



**FISHERIES  
GOVERNANCE  
PROJECT**

Defining Corporate Duties  
in Seafood Supply Chains  
to Prevent IUU Fishing &  
Labor Rights Abuse on  
Industrial Fishing Vessels

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## About This Document

This document provides a consolidated set of environmental and labor rights duties that seafood companies must uphold throughout their operations to identify, prevent, and address labor rights abuse and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in their seafood supply chains. The framework includes detailed actions to take and references to more specific guidance for establishing systems such as grievance mechanisms and traceability reporting.

## How to Use This Document

The Fishery Governance Project (FGP) invites trade unions and civil society organizations to publicly support and promote this document by adding their logo to the document, referencing the document in seafood industry guidance and advocacy, and developing more detailed guidance for corporate implementation.

Retailers, buyers, and producers in the seafood industry are invited to develop policies and implementation mechanisms to align their operations with the corporate duties outlined herein.

## Methodology

This document is based on a two-year analysis and comparison of over a dozen demand sets from civil society organizations focused on environmental and human rights issues in the seafood industry. The drafters also researched industry practices, consulted international norms, and vetted early drafts of the corporate duties document with businesses, trade unions, and non-governmental organization representatives.

## Acknowledgements

This document is the result of a collaboration among labor rights and ocean sustainability experts participating in the Fishery Governance Project. The FGP is a funder-practitioner collaboration working to build a shared understanding of issues and solutions at the intersection of improved fisheries governance and advancements in labor rights.

The principal members of the drafting team were Judy Gearhart for the Accountability Research Center; Zacari Edwards and Sahiba Gill for Global Labor Justice; Charli Fritzner and Sari Heidenreich for Greenpeace USA; Katy Hladki and Huw Thomas for Pew Charitable Trusts; and Meredith Lopuch and Tom Benthin from the FGP secretariat.

# Defining Corporate Duties in Seafood Supply Chains to Prevent IUU Fishing & Labor Rights Abuse on Industrial Fishing Vessels

## Introduction/Context

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is pervasive in global seafood supply chains and threatens the economic, environmental, and social stability of fishing operations around the world. Human rights abuses, particularly violations of fundamental labor rights, are well documented throughout the industry in artisanal, industrial, and distant water fishing fleets, as well as in aquaculture and seafood processing. With regards to marine capture fishing, rights abuses are interlinked with IUU fishing such that one abuse may exacerbate or give rise to the other.

On industrial fishing vessels and the distant water fleet (DWF), abusive conditions and mistreatment by management (including the captain, skipper, and bosun) or vessel owners cutting corners to increase profit means those vessels that violate fishing regulations are very likely to also violate fishers' rights. For artisanal fishers, it can also be a survival issue; many of those engaged in illegal fishing activities are often earning at or below subsistence level incomes and lack an education in the risks of and alternatives to such activities. This intrinsic link between IUU fishing and labor abuses highlights the need for a holistic approach to tackle the problems driving both issues in the seafood industry. Buyers and retailers at the top of the supply chain have a critical role to play in incentivizing and enabling their suppliers to uphold labor rights and environmental standards. Corporations have a duty to lead by example through their policies, actions, and engagement, not only with suppliers and governments, but also with fishers, trade unions, and their cooperatives and associations.

## Purpose and Structure

Given the significant risks of environmental and labor rights abuses in seafood supply chains, all corporations – from producers to retailers – have a duty to take action. Seafood companies must take immediate and comprehensive action to fulfill the duties which this document lays out.

This document thus provides a consolidated set of environmental and labor rights duties that companies engaged in the seafood industry must uphold throughout their operations and in their supply chains. The purpose of this document is to:

- Identify essential transparency measures needed to mitigate labor rights and environmental abuses in the seafood industry; and
- Define specific actions that corporate actors must take to fulfill their duties to prevent, mitigate, and remediate IUU fishing and the abuse of workers' rights.

The document builds on the “protect, respect, remedy” framework of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and defines the actions needed by distinct groups of corporate actors or responsible parties; they are then divided into four areas of responsibility.

### *Responsible Parties*

Recognizing the varied sphere of influence held by different corporate actors and the role of governments, the actions required are divided among three sets of duty-bearers:

1. Direct actions **Retailers, Buyers, and Importers** should take to ensure their suppliers uphold their duties;
2. Direct actions **Suppliers** – processors, vessel owners and operators, and recruitment agencies – should take to uphold their duties in their operations; and

3. **Advocacy** actions all corporate actors should take to advocate for more effective government regulations and protections for fishers and fisheries including engagement with fisher associations and trade unions.

