

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0099

Sabato 25.02.2006

## **INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 94ma SESSIONE (MARITTIMA) DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE DEL LAVORO**

### **INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 94ma SESSIONE (MARITTIMA) DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE DEL LAVORO**

Dal 7 al 23 febbraio 2006 si è svolta a Ginevra la 94ma sessione della Conferenza Internazionale del Lavoro, convocata per approvare la Convenzione sul Lavoro Marittimo che coordina e aggiorna le disposizioni di oltre 60 strumenti internazionali precedenti. La Santa Sede, tramite l'Osservatore Permanente presso l'Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro, S.E. Mons. Silvano Tomasi, C.S., ha salutato positivamente la conclusione dei lavori di redazione, incoraggiando gli Stati ad una rapida ratifica e applicazione della nuova Convenzione.

Pubblichiamo qui di seguito il discorso di S.E. Mons. Silvano Tomasi:

#### **• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. SILVANO TOMASI**

Mr Chairperson

1. The Holy See Delegation takes this opportunity to join its voice to that of numerous other delegations in highlighting the significance of this Conference. Three reasons in fact point out the importance of the present occasion. It underscores the truly historical opportunity presented by this Tenth Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference (ILO). It gives a chance to welcome the proposed Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention as an indispensable tool of decent work. It proves once again the value of tripartite negotiations and cooperation to ensure a successful and timely outcome. Allow me to add that the word historical is not a rhetorical expression, but the definition of an achievement made possible thanks to the spirit of dialogue and the quality negotiations which have prevailed, thus enabling the conference to reach a consensus even on the more difficult provisions. The challenge that now remains is to formalize the good work already done.

2. Life at sea will still be difficult and dangerous for the world's 1.25 million seafarers, but we are confident that the adoption of this comprehensive convention on maritime labour standards, while not eroding existing seafarers' rights, will provide the appropriate environment for the emergence of a new maritime world order that will provide 'opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom,

equity, security and human dignity," as the Report of the Director General has stated<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, a globalised maritime world is fast developing with ships linking the four corners of the world and crews increasingly made up of persons from culturally and religiously diverse nationalities. Therefore before these developments the logical step is to provide the proper environment and the just standards and sufficient security so that each human face is fairly and, hopefully, warmly recognised for the personal worth and inalienable dignity he or she has and for the professional contribution he or she makes to maritime work.

3. Various international and national organizations and many individuals inspired by their Christian faith or by a genuine sense of human solidarity, and specifically reaching out to the People of the Sea, are working for a globalisation with a human face, where benefits accrue to everyone without exclusion of any category of people. For decades they have been offering their precious services to seafarers on land and on merchant, fishing and passengers vessels. Permit me to refer to one example, the Apostleship of the Sea of the Catholic Church and to the ecumenical network of non-profit Christian organizations, that includes the Apostleship of the Sea, the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) representing 526 seafarers' centers and 927 chaplains in 126 countries. From this collective experience comes a strong encouragement to reaffirm maritime welfare and the well-being of the People of the Sea by adopting fair and forward-looking standards and the Convention at the center of concern of this Conference. The whole maritime industry will have a better future with healthier, more satisfied and qualified, and adequately protected seafarers and their families.

4. Five years ago the ILO moved a joint resolution by the representatives of International Seafarers and Ship Owners, a resolution supported by Governments, to create a new Maritime Labour Convention. Those farsighted delegates pointed out that the shipping industry is the world's first global industry and that it requires global labour standards applicable to an entire industry and such as that they can safeguard the rights, welfare and human dignity of all seafarers. By doing so they acknowledged that those same seafarers by their own labour are the bedrock of this very important and very successful industry and that the human element must be its priority.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. The concept of "fair trade" is progressing slowly but surely in many parts of the world. Sea transport being an essential part of international trade, has the time not come to extend this notion of "fair trade", or even better of a fair system of trade rules, to maritime transport, fishing and other categories alike? Has the time not come to provide to maritime workers social security and protection? What the Holy Father Benedict XVI writes in his recent first encyclical applies as well to world of the sea: "...there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life"<sup>2</sup>.

6. The Delegation of the Holy See, therefore, wishes to commend all delegates and the ILO personnel for their commitment and hard work over the last five years to develop this Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention and congratulates them and the dedicated staff of this Organisation for bringing the maritime world to this decisive point of change. A change which if adopted, and ratified early, and implemented effectively at the national level, will bring great benefits to the lives of millions of people over time and be an example of good practice to the whole industrialised world. The proposed new instrument has taken into account today's globalized economy and it shows a positive side of it, that the mentioned encyclical expresses in this way: "Concern for our neighbour transcends the confines of national communities and has increasingly broadened its horizon to the whole world." (n.30)

7. At this crucial moment all delegates have a chance to enlarge the horizon of solidarity by adopting the proposed Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention. In doing so, the globalised maritime industry will move forward towards improved fairness and justice for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

<sup>1</sup>International Labour Conference, 94th (Maritime) Session, 2006 : Report of the Director General on developments in the maritime sector. Geneva: ILO, 2006, p.7.<sup>2</sup>Benedict XVI. Encyclical Letter *God is Love*, n.20. Rome, 2006.[00299-02.02] [Original text: English]

---