



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF  
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING  
34th session  
Agenda item 13

STW 34/13/4  
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## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Consolidation of ILO maritime conventions

#### Submitted by the ICFTU

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This paper addresses the possible movement of training provisions for Able Seaman, currently covered under ILO Convention 74, to the STCW Convention.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 6
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 76/INF.6, STW 34/13 and STCW Conference Resolution 8

#### Background

1 The paper STW 34/13/1 brings the Sub-Committee's attention to developments at the International Labour Organisation with a new proposed Convention to replace all current relevant ILO maritime conventions. At this time, whilst there is discussion on the possibility of transferring the able seaman provision to STCW, there is not yet consensus between the parties. ILO Convention 74 is not well ratified and lacks any clear guidelines when aligned with the watchkeeping requirements under STCW 95. STW Conference Resolution 8 dealt with the '*Promotion, knowledge, skills and professionalism of seafarer,*' and called for the establishment of criteria and processes, whilst appreciating that the evaluation of the skills, abilities and competence exhibited by seafarers must be done ultimately in the course of their service on board ship. It is therefore prudent that the issue be fully debated pending a decision by the ILO.

#### Training, certification and experience

2 The provisions of the ILO convention are very broad, giving the national competent authorities options that range from a minimum of 36 months' sea service and no pre-sea training, to periods on training ships or at training schools with reduced sea service. In actual practice some countries have no pre-sea training or requirements of any kind and there is only experience-based training up to the AB certificate, with the exception of mandatory safety certificate requirements. Others countries require reasonable standards prior to a period of three years at training school and two years' sea service with subsequent examinations. Our information indicates that, whilst many of the larger labour supply countries have pre-sea schools, it is not the case for many countries recently endeavouring to enter the market.

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3 A practice of concern is the increasing range of titles used for seafarers, which do not exist in any recognised regulation or training structure but ultimately must be aligned with the watchkeeping AB under STCW 95. Initially many of these positions were intended to be an extension to the AB's skills for increased flexibility on board the vessels and between departments, e.g. 'general purpose crew' and 'integrated rating', however in recent years this has degenerated into such titles as 'seafarer 1', with no recognisable maritime training. The proliferation of these positions is for primarily cost-cutting purposes and ultimately endangers all other seafarers.

### **Seafarers' competency**

4 As recognised by STW Conference Resolution 8, for on board competency evaluation to be effective there needs to be clear criteria and processes in place. It should also be backed up by sound basic training and standards with regular auditing of any persons carrying out the assessment of any practical abilities. In the report of the International Collaborative FSA Study on Bulk Carrier Safety, MSC 75/5/1 paragraph 23, concerns were expressed that the low level of competence of seafarers on bulk carriers contributed to the high risk of fatalities. This concern was the outcome of a report by the Seafarers' International Research Centre (SIRC) on crew competency, document MSC 76/INF.6, in which it was stated that crews on bulk carriers and general cargo vessel have far lower levels of competency than other vessels. In the course of the study it was clear that some of the problems found on bulk carriers concerned basic deck maintenance, and should have been well within the capabilities of properly trained seafarers and not require a specific bulk carrier model course.

5 The duties and skills required of all seafarers have increased, as has the overall workload. There is no doubt that the industry will benefit from the standardisation of a basic able seaman's qualifications and this will not restrict any member State from establishing higher or more comprehensive standards. The Sub-Committee has sufficient time to introduce harmonised quality standards and processes that do not disadvantage any seafarer. These standards of training and competency should also be fully compatible with ongoing watchkeeping requirements and the enhancement of a safety culture.

### **Action requested of the Sub-Committee**

6 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the possible ramifications of the new ILO framework convention and the able seaman's current training requirements and to:

- .1 Carry out a survey of all current training standards;
- .2 Investigate the industry's requirements for the future; and
- .3 Formulate proposals for the integration of basic requirements for a non-watchkeeping able seaman into STCW.