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(New Compensation Measures to Protect Seafarers Adopted)

More than 300 representatives of seafarers, ship-owners and governments, meeting at the International Labour Organization (ILO), have taken concrete steps to *protect abandoned seafarers and provide financial security for compensation in cases of death and long-term disability due to occupational injury or hazard. The new measures are also aimed at improving the world's shipping industry.*

"The adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention in 2006 was an historical milestone that heralded a new era in the maritime sector," said ILO Director-General. "This latest step, building on international tripartite cooperation, is a very significant and inspiring example for other economic sectors."

"When they come into force, these measures will ensure the welfare of the world's seafarers and their families if the seafarers are abandoned, or if death or long-term disability occurs as the result of occupational injury, illness or hazard," he said. "These steps will certainly help improve working and living conditions for seafarers, doing what is right for the women and men in this sector that play a central role in keeping the real economy going with some 90 per cent of world trade carried on ships."

The measures come in the form of amendments to the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, which were adopted without opposition. They will now be sent to the ILO International Labour Conference in May for approval.

The amendments were developed over nearly a decade by a Joint Working Group established

by the ILO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1998 and will strengthen the 2006 Convention. They establish mandatory requirements that ship-owners have financial security to cover abandonment, as well as death or long-term disability of seafarers due to occupational injury and hazard.

"These legal standards will provide relief and peace of mind to abandoned seafarers and their families wherever they may be," said the Director of the ILO Labour Standards Department. "In addition, by adopting these amendments to the Convention, ship-owners and governments are also strengthening its provisions aimed at ensuring a level-playing field for quality shipping around the world."

Under the new provisions, ships will be required to carry certificates or other documents to establish that financial security exists to protect seafarers working on board. Failure to provide this protection may mean that a ship can be detained in a port.

The ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 came into force on 20 August 2013. To date, 57 ILO Member States representing more than 80 per cent of the world's global shipping tonnage have ratified the Convention. As of March 2014, the ILO Abandonment of Seafarers Database listed 159 abandoned merchant ships, some dating back to 2006 and still unresolved.