



South East Asia Convening: Strengthening Fishers' Unions and Collective Action

1. Introduction

This regional convening in Southeast Asia will bring together innovative organizers and civil society organizations working with industrial fleet fishers in Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan. Workshop sessions will focus on understanding and enhancing participating organizers' capacity to campaign, engage in collective bargaining, negotiate with supply chain actors, navigate retaliation, organize workers, and identify and pursue opportunities for deeper regional collaboration to advance worker demands.

2. Proposed Activities & Agenda

The workshop sessions will cover the following key topics:

- Training and knowledge exchange on best practices for union organizing, collective organization, campaigning, reporting grievances and obtaining remedy, negotiation, and handling retaliation.
- Discussions on best practices for increasing unionization rates and union density among fishers.
- Identification of and co-developing solutions for the most critical issues facing fishers, including exploitative recruitment practices, two-tier employment systems, health and safety violations, union democracy, low rates of unionization and barriers to freedom of association, lack of crew communication and access to grievance mechanisms at sea, and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- With a focus on gender, the sessions will also explore support systems for fishers' families, including organizing wives in origin communities to advocate for strengthened labor rights and improved working conditions.
- Strategies for unions on building and leveraging public pressure on buyers and investors to address supply chain transparency issues and achieve binding agreements between fisher unions and industry.
- The role of international standards, specifically ILO C188, in shaping protections for fishers will be examined, along with strategies to enhance unions' influence in enforcing and advancing these standards.
- Discussions on how to deepen regional and transnational coordination between fishers' unions to build long-term relationships and networks, align on a shared analysis of problems and solutions, and establish unified efforts to build worker power in regional seafood supply chains.

Below is the agenda for the three days:

Day 1: Identifying & Navigating Industry Challenges		
Jun 17, 2025		
Time	Agenda Item & Goals	Session Structure
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Opening Remarks and Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome by Jakarta-based union representatives.• GLJ provides opening remarks, convening overview, and logistics.
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Introducing Organizations & Ice breaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Cross the Line” icebreaker activity. Participants introduce themselves and their organizations through a facilitated exercise.• Mentimeter poll to capture expectations for convening.
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Identifying and Addressing Key Issues Facing Fishers & Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GLJ introduces session• Breakaway group discussions to identify top challenges facing fishers and unions across different countries and to prioritize key challenges• Whole-room discussion of top challenges identified• Open discussion outlining potential solutions to the challenges
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00-3:00PM	Accountability Research Centre (ARC) Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARC Report Presentation: <i>Fisher Organizing in Global Supply Chains</i>- Judy Gearhart - Accountability Research Center at American University.

2:00 - 5:30 PM	Sharing Best Practices for Union Organizing, Campaigning and Collective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valery Alzaga, GLJ- What does it take to run an effective union campaign? ● Break ● Union Case Study Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FRN- C-188 campaign, Thailand (Jon Hartough and Toby Saw) ○ FOSPI-PMFU- Wi-Fi Now campaign (Achmad Mudzakir) ○ SBMI- Multiple campaigns (Rizky Oktaviana) ○ Sakti Sulut OSH campaign (Arnon Hiborang) ● Facilitated group discussion to reflect on the case studies shared and draw out key lessons, challenges, and areas for improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included follow-up discussion on organizing women seafood processing workers.
<p style="text-align: center;">Day 2: Navigating Industry Challenges and Ensuring Access to Grievance Mechanisms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jun 18, 2025</p>		
9:00- 9:30 AM	Opening Session	<p>Agenda Item</p> <p>Session Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome back reflection session on Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mentimeter reflection on Day 1 (most useful elements, strategies, learnings). ● Overview of agenda for Day 2

9:30 AM - 2:00 PM	Union Organizing Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opening from Global Labor Justice (GLJ) (9:30-10:00 AM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the roles of unions and CSOs for labor rights? ○ What does a strong democratic union look like? ○ What are strong unions able to win? ● Breakaway Targeted Workshops for Unions & CSOs (10:00-11:30 AM) ● Split 1- Unions- Enhancing Unionization Rates, Density & Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop on strategic approaches to engage new members, with building stronger organizational structures and improving outreach to fishers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Output: Groups to create visual metaphors to depict strong unions. ● Split 2 – CSOs- How Civil Society Can Best Support Unions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakaway discussions on how civil society organizations (CSOs) can best support fisher by addressing structural barriers that limit organizing efforts. ○ Divided into five themes (capacity building, structural barriers, avoiding harmful practices/campaigning/media/advocacy, legal case support). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Output: Groups to create visual metaphors to depict strong CSO collaboration with unions. ● Unions and CSOs share key reflections from their respective discussions via presenting their visual pictures and a Q&A session per group.
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM		<i>Lunch Break</i>
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Techniques for Case Processing & Handling Retaliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation- Johanna Lee- Global Labor Justice (GLJ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the ILO definition of forced labor and review the 11 indicators with fishing-sector examples. ○ Q&A for Johanna ● Open Discussion Participants to share experiences with case handling, documentation, and framing cases as forced labor to strengthen leverage.

5:00- 5:30PM	Closing Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentimeter poll reflecting on and rating Day 2. Offering feedback for improvements.
Day 3: Effective International Advocacy and Building Cohesive Movements		
		Jun 19, 2025
	Agenda Item	Session Structure
9:30 AM - 10.30 AM	The Importance of ILO C188 and the Role Fishers Can Play in Advancing It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJF - ILO C188 Ratification • Team 9 - Indonesia Presentation - SAKTI Jakarta (Syofian) • Beyond ratification- Enforceability - Johanna Lee- GLJ • Q&A
10:30 AM - 12:00PM	Leveraging Public Pressure, Supply Chain Transparency, and Achieving Binding Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction- Valery Alzaga GLJ- Practical approaches to leveraging public pressure to negotiate and secure binding agreements such as EBAs and and negotiating CBAs with employers • Hespin Lukas- SPAN – Organizing wives and children of fishers for collective power that supports broader union and advocacy effort. • Presentation Zacari Edwards GLJ- Leveraging Public Pressure, Supply Chain Transparency, and Achieving Binding Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline how globalized seafood supply chains are comprised, international, many actors, and issues and opportunities voluntary programmes in seafood present for case handlers • Open discussion and strategies on how to use public pressure to call out buyers and investors, aiming for transparency and accountability in supply chains.
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	<i>Lunch break</i>	

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Leveraging Public Pressure, Supply Chain Transparency, and Achieving Binding Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ITF examples of CBAs in fishing sector and how they are built (democratic & worker participation) ● Johanna Lee- Examples of ESCAs and building worker power from the garment sector ● Q&A
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Closing Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GLJ will facilitate a synthesis of reflections from across the three days, drawing together participants' insights on structural barriers to organizing, the need for stronger regional alignment, and opportunities for ongoing collaboration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus discussion on identifying shared priorities, reinforcing cross-border relationships, and outlining next steps for continued coordination after the convening.