Service and support of technical cooperation activities

The objective of technical cooperation activities in the maritime sector is the same as for the whole programme of the Organization which, in this case, is to help assist member States to contemplate action in the observance of standards regarding maritime workers' employment conditions and, thereby, to contribute both to improved conditions of work and life for this group and to the effectiveness of a country's maritime industries. Furnished at the request of receiving governments, this assistance covers the wide field of maritime labour and related social questions with which the ILO is concerned and draws upon international skills and the Organization's cumulative experience of many years of operational activities. Substantive support to technical cooperation is provided by the Maritime Industries Branch of the ILO. In addition, over forty ILO offices located in countries throughout the world, provide both technical and administrative support to these field operations.

Technical assistance from the ILO may be provided in the form of surveys or expert advice executed in the country concerned by consultants, fellowships, study grants and awards for training abroad, regional and inter-regional training courses and seminars, establishment of pilot projects and exchange of technical information. The broad fields in which technical aid can be provided include in particular:

- labour legislation, administration and conditions of employment;
- maritime manpower;
- vocational training and certificates;
- recruitment and placement of maritime workers;
- occupational safety and health;
- welfare;
- social security; and
- labour management cooperation.
Cooperation with other international organizations

International cooperation is essential in the shipping industry. The ILO, therefore, works closely with other international organizations, for example the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on different aspects of shipping and port activities.

The Joint IMO/ILO Committee on Training keeps under review an international maritime training guide (Document for Guidance) first developed in 1964. The Committee was created with the purpose of examining and commenting upon proposals on international standards concerning maritime training, qualifications or certification prepared by both organizations. Results from the Committee meetings are submitted to the ILO Governing Body and the IMO Maritime Safety Committee for examination, acceptance and recommended action. The Eighth Session of the Committee held in 1990 discussed fatigue as a factor in the manning and safety of ships. Following the success of that meeting, it was decided that a special IMO/ILO Joint Group of Experts, with terms of reference to draw up a uniform framework of procedures for the investigation of maritime accidents, would identify whether and, if so, to what extent, fatigue was a contributory factor to such accidents. The Joint Group met twice (1992 and 1993) agreeing on the procedure to follow. The last session of the Joint IMO/ILO Committee on Training met in January 1994 discussing the revision of the 1978 STCW Convention.

In January 1998 two ad hoc ILO/IMO Working Groups met. One agreed on draft guidelines on investigation of human factors in maritime casualties and the other agreed on guidelines for the development of tables of seafarers’ shipboard working arrangements and format of records of seafarers’ hours of work or hours of rest.

Closely related to shipboard safety is the work of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on the Health of Seafarers which, at the seven sessions since its creation in 1949, has made numerous recommendations on various health problems of ship personnel, a prominent one being the creation of the International Medical Guide for Ships, which was updated in 1988. This unified, modernized and coordinated three existing forms of medical assistance to ships at sea (the ship’s medical guide, the medicine chest and the means of obtaining medical advice by radio) and gives an international approach to the problems encountered by a ship’s captain faced with injury or disease aboard his ship.

The Joint ILO/WHO Committee on the Health of Seafarers held its Seventh Session in 1993 and discussed the following:

- occupational accidents among seafarers resulting in personal injuries, damage to their general health and fatalities;
- guidance to seafarers on the risk and prevention of infection from blood-borne and sexually transmitted diseases;
education of seafarers in the dangers to both their health and professional careers arising from abuse of drugs and alcohol;

- the incidence of mental diseases and psychosocial disturbances associated with work on board ship and the seafaring profession generally;

- a mechanism for periodic updating of the International Medical Guide for Ships; and

- harmonization of medical examination requirements for seafarers.

An ILO/WHO Consultation was held in November 1997 and agreed on Guidelines for conducting Pre-Sea and Periodic Medical Fitness Examination of Seafarers.

Further collaboration between the ILO, IMO and WHO is manifested by the Medical First Aid Guide for Use in Accidents Involving Dangerous Goods published jointly by the three organizations in 1973. The Guide, which is intended for use in conjunction with IMO’s International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code and the International Medical Guide for Ships, contains recommendations for medical first aid to be given after accidents and for preventive measures against poisoning connected with the carriage of dangerous goods.

Also directly related to the hazards faced by seafarers from cargoes carried in their ships are the IMO/ILO/UN/ECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTUs) which will be published in 1997. These Guidelines, first published in 1978, then updated in 1985 give the essentials of safe packing for use by persons responsible for the packing and securing cargo in freight containers or vehicles and for persons whose task it is to train people to pack those units.

In executing its maritime activities, the ILO cooperates with governments and with non-governmental international organizations through special meetings and seminars aimed at improving both working conditions for maritime workers and the efficiency of maritime industry operations. For example, in September 1992, the ILO held an Inter-regional Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Drugs and Alcohol in the Maritime Industry as part of a project recommended by the Joint Maritime Commission and sponsored by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to develop measures to reduce drug and alcohol problems in the maritime industry. Representatives from IMO, WHO, UNDCP and the European Union (EU) participated. Other activities of this nature include the convening of seminars on labour problems resulting from automation and technological change on board ship, and participation in various United Nations, governmental and shipping industry seminars. In addition, the ILO takes an active part in the work carried out under the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (MOU). The objective of the MOU is to ensure that foreign merchant ships visiting the ports of any of the MOU participating States comply with the international Conventions included in this agreement. ILO Convention No. 147 is one of the Conventions.
In 1990, the ILO published *Inspection of Labour Conditions on Board Ship: Guidelines for Procedure* based on Convention No. 147. These Guidelines are intended to assist ship and labour inspectors, and others concerned with labour and social conditions on board ship. The Guidelines relate to the control procedures for national flagships as well as to foreign flagships.

