



MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION  
COMMITTEE  
53rd session  
Agenda item 19

MEPC 53/19/4  
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## FUTURE ROLE OF FORMAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT AND HUMAN ELEMENT ISSUES

### Development of a strategic plan for addressing the human element

Submitted by the ICFTU

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document addresses a strategic plan contained in MSC 78/WP.16 and the identifiable need for both a shipboard health and safety programme as guidelines to the International Ship Management (ISM) Code and a code of safe working practice for seafarers.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraphs 12 and 13
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 78/WP.16, resolution A.947(23), MEPC 53/19, MSC 79/14/5, MSC 79/14/2, BLG 8/WP.4, FSI 12/WP.8

### Background

1 In the annex to resolution A.947(23), Human Element Vision, Principles and Goals for the Organization, it was stated that:

- “1 Rules and regulations which address seafarers directly should be simple, clear and comprehensive, and one goal identified was:
- to provide a framework to encourage the development of non-regulatory solutions and their assessment, on the basis of human element principles.”

2 The eighth session of BLG circulated document BLG 8/WP.4, ‘Guidance on the basic elements for a shipboard occupational health and safety programme,’ for the consideration of all committees and sub-committees. This document, as stated in its application and purpose, ‘does not set specific performance or technical criteria’ and ‘elements are intentionally flexible’. At the twelfth session of FSI in document FSI 12/WP.8, paragraph 21.2, the existence of a potential link between the ISM Code and the draft Guidelines in BLG 8/WP.4 was noted.

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3 At the seventy-eighth session of MSC in paragraph 12 of report MSC 78/WP.16, the working group also recognized the need ‘for the increased understanding and pro-active management of the human element, agreed that additional guidance on the ISM Code to stakeholders other than Administrations may be necessary’.

4 At the ninth session of BLG, the ICFTU expressed the view that document BLG 8/WP.4 should continue to be developed as guidance for the ISM Code in order to fulfil the undertakings of resolution A.947(23), but there was a further need to develop a Code of safe working practice for seafarers based on current IMO conventions, resolutions, circulars, codes and guidance with reference to other relevant standards, codes and industry best practice.

### **Code of Safe Working Practice for Seafarers**

5 Currently throughout the IMO conventions, resolutions, codes, circulars and guidance, there are criteria and standards intended to ensure the safe design and operation of vessels at sea and in port. Many of these standards have been evolved strictly for the handling of cargo but are also applicable to the seafarers in their working and living conditions.

6 For example, at the BLG and DSC Sub-Committees there has been extensive work on the safe handling of chemical and bulk liquid cargos, the dangers of carcinogenic vapours and the emergency procedures with these cargos. They have also identified the risks of chemical cleaners and the dangers of entering fumigated containers. Most of these safety standards are equally as important to the seafarers in their working and living environment.

7 Recent documents have recognized the importance of ergonomics in the design and construction of safe areas. There is also a need for greater consideration of standards for noise, vibration, lighting and ambient factors when designing vessels to ensure the occupational health and safety of seafarers. Although the IMO is recognized as the competent body to set maritime safety standards, many areas of the working and living environment of seafarers have not been considered or where they have, as in the case of noise levels and protection, they have not been revised for 25 years.

8 Many national administrations are collating the wide range of safety standards and guidance from the IMO, ILO, ISO and industry best practice to form a Code of Safe Working Practice for Seafarers and where this is done it may form part of the national regulatory framework for safety and health onboard ships. Unfortunately, many flag States do not have such a collated code and the seafarer is expected to be conversant with the wide range of sources available.

### **The ILO role in safety and health of seafarers**

9 As stated by the working group in paragraph 21 of MSC 78/WP.16:

“1 The Group recognizing that ILO is also engaged in addressing the issue of the human element, and considered that the close co-operation between IMO and ILO should continue in the joint efforts to achieve a common understanding of the associated issues and solutions.”

10 The ILO 'Code of accident prevention onboard ship at sea and port,' is used by many administrations as a basis for any national code of safe working practice as it broadly covers the matter in a generic manner. However, the seafarer is excluded from direct application of the more specific ILO Conventions such as those dealing with benzene, noise, vibration, etc and even the new ILO Consolidated Convention may defer to IMO criteria or recommendations in these instances.

11 Clearly safety must be designed into a ship at the earliest opportunity, it must be a crucial part of the seafarers' training and in conjunction with the ISM Code there should be a Code of Safe Working Practice for Seafarers that is clear, easily understandable, consistent with all the regulations and giving clear reference to all the applicable guidance and standards.

**Action requested of the Committee**

12 The Committee is invited to consider the need to formulate a Code of Safe Working Practice for seafarers consistent with resolution A.947(23), compatible with and in addition to Guidance on the ISM Code.

13 The Committee is also requested, in formulating the human element strategic plan, to identify where areas of occupational safety and health concerning the seafarer have been omitted or require revision.

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