

## **KENYA MARITIME AUTHORITY (KMA) & SEAFARERS WELFARE**

One of the functions of the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) is to oversee training, employment and welfare of seafarers. In this respect, the Authority has undertaken the following activities to enhance training and employment standards of Kenyan seafarers:

In line with the requirements of Section 118 of the Merchant Shipping Act, Cap. 389, the Authority maintains a register of Kenyan seafarers which has 2017 registered as at 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. The number is set to grow as more seafarers continue to be trained, certified and registered.

In 2014, Kenya Maritime Authority noted that there was a large number of experienced Kenyan seafarers who did not have certificates to allow them to work on-board ships as required by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention, 1978 as amended. In 2016, the Authority mitigated the competence gap by sponsoring over 500 experienced Kenyan seafarers for the Mandatory STCW Basic Safety Certificate and Rating Certification to enhance their employment potential on-board ships. More than 50% of those trained have been able to access employment on-board Kenyan and foreign ships; the **Kenyan ships** include MV Aldabra, Alpha 300, Alpha Trion, Seco 500, MV Valentine while the **Foreign ships** include :**Palau Flag** : MV Granada, Alpha Pina, Alpha Transporter, MV Kirawira, Petra I, Petra II, MC Ginty: **Tanzania flag**: MV. Solsky, MV Hippopotus. : **Seychelles Flag, Fishing vessels**: Izaro, Galerna III, Playa De Anzorras, Intertuna, Tres, Galerna I, Euskadi Alai, Txori Bat: **Spain Flag** : Fishing vessels: Albacan, Haizea, Hiru, Albatun Tres, Albatun Dos, Alakrana, Alakranatxu, Elai Elai, Explorer II, Playa De Aritzatxu, Albacora Quatro, Haizea Bat, Haizea Hiru among many other ships. KMA is currently working on more initiatives to increase further the number of Kenyan seafarers being employed aboard foreign vessels in line with the nation's Big 4 Agenda and the Blue Economy Initiative.

The Authority is also responsible for overseeing the recruitment of seafarers in accordance with the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act, Cap. 389 and Regulation 1.4 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) as amended. In this regard, the Authority has currently licensed four recruitment and placement agents for seafarers. They include the

Mombasa Ocean Agency, Alpha logistics, Diverse Shipping Limited and the East African Shipping Limited. The licensed recruitment and placement agents for seafarers have currently placed more than 500 seafarers on-board various ships.



KMA also accredits medical practitioners who examine seafarers to ensure that they are medically fit to work on-board ships. The Authority has currently approved seven medical institutions for seafarers. They include the Mombasa Hospital, Bandari Clinic, Watamu Hospital, Mombasa Medical Practice, Kisima Health Facility, Coast X-ray Centre and the Masala Healthcare Services Limited.

The Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) also ensures that Kenya adheres to the requirements of training and certification of seafarers in accordance to the STCW, 1978 as amended, and that quality standards are maintained in approved training institutions. Kenya was indorsed into the International Maritime Organization (IMO) “White list” in 2010 and has continued to ensure compliance to IMO standards in the training and certification of seafarers. An Audit carried out by the IMO on implementation of seafarers training and certification in 2016 in Kenya confirmed that Kenya continues to maintain the required international training standards for seafarers. For seafarers to be employed onboard international ships, they are required to have certificates of proficiency in the Mandatory STCW safety Certificates as well as Deck Rating or Engine room rating certificates. They may also be employable onboard cruise ships if they have the approved certificates for Ship’s cook or stewards as well as the Mandatory STCW safety Certificates. At officer levels, the seafarers must have the

required Certificates of Competency and Proficiency in line with STCW Convention 1978 as amended either as Engineering Officer or Deck Officer and the relevant sea service for the level applied for onboard ship.

Kenya is training an international calibre of seafarers as proven by the recent interviews carried out by a Norwegian shipping employment agency where more than 75 Kenyan marine graduates with deck and engineering qualifications were found fit for employment on the international fleet. Fifteen of the seafarers have been recruited by the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and the Norwegian Company is still in the process of recruiting the 60 seafarers interviewed. KMA is currently working with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as key stakeholders to establish a wage standard for Kenyan seafarers to mitigate disparity in wages and underpayment on board ships.

The Authority continues to work closely with the Seafarers' Union of Kenya (SUK) in seafarers' employment and welfare matters including dispute resolution between seafarers and their employers in line with the tripartite spirit (this is a spirit of collaboration between seafarers unions, their employers and the Government in dealing with seafarers' welfare issues) as advocated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC). It is important for seafarers to register with a legitimate union in order to benefit from the strength in negotiation provided by the united call of trade unions.

Furthermore, the Authority is dedicated in progressing the welfare of seafarers. In 2018, KMA, facilitated the repatriation to Kenya of various groups of Kenyan seafarers abandoned by ship owners in Indonesia, Oman, Somalia, as well as, assisted in the repatriation of seafarers from the Philippines, Mauritius, Indonesia and Seychelles, who were abandoned at the Port of Mombasa, to their countries. KMA is currently assisting to repatriate to Kenya two seafarers stranded onboard Comarco Falcon (in South Africa. Besides, KMA continues to mediate in disputes between seafarers and their employers as well as counsel seafarers on employment agreements with crewing agencies. Through its Port State Control and Flag State Inspectors, the Authority conducts ship inspections which include among others, the examining of working conditions of seafarers aboard ships.

Seafarers can get more information and assistance from KMA's Registrar of Seafarers:

The Registrar of Seafarers

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