

## ILO-GBSN-UniGE: Teaching Resources



#1

Promoting decent work and  
the elimination of forced labour  
in the fishing industry

**About the standard slide deck:** targeted at graduate students, based on a on a three-hour class in the course “Business and Human Rights”, first taught at the University of Geneva in Switzerland in May 2023.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), the Global Business School Network (GBSN) and the University of Geneva (UniGE) joined forces in 2022 to include human and labor rights in business school education. The teaching resources are developed in expert workshops and consist of a standard slide deck and teaching notes. The resources can be adapted to regional contexts and are available open-source.

For more information, see: <https://gbsn.org/ilo-gbsn-unige-teaching-resources/> or contact Julianna LaBelle, [bhr@gbsn.org](mailto:bhr@gbsn.org).

# Business and Human Rights in the Fishing Industry

GBSN-UniGE, with inputs from the ILO  
GBSN-HR supply chain research cluster

Based on the technical workshop on 30th Nov. – 2nd Dec. 2022



## Learning objectives

**1. Industry context: Understand how the structuring of an industry can enable human rights or lead to violations.**

Sub-objectives: map the labor rights risks along the fishing value chain, understand the different actors in global fish production and distribution, and learn about the economic relevance of global fish production in producing countries and market states. (Unit 1)

**2. Human rights challenges – the role of businesses: Discuss corporate responsibility for human rights along the global value chain.**

Sub-objectives: examine how the operations of fishing companies can lead to labor rights violations or forced labor, learn how to identify and monitor indicators of forced labor. (Unit 2)

**3. Management solutions: Reflect on how management must be an important part of providing holistic solutions.**

Sub-objectives: develop promising solutions to address human rights and forced labor concerns in the fishing industry, consider short-term and long-term strategies to mitigate human rights risks and remedy human rights abuses. (Unit 3)

