



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

**United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development
Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for
Sustainable Development**

7 June 2017

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Statement by: Ms. Alette van Leur, Director, Sectoral Policies Department

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Much has been said this week about the ocean and the need to protect it. The ILO adds to this message that the ocean is also a workplace, where tens of millions of people every day earn their living.

Promoting decent work is crucial for sustainable development as it contributes to ending working poverty, ensuring safety and health, and achieving equality. Yet there are significant “decent work deficits” for many people working at sea and in the ocean economy.

At its worst, this includes such problems as child and forced labour and abandonment of seafarers, long working hours, non-payment of wages and hazardous conditions of work. These violations of labour rights are not only detrimental to the workers concerned: they also damage the reputation of the fishing and shipping industry and those competing legally and fairly.

The ILO makes a unique contribution towards addressing these deficits by adopting international labour standards, drawn up by representatives of governments, employers and workers, and closely monitoring their implementation. Countries ratifying ILO conventions commit themselves to applying them in law and practice and reporting on their implementation. They commit themselves to applying them in law and practice and reporting on their implementation.

The ILO supervisory bodies regularly examine their application. Complaint procedures can be initiated against countries for violations of a ratified convention. If there are problems in the application of standards, the ILO seeks to assist countries through social dialogue and technical assistance.

Let me draw your attention to the two key ILO Conventions concerning living and working conditions at sea.

First, the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, provides a comprehensive set of standards governing living and working conditions of seafarers. It has now been ratified by 83 ILO member States and covers around 90% of the world fleet by gross tonnage. The ILO has witnessed impressive efforts from the shipping industry, seafarers' organizations and governments to promote decent work by implementing this Convention.

Similarly, the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) aims to set out standards governing conditions of work on fishing vessels. This Convention has, so far, received ten ratifications and will enter into force in November 2017.

The ILO encourages all States to ratify and implement these Conventions, as a crucial contribution to the fulfillment of Sustainable Goal 14.

The ocean is a workplace and seafarers and fishers, as all other workers, have the right to decent work.

Thank you.