



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
30th session
Agenda item 9

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MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR SEAFARERS

Proposed amendment to Part B of STCW Code

Submitted by ISF and ICFTU

SUMMARY

Executive summary: ISF and ICFTU wish to suggest that reference to the ILO/WHO Guidelines on Conducting Pre-Sea and Periodic Medical Fitness Examinations for Seafarers should be made in the recommendatory Part B of the STCW Code.

Action to be taken: See paragraph 7.

Related documents: MSC 70/5/4.

1 It will be recalled that regulation I/9 of STCW 95 requires Parties to establish standards of medical fitness for seafarers. Recognizing the lack of any international medical standards, resolution 9 of the 1995 STCW Conference invited the Organization, in co-operation with ILO and WHO, to develop international standards of medical fitness for seafarers.

2 In November 1997, ILO and WHO agreed (and subsequently published) "Guidelines for Conducting Pre-Sea and Periodic Medical Fitness Examinations for Seafarers" which were submitted by ILO as information to MSC 70. ISF and ICFTU had responsibility for co-ordinating the representation of shipowners' and seafarers' views at the ILO/WHO meeting.

3 The ILO/WHO Guidelines do not stipulate the precise minimum medical standards which seafarers should necessarily meet. Nevertheless, the Guidelines are still very useful because they contain, *inter alia*, a definitive list of the medical conditions for which seafarers should usually be examined, ISF and ICFTU therefore believe that use by Administrations of the ILO/WHO Guidelines should make a positive contribution to the health and safety of seafarers and that their adoption should therefore be positively encouraged by IMO.

4 In the long term, it may well be desirable, with the assistance of ILO and WHO, to continue the development of more precise international medical standards for seafarers. It should be recognized, however, that it might prove difficult to achieve a consensus within the international medical profession as to the specific standards to be applied to all categories of seafarers in all trades. At present, therefore, and in the absence of anything more precise, the ILO/WHO Guidelines are extremely helpful.

5 In view of the above, ISF and ICFTU propose that in order to encourage use of the Guidelines, but without wishing to compel Governments to adhere to every detail, reference to the Guidelines should be made in the recommendatory Part B of the STCW Code.

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6 More specifically, ISF and ICFTU wish to propose the following simple amendment to Section B-I/9:

New paragraph 11*bis*

"The standards developed pursuant to regulation I/9 should take account of the ILO/WHO Guidelines for Conducting Pre-Sea and Periodic Medical Fitness Examinations, as may be amended."

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

7 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider whether reference should be made to the ILO/WHO Guidelines in Section B-I/9 of the STCW Code as suggested in paragraph 6.
