

## Government seeks views on treaties improving fishing vessel and crew safety

MEDIA  
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The Ministry of Transport is seeking feedback on whether New Zealand should sign up to two international maritime treaties. The treaties seek to improve the poor safety record of the global fishing industry.

The Cape Town Agreement of 2012 sets international safety standards for the building of new (and conversion of existing) ocean vessels of 24 metres or more in length.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel 1995 (STCW-F Convention) sets training and certification standards for crew on vessels of the same size.

“If New Zealand signs up to these treaties, the fishing industry would benefit. A particular benefit would be Maritime New Zealand officers could ensure all foreign fishing vessels visiting New Zealand ports are subject to the high safety standards of the treaties. However, we want to be sure we have correctly assessed the potential impact of the treaties on the industry,” Nick Brown, General Manager Aviation and Maritime says.

“If New Zealand signs up to the Cape Town Agreement, newly built large fishing vessels — and major conversions of existing vessels — will be safer, because of improved design, construction and equipment standards and safety procedures. New Zealand will also be able to inspect and verify the same standards and procedures apply on foreign fishing vessels visiting New Zealand ports.

“If New Zealand signs up to the STCW-F Convention, we will be able to inspect foreign vessels, to ensure the training, certification and watchkeeping of the crew is up to standard. The Convention would also allow a streamlined process for crew from other States party to the Convention to gain approval to operate in New Zealand waters.

“New Zealand law is already largely aligned with the STCW-F Convention and Cape Town Agreement. Only minor changes to New Zealand law would be required to fully reflect the two treaties.

“Signing up to the STCW-F Convention will not bring any additional costs for our fishing industry, as its standards are already largely reflected in domestic law. And because New Zealand rarely builds or converts fishing vessels of over 24 metres in length, the Cape Town Agreement will not bring any significant additional costs for the fishing industry,” Mr Brown says.

Public consultation is open from 8 April to 6 May 2015. Anyone can make a submission via the [Ministry of Transport's website](#).

**[www.transport.govt.nz](http://www.transport.govt.nz)**

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