



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

F. No. 23-SHCW/1/2024-CREW-DGS

Date: 22.04.2024

DGS Crew Circular No. 10 of 2024

Subject: Guidelines for providing seafarers on ships that are in Indian ports with access to adequate welfare facilities and services - reg.

Whereas, the Directorate General of Shipping, under the Ministry of Port, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India deals with implementation of shipping policy and legislation so as to ensure the safety of life and ships at sea, promotion of maritime education and training in co-ordination with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), regulation of employment and welfare of seafarers, examination and certification of Merchant Navy Officers under its administrative jurisdiction.

2. Whereas, the Directorate General of Shipping vide DGS Circular No. 37 of 2020 dated 21.12.2020 has declared and recognized the seafarers as “Key Worker”.

3. Whereas, Merchant Shipping Act 1958 as amended, Section 88A. has domesticated and defined (c) “Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)” means the International Convention of Maritime Labour Organisation on Maritime Labour Standards signed in Geneva on the 23rd February, 2006.

4. Whereas, Merchant Shipping Act 1958 as amended, Section 88B. (1) has domesticated and has stipulated the application of maritime labour standards to seafarers and ships which is the provisions relating to maritime labour standards as contained in the Maritime Labour Convention and shall apply to all seafarers and ships engaged in commercial activities.

5. Whereas, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 218A read with section 457 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, the Central Government, having regard to the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, and in consultation with such organisations in India to be the representative of the employers of seamen and of seamen, have published vide official gazette Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016.

6. Whereas, Rule 21 of Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016 stipulates that Access to shore-based welfare facilities – “The Director General of Shipping” (DGS) may specify separate

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guidelines from time to time for providing seafarers on ships that are in Indian ports with access to adequate welfare facilities and services.

7. Whereas, Regulation 4.4 of the Maritime Labour Convention contains provisions for 'Access to shore-based welfare facilities', which are largely a port State responsibility. This responsibility was also highlighted in ILO Resolution VIII, as adopted by the 94th International Labour Conference in 2006.

8. Whereas, the above said resolution focused on the need to examine problems related to the provision of, and access to, shore-based welfare facilities for seafarers and also noted that "because of the structural changes in the industry, seafarers have fewer opportunities to go ashore and as a consequence welfare facilities and services for seafarers are needed more than at any time."

9. Whereas, in this context, it should be noted that since 2006 ship turnaround times are increasingly faster, as a consequence it should be recognized that the MLC provisions for seafarers' welfare in ports are as important as those MLC provisions for seafarers' welfare on board ship.

10. The Directorate General of Shipping hereby stipulates following guidelines **annexed** to this circular is for providing seafarers on ships that are in Indian ports with access to adequate welfare facilities and services.

11. The initial verification and compliance of the ports providing such welfare facilities for seafarers as detailed in the guidelines would be verified by the inspecting team of "Seafarers Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT)" as mandated through a separate order.

12. Successful compliance reports submissions and issuance of MLC compliant seafarers' welfare club certificate (5 years validity) by the Seafarers Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT) would act as an incentive to the ports as this would make the ports eligible in getting necessary aids or grants from various donors such as charity foundations, seafarers missions and the Directorate General of Shipping through the support of Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) and subject to the approvals of the said society's trust.

13. Issuance of successful and positive reports by the Seafarers Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT) would bring in many added advantage to the ports such as, this would enhance the ports image as the port cares for the global key workers well-being and the seafarers welfare club is MLC compliant and thus as this would enhance the ports chances for obtaining aids / grants from other public funds, private funds and contributions from shipowners, seafarers, or their representative organisations etc.

14. The subsequent intermediate continued verification and compliance of the said stipulated guidelines by the ports for seafarers' welfare clubs would be carried out by the surveyors of the

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concerned jurisdictional Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) concurrently during the ports mandated International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) audits.

15. The ports would have options of carrying out their intermediate verification of port seafarers' welfare facilities by the surveyors of the concerned MMD concurrently during the ports mandated ISPS audits or alternatively by the Seafarers Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT).

