

**International Labour Office contribution to the report of the
Secretary-General on Oceans and Law of the Sea pursuant to the
United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72 of 9 December 2021,
entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”.**

**Contribution to Part II of the report
regarding all other developments in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea
within the scope of the activities of the Organization, including information on
ILO’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the maritime context**

Ensuring decent work for seafarers and fishers to secure the sustainable use of oceans

The ILO has worked for over 100 years to improve the conditions of seafarers and fishers, adapting to the everchanging challenges faced by those working in the sector. Through its unique tripartite structure, the ILO brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 Member States to set labour standards, develop policies and programmes promoting decent work for all. This has included the adoption of Conventions and Recommendations specific to the shipping and fishing sectors. The widespread ratification and implementation of these sector-specific standards, and the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work for all working at sea is critical to ensuring that the three pillars of ocean sustainability-economic, environmental and social are respected.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Particularly relevant to the work of the ILO with respect to the ocean are [*SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*](#) and [*SDG 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*](#).

The ILO has made commitments related to SDG 8 AND 14. These commitments relate to the implementation of the key ILO maritime instruments which are the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006); the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), as amended. The ILO has made voluntary commitments to promote the effective implementation of the MLC, 2006, in order to improve seafarers' living and working conditions and ensuring a level playing field for shipowners. The ILO has also made a commitment at the Our Ocean conference to address forced labour and trafficking at sea, in particular in the fishing sector. The human-centred, sectoral approach is key to attaining the SDG goals during this Decade of Action to deliver the Global Goals. The active involvement of governments, employers and workers and stronger tripartite governance in the maritime sector is critical to realizing not only SDGs 8 and 14, but also to addressing the labour dimension in every other SDG.

Throughout this paper, the realization of the SDGs is demonstrated through various means: promoting the ratification and the effective implementation of international labour standards; the development of codes of practice, guidelines and reports; promoting social dialogue amongst sectoral constituents; and the implementation of action programmes and development cooperation projects, as well as through the provision of technical assistance and training.

Links to UNCLOS

A number of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are relevant to addressing the issues faced by seafarers and fishers.

This includes, first and foremost, Article 94, which, provides that “*Every State shall effectively exercise its jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over ships flying its flag*”.

Other relevant articles include:

- Article 73 which provides, in the context of the Coastal State`s exercise of its sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve and manage the living resources in the exclusive economic zone, that “*Arrested vessels and their crews shall be promptly released upon the posting of reasonable bond or other security*”, and that “*Coastal State penalties for violations of fisheries laws and regulations in the exclusive economic zone may not include imprisonment, in the absence of agreements to the contrary by the States concerned, or any other form of corporal punishment*”;
- Article 99, which prohibits the transport of slaves; and
- Article 292 concerning noncompliance with the duty of prompt release of vessels and crews upon posting of financial security, which is also often cited with regard to unlawful arrest.

ILO and the Blue Economy

Blue Economy is a broad concept, with many possible and mutually inclusive definitions. The UN defined the Blue Economy as “*an economy that comprises a range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable.*”¹ The World Bank defines the Blue Economy as “*the sustainable use of ocean resources for improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.*”² The Blue Economy as a matter of policy is applicable to all States, but remains particularly interesting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Coastal Least Developed States (CLDS) which have been at the vanguard of discussions on the topic.

The ILO has been an active participant in the discussion leading to the growing recognition of the ocean as a workplace. The ILO has intervened at the UN Oceans Conference to highlight the sectoral approach to the Blue Economy and the fact that 350 million peoples` livelihoods depended on the oceans, with shipping, fishing and coastal tourism providing working opportunities for many.

Since then, a few notable events organized by the ILO concerning the Blue Economy have taken place such as a conference held in the Seychelles, from 7-9 May 2019 entitled “*Creating a sustainable future of work and a just transition towards the Blue Economy*”. The Office also intervened at the 11th meeting of Caribbean ministers of labour in Barbados, on 17 May 2019, during the Office`s centenary year,³ at an event called `Job creation and a just transition towards a Green and Blue Economy`. This event highlighted the importance of de-carbonizing the economy and creating more jobs through a sustainable approach prioritizing the ocean and rural

1 <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-02-08/remarks-the-blue-economy-event>;

2 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy>;

3 https://www.ilo.org/actemp/events/WCMS_702218/lang--en/index.htm;

economy. Furthermore, in 2020, the Director General of the ILO made a statement to include the ocean economy at the Virtual Oceans Dialogue of the World Economic Forum.⁴

More recently, from July to December 2021, the ILO in collaboration with WFP and ACCADEMIS conducted a project entitled `Support for resilience community and empowerment of women through fish processing (smoking) in Madagascar`. The objective of this project was to strengthen the livelihoods of the 170 women federated into a group per fish product processing and development activities, within the framework of the economic empowerment of rural women by improving the quality of fish products.

Last but not least, a “Just Transition Maritime Task Force” was formed at COP26 by the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and the UN Global Compact to drive decarbonisation in the industry while supporting a just transition for the maritime workforce; the ILO and IMO have joined the task force as formal partners. The Task Force will coordinate efforts with governments, industry, workers and their representatives. Research and learnings will be developed around the green training and upskilling needs for the maritime industry’s transition and the green job potential of new fuels. A core driver will be how the maritime industry can achieve an equitable transition – creating opportunities for local communities and ensuring that green infrastructure, technology investments and opportunities for job creation are open to all.

ILO will seek a human-centred approach to achieving green shipping, stressing the principles set out in the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition and respecting the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, particularly as concerns occupational safety and health of seafarers in the context of new technologies and fuels.

ILO and the Maritime Sector – Shipping, ports, fisheries

Ships carry more than 80 per cent of world trade, whether in containers or through the bulk transport of raw materials, including food. There is increased awareness of the vital role of ships and seafarers in global supply chains. Shipping is one of the most international of sectors, requiring global solutions to labour issues to ensure its economic, social and environmental sustainability.