# Agenda

Unit 0 – Setting the stage

Unit 1 – The fishing industry

Unit 2 – Human rights risks in the fishing industry

Unit 3 – Decent work in fishing

# Agenda

Unit 0 – Setting the stage

Unit 1 – The fishing industry

Unit 2 – Human rights risks in the fishing industry

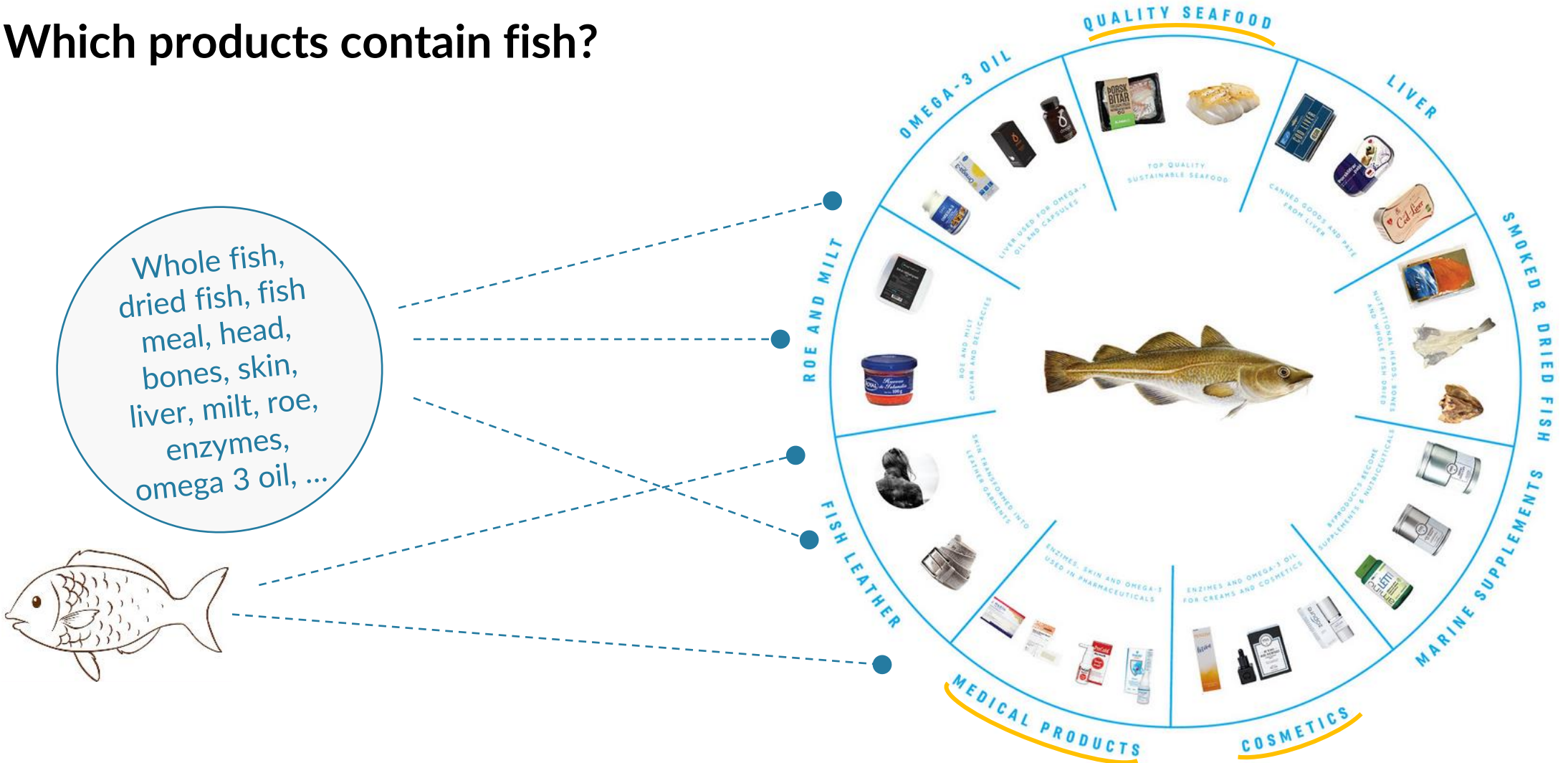
Unit 3 – Decent work in fishing

**What does this picture have to do with today's topic?**



Mathias Erhart from Nenzing, Austria, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Red\\_Kitten\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Red_Kitten_01.jpg))

# Which products contain fish?



<https://www.sjavarklasinn.is/en/100-fish/>; <https://de.freepik.com/fotos-vektoren-kostenlos/fish-outline>

## Which products contain fish?



● **Squalene (from Sharks):** lip balms, tanning oils, creams and moisturizers

● **Guanine (from shimmering scales of fish):** nail varnishes, lipsticks, eyeshadows, highlighters, bronzers and some mascaras

● **Collagen (from fish or other animals – e.g., from skin or bones):** beauty products for elasticity and anti-wrinkles



## Sustainability of fish products?

sustainable  
fashion  
Guardian  
sustainable  
business

*Elisabeth Braw*

Thu 16 Oct 2014 14.32  
BST



### **Prada, Dior and Nike are finding a fashionable new purpose for fish skins**

Fish leftovers are often turned into meal for animals, but top brands are turning fish skin into leather



Using all parts of the fish can increase the sustainability of fish use.

This sustainability discussion in fishing is focused on environmental aspects. People are concerned with the fish and fishers are often forgotten.

## Why is this a BHR issue?



Business & Human Rights  
Resource Centre

27 Aug 2015

Edvard Pettersson,  
Bloomberg Business

Article

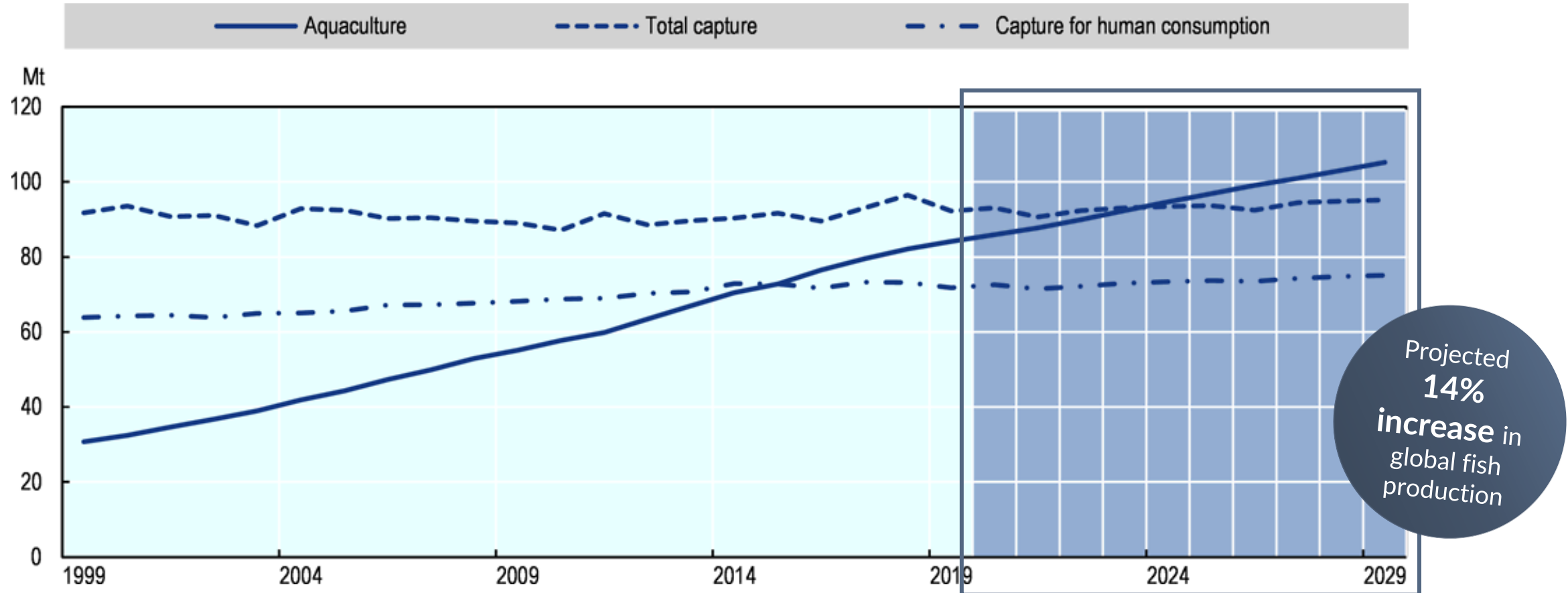
# Nestle Accused of Putting Fish From Slave Labor in Cat Food