The first set of actions refer to leverage held by actors at the top of the supply chain over labor and human rights abuses because their purchasing practices are highly determinative in creating the enabling conditions for their suppliers to ensure the protection of workers' rights and workers' access to remedy, and to uphold responsible fishing practices. The second set of actions are for actors with direct control over how seafood industry workers are treated, and the fishing methods used. The third set of actions relate to the important influence all corporations have over national government policies.

### *Areas of Responsibility*

These duties are organized into four areas of responsibility, which are fundamental to preventing social and environmental harms in seafood supply. These are:

1. **Fishing Vessel Transparency:** Ensure all supplying vessels are known and disclosed, which is a prerequisite to checking legal compliance on fishing practices, fishing methods used, and knowing who is employed and how they were recruited.
2. **Supply Chain Traceability:** Ensure information required to undertake risk assessment and due diligence is collected and used by all actors in the supply chain.
3. **Rights:** Ensure fundamental labor rights are respected throughout the supply chain, following the fundamental conventions of the ILO, Convention 188 on Work in Fishing, and all other relevant ILO Conventions and Guidance, including but not limited to those referenced below in this document.
4. **Working Conditions:** Ensure contracts, communications, and working conditions are structured to ensure fishers' rights and access to remedy.

## Origins

This document is the result of a collaborative initiative, the Fisheries Governance Project (FGP), whose goal is to foster greater alignment across labor, human rights, and environmental organizations working on the seafood industry. The document is drafted based on a broad survey of civil society recommendations and demands to corporations in the seafood industry, extensive research on international norms, and consultation with businesses, unions, and civil society experts.

## How to Use This Document

This document defines steps that buyers and retailers, and also producers, need to take to eliminate the pervasive practice of IUU fishing and the abuse of fishers' rights.<sup>1</sup> The actions listed include both urgent and immediate steps all seafood industry actors need to take to identify and stop forced labor in all its forms and to prevent IUU fishing practices that are causing fisheries to collapse. This document also lists critical actions needed to address systemic factors contributing to egregious abuses and, moreover, to foster responsible ocean stewardship and all aspects of decent work, including respect for human rights and decent work and the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The corporate duties listed below are designed primarily for activities in live capture fishing, but many of the components will be relevant and should be applied in other aspects of the seafood supply chain, including aquaculture, seafood processing, production of fish feed, and fish/seafood distribution.

Realizing these duties throughout a company's seafood operations should not, however, be considered sufficient to fully address all labor rights abuses. Such efforts require ongoing transparency and reporting and continuous engagement with representative worker organizations. Market actors have a duty to uphold both the process and content requirements enshrined in the International Labour

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<sup>1</sup> "Fisher" throughout this document refers to fishers as defined by ILC Convention C188 Article 1e. [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C188](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C188)

Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILO Convention 188 on Work in Fishing, ILO Migrant Workers Conventions Nos. 97 and 143, and national laws that align with or go beyond those requirements. Upholding these internationally recognized rights makes it imperative for businesses to engage workers and their representative organizations in sustained and meaningful dialogue.

The prevention of IUU fishing is equally critical to the welfare of fishers and integral to creating a foundation for both sustainable seafood and labor rights protections. Primarily, key measures relate to transparency and traceability of the supply chain, monitoring of supplier vessel activity, and ensuring the appropriate solution is in place to prevent IUU fishing and keep fishers safe. These measures require contractual commitments between buyers and suppliers that enable the financial feasibility for such preventive measures to be put in place and maintained. Equally important, labor rights, especially freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, are essential for facilitating transparency and accountability from the vessel level upwards through the rest of the supply chain.

## Approach and Methodology

The document is drafted in a way that aims to go beyond a checkbox approach to create one that fosters meaningful change and establishes mechanisms to help sustain those changes. To that end, the duties defined are written so that implementing companies will provide or engage in outcome-based evidence of compliance, meaningful transparency, ongoing stakeholder engagement, and negotiated co-governed approaches to sustaining compliance.