16. Renewal inspections of the port seafarers' welfare facilities (post every five years) shall be mandatorily carried out by the Seafarers Welfare Board Audit Team (SWBAT) for renewal of certificate for five years and for obtaining continual support of aids or grants from the Directorate through the support of Seafarers' Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) and subject to the approvals of the said society's trust.

17. This issues with the approval of Director General of Shipping.



(Capt. Daniel J Joseph)

Dy. Director General of Shipping (Crew)

Enclosure(s): As Above

Annexe

Guidelines for providing seafarers on ships that are in Indian ports with access to adequate welfare facilities and services - reg.

A. Welfare Facilities in Port

Guidance about the provision of welfare services

Services and administrative support may be provided by a seafarers' welfare agency as this would add as a valued direct service to seafarers while making it easier for governments to support existing facilities and to establish new ones. Those with an interest in providing welfare facilities or services in a particular port or country should take the initiative to set up such services by establishing welfare services in accordance with the applicable provisions contained in the MLC, and encouraging governments to support their cause with a minimum amount of administrative burden as this could be an effective way to gain official support and encouragement for the welfare activities being provided.

B. Access to Welfare Facilities

1. Regulation 4.4 of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) consolidates the requirements contained in the ILO Seafarers' Welfare Convention 1987, (No.163) and addresses issues related to seafarers' Access to shore-based welfare facilities. It aims to ensure that seafarers working on board a ship have access to onshore facilities and services to safeguard their health and wellbeing. Shore based facilities are normally required to be located in or near the port or terminal areas and should be made available for use by all seafarers.
2. Usually these facilities offer a range of services including recreation, communication and information resources. Such facilities can either be offered for the exclusive use of seafarers or made available for the use of the local community alongside seafarers. MLC specifies that Government are required to ensure that shore-based welfare facilities, are easily accessible and available to all seafarers. Governments are also required to promote the development of adequate welfare activities and to ensure that all seafarers on board ships have access to these activities.
3. Any seafarer with welfare problems, whether of an industrial, medical, social or domestic nature, may seek help from a local port welfare service. Some may simply require a sympathetic ear and the genuine care and understanding of an impartial welfare worker, whilst other problems may need professional or expert advice or assistance, particularly if seafarers are subject to experiences such

as exploitation, abuse, shipwreck, abandonment or other traumatic situations. Port welfare services should ensure that contacts are maintained with all relevant local, regional and international organisations, which might be able to assist in such circumstances.

4. Guideline B4.4 of the MLC provides detailed guidance on ‘Access to shore-based welfare facilities’, while under Standard A4.4 of the Convention, governments are obliged to:

4.1 Require, where welfare facilities exist that they are easily accessible and available for the use of all seafarers, irrespective of nationality, race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion or social origin and irrespective of the flag State to which the ship they are employed on is registered.

4.2 Promote the development of welfare facilities in appropriate ports at national level and determine, after consultation with the shipowners’ and seafarers’ organisations concerned, which ports might be more appropriate.

4.3 Encourage the establishment of welfare boards, which must regularly review welfare facilities and services to ensure that they are appropriate in light of potential changes in needs of seafarers arising from new or amended technical and operational measures, and other developments within the industry.

5. The requirements listed above, as outlined in Standard A4.4 of the MLC, may also be conducted by local port authorities on behalf of their respective governments. Port States or coastal States should give medical advice and assistance when necessary. They can also play a pivotal role when dealing with abandonment of ships by supporting the work of all stakeholders involved and by facilitating access to the necessary means to support the crew on board.

6. A ratifying State is required to fully implement the MLC requirements regarding access to welfare facilities and services for seafarers. This comprises important duties for implementation at national level and for cooperation with other ratifying States. It links to the Article 1 requirement for Member States to cooperate for the purpose of ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention.

7. The services are usually created and operated either by government bodies or relevant welfare organisations. Other facilities may be commercially managed and require payment for the services provided in or near the port or terminal areas.

8. The importance of establishing welfare boards to oversee and review services, as well as provide advice, is also emphasised, in order to support seafarers’ welfare in ports. It is difficult to predict what the future will bring with regard to changes in technology and how this will influence seafarers’ needs.

