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SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
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Agenda item 13

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DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES FOR RATINGS

Preliminary proposals

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document reviews the current position and provides preliminary proposals for the development of competences for ratings

Action to be taken: Paragraph 18

Related documents: MSC 77/26, STW 34/14, STW 34/13/1

Background

1 The Sub-Committee, at its thirty-fourth session (24 to 28 February 2003), received a report providing an update on developments at ILO with respect to the consolidation of ILO maritime conventions (STW 34/13/1) and noted that the Secretary-General had received a letter from the ILO Director-General seeking agreement, in principle, to the provisions dealing with the qualifications of Able Seamen, now found in the ILO's Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (No. 74) (in force 1951) (annex 1) being subsumed within the STCW Convention.

2 In considering the proposal, a number of delegations expressed support for the principle of all international training requirements being in one instrument, preferably the STCW Convention, but expressed the view that the provisions would require revision before any inclusion in the STCW Convention. The majority of delegations, which spoke, however, did not support the transfer of the existing ILO provisions on able seamen to the STCW Convention as it was premature in light of the fact that the ILO provisions on the qualifications of seafarers to work at sea are still under discussion at ILO as an aspect of its on-going work on the draft consolidated maritime labour convention 2005.

3 The Committee, at its seventy-seventh session (28 May to 6 June 2003), considered the views of the Sub-Committee (STW 34/14, paragraphs 13.16 to 13.22) and agreed (MSC 77/26, paragraph 12.16) that the Sub-Committee should consider:

- .1 the outcome of the ILO discussions on the Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (No.74);

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- .2 the existing ILO provisions and the specific competences for training and certification of able seamen which might be included in the STCW Convention, in order that a fuller analysis of the situation could be made; and
- .3 to report the outcome of its discussions to MSC 78.

4 The Committee therefore included a new high priority item on Development of competences for ratings in the Sub-Committee's work programme and provisional agenda for STW 35.

OUTCOME OF ILO DISCUSSIONS ON THE CERTIFICATION OF ABLE SEAMEN CONVENTION, 1946

5 Since the report to STW 34 on developments at ILO, the ILO High-level Tripartite Working Group held another meeting (30 June to 4 July 2003) and considered a provisional draft text of the proposed consolidated convention. Following this meeting, a revised preliminary second draft text has been prepared and reviewed by the Officers of the High-level Tripartite Working Group. This text will be considered at the next meeting of the Group to be held in Nantes, France, from 19 to 23 January 2004 (the week immediately preceding STW 35).

6 The mandatory provisions in the **preliminary second draft** convention text that relate to the standards for seafarer training and qualifications are contained in Regulation 1.3 – *Training and qualifications* and its associated mandatory Standard – A1.3 – *Training and qualifications*. The Regulation applies to all seafarers and prohibits seafarers from working on ships unless they are trained or certified or otherwise qualified for the duties they are to perform. The regulations exempt Members bound by requirements in other international instruments (i.e., STCW). The Standard requires in paragraph 3 that a seafarer who is to be engaged as an able seafarer (ILO has provisionally adopted the term “able seafarer” in this draft to refer to able seaman) must be qualified and found competent for this position in accordance with requirements set out in the laws and regulations of the Member concerned. When evaluating a seafarer's qualifications for these positions the competent authority is required to give due consideration to the non – mandatory Guideline B1.3 – *Training and qualifications*, section B1.3.1 - *Certificates of qualification as an able seafarer*. The **preliminary second draft** consolidated convention texts, based on the existing provisions (annex 1) are reproduced at annex 2.

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

Requirements for certification as able seaman

7 The Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (ILO No. 74), came into force in 1951. Currently 28 Members¹ of ILO are party to the Convention, with the latest ratification in 2000. Aside from requiring an examination to establish minimum competency, ILO Convention No. 74 leaves the specific content of training and competency programmes up to the national governments. It focuses primarily with minimum safety-related requirements, minimum age and a period of minimum service at sea.

8 The text of Convention No. 74 is essentially reproduced in section B1.3.1 of the Code to the preliminary second draft of the consolidated maritime labour convention. The ILO has taken the view that, at this point, significant changes to the text of Convention No. 74 should not be made in light of the suggestion that IMO might address the question of training and qualifications for seafarers now classified as able seamen. The focus of the ILO preliminary second draft

¹ Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Serbia & Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, The Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom, United States.

convention is on requiring that all seafarers be trained and competent for their jobs as minimum job qualification, as opposed to delineating the training required (other than on board safety life-saving-related requirements). In addition to providing guidance on a candidate's minimum age and sea experience for certification as able seafarer, section B1.3.1 requires an examination to provide a practical test of a candidate's knowledge of seamanship and of his/her ability to carry out effectively all the duties that may be required of an able seafarer, including those of a lifeboatman. It is sufficient for seafarers to meet this latter requirement by holding a special lifeboatman's certificate as originally provided for in SOLAS 1974, regulation III/10, or by meeting a corresponding provision of any subsequent Convention revising or replacing that Convention. In the preliminary second draft text of the ILO consolidated maritime convention there are, therefore, no mandatory international standards of competence for certification as an able seafarer.