### *Outcome-Based Evidence of Compliance*

This document is designed to be process- and outcome-focused, intended to elicit clear actions by the corporate entities to use their leverage to produce tangible outcomes that can be reported publicly. The approach goes beyond asking companies to define and publish a policy. Instead, companies are asked to utilize

their leverage in concrete ways. Examples of how companies can evidence their use of this leverage include, but are not limited to: sourcing agreements between buyers and suppliers that provide evidence of cost-sharing to implement social and environmental protection measures and of how continued purchasing is contingent on suppliers' compliance; public advocacy statements to advance stronger government policies; preferential sourcing from states with clearly defined and enforced regulations that protect fishers and fisheries; and legally enforceable supplier agreements negotiated with trade unions and, where those don't exist, representative fisher organizations.

### *Meaningful Transparency*

Transparency and traceability requirements must be followed to ensure fishers are able to identify the ultimate buyer of their catch. Supply chain actors must be able to ensure that effective grievance mechanisms are available to all workers throughout their supply chain. The document also prioritizes transparency, which is essential for identifying IUU fishing practices and defining clear pathways to remedy for fishers whose rights are violated. The appropriate scope for transparency includes not only the processor from which retailers and buyers purchase the final product, but also the key companies all the way down the chain responsible for the treatment of workers and oceans. This includes, but is not limited to: the recruitment agencies used by vessel suppliers, vessel operators, and other significant subcontracted suppliers and service providers.

### *Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement*

Per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, human rights due diligence (HRDD) means that corporate enterprises are proactively managing potential and actual adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved. Effective human rights due diligence goes well beyond conducting time bound audits or the use of certifications. Human rights due diligence is an ongoing process to identify and prevent abuses and must include effective grievance mechanisms that lead to a process of remediation when abuses are found – at

any level of the supply chain. To emphasize prevention and remediation, the following defines outcome-based requirements for retailers, buyers, and producers to demonstrate their results through transparent reporting and ongoing engagement with trade unions and representative worker organizations. Pathways for engagement must be designed to serve the needs of both parties equally – for example, worker engagement should not only happen when initiated by corporations; rather, trade unions and representative worker organizations must have equal ability to initiate engagement. Full supply chain transparency is a prerequisite for this process, in order to enable unions and other worker groups to initiate engagement with the ultimate brands and retailers.

### *Negotiating a Co-Governance Approach*

There is increasing evidence to show that best practice in stakeholder engagement and transparency is to establish a co-governed approach to ensuring the implementation of social and environmental standards. **To establish such an approach, seafood buyers, retailers, and producers should engage workers’ organizations to negotiate binding agreements that genuinely engage workers in both the development and governance of the agreement.**<sup>2</sup>

The failure of voluntary social audits conducted by professional auditors has been well documented. In lieu of voluntary and confidential audits that sideline worker organizations, the actions defined below propose a dialogue-based, co-governance approach in collaboration with workers’ organizations including trade unions.<sup>3</sup> Engaging trade unions and representative worker organizations in the negotiation and implementation of these agreements is the best way for actors

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- 2 Binding agreements may include collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) between workers and employers at specific segments of the supply chain or more comprehensive supply chain agreements, such as Enforceable Brand Agreements (EBAs). For an example of an EBA, see *Fact Sheet: The Dindigul Agreement to End Gender-Based Violence and Harassment*, GLJ-ILRF, <https://globallaborjustice.org/campaigns/dindigul-agreement-to-eliminate-gender-based-violence-and-harassment-year-2-progress-report/>; see also *Essential Elements for Social Responsibility in the Seafood Sector*, GLJ-ILRF.
  - 3 Worker organizations are those which are freely formed, led, and operated by workers and/or their chosen representatives, consistent with workers’ rights to freedom of association. For content on the right to freedom of association, see ILO, *Compilation of Decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association* (6th ed., 2018).

at the top of the supply chain to establish support for worker voice and the core enabling rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Agreements should include a focus on governance, especially on creating a worker-employer co-governed oversight mechanism and a binding grievance mechanism. Such mechanisms should align with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights Principle 31 and be accessible to all seafood workers, including those on the high seas. Agreements should cover, at minimum, the topic areas detailed in the table below, in addition to what fishers and their representatives demand.

An effective co-governed agreement requires sustained dialogue with workers' organizations, including trade unions. Establishing this ongoing dialogue and defining the scope of such an agreement should be the foundation that guides buyers' and retailers' implementation of these duties. Such open dialogue between buyers and trade unions is also critically important to demonstrate to suppliers the approach they must take to engage worker organizations in developing, implementing, and monitoring their worker protection policies and programs.

