

RESOLUTION 24

Seafarers' Identity Document

Submitted by American Maritime Officers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, International Longshoremen's Association, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association and Seafarers International Union
Referred to the Legislation and Policy Committee

WHEREAS, the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185) as a result of a proposal first made by the United States at the International Maritime Organization (IMO); and

WHEREAS, the Convention is a well-constructed balance between the new security imperatives and the needs of the maritime industry, especially the mariners who serve aboard ships engaged in international voyages; and

WHEREAS, ILO 185 uses cost-effective technology, including two fingerprints of the bearer encoded in a two-dimensional barcode, a computer strip and a digital photograph; and

WHEREAS, the issuing country is required to have a focal point for the verification of the authenticity of a seafarers' identity document and verification that the person is who he or she says through the national database; and

WHEREAS, the national document issuance processes follow strict requirements established by the Convention and require an independent audit every five years; and

WHEREAS, ILO 185 provides that seafarers shall not be required to hold a visa for the purpose of shore leave; however, it also provides that any member state which is not in a position to fully implement this requirement shall ensure that its laws and regulations or practice provide arrangements that are substantially equivalent; and

WHEREAS, to date, ILO 185 has been ratified by 14 countries, but many maritime nations, including the United States and Canada, have yet to do so; and

WHEREAS, a reason delaying widespread ratification is that many member states are concerned that the seafarers' identity document would not be accepted in the major ports and therefore are reluctant to make the necessary financial investments; and

WHEREAS, mariners carry many other documents, including a passport, medical certification and certificates of competency, with U.S. seafarers also being required to have a Transportation Worker Identification Credential; and

WHEREAS, having a technologically advanced seafarers' identity document, which also is carried by foreign mariners, would provide greater security for the ports while allowing the mariners the ability to temporarily disembark ships when tied up in harbors; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO, along with the Seafarers International Union, believes that ILO 185 meets the requirements for an international seafarer identification as set out in Section 103 of the United States Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002; and

WHEREAS, the shipping industry is having difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified mariners; and

WHEREAS, in this age of terrorism as well as the heightened awareness of piracy, the need for a universally recognized seafarers' identity document is critical; and

WHEREAS, the technology is available to make this work, but what is lacking is the will of governments around the world to implement the document;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO joins with its maritime-based unions and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in urging the United States, Canada and other maritime countries to ratify ILO 185; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO believes that it is important that the United States and Canada show international leadership by ratifying and implementing ILO 185 as it would encourage other countries to do likewise.