9 The certificate of lifeboatman has now been superseded by the requirements in STCW regulation VI/2, STCW Code section A-VI/2 and Table A-VI/2-1 for the issue of a certificate of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats. The STCW Convention does not contain any provisions on seamanship or any description of the duties required of an able seaman. As the ILO Convention (No.74) also does not prescribe these provisions, this part of the competence for seafarers certificated as able seaman/seafarers will be determined on a national basis. The Sub-Committee may therefore wish to consider the possible wide variation in competence between seafarers of different nations when selecting international ships' crews.

Relevance of continued use of the term 'able seaman'

10 The minimum monthly basic pay or wage for able seamen is contained in an existing recommendation – the Seafarers' Wages, Hours of Work and the Manning of Ships Recommendation, 1996 (No.187). The actual minimum sum is set periodically by the ILO Joint Maritime Commission and applies only to able seamen. The preliminary second draft text of the consolidated convention incorporates Recommendation No. 187 by providing for the minimum wage for able seafarers in the non- mandatory Guideline B2.2, section B2.2.1(e) where it defines able seafarers for purposes of the Guideline as, any seafarer of either sex who is deemed competent to perform any duty which may be required of a rating serving in the deck department, other than the duties of a supervisory or specialist rating, or who is defined as such by national laws, regulations or practice or by collective agreement. This definition is drawn from the text of Recommendation No.187, paragraph 9. Minimum wages for able seafarers as determined by the Joint Maritime Commission are provided for in B2.2.4.

11 The rating 'able seaman' continues to be used extensively in the international merchant fleet. From information extracted from the Seafarers' International Research Centre (SIRC), Cardiff, UK, database covering over 96,000 seafarers, approximately 15% of all seafarers on board are categorized as able seamen. In the sample analyzed (see annex 3), the average number of ratings on board is 10.1, of which 3.2 are able seamen.

12 In view of the arguments in paragraph 10 and 11 above, in any consideration of the development of competences for ratings for inclusion in the STCW Convention, it would appear necessary to retain the term 'able seaman' or a similar terminology which would, apart from providing the competences which would satisfy the principles of the STCW Convention, would also provide the international benchmark for negotiations between the representatives of employers and seafarers.

Transfer of existing ILO able seamen provisions to the STCW Convention

13 As noted in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, the existing provisions of the Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (No.74) have been transferred to the non-mandatory Guidelines in the preliminary second draft text of the consolidated convention. Direct transfer of the existing ILO provisions to the STCW Convention does not, therefore, appear to be appropriate since their purpose is primarily to provide guidance, in the case of able seamen, on the way to implement the more general requirement that all seafarers must be trained and qualified for their duties on board ship.

STCW Code

14 The STCW Code contains the standards of competence required to be demonstrated by candidates for the issue of certificates. The Code also identifies three levels of responsibility in the standards of competence given in chapters II, III and IV: management, operational and support levels. The only standards of competence specifically identified for the support level are those for watch ratings. The level of responsibility is not specified in relation to the standards of competence given in chapters V and VI but the basic training in STCW Code section A-VI/1, paragraph 2 implicitly includes all levels of ratings. The standards regarding special training requirements for personnel on tankers and passenger ships in chapter V do however apply, as appropriate, to ratings.

Development of competences for ratings

15 At the Sub-Committee's 34th session, a number of delegations drew attention to the fact that most of the requirements for training of able seamen were now to be found in chapters II and VI of the STCW Code (STW 34/14, paragraph 13.21). As there are no definitions of rank, except for watch ratings, in the STCW Code at the operational level, preliminary proposals for possible support levels based on existing STCW Code requirements have been tabulated at annex 4 to form the basis of possible discussion.

16 As part of the ILO requirements for certification as an able seaman are contained in the STCW Convention and Code, the Sub-Committee may wish to consider developing any necessary additional elements of competence necessary to meet the ILO guidance on standards of training for able seamen. The Sub-Committee may wish to base its consideration of seamanship and related tasks appropriate to the able seaman on those items listed in annex 5. In addition, the Sub-Committee may also wish to develop, on the basis of the standards of competence in the STCW Code, standards of competence for seafarers at the support level other than able seamen.