C. Organisation & Administration of Welfare Services

1. The MLC compliant “Member State” i.e. the ratifying government or its responsible body or bodies, should ensure that welfare facilities and services are provided in appropriate ports, and determine how they are to be financed. Shipowner and seafarer organisations should be consulted when determining the ports where the services are to be provided. It is also recommended that welfare boards are established at port, regional or national levels, as appropriate, to assist in the co-ordination of welfare services.

2. It is vital that the membership of welfare boards includes shipowner and seafarer organisations, government agencies and, where appropriate, voluntary organisations, consuls of maritime states and any other relevant and interested persons or organisations. As most of these provisions are recommendatory, hence they allow for a considerable amount of flexibility in the composition and organisational structure of welfare boards.

a. General Structure

1. An organisational structure should be established, with a degree of formality and permanence. While ad hoc arrangements, or informal structures, may work in some ports, these are unlikely to be sufficient to assist governments in complying with the Convention’s requirement that they shall “ensure that adequate welfare facilities and services are provided”.

2. The administrative structure of welfare boards should hold meetings on a regular basis and officials, such as a chairperson, should be appointed. Records of meetings, including any decisions made therein, should also be maintained. Moreover, any funds collected or maintained for use in providing welfare services should be properly accounted for and audited at appropriate intervals.

3. The above-mentioned requirements should not be unduly onerous, but should help to safeguard the credibility and transparency of the welfare board. They would also enable the welfare board to be viewed as a credible entity when dealing or communicating with government officials, port authorities or those prepared to offer financial support for the provision of welfare services.

Typical Structure and composition of Port Welfare Board / Committee: Major Port

SNo	Designation	Post	Preferable experience
1	Dy. Conservator	Chairman	Master Mariner with past sailing experience
2	Harbour Master	Member Secretary	Master Mariner with past sailing experience
3	Chief Account Officer (nominated rep.)	Treasurer	Experience in port accounts departments
4	MMD Surveyor (nominated rep. by PO)	Vice Chairman	Nautical or Engineer Surveyor from the jurisdictional MMD
5	Traffic Manager (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in Ports Traffic department
6	HR Manager (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in Human Resources department
7	Port Health Officer (nominated rep.)	Member	MBBS medical practitioner and experience in port health
8	CISF in-charge (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in Ports Security department
9	Shipowners' representative (nominated rep.)	Member	Members from INSA / ICSSA / FOSMA / MASSA etc.
10	Nominated rep. of Port Agents	Member	Senior level official having experience in crew sign-on / off
11	Nominated rep. of Seafarers union	Member	President or GS of registered seafarers trade union in India

Note:

- *The above is a typical suggested committee members composition and the Port Welfare Committee may co-opt and include all those involved in the provision of welfare services, including shipowner and seafarer representatives, local shipping agencies, port or government officials, port State control officers (PSCOs), local or foreign voluntary welfare agencies, health authorities or others who could provide assistance or funding for the provision of services.*
- *Port welfare boards / committees should comprise of both service providers and users. Where several organisations provide facilities in the same port, establishing such a committee would be appropriate.*

Typical Structure and composition of Port Welfare Board / Committee: Non-Major Port

SNo	Designation	Post	Preferable experience
1	Port Officer	Chairman	Master Mariner with past sailing experience
2	Dy. / Asst. Port Officer	Member Secretary	Master Mariner with past sailing experience
3	MMD Surveyor (nominated rep. by PO)	Vice Chairman	Nautical or Engineer Surveyor from the jurisdictional MMD
4	State Maritime Board (nominated rep.)	Member	Master Mariner with past sailing experience
5	Chief Account Officer (nominated rep.)	Treasurer	Experience in port accounts departments
6	Managements Representative (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in port or terminal management
7	HR Manager (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in Human Resources department
8	Port Security in-charge (nominated rep.)	Member	Experience in Ports Security department
9	Shipowners' representative (nominated rep.)	Member	Members from INSA / ICSSA / FOSMA / MASSA etc.
10	Nominated rep. of Port Agents	Member	Senior level official having experience in crew sign-on / off
11	Nominated rep. of Seafarers union	Member	President or GS of registered seafarers trade union in India

Note:

- *The above is a typical suggested committee members composure and the Port Welfare Committee may co-opt and include all those involved in the provision of welfare services, including shipowner and seafarer representatives, local shipping agencies, port or government officials, port State control officers (PSCOs), local or foreign voluntary welfare agencies, health authorities or others who could provide assistance or funding for the provision of services.*
- *Port welfare boards / committees should comprise of both service providers and users. Where several organisations provide facilities in the same port, establishing such a committee would be appropriate.*

b. Port Welfare Board / Port Welfare Committee

1. Port welfare boards should be established at port, regional and/or national level and it could also be called as “port welfare committee”.

