

Globalisation affects today's seafarers

*Hon Peter Morris, Chairman
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Seafarers are the vital human element in the global mosaic that is international shipping. While 85 to 90% of the industry is quality shipping meeting the international standards for safety and personnel there is a dark side.

That dark side is the sub standard sector where the relentless pressure for lower freight rates and higher profits has led to many thousands of seafarers being cheated, abused, exploited and traded like cattle, so becoming the freight fodder of today's shipping world.

They are the people most in need of the support, comfort and assistance provided by Apostleship of the Sea, (A O S) its fellow welfare organisations and trade unions like the International Transport Workers Federation (I T F).

They are the people whose suffering cries out for governments, the shipping industry and its customers to eradicate sub standard shipping and its sub standard practices.

How globalisation affects the lives, careers, health, families, faith and wellbeing of seafarers is the theme of Congress discussions over the next few days.

We have a great deal of ground to cover.

This morning I want to tell you something of:

- The Inquiry carried out by the International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) and our report entitled "Ships, Slaves and Competition."
- The responses by governments and industry to our report and its recommendations.
- The background to the globalisation of seafarers, demand for seafarers and opportunities.
- Offshore registries
- The role of manning agencies.
- The outlook for seafarers from developing countries
- The role of cargo owners in the reform of labour practices.
- The impact of 911. Should crews be kept captive?
- Are they the risk or do the risks come in pinstriped suits?

I understand copies of our report Ships, Slave and Competition and the Executive Summary brochure have been made available to delegates.

If you did not receive a copy I have a limited number with me. If these are insufficient, let me have your address later and on my return to Australia I will post a copy to you.

The International Commission on Shipping was initiated by the International Transport Workers Federation in 1999 to:

- 1 Investigate and appraise the current approach used by governments, industry and interested parties to achieve compliance with international minimum safety, environmental and social requirements;

- 2 Examine whether current approaches are in line with applicable international law, especially the U N Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- 3 Recommend an appropriate compliance/enforcement strategy that encompasses both the regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

While the I T F met most of the cash costs we received considerable “in kind” support from a wide range of government maritime agencies worldwide.

We presented our report entitled “Ships, Slaves and Competition” at the APEC Symposium on Safer Shipping in Sydney, Australia on 6th March 2001.

We have been heartened by the generally positive responses to the report albeit that a few personalities had difficulty in coming to terms with the reality that thousands of seafarers today suffer exploitation and abuse in the course of their employment. Hence the mention of Slaves in the title.

We did try to give greater prominence to human issues rather than follow past practice of giving priority attention to metals, machinery and corrosion rates of steels.

Our 43 recommendations were mainly in two groups—one dealing with port state control and the other dealing with seafarers and their families.

We have been encouraged more by the direction of the responses to the report than by the detail. There was general support from government maritime agencies for port state inspections to ensure compliance with I L O 147.

However we are disappointed by the continuing failure of Japan, the second largest economy in the world and the host of the Tokyo Port State Control M O U, to inspect for compliance with ILO 147. We noted that Japan had ratified I L O 147 on 31.5.1983 almost twenty years ago.

Abandonment of seafarers was recognised as a problem, but not seen as a matter of urgency by some parties. Some states on the other hand already have repatriation measures in place for abandoned crews.

One industry organisation concluded that information on the abuse of crew members of cruise ships came from the I T F, implying that it did not have credibility. It preferred the denial that from the International Council of Cruise Lines.

That organisation seemed to be unaware or ignored the work of and the information that came from the clergy based seafarers welfare organisations of North America.

Port States gave general support to heavier penalties for ships detained with serious deficiencies and strong support for the rigorous application of I M O Assembly Resolutions A739 (18) and A789 (18) concerning the monitoring of their recognised Organisations.

There was strong support for the recommendations on transparency but some then qualified their support by falling back on the hoary old defence of “commercial confidentiality.” More recently there have been some indications that some of the major classification societies are relaxing that line.

We hope the declarations of support from Intertanko, Intercargo and Bimco for quality in shipping are the beginning of the new message that others including their members will be embracing.

In summary we are pleased with the responses we have received from industry, government maritime administrations and international agencies.