Lawsuits & regulatory  
action

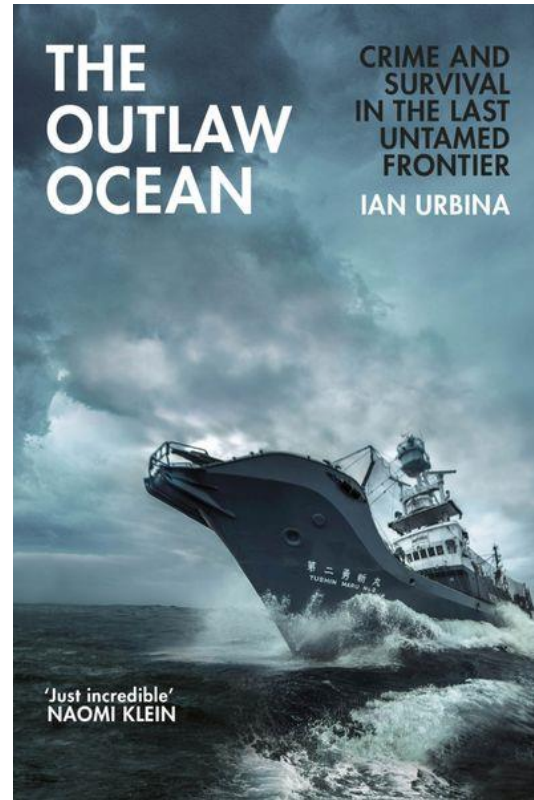


## Increasing relevance of seafood



<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/4dd9b3d0-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4dd9b3d0-en>

## Documenting forced labor on fishing vessels



**Ian Urbina**, investigative journalist, author, and founder of the NGO “The Outlaw Ocean Project”

## Urbina 2021: How fish-meal production is destroying Gambia's waters



<https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/how-fish-meal-production-is-destroying-gambias-waters>

# Agenda

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Unit 2 – Human rights risks in the fishing industry

Unit 3 – Decent work in fishing

Subsistence fishing



Artisanal/ small-scale  
fishing



## Fishing for a living

Industrial fishing



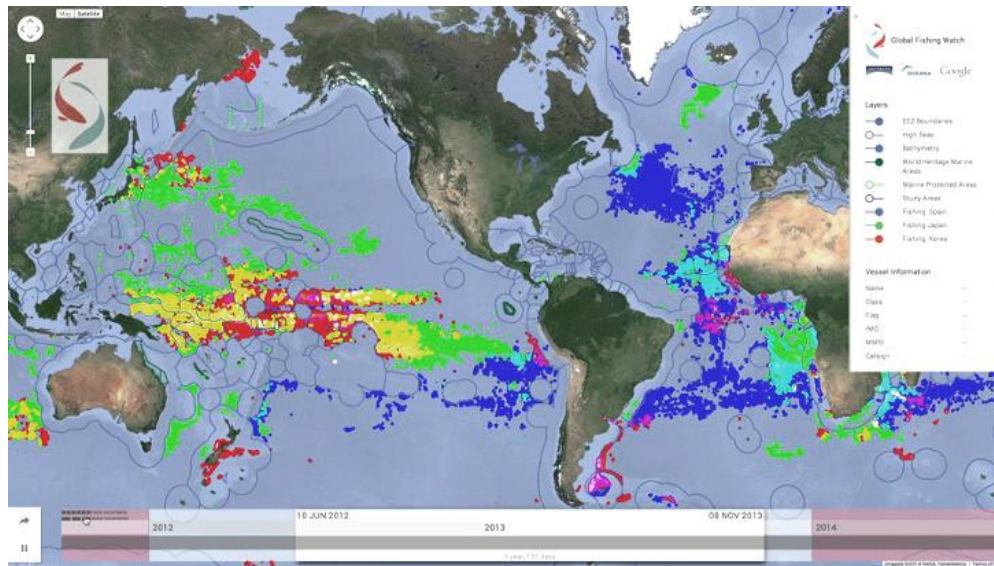
Aquaculture



Capture fishery

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/aps-v12-i2-c10.htm>; [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-two-most-commonly-used-Artisanal-Fisheries-boats\\_fig3\\_301213420](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-two-most-commonly-used-Artisanal-Fisheries-boats_fig3_301213420);  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BM188\\_off\\_Berry\\_Head.jpg/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BM188_off_Berry_Head.jpg/); <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fish-farm-hero.jpg>

## Global fishing industry



Map showing different marine areas and fishing activity from different countries.