# Fishing Vessel Transparency: Know Your Vessels

(The prerequisite to checking legal compliance, knowing who is employed onboard and how they were recruited)<sup>4</sup>

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>VESSEL IDENTIFICATION</b></p> <p>All vessels<sup>5</sup> in the supply chain must be identifiable.</p>	<p>Require suppliers to maintain a list of all vessels in the supply chain, including information about vessel operators, owners, beneficial owners, and vessel investors. This list must be updated and published at least annually.</p> <p>Ensure all vessels in your supply chain have a Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) that does not change if vessels move flag or jurisdiction, and/or, where appropriate, an IMO number. Maintain and show proof of IMO numbers of supplying vessels.</p> <p>Check that the flag states in your supply chain publish their authorized vessel register and that this registry is shared with the Global Record.</p>	<p>Maintain a list of all vessels in the supply chain which includes their authorization to fish or operate and their UVI or IMO number. Register and provide proof of IMO number to buyers.</p> <p>Ensure that flag states publish a register of authorized vessels and share it with the FAO Global Record.</p>	<p>Advocate for all countries in your supply chain to publish an authorized vessel registry, including UVIs, and share it with the FAO. Utilize the Global Record and require by law that all vessels provide all mandatory information.</p>

4 When making asks of governments, companies may also refer to the [Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency](#), 10 policy principles designed to be adopted by governments globally, in law and in practice, created by the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency.

5 Where “all vessels” is used throughout this document, it is shorthand for the FAO’s definition of “fishing vessels”: “Any vessel, boat, ship, or other craft that is equipped and used for fishing or in support of such activity. For management purpose, particularly for monitoring and surveillance, may be considered to include any vessel aiding or assisting one or more vessels at sea in the performance of any activity relating to fishing, including, but not limited to, preparation, supply, storage, refrigeration, transportation, or processing (e.g. mother ships).”

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>VESSEL TRACKING</b></p> <p>To prevent illegal behavior, including use of undesignated ports, unauthorized transshipment, longer than permitted trip lengths, or fishing in restricted fisheries.</p> <p>AIS/VMS is important for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).</p>	<p>Require all vessels to utilize VMS or AIS at all times. Ask suppliers to include the presence of AIS or VMS in vessel supply lists.</p> <p>Use third-party tools to conduct a regular review of vessel movements to assess vessel behavior and compliance with licenses/authorizations.</p> <p>Take action when VMS or AIS data indicates potential illegal behavior or coverage of vessel activity is limited or goes dark.</p>	<p>Utilize AIS or VMS at all times and comply with all requirements from the flag state to use AIS and/or VMS. Verify whether they maintain VMS and/or AIS signals on at all times. Use online tools to check compliance with flag state authorizations.</p> <p>Where vessels have low AIS coverage, ask for VMS data so that activity against license &amp; authorization can be confirmed.</p>	<p>Advocate for laws that require all vessels have AIS and/or VMS employed at all times whilst at sea. Where AIS is not available, advocate for VMS data to be shared publicly.</p>
<p><b>TRANSSHIPMENT AT SEA</b></p> <p>This is associated with IUU fishing and human rights abuses. It makes it difficult to verify legal catch, decreases the frequency of inspections, and leaves fishers at sea for excessive periods of time.</p>	<p>Review AIS/VMS tracking data for signs of unreported transshipment.</p> <p>Publicly commit to uphold and monitor compliance with the <a href="#">NGO Tuna Forum Aligned Guidance for At-Sea Transshipment</a> (Jan 2022), which includes guidance that addresses both IUU fishing and labor issues. Where compliance is not possible, do not source from vessels that transship at sea.</p>	<p>Maintain proof of adherence to the Aligned Guidance for At-Sea Transshipment. Report on the date and location of each transshipment and all vessels (AIS/VMS &amp; IMO numbers) involved.</p>	<p>Ask and verify that the government has adopted all recommended measures in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment and deploys sufficient resources for monitoring and enforcement.</p> <p>Advocate that governments adopt and enforce regulations to protect labor rights of fishers on vessels engaging in at-sea transshipment.</p>