We believe that 85 to 90% of shipowners operate quality shipping and that Governments should ensure that all shipping meets the required international standards for decent treatment of crew and ship safety.

We are impatient that the reform actions essential to end the abuse and exploitation of seafarers are moving so slowly and we are impatient for the emergence of leaders from the cargo and shipping sectors to champion proper treatment of seafarers.

To finalise the work of the Commission a brief overview of the responses and reactions to our report will be released at the end of this year.

The Background to the Globalisation of Seafarers

Seafarers have long been global wanderers of their worlds. First with muscle, (oars) later with wind (sails) then with combinations of both until the age of steam gained superiority. Steam was overtaken by combustion engines, which in turn have been supplemented by turbines. Once upon a time little boys dreamt of growing up to become a ships Captain or Chief Engineer, travelling the oceans of the world, visiting faraway places, meeting fascinating people of other lands, spending time in mysterious ports, commanding the great ships of the seas and bringing home cargoes of foreign goods.

They would be admired for their courage and respected for their skills. Later they would move to important jobs ashore as honoured members of their communities.

Today those dreams have evaporated for most little boys of developed nations. Today they are more likely to be interested in becoming IT gurus and flying to exotic foreign destinations in a Boeing 747.

Before the 1970's the nations that built the ships, usually owned the ships, registered the ships, serviced the ships, crewed the ships, trained the crews, supervised the performance of crew and ships, and often provided the cargoes inbound or outbound.

After a career at sea the skilled mariners progressed ashore to become pilots, tug masters, harbour masters, managers of marine facilities and related professional services from law to education, regulation, accounting and insurance.

Then came the glut of shipping that followed the oil crisis of the 1970's and the desperate drive to cut costs.

This led owners to register their ships offshore so that crew costs could be cut by enabling owners to use foreign crews rather than their own higher paid nationals.

Article 91 of the Law of the Sea Convention states that "every state shall fix the conditions for the grant of its nationality to ships, for the registration of ships in its territory, and for the right to fly its flag. Ships have the nationality of the State whose flag they are entitled to fly.

There must exist a genuine link between the State and the ship."

However the definition of "a genuine link" has never been defined.

The growth of offshore flags provided an initial reduction in costs but severed the common link of citizenship between seafarers, trainers, employers, administrators, supervisors, ship owners and often cargo owners.

The rapid expansion in the use of crews from developing nations, especially ratings resulted in lower wage costs, often little training, minuscule monitoring of crew treatment and new flag states that exercised token supervision of the ships they registered.

These changes created a global market for the supply of seafarers with the major determinant being the price of labour. In the case of officers and engineers the industry was able to live off the then existing supply of OECD trained engineers and officers.

Over the years various non-OECD nations established maritime training institutions for officers and ratings. The quality and integrity of their operations varied widely and is reflected in the demand for their graduates.

In some cases shipping companies or shipping industry associations sponsored selected maritime training institutes in the Asia/Pacific region.

The supply of O E C D trained officers is aging out and it is not clear precisely where tomorrows supply of competent, committed ships officers and engineers will come from despite the expectations of a number of labour supply nations.

Opportunities for Seafarers

The Bimco Manpower Update of Year 2000 identified a worldwide shortage of 16000 competent engineers and officers, expected to reach 46,000 by the year 2010.

The same study estimated the world supply of seafarers in Year 2000 at 1,227,000 comprising 404,000 officers and 823,000 ratings.

The supply of ratings, 823,000 exceeded the demand by 264,000.

The authors of the Bimco Update made it clear that there was a paucity of precise reliable data on the numbers of seafarers employed or available from individual labour supply nations.

The general conclusion has been that there is a growing shortage of competent engineers and officers with a heavy and expanding oversupply of ratings.

In our report we set out on page 41 a table from the Bimco Update 2000 showing the top ten labour supply nations

This table shows Indonesia as the second largest supplier of labour in year 2000 providing 12% of the supply or 83,500 seafarers.

A recent I L O paper presented in Singapore lists 75,000 Indonesians as registered and holding a Seaman's book with 32,000 Indonesians as being employed on non-Indonesian ships.

