave) and is intended to ensure that seafarers can effectively benefit from the right to shore leave while they are in

¹ The MLC, 2006, entered into force on 20 August 2013 and, as of 31 August 2025, had been ratified by [110 Member States](#) representing more than 96 per cent of the world gross tonnage of ships.

² [GB.346/LILS/3](#).

³ The [background, purpose and text](#) of the 16 proposals, including [consolidated proposal 12/13](#), as well as [observations](#) and [amendments](#) submitted in relation to them, are available on the [web page of the fifth meeting of the STC](#).

⁴ The results of the votes can be consulted in the final report of the meeting.

port to benefit their health and well-being. Shore leave shall be allowed without discrimination and without requiring seafarers to hold a visa or special permit.

9. The third amendment relates to Regulation 2.5 (Repatriation) and provides that Member States should designate and recognize seafarers as key workers and take appropriate measures to facilitate their safe movement when travelling in connection with their employment or work, including, but not limited to, access to shore leave, repatriation, crew changes and medical care ashore.
10. The fourth set of amendments relates to Regulations 4.4 (Access to shore-based welfare facilities) and 5.1 (Flag State responsibilities) and requests Member States to take due account of relevant IMO/ILO guidelines to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers detained in foreign ports in connection with alleged crimes or in the context of inquiries into marine casualties. It further requires Members to cooperate with concerned States to that effect.
11. The fifth set of amendments relates to Regulation 2.5 (Repatriation) and is intended to ensure that the costs to be borne by the shipowner for repatriation include at least certain specific items which were previously contained in a non-mandatory provision. These refer to passage to the destination of repatriation, accommodation and food, transportation of up to 30 kilograms of luggage and medical treatment when necessary.
12. The sixth set of amendments relates to Regulation 4.1 (Medical care on board ship and ashore) and is intended to ensure that the training for seafarers in charge of medical care on board when ships are not required to carry a medical doctor takes into account, among others, the *International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers*.
13. The seventh set of amendments relates to Regulations 1.4 (Recruitment and placement), 3.1 (Accommodation and recreational facilities), 4.3 (Health and safety protection and accident prevention) and 5.1 (Flag State responsibilities) and is intended to ensure effective protection of seafarers against violence and harassment on board, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. In particular, the amendments require Member States to adopt laws, regulations and other measures for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment with due regard to the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). Member States shall further require relevant measures for shipowners and seafarers to ensure the establishment of safe, fair and effective reporting mechanisms and procedures for cases of shipboard violence and harassment.
14. Of the six remaining proposals, two (6 and 7) were withdrawn in favour of the resolution adopted by the STC concerning the convening of a meeting of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element (JTWG) on hours of work and hours of rest.⁵ In the light of the time constraints faced by the Committee and in view of the processes being pursued in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on related subjects, three proposals (8, 9 and 15) were withdrawn and will be considered for resubmission to the next meeting of the STC. No consensus was reached on one proposal (16).
15. Pursuant to Article XV, paragraph 5, of the MLC, 2006, and article 17 of the Standing Orders of the STC, amendments to the Code, together with a commentary on the amendments, are to be communicated by the Chairperson of the Committee to the Governing Body for transmittal to the next session of the International Labour Conference. As the fifth meeting of the Committee took place after the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body, the amendments were brought to the attention of the Officers of the Governing Body who decided

⁵ See section V(ii) below.

under delegated authority to transmit them to the 113th Session of the Conference for approval. The amendments were approved by an overwhelming majority of Conference delegates on 6 June 2025.⁶

16. The [amendments](#) were notified to Member States on 23 June 2025, in accordance with Article XV, paragraph 6 of the MLC, 2006. The period to express formal disagreement or indicate the will to be bound by the amendments only after a subsequent notification runs until 23 June 2027. The amendments are expected to enter into force on 23 December 2027 through the tacit acceptance procedure, in accordance with Article XV, paragraph 7 of the MLC, 2006.

► III. Consideration of any request for consultation under Article VII of the MLC, 2006

17. There were no requests for consultation at this meeting.

► IV. Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee

18. The STC appointed the following representatives as Vice-Chairpersons of the STC for the three-year period 2025–28:⁷
 - Mr Haakon Storhaug (Government member, Norway)
 - Mr Tim Springett (Shipowner member)
 - Mr Mark Dickinson (Seafarer member)
19. In accordance with article 6(2) of its Standing Orders, the Government members of the STC decided to nominate Mr Martin Marini (Singapore) for reappointment by the Governing Body as Chairperson of the STC for a second consecutive term for the three-year period 2025–28.
20. The STC agreed to recommend to the Governing Body that the sixth meeting of the STC be held from 3 to 7 April 2028.