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>OBSERVER COVERAGE &amp; MONITORING</b></p> <p>This requires tools and systems in place to ensure independent data collection to establish: legality of catch, use of sustainable fishing practices, and deterrence of IUU fishing.</p>	<p>Require all vessels in your supply chain to allow human observers and/or electronic monitoring onboard. Verify that human observers receive adequate protections to perform their duties, including but not limited to Wi-Fi being made continuously available to observers for the duration of fishing trips.</p> <p>Review and share reports and actions taken with stakeholders.</p> <p>Report on how human and electronic monitoring is financed.</p>	<p>Provide regular reports to buyers showing proof of observer presence and sharing analysis from human observers and/or electronic monitoring onboard the vessel.</p> <p>Report on how human and electronic monitoring is financed.</p>	<p>Advocate for flag states to finance human and electronic monitoring. Engage with national governments of flag states, port states, and RFMOs to establish industry observer reporting requirements and multi-stakeholder reviews of observer data.</p>
<p><b>PORTS OF LANDING</b></p> <p>The place where IUU fish enters the market, where crew is changed and the main point where government inspectors have the opportunity to inspect vessels to assess IUU fishing and crew-related labor issues.</p>	<p>Publicly commit to buying seafood that has been landed in countries whose ports are subject to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), which ensures vessels are subject to government checks to warrant legality of catch or the presence of potential labor violations.</p> <p>Require suppliers to include all ports used by their vessels to be included in your supply chain data and that these ports are covered in PSMA ratification documents.</p>	<p>Maintain proof of ports of landing into which seafood is landed. Ensure the states are party to PSMA and that the ports being used are included in the ratification documents.</p> <p>Undertake port visits and check port control implementation.</p>	<p>Advocate for supplier countries to ratify the PSMA and include all ports of landing used in your supply chain. Ensure that PSMA implementation covers both third country and domestic landings. Seek out ports that have both sufficient IUU fishing and labor inspection capacity to assess vessels when they arrive at port.</p> <p>Advocate for effective and integrated port state control that includes the Ministry of Labor on labor-related issues.</p>

# Supply Chain Traceability:

Ensure information required to undertake risk assessment and due diligence is collected and used by all actors in the supply chain

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>DATA STANDARDIZATION</b></p> <p>Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)</p>	<p>Collect supply chain data using a standardized nomenclature which will allow full analysis and risk assessment; systems should be in place to track any changes to the data.</p> <p>At a minimum, the GDST Key Data Elements (KDEs) should be mandated and adopted throughout the full supply chain back to fishing vessels.</p> <p>Support the development of GDST KDE expansion frameworks so that datasets that currently have no standardized nomenclature become available for the global industry to adopt.</p> <p>Encourage the use of GDST capable software and hardware systems throughout the supply chain to enable real-time sharing of information for due diligence and risk assessment.</p>	<p>Adopt and use the GDST KDEs throughout the supply chain.</p>	<p>Advocate for governments to align their KDE nomenclature with the GDST standard.</p> <p>Ask governments to have an access portal into which GDST compliant data from seafood industry can be ingested.</p>

## **Rights:**

Ensure fundamental labor rights are respected throughout the supply chain, following ILO Convention 188 on Work in Fishing, the Conventions referenced in the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and all relevant ILO Conventions, Guidance, and national action plans, including but not limited to those covering the issues listed below:

1. The respect of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
2. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;
3. The effective abolition of child labor;
4. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and
5. The creation of safe and healthy working environment.

**Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)**

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION &amp; COLLECTIVE BARGAINING</b> (ILO C 87 &amp; 98 and ILO C 188, Article 9)</p>	<p>Uphold, and verify that suppliers are upholding, five core practices to ensuring respect for the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect the right of workers to organise by (forming and) joining a trade union of their choice, to carry out trade union activities, and to bargain collectively.</li> <li>2. Shall not interfere in trade union activities and shall ensure that workers can exercise these rights without any adverse consequence of harassment, retaliation, or detriment, including discrimination, differential treatment, intimidation, influence, or pressure.</li> <li>3. Agree to cooperate in good faith in the steps towards recognition of independent trade unions for the purposes of collective bargaining.</li> <li>4. Workers shall be granted adequate paid facility time to carry out any trade union role in the workplace.</li> <li>5. Grant trade unions physical access to workers, including for the purposes of education and training. Access shall be based upon mechanisms that the parties deem necessary.</li> </ol>	<p>Commit to upholding the five core practices to ensuring respect for the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect the right of workers to organise by (forming and) joining a trade union of their choice, to carry out trade union activities, and to bargain collectively.</li> <li>2. Shall not interfere in trade union activities and shall ensure that workers can exercise these rights without any adverse consequence of harassment, retaliation, or detriment, including discrimination, differential treatment, intimidation, influence, or pressure.</li> <li>3. Agree to cooperate in good faith in the steps towards recognition of independent trade unions for the purposes of collective bargaining.</li> <li>4. Workers shall be granted adequate paid facility time to carry out any trade union role in the workplace.</li> <li>5. Grant trade unions physical access to workers, including for the purposes of education and training. Access shall be based upon mechanisms that the parties deem necessary.</li> </ol>	<p>Advocate for the ratification and implementation of ILO C 87 and 98.</p> <p>Publicly condemn strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) lawsuits and any other retaliation against worker organizers and advocates.</p>