Professor Tony Lane of the Seafarers Research Institute of Cardiff University in his recent study does not include Indonesia in the top 10 labour supplying countries for all ranks.

Likewise Professor Lane's work shows Philippines as the source of 28.5% of all ranks of seafarers compared to the 33% for all ranks listed in the Bimco table for Year 2000.

These variations in comparisons illustrate the looseness of the information available.

Professor Lane lists the top ten labour supply nations for all ranks of seafarers in the following order:

Philippines 28.5%; Russia 7.3%; Ukraine 6.2%; Poland 5.9%; China 5.4% ;India 5.0%; Greece 3.1%; South Korea 2.5%; Croatia 2.3%; Romania 2.0%.

The picture becomes more confused when we consider the recent reports on China, India and Philippines presented to the I L O in Singapore last July by Professor James McConville and Dr Heather Leggate.

They comment that there is an apparent huge oversupply situation in the Philippines where about 470,000 seafarers are listed as available for the 200,000 positions that are filled each year. Added to these figures is the claim of some manning agencies that 50 to 70% of the people they place on board ships are hotel staff. (eg cruise ships).

Being employed voyage-by-voyage breeds uncertainty and insecurity among seafarers. It creates a fear among many of not being rehired so making them vulnerable to pressure, intimidation and abuse from some manning agencies.

The duration of the employment on a voyage basis may be from 3 months to 12 months or more. This leads often to inappropriate comparisons with year round employment.

The market demand for seafarers may be coloured by cultural, competence, reliability or geographical preferences of ship managers and owners.

Preferences for seafarers may be linked to vessel ownership patterns.

At 1st January 2000 according to the UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2000 the two largest users of offshore registries were Greek owners with 88.173 million dwt and Japanese owners with 76.717 million dwt. The United States trailed third with 37.980 million dwt.

Greek owners comprised 12.4% of the Liberian registry; 72.3% of the Cyprus registry; 11.4% of the Panamanian registry; 19.1% of the Bahamian registry; 54.7% of the Malta registry; and 5.5% of the Vanuatu registry.

Japanese owners held 40.1% of the Panamanian registry, 30.0% of the Vanuatu registry, 6.1% of the Liberian registry and 1.8% of the Bahamian registry.

Japanese ship owners are known to have a strong preference for officers and ratings from the Philippines.

Again Professor Lane advised me that where ship managers preferences are concerned Greek owners always want Greek senior officers. Their next choice is for officers from the same region, which takes in Romania, Bulgaria, the Ukraine and Egypt.

Northern Europeans generally prefer other Northern Europeans including Eastern Europe especially Poland and the Baltic States. In addition Indian officers, especially senior officers are also highly regarded.

Southern Europeans from Spain, Portugal and Italy aim for Latin Americans if they cannot get their own nationals and there are increasing numbers being recruited from Cuba.

There is little public data on comparative skill levels but I believe there is an element of skill measurement in owners' preferences for labour supply.

Numbers of quality ship managers select and accredit specific training schools in Asia and more recently in Eastern Europe.

Turning to the general view that there is a growing oversupply of ratings Professor Lane makes the point that in his view there is not a surplus of properly trained and certificated ratings –but rather there are lot of people passing themselves off as ratings and towards the bottom end of the shipping market there are too many ship managers willing to take on anyone as long as they have two hands and feet.

He also made the comment there are quality ship management companies that regard the current standards as not good enough and operate their own training schools for their new recruits.

Another factor adding to the complexity of the global market for seafarers is the contracting sea service life of seafarers. The Bimco Update 2000 reported a 30% drop out rate among officer trainees.

This is aggravated by the fact that most Asian officers move to shore employment at age 50 and generally the age profile for seafarers is getting younger and younger. We were told in Manila that at 40 years of age one is too old for many jobs at sea.

Dr Leggate and Professor McConville reported that 76% of Filipino seafarers are between 25 and 44 years of age. Little opportunity exists for Filipinos beyond 45 years of age. They also reported that the average Chinese seafarer works at sea for from five to eight years.

The shortening sea service period means higher turnover of crew and increased training costs. However in many cases the costs of training are borne by the seafarer.