17 One further option may be to await the outcome of the ILO discussions and refer the issue of the development of competences for ratings to an ILO/IMO joint group (e.g. the Joint Committee on Training) for consideration with a request to provide advice to both Organizations on the appropriate standards to be applied.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

18 The Sub-Committee is invited to:

- .1 note the outcome of the discussions at ILO to date with respect to training and qualifications of able seamen/seafarers (paragraphs 5 and 6);

- .2 note that in the **preliminary second draft** text of ILO's consolidated maritime labour convention there are no mandatory international standards for certification as able seaman/seafarer, although there is a requirement that seafarers be trained or certified as competent or otherwise qualified for their duties on board ship and a further requirement that there be national requirements regarding the competence of able seafarers, with guidance provided (reflecting ILO Convention No. 74) as to the implementation of that obligation (paragraph 8);
- .3 note the need to retain the term 'able seaman' or similar terminology as it continues to be used extensively throughout the world merchant fleet (paragraphs 10 to 12);
- .4 endorse the proposal that the transfer of the **existing** ILO provisions for able seamen to the STCW Convention is not appropriate as the intention of ILO is to only provide guidance on training and qualification standards, the details of which are left to national law (paragraph 13); and
- .5 consider the preliminary proposals for the development of competences for ratings (paragraphs 15 to 17 and annexes 4 and 5).

ANNEX 1**Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (No. 74)*****Article 2***

1. The competent authority shall make arrangements for the holding of examinations and for the granting of qualifications.
2. No person shall be granted a certificate of qualification unless-
 - (a) he has reached a minimum age to be prescribed by the competent authority;
 - (b) he has served at sea in the deck department for a minimum period to be prescribed by the competent authority; and
 - (c) he has passed an examination of proficiency to be prescribed by the competent authority.
3. The prescribed minimum age shall not be less than eighteen years.
4. The prescribed minimum of service at sea shall not be less than thirty-six months: Provided that the competent authority may-
 - (a) permit persons with a period of actual service at sea of not less than twenty-four months which have successfully passed through a course of training in an approved training school to reckon the time spent in such training, or part thereof, as sea service; and
 - (b) permit persons trained in approved seagoing training ships which have served eighteen months in such ships to be certificated as able seamen upon leaving in good standing.
5. The prescribed examination shall provide a practical test of the candidate's knowledge of seamanship and of his ability to carry out effectively all the duties that may be required of an able seaman, including those of a lifeboatman; it shall be such as to qualify a successful candidate to hold the special lifeboatman's certificate provided for in Article 22 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1929, or in the corresponding provision of any subsequent Convention revising or replacing that Convention for the time being in force for the territory concerned.

ANNEX 2

**EXTRACTS FROM THE PRELIMINARY SECOND DRAFT OF THE ILO
CONSOLIDATED MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION TEXT**

Regulation 1.3 - Training and qualifications

Purpose: To ensure that seafarers are qualified and have access to required training

1. Seafarers shall not work on a ship unless they are trained or certified as competent or otherwise qualified to perform their duties. (modified C.53A3/1)
2. [The operational and safety training requirements of this Regulation primarily apply to seafarers forming part of the ships' crew responsible for the safe operation of the ship.
3. Seafarers, other than those referred to in paragraph 2, shall not be permitted to work on a ship unless they have successfully completed a training programme for personal safety on board ship [and meet applicable national training requirements relevant to their position].]*

Standard A1.3 – Training and qualifications (extract only)

3. A seafarer who is to be engaged as an able seafarer or a ships' cook must be qualified and found competent for these positions in accordance with requirements set out in the laws and regulations of the Member concerned. When evaluating a seafarer's qualifications for these positions the competent authority shall give due consideration to the Guidelines dealing with qualifications in Part B of this Code.

4. [Members shall ensure that seafarers with responsibility for the ships' operations that work on board ships that fly their flag have the opportunity to benefit from initial [and ongoing] training that will enable them to perform their shipboard duties.]

B1.3.1 Certificates of qualification as an able seafarer***Guideline B1.3 - Training and qualifications***

B1.3.1 [Implementation of Standard A1.3: Certificates of qualification

1. The competent authority should make arrangements for the holding of examinations and for the granting of certificates of qualification. (C.74A2/1)
2. Seafarers should only be granted a certificate of qualification if they have:
 - (a) reached a minimum age of 18;
 - (b) served at sea in the deck department for a minimum period to be prescribed by the competent authority; and

* The square brackets in the text are from the draft ILO text and are used by ILO to indicate points where further discussion in the High-level Tripartite Working Group is required.

