



STATEMENTS 2011

Opening Address at the Training on Inspection in the Application of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006

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- Secretary Baldoz, Undersecretary Cacdac, Director Valderrama and Officials of the Department of Labor and Employment
- Ms Banawis and Ms Romero, National Trainers from DOLE and MARINA
- Officials representing shipowners, manning agencies and seafarers in the Philippines
- Our colleagues from ILO Geneva – Cleo, Dani, and from ILO Manila - Diane and Alice.
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, *magandang umaga!*

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the training for inspectors on the application of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006

The Philippines plays an important role on the global maritime stage. Seafarers throughout the world leave their families, their communities and their country in order to provide a better life for themselves and their loved ones. In fact, one out of every five seafarers in the world is a Filipino.

Adopted in 2006, the MLC aims to improve the lives of seafarers through decent and productive work. For shipowners and governments, the Convention promotes fairer competition and marginalizes substandard operations.

Often referred to as the “super convention”, the MLC consolidates up-to-date ILO maritime instruments into a single Convention designed to improve relevance of the standards based on the needs of all the stakeholders in the maritime sector.

The MLC sets minimum standards for almost all aspects of a seafarer's working life:

- minimum standards regarding work on board ship,
- conditions of employment,
- hours of work and rest,
- repatriation,
- accommodation,
- recreational facilities, food and catering,
- health protection, medical care, welfare and social security protection.

In the Philippines, the ILO recognizes the efforts and initiatives of those involved to promote the ratification and implementation of the MLC in the country.

In the standards setting process, the Philippines played a major role at the Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference held in 2004.

The Philippines was also an active participant at the International Labour Conference in 2006, where the MLC was adopted. During the conference, Secretary Baldoz made a valuable contribution when she chaired one of the challenging topics of the Convention.

Following the adoption of the MLC, the ILO High Level Tripartite Mission visited the Philippines. The Mission to the Philippines provided an opportunity to discuss key issues and concerns of maritime stakeholders from international to domestic shipping.

The Mission helped set the framework of subsequent consultations, by providing guidelines and highlighting options as well as flexibilities provided by the MLC while taking into account major concerns of domestic shipping in the country.

During the Mission, maritime constituents agreed on follow up actions, specifically:

- To continue dialogue with stakeholders;
- To prepare a matrix on the extent to which domestic shipping meets the requirement of the MLC; and
- To identify areas for ILO assistance.

The ILO also supported the Philippine government, through the Department of Labor and Employment in reviewing gaps and identifying solutions in policies and laws vis-à-vis the requirements of the MLC.

The Philippines has been moving forward in exploring effective implementation of the MLC once ratified. Based on the request of the Philippines for an in-country training programme, the ILO has responded by bringing together experts to this four-day training for inspectors.

Over the last 50 years, there has been a tremendous increase in the level of world trade, largely due to considerable increase in productivity in the shipping industry. Today, the maritime industry moves nearly 90 per cent of all world trade. Nevertheless, as a highly globalized industry, the sector was not immune to the impact of the global financial crisis.

In response to the crisis, governments, employers' and workers' representatives unanimously adopted the Global Jobs Pact at the International Labour Conference in 2009.

The Pact is currently being used in a number of countries to guide national and international policies. The Global Jobs Pact is about promoting jobs and protecting people through ensuring decent and productive work.

The Department of Labour with the social partners is currently in the process of developing a Philippines Job Pack as part of the country's Medium Term Development Plan.

Under the Pact, labour standards "create a basis for and support rights at work. They contribute to building a culture of social dialogue particularly useful in times of crisis." Again, rights at work and social dialogue are critical and irreplaceable elements to addressing the crisis.

The MLC provides an innovative and integrated approach to achieving decent and productive work for all seafarers, wherever they work and wherever they call home. Poor working conditions and sustainable and productive shipping simply do not go hand in hand in a globalized maritime industry. Without decent work productivity growth and stability within the sector is simply not attainable.

The MLC helps decrease vulnerability and improve sustainable productivity growth of seafarers and the maritime industry as a whole.

The MLC also helps guard against a downward spiral in the working and living conditions of seafarers while fostering economic growth and promoting fair competition.

Ratification and then implementation of the MLC will be the next challenges. However, with any challenge that is tackled collectively there shared dividends for Filipino seafarers, the maritime industry and the country as whole.

Despite the long process there have been many positive developments. The creation of a Maritime Industry Tripartite (MITC) early this year, which shows the country's commitment to move the MLC forward and the Philippine government together with representatives of seafarers and shipowners also adopted an Action Plan for the ratification of the MLC.

As the ILO Country Director, I have witnessed first-hand the level of commitment being made by the government and the social partners. Based on this, I can confirm the ILO team in Manila, Bangkok and Geneva stands ready to support you in your efforts towards the ratification and implementation of the MLC.

By working together, we can secure economic interests in fair competition for shipowners that contribute significantly to sustainable development not just at the national but also at the global level.

At the same time, we can help ensure decent and productive work for seafarers wherever they work or call home.

Thank you and *Mabuhay!*

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