More than 39 million people work in capture fishing. The sector faces pressures, such as decent work challenges, climate change, over-fishing, and Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing. Forced labour, trafficking, child labour and high injury and fatality rates also remain a matter of great concern.

Ports are a critical component of supply chains and a point of exchange between the different transport modes (sea, road, railways and inland waterways). They provide key infrastructure in support of international trade and the global economy.

The graphic below gives a brief overview of the international labour standards related to the shipping, fishing and ports sectors. The main focus of ILO's maritime work is the promotion of the ratification and implementation of these standards using all of the ILO's means of action, including advocacy, technical assistance, capacity-building and the dissemination of codes of practice, guidelines, reports and other tools addressing labour issues and fostering decent work in these sectors.

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_747301/lang--en/index.htm



I. Shipping

A. [Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended](#)

Adopted by the ILO's Member States in February 2006, the MLC, 2006 brought together a large number of existing industry labour standards that no longer reflected contemporary working and living conditions, had low ratification levels, or inadequate enforcement and compliance systems. Combining these, often very detailed, instruments into one Convention, makes it easier for countries to regulate and enforce consistent industry norms and standards, worldwide.

The MLC, 2006 sets out seafarers' rights to decent conditions of work and helps to create conditions of fair competition for shipowners. It is intended to be globally applicable, easily understandable, readily updatable and uniformly enforced. The MLC, 2006 addresses all aspects of work such as minimum age, medical fitness and training; and conditions of work including hours of rest, wages, leave, repatriation, medical care, accommodation and occupational safety and health protection.

On 31 March 2022, the MLC, 2006 reached its 101st ratification. By reaching this milestone, the Maritime Labour Convention provides the shipping industry with globally recognized standards that cover more than 96 per cent of the world's shipping.

The MLC, 2006 has been designed to become a global legal instrument that will be the "fourth pillar" of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, complementing the key Conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), such as the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS), the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, 1978, as amended (STCW), and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 73/78 (MARPOL).

There are several novel features in the MLC, 2006 as far as the ILO is concerned. It is organized into three main parts: the Articles, placed at the beginning, set out the broad principles and obligations. They are followed by the more detailed Regulations and the Code of the MLC, 2006 which has two parts: Part A (mandatory Standards) and Part B (non-mandatory Guidelines). The Regulations and the Code are organized in five Titles, which essentially cover the same subject matter. The Code of the MLC, 2006 was amended in [2014](#), [2016](#) and [2018](#). These amendments have regulated subjects such as financial security of seafarers in cases of abandonment; contractual claims for compensation in the event of a seafarer's death or long-term disability due to an operational injury, illness or hazard; extension of the validity of the maritime labour certificate; harassment and bullying on board ships; and the protection of seafarers' wages in cases of piracy or armed robbery.

The ILO regularly provides technical assistance to member States and other relevant parties to ensure universal ratification and effective implementation of the MLC, 2006. In addition to promoting its Conventions, the ILO also supervises the application of international labour standards such as the MLC, 2006. This is done in accordance with the ILO's Constitution through the work of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. It may also be noted that all, or nearly all, regional port State control agreements include the MLC, 2006, in their list of their "relevant instruments" for port State control. Further, the ILO's Maritime Labour Academy at the Training Centre in Turin continues to train inspectors, lawyers as well as government, seafarers' and shipowners' organizations for a harmonious application of the MLC, 2006.

Consensus building

i. Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)

Article XIII of the MLC, 2006 provides for the establishment of a Special Tripartite Committee (STC) by the ILO's Governing Body. The mandate of this Committee is to keep the working of the MLC, 2006 under continuous review. If difficulties are identified in the working of the Convention, or if the Convention needs to be updated, the Special Tripartite Committee, in accordance with Article XV of the Convention, has the power to adopt amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006. The Committee also plays an important consultative role under Article VII for countries that do not have shipowners' or seafarers' organizations to consult when implementing the MLC, 2006.

The STC has met four times, with the most recent Meeting being taking place in two parts, virtually in [April 2021](#) and in hybrid format in [May 2022](#). The [2021 STC Meeting](#) adopted two resolutions and a recommendation, despite the challenge of holding such a large meeting virtually. [The recommendation](#) has ten technical notes examining outdated ILO instruments on a variety of topics affecting seafarers' daily lives that have now been superseded by the MLC, 2006 and recommends their abrogation or withdrawal, while stressing that new ratifications of the MLC, 2006 by Member States would amount to their automatic denunciation. Further, the recommendation stressed the importance of applying MLC, 2006 to its full extent in the non-metropolitan territories of Member States. The two resolutions covered COVID-19 specific issues. One resolution concerned [COVID-19 vaccination for seafarers](#) and the other the [implementation and practical application of the MLC, 2006 during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). These resolutions attest to a tripartite agreement that seafarers should be vaccinated as expeditiously as possible; and that international cooperation is necessary to designate seafarers as key workers and protect them from the direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures.

The 2022 STC Meeting adopted eight [amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006](#), drawing from lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of improving the living and working conditions of the world's seafarers. The amendments they agreed will ensure that:

- seafarers have appropriately-sized personal protective equipment, in particular to suit the increasing number of women seafarers;
- good quality drinking water is available free of charge for seafarers;
- States further facilitate the prompt repatriation of abandoned seafarers;
- States provide medical care for seafarers in need of immediate assistance and facilitate the repatriation of the remains of seafarers who have died on board;
- seafarers are provided with appropriate social connectivity by shipowners and States provide internet access in their ports;
- seafarers are informed of their rights relating to the obligation of recruitment and placement services to compensate seafarers for monetary losses; and
- all deaths of seafarers are recorded and reported annually to the ILO and the relevant data is published.

The amendments were approved during the 110th Session, June 2022 International Labour Conference. They should enter into force by December 2024.

In addition, the 2022 STC Meeting adopted three resolutions. The [Resolution on harassment and bullying, including Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment, in the Maritime Sector](#) called on the Governing Body to take note of the request of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee to include the topic of harassment and bullying, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, in the maritime sector and consider this as an item to be considered, at the earliest opportunity, by the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element (JTWG), under paragraph 4(c) of the JTWG's Terms of Reference and list of priorities, with the objective of ensuring a safe and inclusive workplace for seafarers. The [Resolution on contractual redress for seafarers](#) calls upon States to ensure that all seafarers have adequate means of contractual redress against the shipowner and calls upon Flag States to ensure that shipowners are in compliance with Standard A2.1 of the MLC, 2006 before issuing to their ships a Maritime Labour Certificate, and in any intermediate inspections. The [Resolution on financial security](#) calls for the establishment of a working group of the STC, based on past practice, to discuss the financial security system required under Standard A2.5.2 of the MLC, 2006 and make recommendations to the STC on potential improvements that would make the system more effective and sustainable and ensure a greater degree of protection and assistance for abandoned seafarers.

In early 2020, as a follow up to the [Resolution concerning amendments to the ILO flag State inspection and port State control guidelines to reflect amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006](#), a subsidiary body, in the form of a correspondence group, commenced work to update the MLC, 2006 flag and port State control guidelines to reflect the 2014, 2016 and 2018 amendments. The outcome of this work, which was coordinated by the Officers of the STC, was submitted to the Governing Body of ILO in March 2021 for authorization to publish the amended guidelines on the ILO website.

ii. *Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission*

This Subcommittee, composed of seafarers and shipowners' representatives, meets every two years for the purpose of updating the minimum monthly basic pay or wages of able seafarers, as referred to in the MLC, 2006. Shipping is the only industry that has a worldwide minimum basic wage figure. This subcommittee is special as it is the only permanent bipartite committee within the ILO (only the seafarers' and the shipowners' representatives participate).

In [2021, the JMC Subcommittee](#) coincided with the 75th anniversary of the first minimum wage of seafarers conference held at the ILO. For the first time in history, the meeting was held virtually. Unfortunately, the Subcommittee was unable to agree on an updated minimum wage figure. Though both groups praised the work of the Office, and acknowledged that the meeting was well organized, it was clear that this delicate negotiation process did not lend itself very well to being held virtually.

In [2022, the JMC Subcommittee](#) resumed the previous meeting in person and agreed to raise the minimum basic wage for an able seafarer to US\$658 as of 1 January 2023. The rate will be increased to US\$666 as of 1 January 2024 and to US\$673 as of 1 January 2025. The subcommittee also agreed that the figure of US \$673 as of 1 March 2022 should be used as the basis for recalculation purposes and for discussion at the next meeting of the subcommittee, in 2025.

iii. *Joint Action Group to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's transport workers and the global supply chain (JAG-TSC)*

The JAG-TSC was established at a meeting of the Director-Generals of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) with the heads of international transport organizations on 6 December 2021. The JAG-TSC aims to discuss how to minimize adverse impacts on transport workers, their families, global trade and supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic, while at the same time ensuring that public health needs are fully safeguarded, and local communities are protected.

According to its terms of reference, the JAG-TSC will focus on:

- promoting the application by national authorities of operational protocols to facilitate the safe movement and protect the rights of cross-border transport workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with States' obligations under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005);
- promoting COVID-19 vaccination of transport workers
- advocating for Member States to provide seafarers in need of urgent medical attention with immediate access to medical care and medical evacuation when the required care cannot be provided on board.

In doing so, the JAG-TSC will:

- identify key challenges faced by transport workers during the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to access to vaccination and other medical countermeasures, and access to medical care, with a focus on cross-border workers in the shipping, civil aviation and road transport sectors
- map and raise awareness of existing international guidance and operational protocols;

- identify and prioritize countries for specific, coordinated action by the UN system, in coordination with UN Regional and Country Offices as required;
- recommend actions to be taken at the international level, and identify gaps in the existing international guidance and operational protocols.

iv. *Ad hoc virtual UN inter-agency Task Force on the impact of COVID-19 on seafarers*

The Task Force was established by the United Nations Secretary-General's Executive Committee on 14 January 2022, with the aim to examine the implementation and practical application of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 during the pandemic, including its impact on seafarers' fundamental rights and on the shipping industry.

Three meetings in total are envisaged, of which the first meeting took place in April 2022.

In its first meeting, the Task Force considered:

- the responsibilities of ratifying States in relation to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) that are particularly relevant to the protection of seafarers' rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their recognition as key workers;
- the challenges faced by seafarers during the pandemic; and
- the additional measures the United Nations and its specialised identify which additional measures the United Nations and its specialized agencies can take to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on seafarers and shipping operations

Database on reported incidents of abandonment of seafarers

The abandoned seafarers' database was established as a result of the meeting of the 2002 Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Liability and Compensation regarding Claims for Death, Personal Injury and Abandonment of Seafarers (Joint Working Group), which expressed the need for a joint database. This database contains a regularly updated list of vessels that have been reported to the ILO as abandoned in various ports of the world by Governments or appropriate seafarers' and shipowners' organizations. The purpose of the database is to monitor the problem of abandoned seafarers in a transparent and informative manner.

The database includes all reported cases from 1 January 2004. In recent years, there has been a relative increase in the number of reported cases, although the number of resolved cases remains comparatively low. From 2011 to 2016, the number of cases per year ranged from 12 to 19. However, since 2017, the cases reported has increased drastically. In 2017, there were 55 cases reported, and in 2018. In 2018, the number of reported cases was 44. In 2019, the total number of reported cases was 40. Although a direct linkage is unclear, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been another, alarming spike in cases. In 2020, the total number of reported cases was 85. In 2021, 95 cases were reported, 31 of which were resolved by the end of the year. In 2022, as of 4th June, the total number of reported cases was 46.