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<p><b>NO FORCED LABOR</b></p> <p>(ILO C 29 &amp; 105, Protocol 29 and Recommendation 203 of 2014, and the <a href="#">ILO Guidelines on Fair Labour Market Services for Migrant Fishers</a>)</p>	<p>Engage independent CSO experts in the evaluation of forced labor risks. Develop a protocol and budget for financing and ensuring the remediation of those who experienced forced labor.</p> <p>Contractually require suppliers to report on forced labor prevention policies, which must include monitoring and reporting to confirm:</p> <p>a) Contracts are transparent and can be reviewed by fishers in consultation with trade unions;</p> <p>b) Fishers can safely store and retrieve identity documents when they wish;</p> <p>c) Fishers have guaranteed access to communications, including Wi-Fi<sup>6</sup> at sea;</p>	<p>Ensure fishers have:</p> <p>a) Written contracts in their language;</p> <p>b) A way to safely store and retrieve identity documents when they wish;</p> <p>c) Regular guaranteed access to communications, including Wi-Fi at sea;</p> <p>d) Access to support organizations at port every three months;</p> <p>e) Zero fees charged for recruitment, or other charges while on the ship or at sea;</p> <p>f) Wages paid in full and on time with no illegal deductions; and</p> <p>g) Protection from physical or sexual violence or harassment.</p>	<p>Advocate for the ratification and implementation of ILO C 29 and 105 and Protocol 2014.</p> <p>Strengthen the regulation and effective monitoring of recruitment agencies, ensuring that workers pay zero recruitment fees.</p> <p>Advocate for governments to enable fishers' access to effective port state control, including port services and independent trade unions and CSOs whenever in port.</p> <p>Advocate for governments to guarantee, provide financing for, and monitor the provision of regular access to Wi-Fi at sea for all fishers.</p> <p><i>Continued on page 18</i></p>

*Continued on page 18*

6 When Wi-Fi is referred to throughout this document, it refers to access to free and secure Wi-Fi with guaranteed access for fishers. See [https://globallaborjustice.org/media/uploads/2025/04/WiFi\\_Guidelines\\_2025\\_02.pdf](https://globallaborjustice.org/media/uploads/2025/04/WiFi_Guidelines_2025_02.pdf)

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<i>No Forced Labor, Continued</i>	<p>d) Fishers have access to support organizations while at port at least every three months.</p> <p>e) Fishers’ wages are paid fully and on time with no illegal deductions or fee charging;</p> <p>f) There is a zero-tolerance policy for physical or sexual violence or harassment or threats of such behavior; and</p> <p>g) No recruitment fees are charged to workers/ fishers.</p> <p>See also section on <i>Transparency, Recruitment, and Grievance.</i></p>	<i>See page 17</i>	Advocate for the adoption and effective enforcement of ILO C, 29 & 105, Protocol (P. 29) & Recommendation (R. 203) of 2014, as well as training of labor inspectors and other enforcement officers on the ILO indicators of forced labor.
<p><b>NO CHILD LABOR</b> (ILO C 138 &amp; 182 and ILO C 188, Article 9)</p>	Engage the ILO and independent CSO experts in the evaluation of child labor risks. Develop a protocol and budget for financing and ensuring the remediation of child laborers.	Establish a regular and continuing engagement with child rights advocates from CSOs, the ILO, and relevant government agencies; review risks and risk mitigation strategies.	Advocate for the ratification of ILO C 138 and C 182 and effective enforcement of child labor bans, including training for labor inspectors and other enforcement officers. In the countries where C 182 is ratified, advocate for the inclusion of fisheries in the tripartite national action plan to eliminate child labor.