- (c) passed an examination of proficiency to be prescribed by the competent authority. (C.74A2/2)
- 3. The prescribed minimum period of service at sea should not be less than [36 months]. The competent authority may, however –
 - (a) permit seafarers with a period of actual service at sea of [not less than 24 months who have successfully passed through a course of training in an approved training school to reckon the time spent in such training, or part thereof, as sea service;] and
 - (b) [permit seafarers trained in approved seagoing training ships who have served 18 months in such ships to be certificated as an able seafarer upon leaving in good standing. (C.74A2/4)]
- 4. The prescribed examination should provide a practical test of the candidate's knowledge of seamanship and of his or her ability to carry out effectively all the duties that may be required of an able seafarer including those of a lifeboatman; it shall be such as to qualify a successful candidate to hold the special lifeboatman's certificate provided for in Chapter III Regulation 10 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, or in the corresponding provision of any subsequent Convention revising or replacing that Convention for the time being in force for the territory concerned. (C.74A2/5)]

ANNEX 3**STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

From an analysis of information contained in the SIRC database, there are 96400 seafarers in total recorded of which 51649 (53.6%) are Ratings and 14411 (14.9%) are categorised as able seaman (AB).^{**}

Average no of Seafarers per ship:	18.79
Average no of Ratings per ship:	10.10
Average no of ABs per ship:	3.20

Sample data

Flag	% Ratings	% AB
Panama	54.08	14.14
Liberia	56.06	14.62
Malta	55.75	14.88
Cyprus	56.63	15.26
Bahamas	54.24	14.45
Norway (NIS)	55.17	13.20
Greece	58.48	19.13
Antigua & Barbuda	56.14	17.78
Russian Federation	41.07	7.65
Germany	59.37	19.12

^{**} Source: SIRC database 2003

ANNEX 4

MINIMUM STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE FOR RATINGS AT THE SUPPORT LEVEL

	Standard of competence (STCW Code ref.)	Minimum age	Sea experience	Additional national standards of competence to meet ILO Convention requirements
Level 3	1. Watch rating (A-II/4 or A-III/4) 2. Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (A-VI/2) 3. Basic training (A-VI/1-1 to 4) 4. Familiarization training (A-VI/1)	16 18	6 months 12 months	For certification as able seaman: 18 years of age + knowledge of seamanship and ability to carry out duties of an able seaman + 36 months sea service or 24 months plus approved training or 18 months on training ship
Level 2	1. Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (A-VI/2) 2. Basic training (A-VI/1-1 to 4) 3. Familiarization training (A-VI/1)	18	12 months	For certification as able seaman: --as above --
Level 1	1. Basic training (A-VI/1-1 to 4) 2. Familiarization training (A-VI/1)			None specified

Note:

Special training requirements for ratings on tankers and passenger ships are additionally required for some ratings under the provisions of STCW Code chapters V and VI.

ANNEX 5

EXTRACT FROM ILO/IMO DOCUMENT FOR GUIDANCE, 1985

Annotated by references to the existing provisions in the STCW Convention and including possible additions and deletions

ABLE SEAMAN'S CERTIFICATE (section 26)

In addition to the requirement for an able seaman to hold an appropriate certificate of proficiency in survival craft any training leading to qualification for an able seaman certificate should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the subjects contained in the following appendix:

- 1 Knowledge of magnetic and gyro-compasses, methods of changing over from automatic pilot to hand steering and vice versa
[STCW section A-II/4, Table A-II/4].
- 2 The ability to steer and understand helm orders
[STCW section A-II/4, Table A-II/4].
- 3 The ability to keep a proper lookout and report bearings both relative and true
[STCW section A-II/4, Table A-II/4].
- 4 ~~Streaming, reading and hauling in a patent log.~~
[outdated].
- 5 Ship cleanliness and personal hygiene.
- 6 Knowledge of ropes and wires, and the ability to make common knots and splices.
[could be expanded with seamanship to include the above and other items such as rigging a pilot ladder, securing the deck for heavy weather, closing and opening of hatches and watertight doors, etc.]
- 7 Basic principles of fire fighting and use of fire-fighting equipment
[STCW section A-VI/1, Table A-VI/1-2].
- 8 First aid, health hazards and personal safety
[STCW section A-VI/1-1, Tables A-VI/1-1, VI/1-3 and VI/1-4].
- 9 Emergency procedures
[STCW section A-VI/1, Table A-VI/1-4].
- 10 Safe working practices [STCW section A-VI/1, Table A-VI/1-4].