The continuing drive for younger personnel combined with the shorter sea service period has several consequences.

These include a reducing store of meaningful experience at sea, less stability in management and a loss of corporate knowledge arising from early retirements. These are costs that are not recoverable. Simultaneously these factors contribute to negative perceptions of seafaring as a career , making recruitment of genuine professionals harder and harder.

In all, the background to the Globalisation of seafarers and their employment is a tangled picture where good incomes compared to country of origin may be earned at sea by some and where much deception, deceit, abuse and exploitation is practised on others desperate to earn income. Sometimes I liken in my mind the ill treatment, cheating and exploitation of seafarers, especially from developing nations, to the spectacle of a wounded whale, floundering in sea being attacked from all sides by sharks, barracudas and piranhas.

Offshore Registries

The move by shipowners to offshore registries from the early 1970's was initially to reduce labour costs by hiring crew from developing nations at much lower wage rates.

Use of the Liberian registry by U S shipowners had enabled them to avoid the provisions of the Jones Act.

The flag state carries the responsibility of ensuring the vessels are safely operated, safely manned and that the seafarers are provided with safe, decent living and working conditions. It is responsible

for the manning certificate for the vessel and ensuring its Qualification Certificates are genuine and have integrity.

Under the broad umbrella of the Law of the Sea Convention Article 94 requires that flag states shall exercise effective jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical, social and labour matters over ships flying its flag and, in doing so, the flag state is required to conform to generally accepted international regulations, procedures and practices and to take any steps which may be necessary to secure their observance.

Unfortunately for many thousands of seafarers some Offshore Registries pay scant regard to their obligations towards seafarers. This is a major attraction for some ship owners to use those registries.

We know the difficulties of remoteness, accessibility, lack of effective administration, language, culture and delay that aggrieved seafarers may face if they have to seek compensation, injury or wage justice in the distant offshore flag state of their ship.

The barrier those difficulties create is an added reason why many owners place their ships on offshore registers.

It helps them to avoid their obligations for social and labour matters. A desire to escape liability, avoid or minimise tax and the ease of concealment of the identities of a ship's beneficial owners adds to the attraction of offshore registries.

Other shipowners see an offshore registry as an opportunity to exploit the oversupply of ratings from developing countries, people who are desperate to earn income and are vulnerable to the deception and deceit that flourishes among sectors of the shipping industry often aided and abetted by participating officials.

Owners know the Registries where if there is an incident, accident, collision, sinking or violence resulting in death or serious injury involving their ship there is little likelihood of the matter being thoroughly investigated or reported.

An infamous case was the Panamanian registered M V Glory Cape where the Indonesian radio operator Budi Santoso died in the sea near the ship several hours after being beaten with an iron bar by officers before he and his five ship mates jumped into the sea about 1.30am on the 1st November 1995 some 10 miles off Port Dampier, north west Australia.

To the best of my knowledge Budi Santosi's death has not been investigated, no one has been charged, the ship was sold, changed its name, changed its flag and sails on merrily, no care, no responsibility.

The case of the M V Glory Cape is an international scandal and it is an even greater scandal that the largest ship registry in the world is seen by some ship owners as a haven for illegal practices and avoidance of obligations to the seafarers they recruit.

Ship owners know also that if they do not wish to be particular about the qualifications of crew then Panamanian certificates are not hard to obtain.

Eg Chief Officer David Cockford a landlubber who became a certificated Panamanian Chief Officer by money and the mail.

The question that must be asked is who owns the ships that are registered in registries like Panama and who uses them?

The failure of most flag states to honour their obligations in respect of abandoned seafarers is another matter for concern. I note that a later speaker will cover this issue.

Some Registries hold their businesses out as providing a more efficient, better value commercial service to the shipping industry than their competitors and in some cases they do.

On the face of it that is simply trade and commerce at work. But why is it that given the responsibilities that flag states bear for seafarers and their certificates no flag state claims it offers the best services for seafarers?

No flag state gives priority to offering the best-trained seafarers and ensuring that the seafarers on ships wearing their flag receive their full entitlements and protections?

