



### SEAFARERS – Jon Whitlow, Secretary Seafarers' Section, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

Jon has a degree in industrial relations and law and an active trade union background. Initially he worked within the Claims Unit of the ITF, which involved the progressing of loss of life and personnel injury claims on behalf of seafarers and their next of kin. During his time as Assistant Secretary and then Acting Secretary of the ITF's Seafarers', Fisheries and Inland Navigation Sections, Jon was formally designated as the Permanent Representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to the IMO. As Secretary of the Sections, he represents the seafarers and their trade unions within the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Jon has taken the lead role in the ITF's political campaign against flag-of-convenience shipping and has participated in many International Labour Organization, United Nations and OECD meetings.

ITF is supportive in principle of Poseidon Challenge but it will be judged by what it really achieves. The zero goals are good ones – in fact we find them quite inspiring.

To improve, we need to focus not so much on systems but on the human element. Important developments this year are the adoption of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), and the adoption of the IMO/ILO draft guidelines for the fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident.

We have to address reality and the quality of life of seafarers. A change of culture to a safety culture is fundamental to improving the industry. We need to empower the seafarers and give them freedom to act.

ITF is promoting the ratification of the MLC and is seeking implementation of the fair treatment guidelines. It is looking to stop the steady criminalisation of seafarers. It is promoting shipboard safety and health representatives – for which it requires support from shore management.

Other issues on which we are pressing for progress are restrictions on shore leave which are the source of great hardship to seafarers, and also putting pressure on flag states to give proper treatment to abandoned seafarers.

ITF seeks the cooperation of the industry in moving these issues forward.

#### COMMITMENTS:

The ITF will, amongst other things, be:

- Promoting the ratification and implementation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention.
- Seeking the implementation of the IMO/ILO Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers and to limit the growing criminalisation of seafarers.
- Promoting shipboard safety and health representatives.
- Promoting the ratification of ILO Convention No. 185 (Seafarers Identity Documents), trying to ensure that seafarers are able to enjoy shore leave, and seeking to mitigate some of the excesses in the implementation of the ISPS Code.
- Providing information to the recently developed ILO/IMO database on abandoned seafarers.