► V. Resolutions

21. The STC adopted four resolutions as described below.

⁶ In accordance with Article XV, paragraph 5, of the MLC, 2006, approval by the Conference requires a majority of two thirds of the votes cast by the delegates present. The [results](#) of the votes are available online.

⁷ The STC noted that Mr Tim Springett had replaced Mr Max Johns as Shipowner Vice-Chairperson in September 2023. In accordance with article 6(3) of the Standing Orders of the STC, the Vice-Chairpersons shall be appointed by the STC for a term of up to three years.

(i) Resolution on the extension of the mandate of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG)

22. The relevant section of this [resolution](#) reads as follows:

Mindful of the decision of the IMO Legal Committee at its 111th session (April 2024) to establish a Task Force to review and update (or redevelop) the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers (including all procedural, policy, financial and technical aspects) (...),

[The STC]

1. **Recommends** that the ILO Governing Body approve the extension of the duration of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG);
2. **Invites** the ILO Governing Body to liaise with IMO, in order to convene meetings of the JTWG, under paragraph 4(c) of the JTWG's Terms of Reference, to conduct a final review and consideration of the Task Force Report;
3. **Authorizes** the Officers of the STC, in accordance with article 7, paragraph 7 of the Standing Orders of the STC, to review requests received to convene the JTWG as a result of decisions adopted by the relevant IMO bodies in between sessions of the STC and to make a recommendation to the ILO Governing Body concerning such requests; and
4. **Invites** the IMO and ILO to work cooperatively on areas of common interest.
5. **Proposes** that paragraph 19 of the Terms of Reference of the JTWG be amended as follows: *"~~The JTWG shall, in principle, hold at least one three-day meeting per year. Additional~~ Meetings of the JTWG may be convened if authorized by, and in coordination with, the relevant bodies of the Parties, and subject to availability of funding. Both ILO and IMO shall communicate the invitation to a meeting at least two months in advance"*.
6. **Authorizes** the Officers of the STC to raise matters of common interest between the ILO and IMO and make proposals for meetings of the JTWG to the STC or, subject to operative paragraph 3, directly to the ILO Governing Body, to address such matters as it considers appropriate.

23. It is proposed that the Governing Body approves the extension of the duration of the JTWG and endorses the request of the IMO Legal Committee to convene a JTWG meeting to consider the final report of the Task Force to review and update (or redevelop) the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers. It is further proposed that the Governing Body requests the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to convene a meeting of the JTWG for that purpose.

(ii) Resolution concerning the convening of a meeting of the Joint ILO-IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element on hours of work and hours of rest

24. The operative section of this [resolution](#) reads as follows:

[The STC]

Recommends that the ILO Governing Body approves at its 355th Session (November 2025) the convening of a meeting of the Joint ILO-IMO Tripartite Working Group to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element (JTWG), with the following terms of reference:

- (a) Review the relevant hours of work and rest provisions of the MLC, 2006; and the relevant hours of rest provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention;
- (b) Consider the development of practical guidance for Members on the implementation of the hours of work or hours of rest regulations; and development of practical guidance for

port State and flag State authorities on enhanced monitoring of compliance with the hours of work or hours of rest regulations, as appropriate; and

- (c) Provide recommendations to the ILO Governing Body and the IMO Maritime Safety Committee for consideration and action, as appropriate.

Recommends that the ILO Governing Body requests the relevant IMO bodies to consider the convening of this meeting of the JTWG.

- 25. It is proposed that the Governing Body endorses the STC's request to convene a meeting of the JTWG on hours of work and hours of rest, with the terms of reference contained in the above-mentioned resolution, and requests the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to submit the request to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee.

(iii) Resolution on recognizing seafarers as key workers

- 26. The operative section of this [resolution](#) reads as follows:

[The STC]

1. Calls upon ILO Members to effect the early implementation of Guideline B2.5.2 – Key workers, and designate and recognize seafarers as key workers and take appropriate measures to facilitate their safe movement when travelling in connection with their employment or work, including, but not limited to, access to shore leave, repatriation, crew changes and medical care ashore.
2. Reaffirms the commitment of the tripartite constituents of the ILO to advocate for the well-being and rights of seafarers, promoting initiatives that recognize their indispensable contributions to global maritime commerce, including giving full effect in the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, to the right of seafarers to safe movement when embarking or disembarking a vessel, including access to shore leave, repatriation, crew changes and when necessary, access to shore-based medical treatment.
3. Requests the Office to support early implementation of Guideline B2.5.2 – Key workers.

