CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION, 2006

Overview: An Approach to International Maritime and Labour Law

This book was completed in 2011, following the ninetieth year since the adoption of the first maritime labour instrument in 1920\(^1\) by the then newly-established International Labour Organization (ILO).\(^2\) The year 2010 was also the year declared by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)\(^3\) as the ‘year of the seafarer’.\(^4\) The publication of this book in 2011, shortly after the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006),\(^5\) a major new maritime labour instrument, by the 94th International Labour Conference (ILC) of the ILO is significant. At the time the MLC, 2006 was adopted, it was expected that it would take approximately five years to achieve the ratifications necessary to bring this comprehensive maritime convention into force.\(^6\) Although at the time of completion of this book, the MLC, 2006 is not yet in force,\(^7\) it is expected that the stringent formula for entry into


\(^3\) The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations. See: http://www.imo.org.


\(^7\) As of February 2011 the Convention has been ratified by twelve countries that are the flag States for over 47 per cent (by gross tonnage (GT)) of the world’s fleet (in order of ratification: Liberia, the Marshall Islands, Bahamas, Panama, Norway, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, Croatia, Bulgaria, Canada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland).