

## **Seafarers' Identity Documents: Cooperation with ISO**

The ISO/IEC 24713-3 standard is completely technically compatible with ILO Convention No. 185 but addresses, through the use of multiple other technical standards, some of the complex details that will arise once SIDs are issued by a large number of different competent authorities and are verified by port and border control authorities around the world. This includes additional details in the standardization of the bar-code content, the biometric data, the national databases and the infrastructure needed for communication between different issuing authorities and those who may wish to verify the authenticity of a SID. One of the most significant enhancements suggested by this standard is the use of an optional digital signature block at the end of the data in the two-dimensional barcode to allow automated verification of a document's authenticity. Another is the creation of a focal point to coordinate secure communications between each verification point (usually a border control station at an air or sea port) and the national electronic databases of all the SID-issuing authorities. This would allow automated electronic verification of SIDs and greatly reduce the burden of maintaining the 24/7 national focal points required by Convention No. 185.

The Office plans to organize a meeting of governments from member States that have ratified Convention No. 185 or which are seriously considering ratification, along with representatives from the International Shipping Federation and the International Transport Workers' Federation. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the details of the new ISO/IEC 24713-3 standard and consider whether its technical recommendations should be followed. Specifically, the question of how to organize the focal point coordination centre and whether or not its benefits outweigh its costs will be discussed. On the basis of the outcome of this meeting, a series of proposals will be prepared for the Governing Body that will address the ways in which the ILO should respond to the ISO/IEC 24713-3 document and the infrastructure which it recommends for facilitating the implementation of Convention No. 185.

Given the significant event of a unanimous vote by the ISO/IEC JTC-1 national bodies in support of a standard to facilitate Convention No. 185 and the cooperation of the International Maritime Organization and the ICAO, it seems that momentum is building beyond traditional ILO participants for a secure, biometric means of identifying seafarers. Convention No. 185 provides this, whereas Convention No. 108 did not. This is why all Members are being encouraged to move forward with their ratification of Convention No. 185 and issuance of biometric-enabled SIDs as specified in the Convention.