~ **38 million** people work in the global fishing industry, 80% in Asia, 20% women.  
+ ~ **20 million** workers are employed in aquaculture.

In comparison: the forestry sector employs approx. 33 million people (approx. 1% of global employment).

~ **500-600 million livelihoods** depend at least partially on fisheries and aquaculture.

~ **US\$ 141 billion value in sales** for capture fisheries.

**Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing** is a global challenge, representing approx. 14-33% of global capture fishery (and up to 37% in West African waters).



## Fishing supply chain

Can you map the key stages of the fishing supply chain?



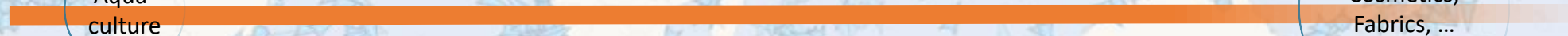
<https://www.marinevesseltraffic.com/2013/02/fishing-boat-track.html>; <https://www.vesselfinder.com/>

# Fishing supply chain

STAGES IN THE FISHING SUPPLY CHAIN



HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS



<https://www.marinevesseltraffic.com/2013/02/fishing-boat-track.html>; <https://www.vesselfinder.com/>

## What do you know about the fishing industry?

### Global production of fish is:

- A. Increasing steadily since 1950
- B. Increased from 1950 to 1990 and is now stalling
- C. Increased from 1950 to 1990 and is now decreasing

### Global production of fish is:

- A. Predominantly composed of fishing
- B. Evenly composed of fishing and aquaculture
- C. Predominantly composed of aquaculture

### The top 7 producers (China, Indonesia, Peru, India, Russia, USA, and Viet Nam) of fish account for:

- A. 25% of world production
- B. 50% of world production
- C. 75% of world production



## What do you know about the fishing industry?

Global production of fish is:

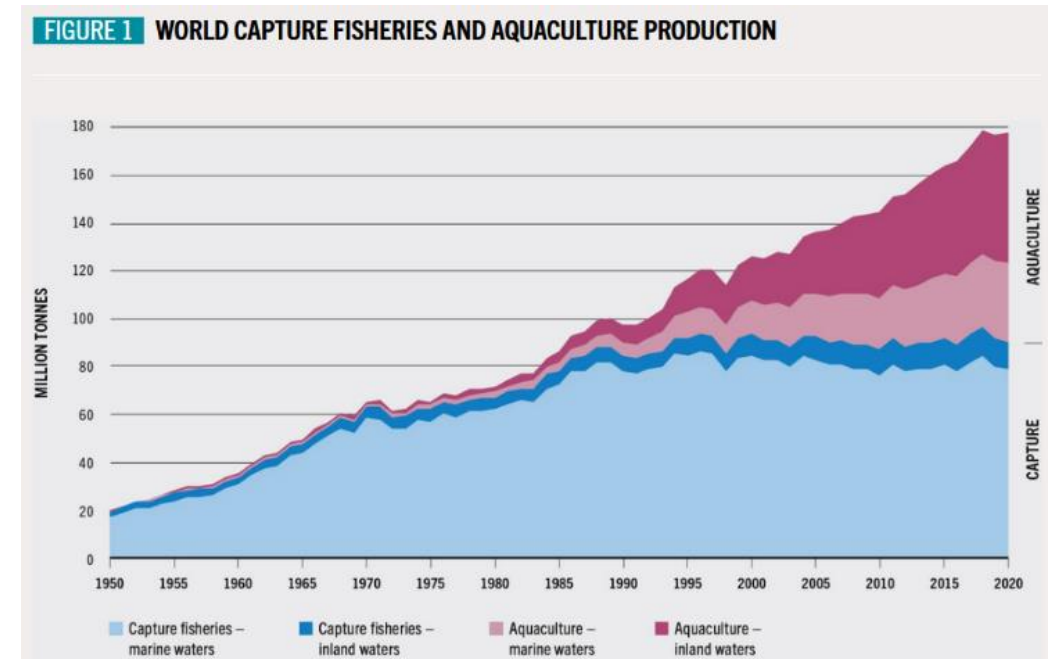
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Global production of fish is:

- A. Predominantly composed of capture fishing
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## Governance gaps and responsibilities