The function of these boards can include as following:

- Managing the Port welfare facilities for seafarers;
- Review of the adequacy of existing facilities;
- Provision of assistance and advice to welfare providers;
- Implementation of port levies and other fundraising tools; and
- Facilitation between the different service providers.

2. It is also recommended that:

Establishment of port, regional and national welfare boards should be considered as a priority. If managed effectively, not only do they allow individual organisations to pool and exchange information, to provide or help with provision of services and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, they would also help ensure that those involved in providing services liaise to maximise the impact of any initiatives pursued with port, regional or national authorities.

3. Terms of Office: Subject to the other provisions of these guidelines, every member of the Board / committee other than an ex-officio member shall hold office for a period of five years;

4. Casual Vacancies: A casual vacancy in the office of member shall be filled by nomination or appointment, as the case may be, and a member so nominated or appointed to fill the vacancy shall hold office for so long only as the member whose place he fills would have continued to hold office if the vacancy had not occurred.

5. Resignation by member of the Board / Committee: A member may resign his office by letter under his hand address to the Chairman but he shall continue in office until his resignation is accepted by the Chairman.

6. Removal of members from office: The Committee with majority vote may at any time remove from office any member of the Board

(a) If he / she is continuously absent from India for a period of more than twelve months and has not obtained the permission of the Chairman for such absence.

(b) If he / she absents himself / herself from three consecutive meetings of the Board without the permission of the Chairman;

- (c) If he / she is an undischarged insolvent;
- (d) If he / she is convicted of an offence which, in opinion of the Central Government, involves moral turpitude.
- (e) If in the opinion of the Committee, he has ceased to represent the interest on whose behalf he / she was appointed;
- (f) If, in the opinion of the Committee, it is for any other reason to be recorded in writing, not desirable that he / she should continue to be a member.

7. Suspension of representation on the Board of Bodies or Associations: if, after such enquiry as it may deem necessary, the Central Government is of the opinion that anybody or association which is represented on the Board has acted or is acting in a manner prejudicial to the interest of seafarers generally, it may be order, suspend the representation of that body or association for such period as may be specified in that order.

8. Register of Members: There shall be maintained a Register in which the names, and address of all members shall be entered; any change of address of a member shall also be entered in the register.

9. Secretary of the Board: The nominated Secretary of the Board shall function as Secretary to the Board with the duties shall be as follows:

- (a) To convene, under the directions of the Chairman meetings of the Board or of any Committee of the Board;
- (b) To maintain the Minute Book and the register of members;
- (c) To assist the Chairman in the discharge of his functions; and
- (d) To undertake such other duties may from time to time be entrusted to him by the Board.

10. Meetings: (a) The Board shall meet ordinarily once in six months and may, if necessary, meet at shorter intervals.

(b) An extraordinary meeting of the Board shall be convened if not less than five members send a written requisition to the Chairman stating the object for which the meeting is proposed.

(c) Every meeting shall be held on such date and at such time and place as the Chairman may fix.

(d) Every meeting shall be presided over by the Chairman or in his absence by the Vice-Chairman or in the absence of both the members present, shall elect one from amongst themselves to preside over the meeting.

11. Notice of meetings: (a) Notice of the place and the date and time of each meeting shall be sent to the members at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting;

Provided that a shorter notice may be given in cases where, in the opinion of the Chairman, the meeting has to take place urgently.

(b) A notice may be delivered either by email to registered email address of the members or hand or sent by registered post to the last known address of the member.