Issue	Direct actions sought from Retailers, Buyers, and Importers	Requirements for Suppliers: Processors, Vessel Owners and Operators, Recruitment Agencies	Asks retailers & supply chain actors should publicly make to Governments (port, flag, coastal, market, & labor states)
<b>PROMOTE &amp; ENSURE EQUALITY</b> (ILO C 100 & 111)	<p>Actively monitor, speak out against, and address any and all discrimination based on workers’ organizational affiliation (including union membership) and protected characteristics, including migration status, national origin, race/ethnicity, religion, and gender, among others, and including systematic or structural discrimination.</p> <p>Identify common discriminatory practices in your supply chain and report on actions taken to mitigate those on an annual basis. Demand reports on upward mobility of traditionally discriminated-against groups of workers.</p>	<p>Identify common discriminatory practices in the local community or industry that may affect your workplace, including systematic or structural discrimination.</p> <p>Set policies in place to actively mitigate such practices.</p> <p>Actively monitor, speak out against, and address any and all discrimination based on workers’ protected characteristics, including migration status, national origin, race/ethnicity, religion, and gender, among others.</p>	<p>Advocate for ratification of C 100 and 111 and effective enforcement of these conventions.</p> <p>Advocate for ratification of the ILO Migrant Workers Conventions 97 and 143 to prevent discrimination against migrant workers in fisheries and the seafood industry.</p>

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<p><b>ENSURE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY &amp; HEALTH</b></p> <p>(ILO C 155 &amp; 187, STCWF)</p>	<p>Track government safety inspections and report annually on health and safety issues identified and steps taken to address those.</p> <p>Review vessel policies and provision of food, health and safety supplies, and medical treatment capacity.</p> <p>Ensure fishers have a safe and secure means to report health and safety violations.</p>	<p>Cooperate fully with all safety inspections.</p> <p>Ensure all fishers receive, at no cost, food of sufficient nutritional value, quality, quantity, and variety, and potable water of sufficient quality and quantity throughout the voyage.</p> <p>Recognize sufficient meal periods; respect fishers' religious requirements and cultural practices in relation to food; stock vitamin supplements.</p> <p>Ensure fishers receive required safety training at no cost to themselves, and report on how training costs are covered.</p>	<p>Advocate for Ratification of C 155 and 187 and work with relevant government agencies to advocate for better safety inspections, protections, and reporting in the sector, among both flag states and port states.</p> <p>Ensure effective inspections are conducted jointly by relevant Ministries (Maritime, Fisheries, Agriculture) and with adequate participation from the Ministry of Labor.</p>
<p><b>ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE &amp; SOCIAL SECURITY</b></p> <p>(ILO C 188, Article 8 and Section VI. Articles 29-39)</p>	<p>Establish a budget and ensure suppliers have proof of insurance/ financing to pay for medical treatment and plans for how to divert the ship's course if needed.</p>	<p>Provide proof of insurance, including medical and social security, for all fishers onboard.</p> <p>Ensure vessels provide appropriate level of medical supplies and care for crew, in alignment with C 188.</p>	<p>Advocate for governments to ratify and implement C 188.</p>

## **Working Conditions:**

Ensure contracts, communications, and working conditions are structured to ensure fishers' rights and access to remedy.

Contracts should:

- Be in the workers' own language;
- Be read and understood by workers; and
- Align with national laws or C 188, whichever is more protective.

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<b>WORKING &amp; REST HOURS</b> (ILO C 188, Art 14)	<p>Ensure all workers in the supply chain are covered by binding agreements negotiated in good faith with unions that explicitly agree to work and rest times.</p> <p>Ensure all fishers have contracts in their language that define maximum working hours that align with the relevant conventions or national law, whichever is less.</p> <p>Ensure all fishers receive the minimum hours of rest, aligned with the relevant conventions or national law, whichever is greater.</p> <p>Review fisher contracts and work with local trade unions to confirm contracts align with C 188; Verify fishers have read and understand their contracts.</p> <p>Document and report on supplier contracts.</p> <p>See also <i>Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining</i>.</p>	<p>Ensure all workers have a legal contract in their language consistent with C 188, that workers are in possession of their identity documents, and that workers are not working beyond the limits set forth in C 188 or national law, whichever is fewer.</p> <p>Document and report on supplier contracts.</p> <p>Review fisher contracts and work with local trade unions to confirm contracts align with C 188.</p>	<p>Work with Ministries of Labor to ensure contract reviews are occurring on a regular basis and that contracts align with ILO C 188 and other core ILO Conventions.</p>

