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## **CANADA WORKS TO CUT POLLUTION FROM SHIPPING AND IMPROVE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR WORKERS**

OTTAWA — The Government of Canada announced today that Canada is taking important steps to help reduce air and water pollution from ships in Canadian waters, and ensure the safety of vessels, goods and workers.

The government will ratify international conventions related to marine pollution and maritime safety, which builds on other actions taken, including introducing the *Clean Air Act* in 2007, passing legislation to hold ship owners more accountable for environmental disasters and doubling Canada's jurisdiction over Arctic waters.

"Ratifying these conventions will demonstrate Canada's commitment to adopting uniform international standards for maritime safety and protecting the marine environment," said the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs. "Our government is taking action to protect public health, the environment and biodiversity, and to promote fair labour standards here and abroad."

"This is one more way for Canada to ensure environmentally responsible shipping while creating economic opportunities for Canadian companies," said Canada's Transport Minister John Baird. "It will confirm the reputation of Canadian ships as quality carriers that meet international environmental and safety standards."

"These changes will mean less garbage and ship sewage polluting Canadian waters," said the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment. "This is one more example of our government's commitment to working with the United States and other countries to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions."

The ratified International Maritime Organization and International Labour Organization conventions will:

- reduce air and water pollution;
- better protect the marine environment and biodiversity;
- ensure the safety of vessels, goods and workers on board;
- create economic opportunities for Canadian companies; and
- enhance the competitiveness of Canadian ships.

Specifically, the International Maritime Organization conventions will make a tangible contribution to reducing marine pollution from ship sewage, garbage and environmentally harmful paints; controlling atmospheric emissions from ships; and improving ballast water management (to reduce the risk of releasing invasive aquatic species into Canadian waters).

"The *Maritime Labour Convention, 2006* demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to decent working conditions for seafarers in Canada and around the world, and it represents our most significant maritime labour initiative to date," said the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of

Labour. "Ratifying these conventions will bring significant benefits and protections to Canadian workers and industry."

The conventions were tabled in the House of Commons on October 9, 2009, followed by a period of 21 sitting days to inform members of Parliament and to give the House of Commons an opportunity to comment on the treaties. The 21 sitting days ended on November 23, 2009, and the government will now proceed to bring them into force.

Ratifying the conventions enables Canada to fully enforce environmental and safety standards, and complements several government priorities, as well as pollution prevention efforts of provinces and municipalities. Canada will also be able to provide leadership and influence on international maritime labour standards, and demonstrate its commitment to fair labour rules and working conditions for seafarers.

A [backgrounder](#) with further information is attached.

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## BACKGROUND

# RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS RELATED TO MARITIME POLLUTION AND SAFETY

Ships carry most world trade and about half of Canada's trade. At any given time, the majority of vessels in Canadian waters are foreign-flagged. It is therefore very important to have effective tools to regulate foreign vessels operating in our waters in order to protect the marine environment, and ensure Canadian ports and waterways operate safely and efficiently.

Canada has been a key participant in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is the United Nations body responsible for promoting the highest practicable standards in maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention, and control of marine pollution from ships. The International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, promotes social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. It also adopts international standards for working conditions on board vessels.

Ratifying the IMO and ILO conventions enables Canada to fully enforce environmental and safety standards. The Government of Canada intends to ratify the following IMO and ILO conventions:

- annexes IV, V and VI of the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships* (MARPOL) (reduced pollution from sewage and garbage; control of air emissions from ships);
- the *International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, 2001* (limits on environmentally harmful paints);
- the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments* (control of invasive species in the water);
- the *Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974* (harmonized system of surveys and certification);
- the *Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966* (harmonized system of surveys and certification with respect to ship load levels);
- the *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995*; and
- the *Maritime Labour Convention, 2006* (working conditions on ships, including hours of work and rest; health protection and medical care; and standards of accommodation).

Ratifying these conventions complements several government priorities, as well as pollution prevention efforts of provinces and municipalities. Several of these conventions are now in force internationally. Many of Canada's major trading partners have adopted these conventions and are expected to ratify them.

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