

Vigo Dialogue on Decent Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture



- An intergovernmental organization for marketing information and technical advisory services for the Asia Pacific region
- Promote fishery trade from Asia Pacific region and assisting countries in the region enter the international market
- Our programmes and activities focus on issues related to sustainability whether related to markets or production
- Also address issues and needs of member countries including trade and technical barriers
- Work closely with FAO to carry out a lot of our work
- These are through our industry seminars, trade and technical workshops, trainings, the INFOFISH International magazine
- Current issues are also addressed through our regular international conferences like the World Tuna Conference, Shrimp Conference, Tilapia Conference, the Pacific Tuna Forum

The issue on decent work has been debated in the Pacific Tuna Forum

- ATF PTF 2015, Fiji: Patricia Kailola, NGO Pacific Dialogue advocating awareness on good governance, rule of law and human rights as well as crew conditions...
- Existing standards specifically social accountability
- At the World Tuna Conference in Bangkok, we also had a representative from ILO make a presentation
- Information from the conference is disseminated through our publications with regular updates from the contributors

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS IN THE TUNA SUPPLY CHAIN

by Marcelo Hidalgo

Fishing companies and governments should enforce the implementation and compliance of ILO 188 to ensure the welfare of skippers, crews and workers in the tuna supply chain. The PNA and WCPO countries could take the lead in this initiative.

Introduction

The Western and Central Pacific Ocean, with more than 250 fishing vessels (purse seiners, mother vessels and carriers), home of 20 island nations and the biggest tuna reserve in the world, plays an important role in the responsible management of tuna stocks. Any decision taken by the region has a big global impact especially in influencing work and working conditions in the tuna supply chain.

Social issues in the tuna supply chain are becoming increasingly important, specifically those related to workers and working conditions both in processing and within the purse seiner fleet. The author opines that tuna fishing companies and governments should enforce the implementation and compliance of ILO 188 (Work in Fishing Convention) to ensure the welfare of skippers, crews and workers in the tuna supply chain.

In the last two years, the increase in media coverage about social issues has led to investigations and even analysis of various tuna supply chains globally. NGOs report on modern slavery at sea, labour abuses and forced labour that destroy the lives of workers and their families. Usually these abuses are directly related to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU). Overfishing also destroys ocean life and sustainability.

On the other hand, tuna global markets, and retailers with the support of non-governmental organisations, have already included social issues in their tuna sourcing policies.

While it has to be clear that abuses in worker welfare and working conditions are a global issue in all industries including food and textiles, the working conditions definitely need to improve in some pillars of the tuna supply chain, particularly at sea, in ports and during primary processing.

Social accountability in tuna processing

At the 5th Pacific Tuna Forum in Fiji in September 2015 [jointly organised by INFOFISH, the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests, Fiji], and the National Fisheries Authority Papua New Guinea), the author had the opportunity of talking with directors and managers of several tuna processing and fishing companies. In a few cases, there was some confusion about the concept of social accountability.

To clarify, social accountability in tuna processing facilities is about implementing and improving occupational health and safety policies at the workplace. It is about not having child labour, discrimination at the workplace and remediation procedures and policies in case there is an occurrence of such; it is also about having policies preventing forced labour, having fair wages, having working hours as per standard and if exceeded, companies should have policies in place to recognise extra working time.



Tuna processing factory located in a PNA country

implementation of the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) adopted by many supermarkets in their tuna sourcing policy.

In the Western Central Pacific Ocean region, the Parties to The Nauru Agreement (PNA) countries have taken the lead in moving towards SA8000 compliance in six tuna processing companies. By the beginning of 2016, the PNA expects to have one of their companies certified as SA8000.

Social accountability in purse seine fishing

Due to the complexity of tuna fishing methods (different fishing gears, fishing periods and quantity of crew onboard), this article will review only the workers and working conditions of the tuna purse seiner fleet and briefly, tuna longliners. Pole and line, and handline fishing, as well as mother vessels and carriers will not be mentioned.

by enforcement barriers (such as safety and language) are used to create barriers to enforcement, in addition to the language barriers among crew, captain and the authorities.

Social accountability in the tuna purse seiner fleet is about the right of the crew to have decent working and living conditions onboard, including health protection, safety installation, and occupational safety. It is about providing hours of rest after fishing periods, and providing food and drinkable water, and medical care onboard. It is also about having employment agreements and clear terms of employment, as well as the right to repatriation and social security plans. All of these should be communicated to the crew. The tuna fishing company should also have policies, procedures and a management system onboard.

Actually there is no Standard available for certification of tuna purse seiners. However, ILO Convention 188 is a guide that looks at the crew working conditions mentioned above, which the tuna fleets should follow. ILO 188 is recognised and committed to by country members of the United Nations.



Good working and living conditions for crew in four different tuna purse seiner fleets (kitchen, dormitories, cantina and machine room)