The database can be found at: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/seafarers/seafarersbrowse.home>.

B. Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185)

The Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185) guarantees the rights of seafarers to temporarily enter a country for the purpose of shore leave, transfer or transit. The Convention was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2003 and amended by the same body in 2016. The latest amendments entered into force on 8 June 2017 and are aimed at aligning the technical requirements of the Convention with the latest standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regarding the technology for seafarers' identity documents. It is expected that the issuance of the new seafarers' identity document, with technology similar to the one currently in use in electronic passports, will strongly contribute to facilitating seafarers' access to shore leave, transfer and transit, whilst enhancing security in ports through the use of an internationally recognized document.

II. Fishing

A. Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and Work in Fishing Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199)

The fisheries sector makes vital contributions to global food security and supports the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. Seafood is a primary source of protein globally, especially in developing countries. Global fisheries are a limited and shared resource, the increasing global demand on these resources threatens sustainability and global food security. In 2018, an estimated 59.5 million people were engaged in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture. Of these, 39 million are employed in fisheries and about 20.5 million people were employed in aquaculture. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) figures tell us that women account for just 14 percent of the 59.5 million people engaged in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture in 2018.⁵ There is a need to promote sustainable fisheries to tackle over exploitation of precious resources and fighting IUU fishing.

The Work in Fishing Convention No.188 (2007) (Convention No. 188), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2007 revises and updates several earlier ILO fishing Conventions. The objective of Convention No. 188 is to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels with regard to minimum requirements for work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health, medical care and social security. It sets out binding requirements to address the main issues concerning work on board fishing vessels, including occupational safety and health and medical care at sea and ashore, rest periods, written work agreements, and social security protection at the same level as shore workers. It provides for regulation that will help prevent unacceptable forms of work and open up effective enforcement mechanisms upholding the ILO's commitment to ensuring decent working conditions for all fishers in the sector.

The widespread ratification and enforcement of Convention No 188 is key to ensuring that there is effective protection for all the people who work in the sector. It is also key to addressing global concerns such as forced labour, human trafficking and the exploitation of migrant fishers. Convention No. 188 came into force on 16 November 2017 and as of 1 June 2022, it has been ratified by 20 States. States that ratify and give effect to the Convention commit to exercising control over fishing vessels, through inspection, reporting, monitoring, complaint

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture/en/>;

procedures, penalties and corrective measures, and may then also inspect foreign fishing vessels visiting their ports and take appropriate action.

With a view to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention, has been working directly with ILO member States, as well as through ILO projects to assist States to undertake gap analyses and validation workshops on Convention No. 188.

Knowledge development

A number of publications and tools have been developed to assist States to better implement and enforce the Convention:

i. [*ILO training package on inspection of labour conditions on board fishing vessels*](#)

Over the years, there have been increased calls by governments, fishers' organizations and fishing vessel organizations, and others, for the Office for assistance in establishing, or improving, national inspection systems and in training inspectors. This training package aims to assist directors, managers and inspectors of competent authorities responsible for regulating and inspecting labour conditions on board commercial fishing vessels and enforcing standards for work in fishing. The package can be used to train officials who are building or improving comprehensive and coordinated inspection services for fishers. In particular, it seeks to promote cooperation and coordination among the many authorities that may have a role in the inspection of living and working conditions on fishing vessels, with the aim of ensuring decent work for all fishers.

ii. [*The flexibility clauses of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(No. 188\)*](#)

This working paper outlines the flexibility provisions of Convention No. 188 in order to clarify their scope to member States and constituents. It explains how flexibility may facilitate widespread acceptance of Convention No. 188 by permitting to adapt the level of protection afforded by the Convention to particular national practices and circumstances.

iii. [*Gap analysis of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(No. 188\)*](#)

A number of ILO member States have conducted a comparative or "gap" analysis of their laws, regulations and other measures in order to discern where changes are needed to bring them in line with the minimum standards set out in Convention No. 188. These gap analyses can and have helped in identifying lacunae in the protection of fishers and have led to changes in national law.

iv. [*Guidelines on flag State inspection of working and living conditions on board fishing vessels*](#)

The Guidelines aim to assist States in effectively exercising their jurisdiction and control over vessels that fly their flag by establishing a system for ensuring compliance with national laws, regulations and other measures through which Convention No. 188 is implemented. The Guidelines are intended to provide flag States with supplementary practical information and guidance that can be adapted to reflect national laws and other measures through which Convention No. 188 is implemented.

v. [*Guidelines for port State control officers carrying out inspections under the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(No. 188\)*](#)

The Guidelines are intended to provide supplementary practical information and guidance to port State administrations that can be adapted to reflect national practices and policies and other

applicable international arrangements in force governing port State control inspections of fishing vessels. The Guidelines promote harmonization in the implementation of the provisions of Convention No. 188 concerning port State responsibilities.

Consensus Building

The Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Related Matters

The ILO is now a full member of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters and participated in the fourth session of the Joint Working Group (JWG) held in Torremolinos, Spain, in October 2019. The Joint Working Group adopted a set of Recommendations (see [JWG 4/15](#)).

As a follow up to these Recommendations, the ILO is redoubling its efforts to tackle the scourge of forced labour in fishing, and closely coordinates with IMO and FAO on matters related to fighting IUU fishing while ensuring decent work for fishers and safety at sea. This includes active participation in each other's meetings and events, and jointly promoting compliance with the relevant international instruments. Also, the ILO, FAO and IMO have joined forces to promote the Convention No. 188, the Port State Measures Agreement, the Cape Town Agreement and the STCW-F Convention. This inter-agency cooperation helps encourage institutional cooperation at the national government level, which is necessary in the fisheries sector.