As things stand today in many flag states the dice are loaded against the seafarers.

The Role of Manning Agencies

The decline of the era where the people that owned the ships, managed the ships and hired their own crews saw the development of Ship Management firms and Manning Agencies.

As the supply of seafarers moved from the traditional maritime nations to India, the Far East and Asia the services of the manning agencies were gradually built into the system.

The wide variation in the quality of services provided by manning agencies led to quality shipping companies retaining their own crew recruitment and management services or establishing preferred relationships with selected manning agencies.

In the labour supply states with an oversupply of potential seafarers manning agencies can exercise quite powerful control over job seekers.

Certain manning agencies are major players in treating seafarers as commodities.

During the ICONS inquiry the activities of some manning agencies were a frequent subject of complaint from seafarers.

We were told of questionable links between training schools and manning agencies; the sale of jobs, non payment and underpayment of wages, seafarers being forced to sign double contracts, intimidation, deceit, forcing seafarers to pay their travel costs to and from their ship, manipulation of family remittances for exchange rate or interest benefit purposes and blacklisting of seafarers who approached unions for assistance.

Blacklisting has long been the scourge of seafarers in the Philippines where we were presented publicly with sheets of A4 papers entitled Watchlist that were similar to Police mug shots of convicted criminals.

The sheets listed the names, classification and photographs of the seafarers with these words printed at the foot of the sheets:

“The above seafarer should be considered UNDESIRABLE as he may destroy the integrity of your company and the manning industry as a whole.”

The most frequent “offense” listed against the seafarers was “ITF involvement”.

I know that many of you will have heard of similar practices in your homeports but they need to put on the public record again.

There is no doubt that some manning agencies are involved in the secret and illegal recruitment and transfer of people to other countries which in many cases involves the provision of fraudulent, forged or unearned Qualification Certificates.

There is no doubt also that the established procedures of some manning agencies for secretly moving people from one country to another, concealing identities and providing false documents will have to be addressed in the context of ship security and measures to authenticate the identity of seafarers. Hopefully this may help bring reform.

It is repugnant that in the debate on Globalisation economists, cargo owners, selected government officials and politicians gloss over the oppressed seafarers that are the victims of these manning agencies as **“elements in competitive shipping”**.

Despite the practices I have referred to being in contravention of ILO Conventions we were unable to find any evidence of disciplinary action taken against offending Manning Agencies.

Seafarers Welfare Support Services

An important component of international shipping are the support services provided to international seafarers by the Apostleship of the Sea, Stella Maris, Casa Del Marino, the Missions to Seafarers, the International Sailors Society and the Center for Seafarers Rights.

While most of these organisations see their primary role as Chaplaincy they are frequently involved in providing contact with families and friends at home, counselling, access to medical care, legal advice, guidance on personal, financial and safety problems. On occasions they are called upon to provide food and basic toiletry items.

Often they are the first port of call for visiting seafarers who are under stress, fearful, lonely, unpaid, intimidated, cheated and maybe abused. I am sure many of you could relate first hand experiences on these matters.

The services provided by the Welfare organisations are essential to the operation of international shipping services so the question arises who should meet the cost of providing these essential services?

We know of the wonderful work that is performed by voluntary organisations and their staff around the world in providing a welcome, comfort and help to visiting seafarers who constitute the workforce of international shipping.

They meet their expenses through local fund raising, contributions from local communities, port authorities, maritime related businesses and from shipping companies.

The beneficiaries of their efforts are the cargo owners, port authorities or companies and ship owners. In fact all those interests who earn income from or use international shipping services.

When the International Commission on Shipping was gathering information during year 2000 we were told of the similar fund raising methods utilised from port to port.

We were told also of the hardships related to their staff and clergy by suffering seafarers, their appeals for help and the pledges to secrecy for fear of retribution.

When we discussed the need to ensure that the information was passed promptly to the relevant authorities some people then stated that was not the role of their organisation.

They said that if they were to do anything like that then some of their committee members drawn from the shipping industry might be offended and stop their donations. This experience led us in the direction of our recommendations 31,32 and 33.