In 1991, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) published *Guidelines for Maritime Industry Labour Legislation*. The Guidelines were produced through a joint ILO/ESCAP project and provide a comprehensive reference work to assist countries in the preparation of up-to-date maritime labour law. Copies may be obtained by contacting ESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand.

In 1993, an ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Accident Prevention on Board Ship revised the ILO *Code of Practice for Accident Prevention on Board Ship at Sea and in Port*, originally published in 1978, taking into account technological and operational changes in shipping and new means of improving the occupational safety and health of seafarers.

**Technical assistance provided by the ILO in the port industry**

Stemming from the instruments concerning dock workers mentioned above, the ILO has adopted guidelines, both for vocational training and for the safety and health of dockworkers. It has developed and executed projects covering issues such as recruitment and placement of port workers and occupational safety and health. Furthermore, the ILO has also developed and executed projects concerning the organization of work in ports, the assessment of training needs and subsequent curricula development for training programmes, the training of instructors, the establishment of port training centres and provided assistance in supervisory training.

The activities can be summarized as follows:

(i) **establishing port training centres**

under this programme projects have been carried out in a number of countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Recently projects have been executed in Algeria, India, Mozambique and Tanzania for assisting in the creation of the necessary training capacity in the port industry of these countries. Upon requests advisory services are available in the different regions.

(ii) **standardization of port training programmes**

in 1986, the ILO started a technical co-operation programme between sixteen countries in Latin and Central America on the development of standardized training programmes. The programmes were based on a methodology developed by the ILO Inter-American Vocational Training Research and Documentation Centre (CINTERFOR) together with national vocational training centres in the region.
Courses were prepared covering, inter alia, basic portworker training, supervisors and conventional cargo-handling, container handling, safety and hygiene operators of mobile cranes, fork trucks and straddle carriers.

The Courses, all in Spanish were distributed free of charge to port training centres in the region.

(iii) ILO's Portworker Development Programme (PDP)

The underlying philosophy of the PDP is the provision of centrally prepared training material, properly tested and validated, to be presented by a corps of specially trained instructors within a carefully established organizational framework, extending from national to port level. The development objective: "to enable the governments and port authorities of developing countries to establish effective and systematic portworker training schemes, designed to improve cargo-handling performance, working conditions and practices, safety, and the status and welfare of portworkers." The material relates to container terminals. "Portworker" in this context is defined as a port or terminal employee of supervisory grade or below, and covers foremen, drivers, operators, stevedores and other operations personnel of similar grades, as well as office and workshop employees of equivalent status.

The training materials has been developed as an open-ended series of self-contained but interrelated "Units" of instruction, designed for classroom-based, instructor-led but highly interactive teaching of small groups of learners (between eight and twelve at a time). The classroom sessions are supported by practical exercise, both indoors and out, and by organized visits to operational and other port facilities. It is not intended that the Units should comprise a "course" in the conventional sense, but instructors should select and combine groups of individual Units (and possibly sections of Units) to form appropriate training schemes for groups of employees (or, individuals) as their needs and those of their employers. It is planned to continue developing further Units, so that an expanding library or materials will provide a teaching resource from which instructors can, in consultation with port managers, develop training programmes appropriate for all categories of portworkers. To that end, the initial and future Units cover a wide variety of topics, some suitable for all or most port/terminal employees (introductory, general descriptions of ports and terminals, and Units on safe access and working, for example) while others may be targeted much more specifically (e.g. towards supervisors of a container terminal CFS).

The Unit materials are based on best international practice; this is ensured by the employment of acknowledged subject experts in the teams developing the materials, and by basing the PDP approach on the ILO's regulations and guidelines on the health, safety and welfare of portworkers.
Throughout the Programme, the underlying philosophy is to provide not just a series of "how to do it" checklists but simple explanations and descriptions of the reasons for processes, procedures and practices - the "why do it"! The aim is to create the required motivation to adopt best practices through understanding, so that portworkers acquire a positive attitude to their work, with benefits to organizational efficiency and personal safety.

The ILO Portworker Development Programme for portworkers working in container terminals became available at the end of 1997.

Summary

This extract has only highlighted some of the major activities of the International Labour Organization concerning seafarers, fishermen, port workers and inland boatmen, the principle objectives being the widespread ratification and implementation of international maritime labour standards and the execution of related meetings, seminars and technical cooperation projects. The ILO's work in these areas is growing in importance as all maritime industries have increasingly looked at the role of workers in the safe and productive conduct of their activities. For further information on these subjects, contact the Maritime Industries Branch of the International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland, or any of the many other ILO Offices located world wide.