(iv) Resolution proposing amendments to the Convention on the Facilitation of International Marine Traffic, 1965, as amended, to reflect amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, decided at the Fifth Meeting of the ILO Special Tripartite Committee concerning shore leave

- 27. The operative section of this [resolution](#) reads as follows:

[The STC]

Recommends that the IMO Facilitation Committee considers the amendment to the MLC, 2006, on shore leave adopted during the Fifth Meeting of the STC, and takes action as appropriate;

Requests that the Governing Body at its 355th Session in November 2025 instruct the Director-General to forward this resolution to the IMO Secretary-General and request that he further forward this resolution to the IMO Facilitation Committee for consideration and action, as appropriate.

- 28. It is proposed that the Governing Body endorses the STC's request to instruct the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to submit the above-mentioned resolution to the IMO Facilitation Committee for consideration and action, as appropriate.

► VI. Proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC

29. The STC discussed two proposed amendments to its Standing Orders, which were adopted by the Governing Body at its 313th Session (March 2012).⁸ The proposals are set out in the appendix.
30. The first proposal aims to establish a procedure to fill vacancies should the Officers of the STC leave their positions between meetings. In recent years, such vacancies have arisen between meetings on several occasions and have given rise to legal difficulties. In these situations, the absence of relevant provisions in the Standing Orders has necessitated ad hoc pragmatic solutions to prevent vacancies from going unfilled for lengthy periods. A clear legal solution should be enshrined in the Standing Orders, and it is therefore proposed to amend the Standing Orders to allow any vacant position to be filled expeditiously, without awaiting the next meeting of the STC. This could be achieved without modifying the procedures contained in article 6(2) and (3), by adding a new paragraph (4) that would allow, as appropriate, decisions to be made with respect to the filling of vacancies.
31. A new paragraph (4) would also be added to article 4 to allow the representatives of governments appointed for one specific meeting to remain “in office” until the next meeting for the purpose of appointing a new Vice-Chairperson to fill a vacancy. The amendment proposes a change to the current situation in which nominations of Shipowners’ and Seafarers’ representatives have always been considered valid beyond a given STC meeting, while nominations of Government representatives have been viewed as credentials valid only for one meeting. This extension would apply only to a government’s two titular representatives, and not to substitutes or advisers.
32. The second proposal, presented to the STC at the initiative of the Seafarers’ and Shipowners’ groups, draws on the painful lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic when governments and social partners urgently needed international guidance on how to implement the MLC, 2006, in the context of travel restrictions and other measures put in place to contain the virus. While Article XIII of the MLC, 2006, specifies that “The Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall keep the working of this Convention under continuous review through a committee established by it with special competence in the area of maritime labour standards”, no framework currently exists for the STC to address urgent matters between meetings regularly convened by the Governing Body.
33. In this context, the amendments proposed under article 3 of the Standing Orders are intended to establish a new framework under which extraordinary meetings of the STC can be convened, on an exceptional basis, to address urgent matters, and at the exclusion of amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006. The STC considered that such extraordinary meetings would facilitate cooperation between the Office, governments and shipowners’ and seafarers’ organizations in the event of an emergency of international concern. This work would allow the STC, for example, to provide timely advice to the Governing Body, ILO Members and tripartite constituents, including by way of resolutions, on actions to be taken on matters relating to the working of the MLC, 2006.

⁸ According to article 21 of the Standing Orders, amendments to the Standing Orders “may be made by the Governing Body after consultation with the MLC Committee”.

34. Lastly, the STC proposed an addition to paragraph 10 of the Introductory Note on the subject of the secretariats of the Shipowners' and Seafarers' groups.