12. Agenda: Along with the notice of meeting, a list of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting shall be sent to every member, and no business which is not on the list, shall be transacted at the meeting except with the permission of the Chairman.

13. Quorum: (a) The quorum for a meeting shall be at least fifty percent of the total strength of the board / committee.

(b) If at any time there is no quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned to a later date, such date being not earlier than fourteen days from the date of the original meetings; and business may be transacted at the adjourned meeting whether or not there is quorum.

14. Procedure at meeting: (a) A member desiring discussion on any proposal shall give written notice or by email thereof to the Secretary at least three days before the date fixed for the meeting.

(b) The member presiding at a meeting shall regulate the conduct of the meeting and shall have power to fix the time limit for speeches.

15. Voting: (a) Any question arising for decision by the Board / committee shall be decided at a meeting of the Board / committee by a meeting of the Board / committee by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting and in case of an equality of votes, the presiding member shall have and exercise a second or casting vote.

(b) All votes shall be by show of hands.

16. Minutes of Meetings: (a) The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Board / committee shall be drawn up by the Secretary and circulated to all the members of the Board / committee present in India and the minutes along with any amendments suggested shall be placed for confirmation at the next meeting of the Board / committee.

(b) After the minutes are confirmed and signed by the Chairman or the Member who presided at the meeting they shall be recorded in Minutes' Book which shall be kept open for inspection of the members at all times during office hours of the Board / committee.

17. Recommendations: Decisions arrived at by the Board / committee requiring any further action shall be recorded in form of recommendations be forwarded to the Port Authority / Management for further necessary actions.

18. Non-Member attending meetings: The Chairman may invite any person to be present at any meeting to participate in the discussion but such persons shall not be entitled to vote.

19. Sub- Committees: The Board / committee may appoint one or more sub-committees, standing or otherwise, to examine and report on any specific problem or problems referred to such Committees.

20. Travelling and daily allowances, etc. of members: The members of the Board / committee and of any sub-committee thereof shall be entitled to travelling and daily allowance in accordance with the terms and conditions as decided by the Board / committee.

c. Financing Welfare Activities including Grants from Public Funds

1. Financial support for welfare activities may be made available through one or more of the following sources:

- Grants from public funds;
- Levies or other public dues derived from shipping activities;
- Voluntary contributions from shipowners, seafarers, or their representative organisations;
- Voluntary contributions from other sources.

2. Funds collected should only be used for the purpose of financing welfare activities. Funding should be available when ports are committed to the provision of proper welfare for seafarers, understands the contribution these make, and has the necessary funds available.

3. It may be possible to attract indirect financial support from governments through provision of buildings or space in port areas at nominal cost, particularly if the government has some direct involvement with, or influence over, the port authorities.

4. Many national and international organisations, which provide start-up funding and award grants to provide welfare services and facilities may find it difficult to commit themselves to funding the running costs on a long-term basis. It is therefore necessary to ensure such costs are met from other sources. It is often easier for organisations to contribute equipment or to provide office space than to contribute financially.

5. Long-term funding, such as funds derived from port levies, are important for welfare facilities to be in a position to recruit and retain technically competent, full-time staff on competitive rates of pay.

d. Levies or other public dues from shipping sources

1. Port levies are particularly helpful in supporting the operating costs associated with provision of seafarers' welfare facilities and services, such as seafarers' centres, port transportation and ship visits by trained welfare personnel. Levy systems may operate in ports on a contributory or voluntary basis.

2. Port levies are normally administered as a small additional charge to port dues and distributed to organisations involved with seafarers' welfare in a specific port. There should be a system to ensure that the levies are used for the sole purpose of providing welfare services to seafarers and are allocated to the welfare organisations operating in the port.

e. Voluntary contributions

1. Shipowners should recognise that their crew members will benefit from welfare arrangements in ports around the world and may therefore should make financial contributions for the well-being of seafarers. As safe seafarers will result in safer ships. Seafarers' organisations including maritime trade unions should also come forward and provide financial support.

2. Employed and retired seafarers may have an affinity to a particular organisation which provides welfare facilities, which they may financially support and ultimately, perhaps, leave a legacy.