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<p><b>WAGES &amp; COMPENSATION</b></p> <p>(Protection of Wages Convention (C 95); Equal Remuneration Convention (C 100))</p>	<p>Report on monitoring of living wage policies in the supply chain.</p> <p>Ensure the price paid for goods enables living wages at every level of the supply chain.</p> <p>Identify in reporting the contracting practices and compliance of both direct employers and recruitment agencies when those agencies serve as the contracting party.</p> <p>Develop a policy to ensure that suppliers pay fishers in full, with no illegal deductions, and on time.</p>	<p>Ensure wages are aligned with the flag state minimum wage and the ILO consolidated wage for able bodied seafarers, whichever is higher.</p> <p>Ensure workers are paid in full, with no illegal deductions (including for basic needs described above) and on time.</p>	
<p><b>COMMUNICATIONS</b></p> <p>(C188)</p>	<p>Provide financing and establish agreements with vessel operators to provide fishers with access to Wi-Fi at sea.</p> <p>Engage trade unions and worker advocates to monitor the implementation and effective accessibility of free and secure Wi-Fi at sea.</p>	<p>Ensure fishers have access to free and secure Wi-Fi at sea.</p> <p>Engage trade unions and worker advocates to ensure Wi-Fi at sea is effectively connecting fishers to support structures and grievance mechanisms, allowing union access to fishers consistent with freedom of association.</p>	<p>Advocate for governments to require and finance adequate/accessible Wi-Fi at sea as part of gear requirements on vessels.</p>

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<b>MAXIMUM TIME AT SEA</b>	<p>Establish, verify, and enforce a policy that prohibits longer than three months at sea for large industrial vessels (&gt;24 meters) and one month at sea for smaller vessels. Every three months fishers must have a minimum of ten days of unfettered access to port services. Verify compliance.</p> <p>Sign contractual agreements with vessel operators to receive reports on which ports they dock in and for how long.</p>	<p>Ensure fishing vessels are not at sea for more than three months before returning to port – a maximum of three months for larger vessels and one month for smaller vessels.</p> <p>Every three months, fishers must have a minimum of ten days of unfettered access to port services.</p>	<p>Advocate for laws that limit the allowable time at sea to three months for fishing vessels over 24 meters and one month for fishing vessels under 24 meters, and with ten days of unfettered access to port services every three months. Advocate for port state laws that allow fishers’ access to port services.</p>
<p><b>RECRUITMENT</b></p> <p><i>(see also forced labor)</i></p> <p>(General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment, ILO C 181 on private employment agencies, and other relevant ILO standards.</p> <p><a href="#">ILO Guidelines on Fair Labour Market Services for Migrant Fishers</a></p>	<p>Publish annually the list of recruitment agencies supplier vessels use.</p> <p>Identify the costs of recruitment and how those are paid.</p> <p>Establish a contractual agreement with suppliers to provide financing or financial incentives to cover recruitment expenses.</p> <p>Publish and uphold a policy to prohibit workers being charged recruitment fees, including access to remedy when workers have paid fees.</p>	<p>Report annually on the recruitment process, the costs, and how related costs are covered.</p> <p>Commit to the employer-pays principle so that no recruitment fees or related costs (including but not limited to repatriation costs) are charged to, or otherwise borne by, workers, regardless of what is legally allowed. Provide proof of payment showing recruitment-related costs were paid by the company.</p>	<p>Advocate for laws that prohibit the charging of recruitment fees and related costs to workers.</p>

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<p><b>GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS</b></p> <p><u>Reference UNGP 31 effectiveness criteria for non-judicial grievance mechanisms:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legitimate</li> <li>2. Accessible</li> <li>3. Predictable</li> <li>4. Equitable</li> <li>5. Transparent</li> <li>6. Rights-compatible</li> <li>7. Based on dialogue and engagement</li> <li>8. A source of continuous learning</li> </ol>	<p>Require all suppliers to have a grievance mechanism in place that aligns with the UNGPs.</p> <p>Sign a binding agreement with trade union(s) to ensure that effective grievance and remedy processes down the supply chain are monitored and governed by a binding co-governance mechanism, with use of the Model Arbitration Clauses for Disputes arising under Enforceable Brand Agreements.</p> <p>See also <i>Rights to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining</i>.</p>	<p>Ensure effective, accessible, and transparent grievance mechanisms that involve workers and their advocates directly and lead to prompt and appropriate remediation.</p> <p>Sign agreements such as CBAs with unions to establish union-run grievance mechanisms.</p> <p>Report transparently on grievances and remedy.</p>	<p>Create national tripartite structures with the government, unions, and CSO to coordinate handling of grievances.</p>