

Ro48 - Seamen's Welfare in Ports Recommendation, 1936 (No. 48)

*Recommendation concerning the Promotion of
Seamen's Welfare in Ports* Adoption: Geneva, 21st ILC
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Preamble

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Twenty-first Session on 6 October 1936, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the promotion of seamen's welfare in ports, which is the third item on the agenda of the Session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation,

adopts this twenty-fourth day of October of the year one thousand nine hundred thirty-six, the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Seamen's Welfare in Ports Recommendation, 1936:

Whereas by the nature of their calling seamen are frequently deprived for long periods of the advantages of family life and may be exposed while in ports, particularly in foreign countries, to special dangers and difficulties and whereas it is not always possible for them to have the benefit of arrangements made to organise the spare time, promote the welfare and safeguard the health of the general body of workers;

Whereas certain Governments and different private associations have successfully taken various measures for the special help and protection of seamen in ports and whereas such protection should be extended to as large a number of seamen as possible; and

Whereas it is important, notwithstanding differences which may exist in national and local needs and customs, to develop and co-ordinate nationally and internationally the principal forms of action, in a manner which draws no distinction of race between seamen;

The Conference recommends that each Member of the International Labour Organisation should take the following principles and methods into consideration for the promotion of the welfare of both national and foreign seamen in ports.

Part I. General Organisation

- 1. It is desirable to create in every important port an official or officially recognised body, which might comprise representatives of shipowners, seamen, national and local authorities and the chief associations concerned, for the purposes of--
 - (a) collecting, as far as possible in conjunction with the different authorities or organisations concerned, including the consular authorities of maritime States, all useful information and suggestions on the conditions for seamen in the port;
 - (b) advising the competent departments, authorities and associations as to the adoption, adaptation and co-ordination of measures for the improvement of such conditions; and
 - (c) collaborating if required with other competent bodies in carrying out such measures.
- 2. It is desirable, in order to enable the International Labour Office to inform the Governments of the maritime States and to assist them to co-ordinate their action, that each of them should keep in touch with the Office and furnish it every three years with all useful information on the experience acquired in the promotion of seamen's welfare in ports and on the progress made in this field.

Part II. Regulation

- 3. There should be laws or regulations to protect seamen, by measures including the following, from the dangers to which they are exposed in certain establishments or in the docks as such:
 - (a) the regulation of the sale of intoxicating liquor;
 - (b) the prohibition of the employment in public houses of young persons of either sex under a certain age;
 - (c) the application of the provisions of international agreements limiting the sale and use of narcotics to all seamen without distinction of nationality;
 - (d) the prohibition of the entry into the docks and harbour area generally of undesirable persons;
 - (e) the fencing off of dock areas and the protection of edges of wharves and quays and other dangerous parts of docks by fixed or movable barriers, wherever such measures are practicable;
 - (f) the provision of sufficient lighting and, where necessary, of signposts for docks and approaches.

- 4. In order to ensure the strict enforcement of the measures indicated above and to increase their efficacy, there should be arrangements for supervision, including--
 - (a) supervision of establishments where intoxicating liquors are sold and, where necessary and practicable, of hotels, cafés, lodging houses and other similar establishments in the harbour area;
 - (b) supervision, which might be carried out jointly by masters and the public authorities, of persons visiting ships, including boatmen plying between ships and the shore, with a view to preventing intoxicating liquor or narcotics being wrongfully brought on board or the fulfilment of any other illicit purpose;
 - (c) the maintenance in the harbour area of adequate police forces, specially trained and equipped, which should keep in touch with the other supervising bodies.
- 5. For the better protection of foreign seamen, measures should be taken to facilitate--
 - (a) their relations with their consuls; and
 - (b) effective co-operation between consuls and the local or national authorities.

Part III. Health

- 6. Soliciting and enticing, whether directly or indirectly, in the neighbourhood of the harbour and in districts frequented by seamen should be energetically repressed.
- 7. All suitable measures should be taken to make known to seamen entering the port, irrespective of their nationality--
 - (a) the dangers and means of preventing diseases to which they are exposed, including more particularly tuberculosis and tropical and venereal diseases;
 - (b) the necessity for persons suffering from disease to undergo treatment and the facilities available for such treatment; and
 - (c) the dangers arising from the habit of using narcotics.
- 8. The treatment of seamen suffering from disease should be facilitated by suitable measures including--
 - (a) as wide extension as possible, especially in the dock area, of free and continued treatment for venereal diseases, as provided, for example, by the Agreement concerning Facilities to be given to Merchant Seamen for the Treatment of Venereal Diseases, signed at Brussels, 1 December 1924;
 - (b) the admission of seamen to clinics and hospitals in ports, without difficulty and irrespective of nationality or religious belief;

- (c) as wide application as possible to foreign seamen of the provision made for the protection of nationals against tuberculosis;
- (d) the provision, whenever possible, of arrangements, designed to ensure, when necessary, continuation of treatment with a view to supplementing the medical facilities available to seamen.

Part IV. Accommodation and Recreation

- 9. Arrangements should be made, at least in the larger ports, for the material and general assistance of seamen while in the port and such arrangements should more particularly include--
 - (a) the institution or development of seamen's hostels of a satisfactory character and furnishing suitable board and lodging at reasonable prices;
 - (b) the institution or development of institutes--which might be distinct from the seamen's hostels, but should keep as far as possible in touch with them--providing meeting and recreation rooms (canteens, rooms for games, libraries, etc.);
 - (c) the organisation, where possible in co-operation with ships' sports clubs, of healthy recreations, such as sports, excursions, etc.;
 - (d) the promotion, by every possible means, of the family life of seamen.

Part V. Savings and Remittance of Wages

- 10. In order to help seamen to save and to transmit their savings to their families--
 - (a) there should be adopted a simple, rapid and safe system, operating with the assistance of consuls, masters, shipowners' agents or reliable private institutions, for enabling seamen, and more especially those who are in a foreign country, to deposit or remit the whole or part of their wages;
 - (b) a system for enabling seamen, at the time of their signing on or during the voyage, to allot, if they so desire, a proportion of their wages for remittance at regular intervals to their families should be instituted or made of more general application.

Part VI. Information for Seamen

- 11. In view of the fact that the success of most of the measures recommended above must depend to a large extent on suitable publicity among seamen, such publicity should be organised and undertaken by the public authorities, the bodies referred to in Part I of this Recommendation, and the competent associations, assisted as far as possible by the ship's officers and doctor and by ships' sports clubs.

- 12. Such publicity might include--
 - (a) the distribution on shore and, subject to the consent of the master, on board ship, of pamphlets in the most appropriate languages giving clear information as to the facilities available for seamen in the port of call or in the next ports for which the ship is bound;
 - (b) the creation in the larger ports of information offices, either at shipping offices or elsewhere, easily accessible to seamen and staffed by persons capable of giving directly such explanations or guidance as may be useful;
 - (c) the inclusion of some useful information for the physical well-being and general protection of seamen in seamen's books, discharge books or other documents habitually carried by seamen, or in notices posted in a conspicuous place in the crew's quarters;
 - (d) the frequent publication of articles of general and educational interest to seamen in periodicals read by seamen, both of specialised and general interest, and also the use of the cinema for this purpose;
 - (e) the distribution of information concerning the tariffs of local transport and of local places of interest and entertainment.

Part VII. Equality of Treatment

- 13. Governments, authorities and organisations which may have to administer funds for the welfare of seamen are specially urged not to concern themselves solely with seamen of a particular nationality, but to act as generously as possible in the spirit of international solidarity.