**High seas:** cover 64% of the ocean surface, states must cooperate (e.g., through regional fisheries bodies or international organizations)

**Coastal states:** sovereign rights for managing fishing activities within their EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zones), up to 200 nautical miles

**Workers' nationalities**

**Owners' nationalities**

**Flag states:** registration of vessels, exercise jurisdiction over vessels and control compliance with int'l conventions, national labor standards, and human rights

**Port states:** legislation of the port's location, inspection regime to prevent vessels suspected of IUU fishing from using ports and from bringing their produce to the national or int'l market

(see Port State Control, PCS)

**Trade and Market States:** involved in the processing, wholesale, and retail of fish and fish products. The main fish markets are found in the EU, the US, Japan and Australia.

## Flags of convenience

A flag of convenience vessel is one that flies the flag of a country other than the country of ownership.

For workers onboard, this can mean:

- Very low wages
- Poor on-board conditions
- Inadequate food and clean drinking water
- Long periods of work without proper rest, leading to stress and fatigue

Associated with illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing (IUU)

Can be used to avoid regulations and controls

## FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

SOLAS = International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea; MARPOL = International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, LL66 = The International Convention on Load Lines, MLC2006 = Maritime Labour Convention (ILO), CLC FUND92 = International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage

## Deep dive

Input from the Charles Autheman:

**How does the international community try to regulate labor rights risks in the fishing industry?**

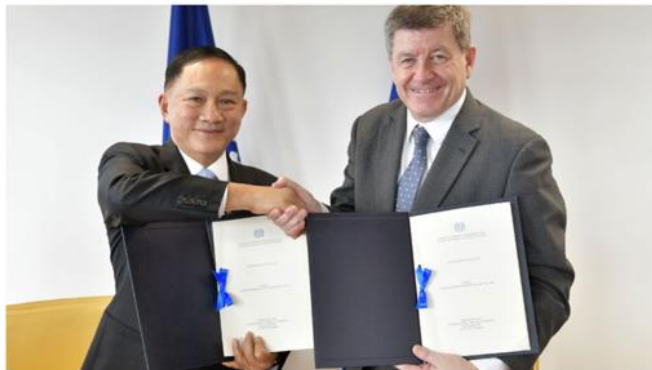
# Regulations – International labor standards

Fishing Convention - C188

## Thailand ratifies Work in Fishing Convention

Thailand has committed itself to ensuring acceptable living and working conditions for fishers on board ships by ratifying the Work in Fishing Convention. It has become the first country in Asia to do so, which signals to other countries in the region to follow this move.

Press release | 30 January 2019



Tools 

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español > français > ภาษาไทย >

A A+ A++ Print >

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## Ratifications of C188 - Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)

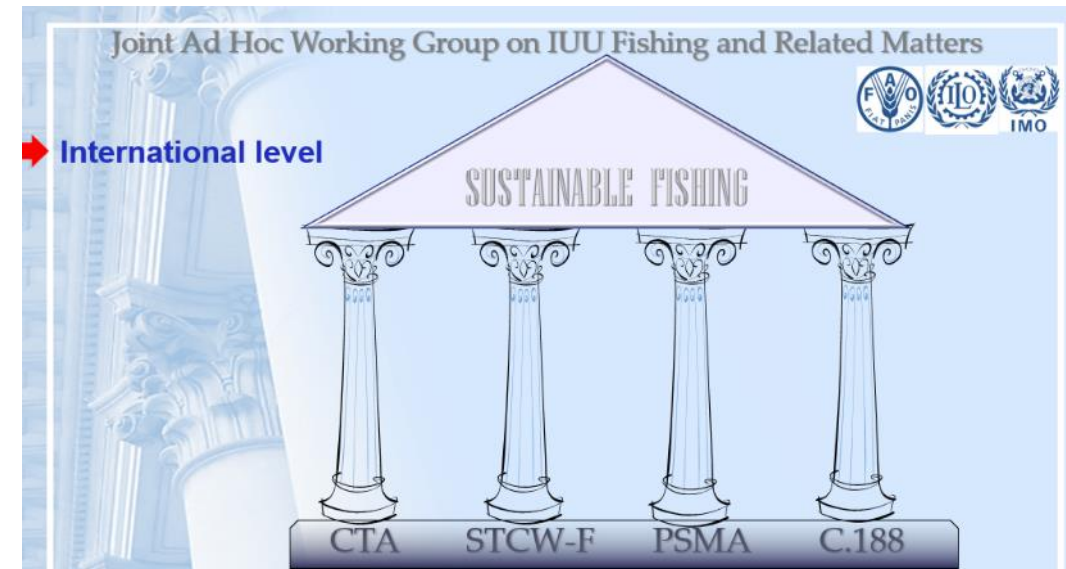
Date of entry into force: 16 Nov 2017

21 ratifications

- Denounced: 0

See also

- Countries have not ratified





# Regulations – Regional fisheries management organizations



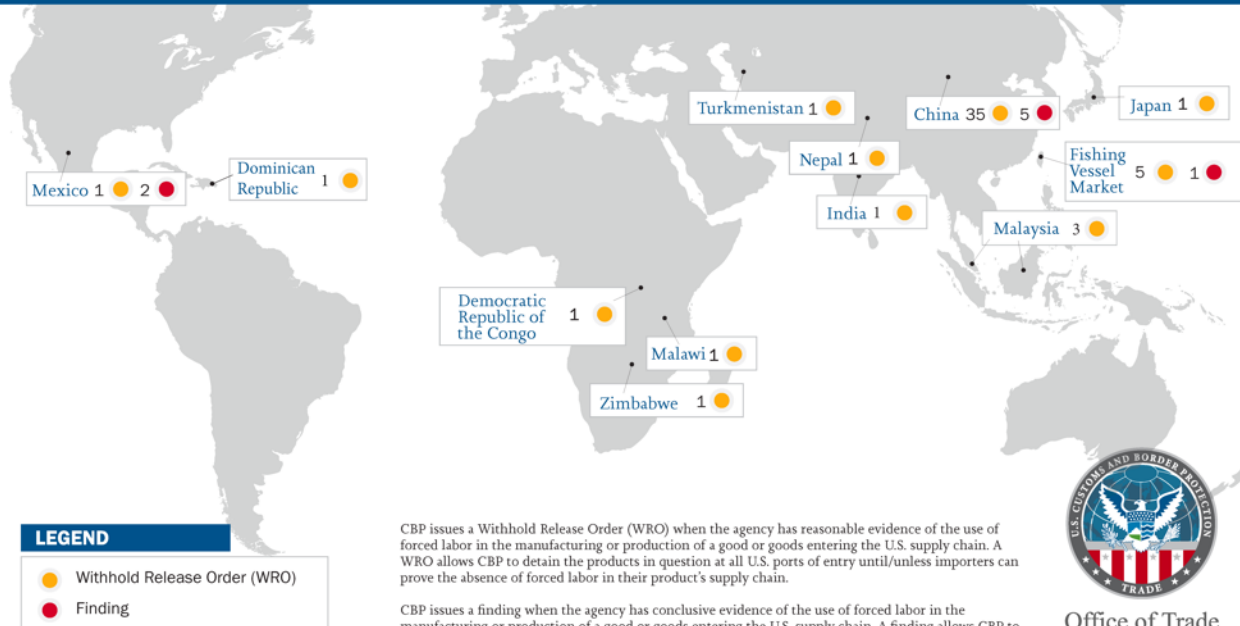
**FCWC Signs MOU with ILO to Collaborate on Decent Work in Fisheries**



# Regulations – Import bans and mHRDD

## Active Withhold Release Orders & Findings

This map provides an overview of all active WROs and Findings around the world. CBP is currently enforcing 52 active WROs and 8 Findings across the globe.



FISHING VESSELS					
#	Date	Merchandise	Entities	Status	Status Notes
5	08/04/2021	Seafood	Fishing Vessel: Hangton No. 112	Active	Press Release
4	05/26/2021	Seafood	Fishing Vessels owned by Dalian Ocean Fishing Co. Ltd.	Active	Press Release
3	12/31/2020	Seafood	Fishing Vessel: L		
2	8/18/2020	Seafood	Fishing Vessel: D		
1	5/11/2020	Seafood	Fishing Vessel: Y		



## Deep dive

Input from the ILO:

**Why is it challenging to ensure decent work in the fishing industry?**

**Who is in charge of implementing labor rights on board fishing vessels?**

# Establishing labor rights in fishing

## General challenges

- Transnational nature of the industry
- Isolation
- Declining fish stocks

## Challenges for port inspectors

- Sheer number of vessels calling into port
- Many things to inspect
- Limited human resources, labour inspectors not involved



# Agenda

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# Human rights risks in the fishing industry

## Health and safety

Each year, over 100'000 fishing-related deaths occur, compared to 300 deaths per year in the shipping industry.

## Privacy and communication

Workers often live in very tight living quarters and have sporadic cell phone reception.

## Hours and wages

Working hours of 16-20 hours a day, seven days a week are common. Workers often experience debt bondage.

## Isolation and time at sea

Workers in forced labor spend months or even years at sea without stepping on shore. Fishing, processing the fish, transshipments of the catch and vessel transfers of workers all take place at sea.