We stated in paragraph 3.119 of Ships, Slaves and Competition that we believed that “the port State and port authorities have a responsibility to ensure that missions have the financial resources needed to assist visiting international seafarers where required.

A small levy on port cargo or international shipping movements would be a simple and inexpensive means of raising such funds.”

Our recommendation 31 stated, “Port state authorities establish toll free telephone services to enable ships’ crews and others to confidentially alert port state control authorities to safety deficiencies and crew related problems.”

Our Recommendation 32 stated, “Port state control authorities establish standing consultation arrangements with pilots, port authorities, unions and seafarers missions who could be expected to become aware at an early stage of the arrival of sub-standard ships.”

Recommendation 33 stated, “Port state and port authorities introduce measures to provide a significant proportion of the costs of seafarers missions’ support services for international seafarers.”

I understand the reticence that some members of welfare organisations have towards passing on information on abuses and unsafe ships.

I understand also the role that seafarers’ welfare support service organisations may play in the exposure of the exploitation of crews of sub standard ships.

However I want to see the importance and value of your services given much greater recognition and financial support by governments, shipping and its customers.

Cargo owners and ship owners benefit from the services of volunteer seafarers welfare groups. Put bluntly if they do not contribute then they are preying on the good will of local charity workers to support the crews of the ships that carry their goods.

I want to see you go from this Congress determined to expose the evils of substandard shipping, angry at the inhumanities being inflicted on seafarers in the name of competitive shipping and determined to arouse community support to eradicate sub standard shipping and its customers.

Seafarers Employment and Working Conditions

There are some 30 International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions and more than 20 recommendations that address sea transport. Of these the ILO 147 Convention of 1976 governing employment and accommodation conditions on board ship is the principal Convention.

At 22nd July 2002 a total of 43 nations covering 50.25% of the world fleet had ratified the Convention.

A Protocol to the Convention was adopted in 1996. Together they relate to minimum age, medical examinations, repatriation, articles of agreement, food and catering, accommodation, recruitment and placement, sickness and injury, prevention of occupational accidents, welfare, social security, and working hours.

It is worth noting that the world's largest registry Panama, has not ratified ILO and as I mentioned earlier, Japan, the nation that owns 40% of the tonnage under the Panamanian flag does not inspect for ILO147 compliance.

In a perfect world the International Safety management Code (ISM) would effectively address almost all human problems associated the operation of ships.

There are signs that the ISM code is having a beneficial effect but with stage II having only commenced on 1st July 2002 it is too early to see marked improvement.

However it has taken 26 years to get ratification of ILO 147 by less than a quarter of the ILO's membership covering half of the world's fleet.

The International Shipping Federation (ISF) in its latest Guidelines on Good Employment Practice states on page 4 that:

“For the large majority of seafarers, employment conditions at sea match, or in most cases comfortably exceed, those they could obtain in shore-based employment at home. Good employment conditions are crucial to the shipping industry's ability to attract and retain competent and well qualified seafarers.”

It goes on to state “Apart from general conditions of work, wage rates for most of the world's officers and ratings are generous by comparison with pay rates for similar occupations ashore.”

This situation is not what we are confronted with in the substandard shipping sector and it does not appear to apply to a significant area of international shipping.

Let me say that the numbers of dollars do not take into account the long periods of isolation, the increasingly onerous nature of officers' duties, the reducing sea service career of seafarers nor the added responsibilities placed upon officers.

The growing shortage of officers and the oft-repeated complaint from shipowners that it is difficult to recruit young people of the standard they require does not sit well with the Guidelines statement.

While the Guidelines provide sound advice for desirable practices in the employment of seafarers the challenge for the Federation is how to persuade all their shipowners to follow the Guidelines. Contrary to the opinion conveyed by sectors of the industry the Guidelines make the positive point that:

“the international shipping industry has not suffered greatly from major industrial disputes between employers and the seafarers they employ, and many employers maintain close contact with the trade unions which represent their seafarers. In these contacts, they have observed a number of general principles which have proved of benefit in the establishment of good employment relationships...”(which it lists).

Apostleship of the Sea deals with casualties of the imperfect world of shipping.