► Draft decision

35. The Governing Body welcomed the work conducted by the Special Tripartite Committee (STC) established under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), and:
- (a) took note of the report of the Chairperson of the STC on the fifth meeting of the STC (7–11 April 2025) and of the resolutions adopted at that meeting;
 - (b) endorsed the request of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Legal Committee to convene a meeting of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element (JTWG) to consider the final report of the Task Force to review and update (or redevelop) the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers and requested the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to that effect;
 - (c) endorsed the STC's request to convene a meeting of the JTWG on hours of work and hours of rest, with the terms of reference contained in the resolution mentioned in paragraph 24 of document GB.355/LILS/2, and requested the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to submit the request to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee;
 - (d) approved the amendment to paragraph 19 of the Terms of Reference of the JTWG;
 - (e) decided that the relevant cost of the three-day meetings of the JTWG, if held in 2026 and 2027, be financed in the first instance from savings in Part I of the budget or, failing that, through Part II, on the understanding that, should this subsequently prove impossible, the Director-General would propose alternative financing methods at a later stage in the 2026–27 biennium;
 - (f) requested the Director-General to forward to the IMO the resolution recommending that the IMO Facilitation Committee consider the amendment to the MLC, 2006, on shore leave adopted during the Fifth Meeting of the STC, and take action as appropriate;
 - (g) adopted the amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC as proposed in the appendix to document GB.355/LILS/2;
 - (h) reappointed Mr Martin Marini (Singapore) as Chairperson of the STC for the three-year period 2025–28;
 - (i) decided to convene the sixth meeting of the STC from 3 to 7 April 2028 and requested the Director-General to include a provision for that purpose in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2028–29.

► Appendix

Proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC)

[New text is underlined, deleted text is crossed out.]

Standing Orders of the Special Tripartite Committee established for the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

ARTICLE 3 *bis* (new)

Extraordinary meetings

1. An extraordinary meeting shall be convened by the Governing Body if a written request to that effect is made by ten Government members of the MLC Committee (i.e. from ratifying Members) and the Shipowners' and Seafarers' groups.
2. If time does not permit the Governing Body to convene an extraordinary meeting due to the urgency of the matter to be addressed, the meeting shall be convened by the Officers of the MLC Committee. The agenda shall be adopted by the Officers and included in the communication convening the meeting. Amendments to the Code of the Convention shall not be considered at extraordinary meetings. The Director-General shall inform the Officers of the Governing Body without delay of the decision of the Officers of the MLC Committee.
3. International organizations and non-governmental international organizations or other entities as referred to in article 9, paragraphs 3 and 4 below, which were invited by the Governing Body to the last meeting of the MLC Committee, may attend as observers.
4. The modalities of organization of extraordinary meetings shall take into account the financial resources available. Attendance shall be remote, through videoconferencing services, or, when possible, also in-person.

ARTICLE 4

Composition

...

4. The nominations of representatives made in accordance with this article shall remain valid until the next Meeting of the MLC Committee, unless changes to them are notified during that period by the Government concerned or the secretariat of the relevant group.

ARTICLE 6

Officers of the MLC Committee

1. ...
2. The Chairperson shall be proposed by the Government members of the MLC Committee ~~(i.e. from ratifying Members)~~ and appointed by the Governing Body, for a term of up to three years. A Chairperson may be reappointed for a second consecutive term. ...

3. ...

4. If a vacancy occurs between meetings of the MLC Committee, owing to the death or resignation of an Officer, it shall be filled by the method laid down in paragraph 2 or 3, as the case may be, subject to the provisions of this paragraph. For the replacement of the Chairperson, a proposal shall be made by the Government members of the MLC Committee in time for an appointment at the earliest session of the Governing Body. For the replacement of any Vice-Chairperson, a proposal made by the representatives of the group concerned shall be circulated to the members of the MLC Committee. In the absence of any objections received by the Office within 15 days of circulation, the Vice-Chairperson shall be deemed appointed by the MLC Committee. Any new Officer so designated shall sit for the unexpired portion of the term of office of the previous incumbent.

* * *

Introductory note

Admission to meetings

10. While participation in the discussions of the MLC Committee is restricted by the Standing Orders, its sittings are – as a general rule – public, under the Standing Orders. This rule is also in line with ILO practice. Obvious limits to this general rule would be the size of the meeting room or any security concern that the Office may have. The MLC Committee may also decide to sit in private, as, for example, in the performance of its consultation function under Article VII of the Convention. If it decides to sit in private, attendance would be limited to the members of the MLC Committee (the representatives of the Governments of ratifying Members, and the representatives of the Shipowners and Seafarers), the secretariats of the groups (traditionally provided by the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers' Federation), and the ILO officials necessary for the conduct of the sitting.