Development cooperation

i. [Sustainable supply chains to build forward better – Project linked to Fisheries in Namibia](#)

“Sustainable Supply Chains to Build Forward Better” is a joint initiative of ILO and European Commission that sets out to advance decent work in five selected global supply chains for a fair, resilient, and sustainable COVID-19 crisis recovery. The fisheries supply chain in Namibia is one of them. The sector comprises industrialized marine capture fisheries, recreational fisheries, inland capture fisheries, mariculture and freshwater aquaculture. The industry exports over 90 per cent of its total unprocessed and manufactured fish products.

The fisheries sector in Namibia faces several decent work challenges. These include occupational safety and health, a lack of skills development, especially for vessel skippers and engineers, and a lack of harmonization of national qualifications with international standards, which contribute to low wages. There have been reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as child trafficking and forced labour, on some vessels using Namibian ports. The workforce is stratified by race and gender.

The key aims of the Project are to promote decent work in the fisheries supply chain as key to the global social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The Project will also engage stakeholders and promote social dialogue along the supply chain to keep decent work principles at the forefront; as well as explore possibilities for a “new normal” during and after COVID-19 recovery. The project will also seek to promote zero tolerance to child and forced labour campaign, promote safe and healthy working conditions, freedom of association, human rights, trade policies and support the transition to the green economy.

The implementation of the project activities in Namibia are aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of the decent work gaps and opportunities in the supply chain among policymakers, employers and business and workers; and other stakeholders. To get there, the

ILO carried out a ‘a deep-dive’ study in the fisheries sector so as to facilitate the formulation of sector specific interventions. The findings from this major study will lead to the development of tools, training and policy guidance, which will enhance knowledge and capacities for key stakeholders with technical support from the ILO.

ii. *Ship to Shore Rights Project*

The project, funded by the EU and the ILO, has been working closely with partners including the Thai Government, employers' organizations, workers' organizations, unions, and civil society organizations towards the prevention and reduction of unacceptable forms of work in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors since 2016. In recent years, a number of graphic reports have triggered increased awareness of the serious human and labour rights abuses committed in the Thai commercial fishing and seafood processing industries, particularly against migrant workers. Warnings of IUU have drawn specific attention to the situation. The project has addressed four core objectives with special focus on Thailand's key fishing and seafood regions:

1. *Strengthen Policy*: strengthen the legal, policy and regulatory framework in the fishing and seafood sectors by raising labour standards and facilitating more legal migration into the seafood & fishing sectors;
2. *Enhance Government*: enhance the capacity of Government officers to effectively identify and take action against forced labour and other labour rights abuses in the fishing & seafood processing sectors;
3. *Improve Compliance*: improve compliance with the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Core Labour Standards) in the seafood and fishing industries through the implementation of the Good Labour Practices (GLP); and
4. *Support Workers*: increase capacity of unions and Civil Society Organizations to support workers and victims of labour abuses including women and children.

On 10 March 2020, the project published [Endline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand](#), which is a follow-up survey from the ILO's baseline research on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand, conducted in 2017. Using similar research methodology and data collection tools, the end-line research compares development, measures progress, and captures the changes to the working conditions as well as identifies the needs and challenges for the next phase of reforms in the Thai fishing and seafood processing industry.

This project has contributed to the ratification of Convention No. 188 by Thailand in January 2019 and awareness has been raised about the convention in the Southeast Asian region. The project also contributed to the ratification by Thailand of the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.

The project has been extended until 2024 in order to reach additional ASEAN States and renamed [Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia](#).

Countries in South-East Asia are among the world's top producers and exporters of fish and seafood products. The fishing and seafood processing supply chains rely on several elements including capture fisheries and land-based primary and secondary processing. Migrant workers contribute significantly to these sectors as fishers and workers in the processing phase. The regulatory framework for labour migration in the fishing and seafood processing sectors is often weak, with migrant workers frequently recruited through irregular and informal channels.

While there have been important improvements in recent years, workers still report lack of written work contracts, underpayment or withholding of wages, other types of wage theft, and coercion or involuntary work

Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia is a four year (2020-2024) programme implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme.

“The regional, multi-country cooperation will help create a level playing field that will benefit the relevant governments, private sectors and workers. This regional intervention will maintain the political link between sustainable fisheries and decent labour practices.”

Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand

The overriding objective is to promote regular and safe labour migration and decent work for all migrant workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in South East Asia. This includes strengthening legal frameworks, protecting labour rights, and empowering workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The ILO has published the [`Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia: Gender equality and women’s empowerment strategy Report`](#) which aims to increase the visibility of gender inequality within the fishing and seafood processing sectors and reset it through a gender transformative approach. The Strategy lays out a clear and concrete approach for the Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia programme and provides a robust gender analysis of the fishing and seafood processing sectors, highlighting how the issues of labour migration, informality and gender intersect to entrench inequalities and exacerbate decent work deficits. The strategy calls for an ambitious and transformative approach, integrating gender mainstreaming across all types of programme activity, while simultaneously implementing specific activities focused on empowerment of women and LGBTQI+ persons.

iii. [The 8.7 Accelerator Lab programme](#) and other ILO projects on forced labour in fishing

The 8.7 Accelerator Lab is an initiative of the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS). It was created to accelerate progress towards the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour by optimizing the effectiveness of development cooperation interventions by embracing six acceleration factors that form the core of the programme.

The 8.7 Accelerator Lab targets interventions at the national, regional and global levels, leveraging the use of strategic entry points through an integrated and sectoral approach. With a focus on South Africa, Ghana and Indonesia, the Programme supported labour inspection pilots to improve the detection of forced labour and protection for fishers, carried out gap analyses of national legal frameworks with a view to support the ratification of relevant International Labour Standards and held capacity building workshops with social partners, among other activities. At the regional level, the Programme is actively engaging with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and Regional Fishery Bodies to embed the labour rights of fishers and the detection of forced labour in agendas, action plans and mandates traditionally focused solely on environmentally sustainable fishing. At the global level, the Programme has engaged with business and journalism schools to embed labour rights in fishing into their curriculum and carried out a mapping of actors and digital technologies used to address forced labour on board fishing vessels.

In terms of research, the 8.7 Accelerator Lab also joined forces with the [MAP16 project](#) to develop a handbook on the detection of forced labour in fishing, a qualitative study of migrant

fisher journeys and experiences and an online training module for labour inspectors on forced labour in fishing.

FUNDAMENTALS has also, in collaboration with IOM and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supported the development and pilot application of a forced labour in fishing prevalence measurement tool, including a questionnaire and a list of indicators of forced labour in fishing for labour inspectors. [The Bridge Project](#) is undertaking a qualitative study of fundamental principles and rights in the fishing supply chain in Mauritania in order to inform interventions aimed at addressing fundamental principles and rights in the sector, including forced labour.

For more information on the work of the ILO in Fisheries in general, see: [Fisheries \(ilo.org\)](#)

B. Aquaculture

Aquaculture, defined as the cultivation of aquatic organisms in controlled aquatic environments involving interventions in the rearing process to enhance production, is an important source of income and livelihoods for many rural communities, both coastal and inland. The sector has grown dramatically over the past five decades and now accounts for half of the world's fish food supply.

The aquaculture sector provides an important source of employment, income and livelihoods, especially in rural communities, both coastal and inland, for developing countries. Globally, aquaculture today provides direct work for an estimated 20.5 million people, accounting for approximately one third of all workers engaged in fisheries and aquaculture. Women constitute a significant proportion of the aquaculture workforce, especially in processing. While no up-to-date data on indirect employment generated through aquaculture-related activities is available, it is estimated that for each person employed in primary production in aquaculture and capture fisheries, about three to four related jobs may be involved in secondary activities, including the processing, marketing and service industries.⁶

Despite its growing contribution to employment, rural livelihoods, economic development, food security and nutrition in many countries, aquaculture faces significant decent work deficits alongside other important social and environmental challenges. These may include: the prevalence of informality and discrimination; the presence of child and forced labour, primarily in the informal economy; a lack of organization and social dialogue; low and insecure wages and incomes; low levels of skills; low productivity; poor working conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH) practices; limited social protection; and lack of stable and formal contracts.⁷

Harnessing aquaculture's potential to effectively contribute to feeding the world's growing population in the decades to come will require concerted efforts to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work for its workforce.

The [Technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy](#), held in December 2021, brought together representatives from governments, employers and workers at the ILO to discuss the decent work challenges and opportunities in the aquaculture

⁶ FAO, [Improving governance of aquaculture employment: A global assessment](#), 2014

⁷ FAO, Scoping study on decent work and employment in fisheries and aquaculture ...; FAO, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020, 118; and ILO studies conducted as part of the EU–ILO–OECD Responsible Supply Chains in Asia programme, report forthcoming.

sector. The meeting acknowledged that the fragile nature of employment in the sector was exacerbated by the COVID-19 crises and that pandemic had further highlighted the importance of placing the promotion of decent work at the centre of recovery strategies and sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector.

The meeting adopted [conclusions](#) that will assist governments, workers and employers to take measures to tap the potential of the sector to support full and productive employment and decent work for all, so contributing to food and nutrition security and making sure that no one is left behind.

III. Ports

As the transport sector has become increasingly competitive and global, many developments have taken place in the organisation of work in ports which have affected labour and social conditions in the industry.

There are 856 international ports,⁸ and over 2,000 ports in total in the world.⁹ Port facilities have historically played a pivotal role in seafarer well-being through the provision of welfare services and facilities. These can range from port-based welfare services, including contacts with welfare workers, the use of seafarer centres and port-based facilities, communication with family and friends, shore leave and the provision of spiritual services.

The international labour standards in the ports sector are the [Dock Work Convention, 1973 \(No. 137\)](#) and [Dock Work Recommendation, 1973 \(No. 145\)](#) and the [Occupational Safety and Health \(Dock Work\) Convention, 1979 \(No. 152\)](#).

Development cooperation

Portworker Development Programme

The ILO is the primary agency responsible within the UN system for the protection of port workers' interests, health and safety. The ILO has accumulated expertise and experience in establishing various international institutional frameworks and labour standards through a series of conventions and tools relevant to the port sector. For this reason, the ILO is uniquely positioned to develop and provide the required training materials for ports, with a proven capability of improving working conditions and productivity of container and bulk port terminals.

The ILO's Portworker Development Programme in Container Terminals (PDP I) has successfully contributed to the goal of creating greater opportunities for port workers to obtain decent work and to ensure their safety, health and welfare. Since its launch in 1989, it has been adopted by more than 70 organizations and major terminals and translated into 9 additional languages. ILO has organized several Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops for supporting the implementation of PDP I in the countries, including two interregional programmes held in

⁸ World Bank. Data Catalog – International Ports, updated 16 June 2020.

⁹ ILO (2002). Dock Work. General Survey of the reports concerning the Dock Work Convention (No. 137) and Recommendation (No. 145), 1973, Report III (Part 1B), International Labour Conference, 90th Session, p. 14; and Sestini, G., Jetic, L. and D. Milliman (1989). Implications of expected climate changes in the Mediterranean region: An overview, United Nations Environmental Programme Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 103, 1989, p. 13.

ITC/Turin in 2012 and 2013. Based on the success of PDP I, the ILO launched the Portworker Development Program in Bulk Terminals (PDP II) in 2014.

Its main objective was to enable governments and port authorities of developing countries to establish effective and systematic portworker training schemes for port workers in bulk terminals. PDP II covered five major bulk cargoes, namely iron ore, coal, fertilizer, grain and bauxite/alumina. The materials were tested in selected ports in Asia and the first training course was subsequently held in the Republic of Korea. To maximize the effectiveness of the PDP II training programme and ensure its sustainability in the medium and long term, substantial activities to promote the use of PDP II materials need to be put forward by the ILO and interested partners at the global level. In this context, it is important to organize regular Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops to train PDP II chief instructors and terminal managers from all over the world. However, it has become physically impossible to have on-site TOT workshops and training chief instructors from all over the world at one place during the unprecedented pandemic and the resulting strict travel restrictions adopted by almost all countries. The first TOT on-line workshop was conducted over a 10-day duration from 11 – 25 Oct 2021 and the second on-line workshop will be held in July 2022.

