



## ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS OF NZ INC.

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### **Submission on Cape Town Agreement of 2012 and STCW-F Convention 1995**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Environment and Conservation Organisations of NZ (ECO) is the national alliance of 55 groups with a concern for the environment. We were established in 1972. Oceans Policy and its cut-down derivatives have been a central concern for many years.

This submission has been prepared by members of ECO Executive and is in line with ECO Policy that was developed in consultation with ECO member bodies and endorsed by our AGM.

ECO supports New Zealand ratifying the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel 1995 (STCW-F Convention). ECO has been concerned that New Zealand has been slow in ratifying international maritime arrangements and welcomes moves to ratify these measures.

ECO is a member of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC). ECO has supported ASOC's advocacy for the development of a polar code which applies to all vessels, including fishing vessels, in polar waters and the ratification of the Torremolinos Convention and Protocol, and now its successor Cape Town Agreement.<sup>1</sup>

## **2.0 Main Submissions**

ECO supports New Zealand ratifying the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel 1995 (STCW-F Convention). The ratification of these measures

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<sup>1</sup> See for example - ASOC (2014) Update to Vessel Incidents in Antarctic Waters ATCM XXXVI CEP XVI, IP059.

are important as part of other arrangements to reduce the chance of accidents causing death and injury and associated environmental impacts.

ECO has been concerned at the absence of an effective international agreement managing international safety standards for the building of new (and major conversions of existing) ocean fishing vessels of 24 metres or more in length. ECO is aware of previous efforts to develop such an agreement via Torremolinos Protocol and Convention.

ECOs support for the ratification of these arrangements arises from its work on fisheries in the South Pacific and in the Southern Ocean. ECO has observed the environmental impacts of poorly operated and inappropriate licensed and IUU vessels in the Southern Ocean. The failure to have internationally agreed and ratified standards for fishing vessels has resulted in the loss of life and vessels in the South Pacific and the Southern Ocean. In addition, oil spills and the loss of vessels containing oil and other hazardous cargo has occurred.

ECO has been concerned that New Zealand has not ratified these agreements despite them having little effects on New Zealand owned and operated fishing vessels. The new Fisheries (Foreign Charter Vessels and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2014 means that formerly chartered vessels will be subject to all New Zealand maritime rules from 1 May 2016.

Applying these measures to all fishing vessels operating in New Zealand waters over 24m is strongly supported. An important part of the Agreement is that it also applies to foreign fishing vessels 24 metres in length and over visiting New Zealand ports.

ECO notes that the STCW-F Convention came into force in 2012 and it is overdue for New Zealand to ratify the agreement. It is the first international instrument to establish basic requirements on for fishing vessel personnel. It is an important agreement as it set for a range of requirements, including:

- the certification of skippers, engineer officers and radio operators;
- the basic training required for personnel on fishing vessels to which the Convention applies; and
- watchkeeping.

Given the deaths and environmental impacts of fishing accidents in New Zealand waters, the Southern Ocean, and South Pacific it is essential that New Zealand becomes a party to this agreement. By setting these basic requirement the Convention should assist in reducing death and injury rates in the global fishing industry and also reducing accidents causing environmental impacts, including oil spills.

ECO agrees that ratification of these measures is important for New Zealand's reputation and international advocacy of a safe and sustainable fishing industry. In addition, New Zealand has faced costs in search and rescue in the Southern Ocean resulting from accidents (including those involving injury and death) caused by poorly operated and inappropriate vessels.

### **3.0 Additional Comments**

Based on ASOC experience in the Southern Ocean and review of Southern Ocean accidents, ECO recommends:

- Support at the IMO Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) Subcommittee Meetings for the Canadian proposal to ensure that advanced training for Masters and officers in charge of the navigational watch does not only take place in ice-covered waters but in waters relevant to the region where their vessels will be operating, i.e. Antarctic, or Arctic or Baltic.
- Inclusion of fishing vessels in the IMO Polar Code as a matter of priority.

ECO welcomes the advocacy by New Zealand on the IMO Polar Code with other like-minded countries. NZ should continue to support the expansion of the IMO's Polar Code to non-SOLAS vessels, including fishing vessels, and in particular seek provisions on:

- training for all personnel on vessels operating in polar waters to equip them with basic information about the challenges of operating in polar environments including on-board practices, procedures and use of emergency equipment,
- strengthened standards for training of Masters and officers in charge of the navigational water, including training in ice-covered waters relevant to the vessels area of operation,
- environmental pollution including the equipment used in oil spill response, and for the training of crew in the appropriate procedures for oil spill response and the use of response equipment.

#### **4.0 Request**

ECO would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with the Ministry. Please contact ECO at [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz) tel 04-385-7545 and copy in [ecowatch@paradise.net.nz](mailto:ecowatch@paradise.net.nz) and for any arrangements about this submission.

Yours sincerely,

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