The cheating, exploitation, intimidation and coercion practised by some manning agencies and ship owners against seafarers in distress who seek union assistance to gain their rights is in total conflict with the ILO Conventions.

Almost 60 years ago (1944) an International Labour Conference in Philadelphia declared:

- Labour is not a commodity;
- Freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress;
- Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere;
- All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, economic security and equal opportunity.”

The Philadelphia Declaration was reinforced by the adoption in 1999 of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In terms of implementation however there is a long way to go.

The high incidence of non-compliance with ILO 147 and the abusive practices perpetrated against crew members has led to the tripartite initiative by Governments, Shipowners and Seafarers to simplify, streamline and consolidate existing Maritime Conventions into a single Convention that will be available for adoption by the International Maritime Conference in 2005.

But given the international procedures it will take anywhere from 6 to 9 years before it improves the working conditions for seafarers.

By that time most of the seafarers currently serving will have died or come ashore.

The glacial pace at which reform of industry practices proceed under international processes like ILO literally condemn serving seafarers to existing malpractices and their employers know that well.

A measure of the contempt operators and users of substandard shipping hold for the safety of seafarers and their blind faith in the continued seaworthiness of substandard ships can be seen from port state control statistics on detained ships.

Forty four per cent of deficiencies on ships detained by the Tokyo MOU in 2000-2001 were related to people safety. The deficiencies included Crew accommodation, food and catering, life saving appliances, fire safety measures, SOLAS and Marpol related operational deficiencies and ISM related deficiencies.

The comparable percentage for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for the same period was 42% and figures for the Paris MOU were also similar.

The ISM code was meant to eliminate issues of competence and poor care of seafarers. Again the figures point to a failure of a significant sector of shipping to comply with safe working to the detriment of crew members.

Much attention has been given to making shipping more accountable and transparent through the publication of information on Detained Ships.

Similar attention has not been directed to publishing information on work related illnesses and injuries or ill treatment of crew.

Land based industries use such information as a management tool to reduce the incidence of lost time and injury. In shipping but for a few P&I clubs the information is secret.

Again measures that could lead to avoidance of work related injuries and illnesses are blocked to the detriment of seafarers. We know that quality ship operators value good seafarers and want to see a decent treatment of seafarers. They train them well, they pay them well and they get loyalty and service in return.

In tomorrow's globalised world of shipping, shipowners will have to offer more attractive careers to young people than are available ashore if they are to succeed in recruiting the calibre of people the industry needs. It will be more a case of the carrot than the stick.

Let me summarise---this morning I have tried to tell you something of:

- The ICONS Inquiry and our report Ships, Slaves and Competition
- The reactions to the Report
- The background to the Globalisation of Seafarers
- Offshore Registries
- The role of Manning Agencies
- Seafarers Welfare Support Services
- Seafarers Employment & Working Conditions.

Time does not permit me to address the horrific practices associated with sectors of the international fishing industry. Suffice to say that the worst abuses that came to the attention of the Commission were associated with fishing.

There seemed to be more attention given by government agencies and Conservation Groups to protecting fish stocks than the lives of fishermen.

I would like to conclude with a reference to the aftermath of 9/11.

The tragedy of September 11th, has brought pressures to identify the origin and ownership of cargoes and ships destined for U S ports. Both the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the ILO are directly involved in developing the appropriate procedures.

There are long established sophisticated processes in the dark side of shipping and international fishing for the secret transfer of people, fraudulent documents, and money between nations that must be investigated if shipping is to be made secure.

Terrorism has been facilitated by the benign acceptance of secrecy in shipping.

A key target has to be selected manning agencies and ownership patterns of offshore flag states whose performance records are well known to governments.

At the same time I believe thought has to be given to easing the requirement that crew members be confined to ship when in a US port. Many seafarers are forced to spend long periods of isolation and loneliness away from home and family.

They desperately need the few hours ashore to make contact with family or just to be ashore or shop or to visit the nearest Apostleship of the Sea.

I sincerely hope that the measures to identify ships ownership or operational controllers and to authenticate the identity of seafarers can be used to smash the secrecy of the dark side of shipping and to end the exploitation of seafarers.

I will try to answer any questions that may be asked.