## Trafficking and forced labor

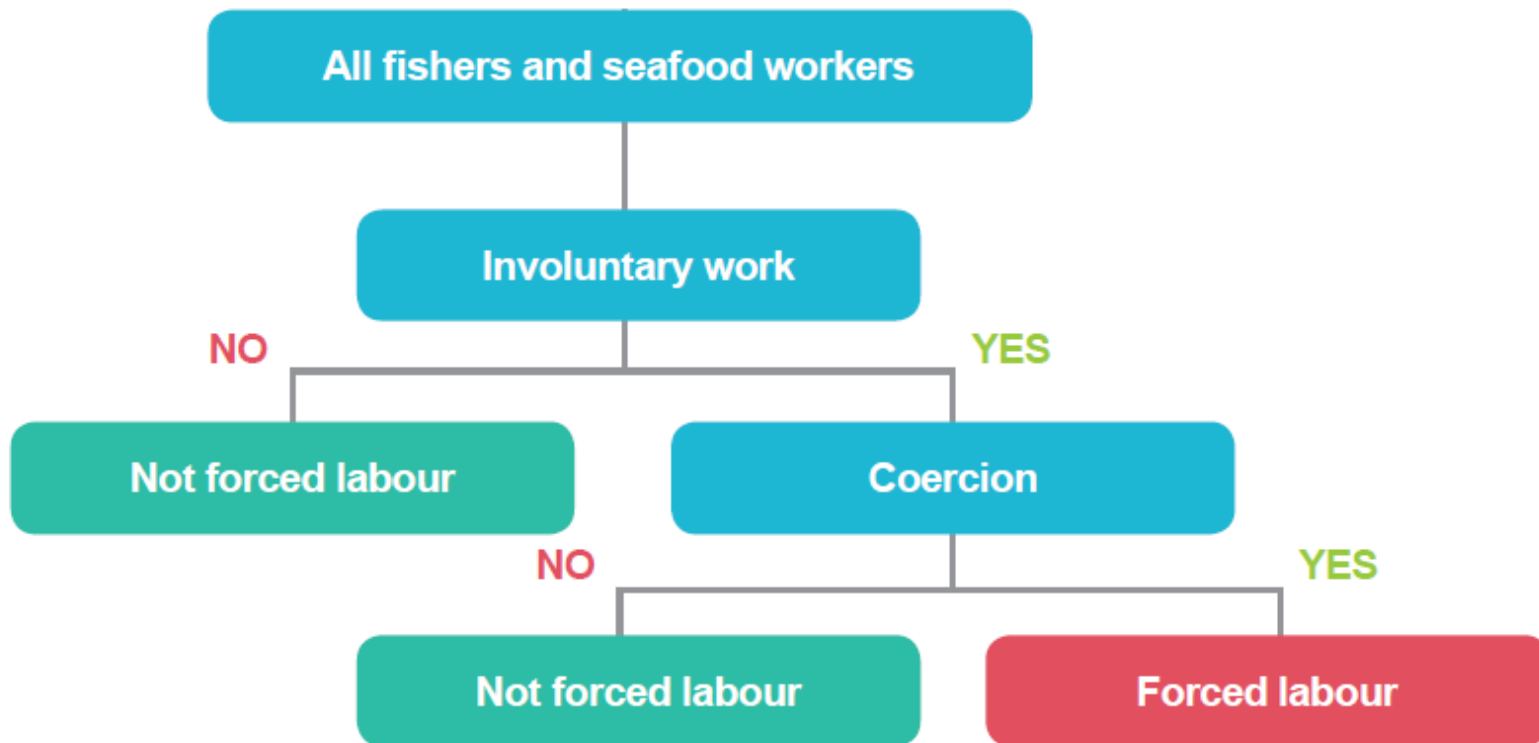
The Pew Charitable Trusts (pewtrusts.org) ; see also: <https://go.fishsafety.org/downloads/White%20Paper%20-%20Triggering%20Death%20-%20November%202022.pdf>;  
[https://www.tracit.org/uploads/1/0/2/2/102238034/tracit\\_forced\\_labor\\_and\\_illicit\\_trade\\_nov2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.tracit.org/uploads/1/0/2/2/102238034/tracit_forced_labor_and_illicit_trade_nov2021_final.pdf); <https://theconversation.com/why-is-it-so-difficult-to-stamp-out-seafood-slavery-there-is-little-justice-even-in-court-152179> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/21/such-brutality-tricked-into-slavery-in-the-thai-fishing-industry>

## Deep dive

Input from the ILO:

**What is forced labor? How does ILO support governments, employers and workers to address forced labor in the fishing industry?**