3. Religious and charitable organisations also conduct welfare work to support seafarers, both in their own country and overseas. They may also offer financial support towards running costs including the provision of port chaplains, ship visitors, seafarers' club staff, etc. For the purposes of these guidelines the term 'ship visitor' refers to individuals authorised by the port authority to provide welfare provisions to seafarers.

4. Serving seafarers visiting ports may help to contribute to the costs incurred in running a facility by using the facilities of a seafarers' club e.g. by purchasing food, drinks or souvenirs, or through using other services provided, as listed in the next section.

f. Provision of Services

1. In accordance with Guideline B4.4.1 of the MLC, each Member State is required to adopt measures to ensure that adequate welfare facilities and services are provided for seafarers in designated ports of call.

2. Adequate assistance should also be provided to seafarers in the exercise of their profession and it is important to take into account the special needs of seafarers, especially when in foreign countries and when entering war zones, in respect of their safety, health and spare time activities. Seafarers comprise many different nationalities, and are of different religious and cultural backgrounds with different needs, values and expectations. However, there are many common services that all seafarers will value and which welfare

3. Organisations should aim to provide the facilities available according to ship turnaround times and at short notice. Services provided should be either free or fairly priced and represent value for money. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Internet/ Wi-Fi access on board or ashore and at anchorage;
- Communication facilities and ability to purchase sim cards and top-ups;
- Transport to the nearest city, shopping area, or other nearby destinations as specifically requested;
- Easily accessible recreation facilities;
- Shopping facilities;
- Hotel facilities;
- Online delivery service;
- Medical check -ups;
- Access to ship visitors and counselling;
- Sports and entertainment facilities;
- Library facilities including book/ - DVD exchange; and
- Money exchange and remittances.

4. To determine which kind of welfare facility to establish, the welfare board / committee or other relevant stakeholders should consider various aspects including the number, types and turnaround time of ships calling at a particular port, and distance and accessibility to nearby cities or other places providing services requested by seafarers.

5. Permanent facilities are more often appropriate in isolated ports with longer ship turnaround times, but they are not always the most cost-effective solution, especially where the city, shopping or recreational areas are within walking distance of the port. In some circumstances, ship visitors may provide services on board ships and offer transportation to outside facilities available to the general public. This can be a more dynamic and cost-effective solution.

6. Careful consideration should also be given about how best to assist crews which are docking in remote locations, such as at oil and LNG terminals, particularly in light of security restrictions which may be in place.

g. Port facilities and resources

1. MLC emphasises the need for cooperation amongst Member States to promote the welfare of seafarers in port and at sea. Such cooperation should include:

- Consultations among competent authorities aimed at the provision and improvement of seafarer welfare facilities and services, both in port and onboard ships;
- Agreements on the pooling of resources and the joint provision of welfare facilities in major ports, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication;
- Organisation of international sports competitions and encouragement of the participation of seafarers in sports activities;
- Organisation of international seminars regarding welfare of seafarers at sea and in port; and
- Where appropriate, facilities for religious observance and counselling.

2. For ports where large numbers of seafarers of different nationalities require facilities such as a hotel, clubs and sports facilities, the relevant authorities and stakeholders should consult and cooperate with one another, with a view to pooling welfare resources and avoiding duplication of services.

h. Accommodation on shore

In accordance with the MLC, accommodation such as hotels or hostels needs to be made available to seafarers in appropriate cases. The accommodation provided should be of a good standard and located in surroundings removed from the immediate vicinity of the docks. Accommodation facilities should also be properly supervised, provided at a reasonable fee and, where necessary and possible, provision should be made for accommodating seafarers' families.

i. Staffing of welfare facilities for seafarers

1. The MLC also highlights the need for measures to be taken “to ensure that, as necessary, technically competent persons are employed full time in operation of seafarers' welfare facilities and services, in addition to any voluntary workers.” Where adequate funds are available, at least one full time employee should be hired and trained properly, in order to manage the day-to-day welfare provision in port. Specific training courses are available for welfare providers and grants can sometimes be obtained in order to attend those courses.

