

# Amendments to merchant seafarer law to take effect in December

The Government proposes to commence the relevant provisions in the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers) Ordinance (Cap 478) and its subsidiary legislation on December 20, 2018, to implement the requirements under the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which will be officially extended to Hong Kong on the same day.

Promulgated by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the MLC sets out a comprehensive set of global standards for the working and living conditions of seafarers and seeks to protect the welfare of seafarers. To prepare for the extension of the MLC to Hong Kong, various amendments to the Ordinance and its subsidiary legislations were enacted previously to incorporate the requirements of the MLC into the local legislation. With the ILO having announced that the MLC will come into force in Hong Kong on December 20, the relevant provisions in the local legislation to implement the MLC requirements have to be brought into operation.

"Implementation of the MLC's requirements, which are already in force globally, not only helps ensure that the working and living conditions of seafarers on board Hong Kong ships are up to standard, but also helps assure overseas port state control that our fleet fully complies with the relevant international conventions," a spokesperson for the Transport and Housing Bureau said.

The trade has already been notified of the date of extension of the MLC to Hong Kong and the commencement of the relevant local legislation. All relevant ships should have already complied with the requirements of the MLC.

The legislative proposal was gazetted today (October 19) and will be tabled at the Legislative Council for negative vetting on October 24.