PDP I and PDP II materials are available at the ILO webpage upon registration on the site.

More information is available on the website:

http://www.ilo.ch/sector/Resources/training-materials/WCMS_549818/lang--en/index.htm

IV. COVID-19 impact on maritime shipping, fishing and ports

In June 2021 at the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference, governments, employers and workers adopted a [Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery](#). With the Global Call to Action, the 187 Member States of the ILO commit to a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient. The Global Call to Action commits to an accelerated implementation of the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work \(2009\)](#). The Centenary Declaration, which also serves as its foundation, is guided by the principle that people and their work must be placed at the centre of business practices and economic, environmental and social policies.

The Global Call to Action focuses on the importance of policies at the global, regional, national and sectoral level that address inequalities and prioritize the creation of decent work for all. To achieve this, it outlines a comprehensive agenda with specific measures to promote quality employment and economic development, worker protections, universal social protection and social dialogue. At the sectoral level, it asks governments and their social partners to commit to investing in sectors hit hardest by the pandemic and those with strong potential to expand decent work opportunities.

The impact of the COVID-19 crises on the maritime sector was devastating. The pandemic has negatively affected the safety and well-being of seafarers and fishers, their ability to join their vessels and return home, and the future of their jobs. In some parts of the world, suppliers have been prevented from boarding ships to give masks, overalls and other personal protective equipment to crews. Seafarers were confined to vessels for months because of restrictions on international travel and measures to contain the virus with ports refusing vessels that had previously docked in areas affected by COVID-19, to dock, impeding on a crew change,

preventing such vessels from obtaining essential supplies and denying medical care ashore. Whilst there were huge shifts in the day-to-day life of the world, the need for food supplies, medicine and everyday good remained. With maritime trade shipping over 90 percent of all goods, it is imperative to have measures in place that ensure the safe and efficient movement of ships and the health of the seafarers who operate them.

The ILO's [Sectoral impact, responses and recommendations](#), in particular the [COVID-19 and maritime shipping & fishing brief](#) (17 April 2020), provide an overview on the impact of COVID-19, responses by constituents and partners, and ILO tools and responses in specific sectors. In the maritime shipping & fishing brief, the ILO has drawn upon not only the STC Officers' statement but also the ICS and ITF Joint open letter to United Nations agencies from the global maritime transport industry (both mentioned below). The latter emphasized the vital importance for all governments of keeping maritime trade moving by continuing to allow commercial ships access to ports worldwide and facilitating the movement and rapid changeover of ships' crews and made an urgent call for this to be added to the agenda of appropriate high-level meetings, and for national authorities to engage immediately with national shipowners' associations and seafarers' unions.

"Seafarers are just as worthy as everyone else and should be treated with dignity and respect to ensure that they can continue to provide their vital services to the world."

Using the guidance of the MLC, 2006, the ILO has been working with its social partners – governments, workers' and employers' organizations – as well as a number of international bodies to solve the issue. In the spirit of social dialogue, which the lifeblood of the ILO, the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006) issued a [joint statement](#) on 31 March 2020 calling on ILO member States to "*do all that they can to facilitate the delivery of essential medical supplies, fuel, water, spare parts and provisions to ships*". This Statement notably provides that charter contracts should not contain clauses preventing necessary crew changes from being conducted, as such clauses could negatively affect the safe operation of maritime trade and the protection of the well-being and contractual rights of seafarers.

They also call for seafarers to be officially recognized as `key workers`, granted exemptions from travel restrictions and accorded special consideration so that they can join and leave their ships and return home without impediment, while complying with good practice in infection control.

Similarly, IMO, ILO and ICAO published the [`Joint Statement on designation of seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel, and service provider personnel at airports and ports as key workers, and on facilitation of crew changes in ports and airports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic`](#) on 22 May 2021. This sought to ensure that seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel and service provider personnel at airports and ports are designated as 'key workers', regardless of nationality, to exempt them from travel restrictions, to ensure their access to emergency medical treatment and, if necessary, to facilitate emergency repatriation.

In the [Joint Statement on medical certificates of seafarers, ship sanitation certificates and medical care of seafarers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (22 April 2020), the ILO worked closely with the International Maritime Organization and World Health Organization to raise awareness about a number of issues related to medical fitness and care of seafarers,

including their right, under the MLC, 2006, to have access to medical care ashore, as well as issues related to ship sanitation. These joint statements make use of the respective strengths and contacts of different UN agencies to reach ministries and agencies responsible for maritime safety, labour and health, including public health. The three Organizations have also worked together to produce IMO circular letters (published on the IMO website) related to these topics, as well as advocating for the distribution of personal protective equipment for seafarers. The three agencies are also collaborating on the new WHO guidance for seafarers specific to the many health-related issues for the maritime sector in the context of COVID-19.

The ILO's Governing Body has adopted a [Resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (8 December 2020). In this resolution, the Organization's executive organ has taken an exceptional action of calling upon the Member States that have ratified the MLC, 2006 to adopt without delay the necessary measures to fully implement the Convention in law and practice during the COVID-19 pandemic in coordination among relevant ministries and agencies within national administrations, in cooperation with other ratifying Members and in consultation with relevant social partners.