2. Retention of qualified and dedicated staff, including volunteers, is often a challenge for welfare providers. In addition to the need for core and traditional roles of ship visitor, driver, chaplain and counsellor, a welfare facility may also require a dedicated management team with administration and accounting skills, and maintenance capabilities.

3. Facility staff, whether paid or unpaid (volunteers), require training (e.g. specific training tailored to ship visitors, counsellors, etc.) as well as licenses, insurance and port security passes. The relevant authorities should facilitate the issuance of all security passes needed to access a port area to ensure services are provided as required.

j. Dissemination of information and facilitation measures

1. The port's competent authority in collaboration with the welfare board / committee and with other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, should ensure that information is available to the seafarers on board the ship regarding services and facilities such as transport, welfare, entertainment, education and places of worship. This information may come in the form of leaflets, maps or links to information.

2. The MLC stipulates that all suitable measures should be taken by the competent authorities to notify shipowners of any special laws and customs, which seafarers must not contravene. Seafarers deemed to be in breach of these laws, even if due to a lack of awareness about certain restrictions, may be fined or detained. Port welfare boards or committees may be able to assist with additional information in this regard.

k. Seafarers in a foreign port

1. In order to ensure the safety and security of seafarers, port areas and access roads should have adequate lighting, signposting and regular patrols. Information should also be provided in a range of languages and measures should be taken to facilitate seafarer access to consuls of nationality or residence.

2. When necessary, effective cooperation between consuls and the local or national authorities should be promptly established. Seafarers detained in a foreign port should be dealt with immediately under due process of law and with appropriate consular protection.

3. In the event that a seafarer is detained for any reason in the territory of a Member State, the competent authority should, if the seafarer so requests, immediately inform the flag State and the seafarer's State of nationality and/or residence.

4. Seafarers should be promptly informed of their right to make such a request. If requested by the seafarer, the flag State, the State of nationality or residence should promptly notify the seafarer's next of kin.

5. The competent authority should allow consular officers of these States immediate access to the seafarer and permit regular visits thereafter whilst the seafarer is detained. If the detention is related to the seafarer's involvement in a maritime incident, the seafarer, and those assisting and advising the seafarer, should consult the "IMO/ILO Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident".

l. Health information and other services provided

1. Ship visitors and port authorities should be adequately prepared to provide health related information, such as publications covering health and hygiene issues, and drug and alcohol abuse. Additionally, they should also have knowledge about local medical facilities including doctors and dentists, although visits are usually arranged by the ship's agent.

2. Where particular hazards or health problems may exist in a port, which might affect seafarers, they should be informed by the local authorities before entry into port. This includes advice about communicable diseases, prevalent sexually transmitted diseases, and local legal requirements concerning prescription drugs.

m. Ship Visiting

1. Ship visiting encompass a plethora of services and activities, provided by authorised and trained individuals, and will vary depending on the ship's schedule. Therefore, it is essential to establish a relationship based on trust between ship visitors, pilots, port agents and all relevant local authorities.

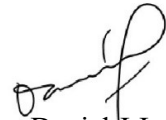
2. All stakeholders should be made aware of relevant information, such as the ship's arrival, shifting and departure times. When a ship has sufficient time in port and crew members have some free time, they should be encouraged to take part in recreational activities away from the ship.

3. Any opportunity to have a break from the routine of shipboard life would be considered welcome and therapeutic. Such recreation may include arranging trips for sports activities, shopping, the barbers, or sightseeing.

n. Ship visitor:

- Firstly, ask how best they can assist the seafarers on board the ship, by offering a series of services on board to meet their needs;
- Be a friendly "expert" providing all relevant information which a seafarer might wish to obtain;

- Appreciate that seafarers' welfare needs differ due to their cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Be a 'friendly face' to listen to seafarers concerns and, where necessary, be in a position to identify and reach out to those that may be better suited to provide assistance in certain cases, e.g. doctors, seafarer representatives or company officials;
- Have knowledge about the requirements and implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code within the port;
- Take all the necessary precautions when boarding a ship, to ensure a safe and secure visit; and
- Provide transport services to assist seafarers' access to facilities and services ashore.



(Capt. Daniel J Joseph)
Dy. Director General of Shipping (Crew)