Employer experts join forces with Worker and Government peers for global harmonisation of supervision of working conditions in fishing vessels

Experts from among the ILO’s tripartite constituents came together in Geneva from 21-25 September to discuss and adopt a set of guidelines for the supervision of fishing vessels in general, and for labour inspection by their flag state in particular. The participation of fishing vessel owners in the meeting was coordinated and supported by the IOE, with representatives from the Secretariat on hand for the duration of the deliberations.

Recognising that fishing activity often occurs in hostile, even dangerous, environments, and that rates of accident, and even death, can be high, it has long been widely accepted that the fishing sector requires special consideration. In response, in June 2007, the International Labour Conference adopted, by a crushing majority, both a Convention and a Recommendation on work in fishing.

These instruments paved the way for decent work on board fishing vessels, including provisions on minimum age, medical certificates/examination, standards of accommodation and sustenance and more. The responsibilities of the fishing vessel owner, employers and workers were all clearly set out.
In 2010, further improvements were made with the adoption of guidelines for the supervision of vessels by the port state, and the 21-25 September experts session complemented these guidelines by adopting a similar approach for supervision of the fishing vessel by the flag state.

This recent development will enhance the promotion and aims of the work in fishing instruments, thus ensuring clarity for employers and better conditions on board for all engaged in this sector.

For further information on the IOE's sectoral activities, please contact Mr Jean Dejardin via the link in the side panel.