Jointly, the ILO, the Global Compact, IMO, the International Organization for Migration, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published, in 2021, the [Maritime Human Rights Risks and the COVID-19 Crew Change Crisis: A Tool to Support Human Rights Due Diligence](#). The tool provides guidance and a checklist for cargo owners, charterers and logistics providers to conduct human rights due diligence across their supply chains to identify, prevent, mitigate and address adverse human rights impacts for seafarers impacted by the ongoing Covid-19 crisis. Related to this is the [joint statement](#) made in September 2020 by the ILO, the FAO, the Global Compact, IMO, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), calling on member States to establish and implement measurable, time-bound plans to increase the rate of crew changes. As restrictions on travel, embarkation and disembarkation in ports, quarantine measures, reductions in available flights, and limits on the issuing of visas and passports left seafarers trapped aboard vessels, the joint call to action recognizes the sacrifices that seafarers have made to keep trade moving and therefore to ensure the continuity of global supply chains.

In the vein of global partnerships, which is a common value of both the ILO and the IMO, the Secretary General of the IMO and the Director General of the ILO have issued a [Joint Statement calling for attention to the « no crew change » clauses in charter parties](#) (15 January 2021). In addition to this, the heads of the ILO and IOM issued, in October 2021, [a joint statement](#) calling for port and coastal States to allow seafarers to receive medical care. The joint statement outlines the difficulties facing seafarers in accessing medical care due to COVID-19 restrictions. It highlights the “obligation to ensure seafarers can access medical care ashore without delay, whenever they need it, and to extend medical assistance on board should the need arise by allowing qualified doctors and dentists to visit ships”. According to the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC 2006), Member States must ensure that seafarers on board ships in their territory are given access to medical facilities ashore, should they require immediate medical care, including dental care. The legal obligation to render assistance to seafarers in distress, including medical assistance, is also an intrinsic component of the IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR); and the Convention on the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL).

The Fourth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006 (April 2021), adopted two resolutions covering COVID-19 specific issues: COVID-19 vaccination for

seafarers; and the implementation and practical application of the MLC, 2006 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to requests from constituents, and following consultations with the Officers of the STC, the Office issued an [Information note on maritime labour issues and coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), published 3 February 2021, which includes the General Observation of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and joint statements of the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006. The Note provides links to other information resources and contacts for seafarers' individual claims, which can be used by crews and individual seafarers to obtain information or raise concerns relating to the pandemic.

Further, at the request of the ICS and the ITF, the Office has also addressed letters to more than 60 countries that have ratified the MLC, 2006, with a request to adopt without delay all measures within reach to ensure that seafarers on board cruise ships can be repatriated.

It remains imperative that seafarers, during this unprecedented period, are adequately protected through access to medical care, and have an ability to travel to and from their ships, as necessary, in order to continue to play their crucial role.

Fishers on many commercial fishing vessels have faced similar problems, including the inability to make crew changes, the expiry of medical and competency certificates, the lack of the necessary PPE, restrictions on joining and leaving vessels and on travel, insufficient medical care on board vessels and lack of access to shoreside medical care. The inability to change crews, leading to extended periods on board, is particularly problematic in the case of fishers due to the physical and fatiguing nature of their work.

The COVID-19 virus also intensified the precarity of the fishing industry where close quarters aboard vessels, lack of personal protective equipment, including masks and limited access to medical care increased exposure and health risk for fishers. There is a call for the prioritization of health and safety protections for workers.

In its press release of 30 April 2020 entitled `[Seafarers and fishers: Providing vital services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)` the ILO called on governments to adopt without delay all possible measures to facilitate crew changes and the repatriation of seafarers and fishers, while taking steps to minimize the risk of contagion. The protection of seafarers' and fishers' safety and health must remain a priority during the pandemic.

The ILO Brief, `[Rough Seas: The impact of COVID-19 on fishing workers in South-East Asia](#)` reveals how the impact of COVID-19 on migrant fishers and seafood processors has been exacerbated through their exclusion from government relief programmes, social security protection and unemployment benefits during the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unparalleled impact on the world of work. In addition to the loss of life and damage to health, measures taken to limit the spread of the virus have affected the livelihoods of many.

Ports are a critical component of supply chains and a point of exchange between the different transport modes (sea, road, rail and inland waterways) integrated through multi- and inter-modal transport systems.¹⁰ The shock of the COVID-19 pandemic has left no port unaffected, while exacerbating certain existing challenges. Ports have been heavily impacted by developments in the shipping sector, where some shipping lines have gone into 'survival

¹⁰ Peter Turnbull (2011). An international assessment of training in the port sector, ILO, p. xiii.

mode', affecting container and cargo markets, with knock-on effects that may be felt for years to come.¹¹

The impact of the pandemic on the number of vessels calling in ports differs according to the type of market and geographical region. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ports have had to adjust to the reality of lower volumes, worker shortages, the implementation of occupational health and safety measures for dockers and shore personnel, and the adoption of teleworking and remote operations for office workers. In some countries, calls by cruise ships have come to a halt. The 2021 [ILO Sectoral Brief on COVID-19 and the port sector](#) summarizes the issues relating to COVID-19 and decent work challenges in the port sector.

The [Information note on the Occupational Safety and Health \(Dock Work\) Convention, 1979 \(No. 152\) and coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) provides technical guidance for use by competent authorities of Parties to Convention No. 152, as well as representatives of employers/shipowners and workers/seafarers concerned, to ensure that, in these unprecedented circumstances the application of certain provisions does not have the unintended consequence of disrupting the flow of essential goods and commodities required to be transported worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The above only refers to the ILO's actions specific to the maritime sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all workers, and the ILO's [COVID-19 and the world of work brief](#) sets out the Organization's broader efforts to address this global crisis. This includes the issue of an impact assessment and a range of policy options to mitigate the impact of the crisis and facilitate a strong and rapid recovery.

A comprehensive source on the resources related to COVID-19 and maritime shipping, fishing and ports may be accessed here:

https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_742026/lang--en/index.htm

¹¹ Eugene Seroka, "The impact of the coronavirus on ports and supply chains", Webinar of the IAPH, 13 May 2020.