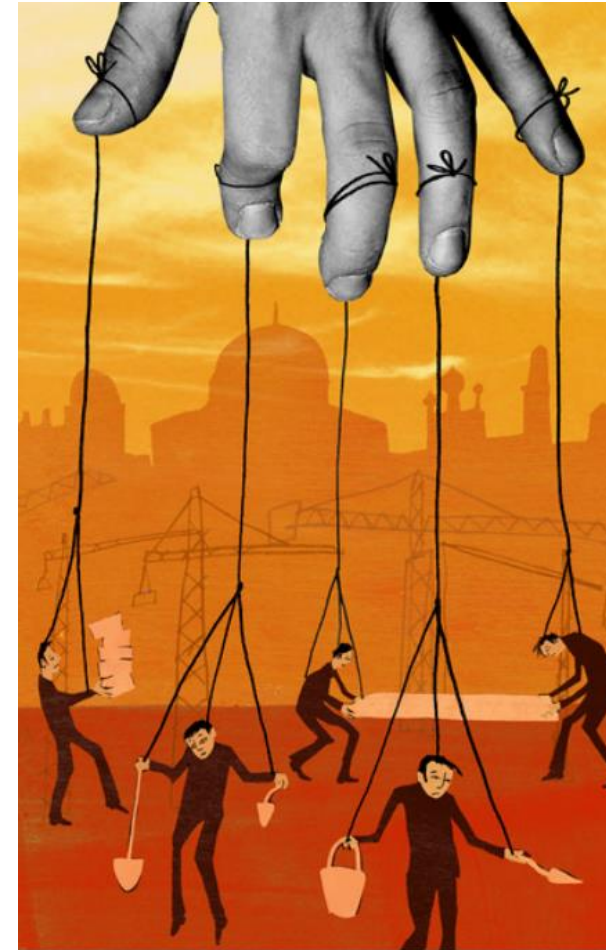
## Identifying forced labor in fishing





## 11 indicators / red flags of forced labor

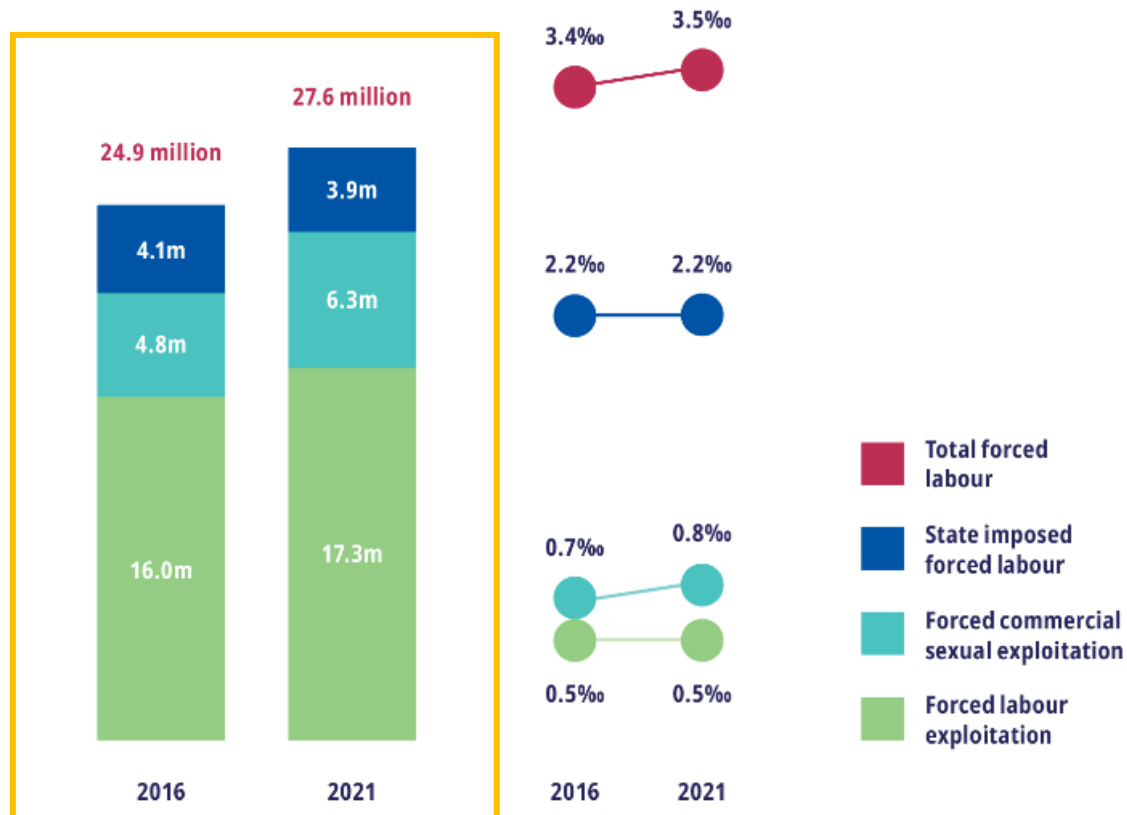
- Abuse of vulnerability
- Deception
- Restriction of movement
- Isolation
- Physical and sexual violence
- Intimidation and threats
- Retention of identity documents
- Withholding of wages
- Debt bondage
- Abusive working and living conditions
- Excessive overtime



## Forced labor trends

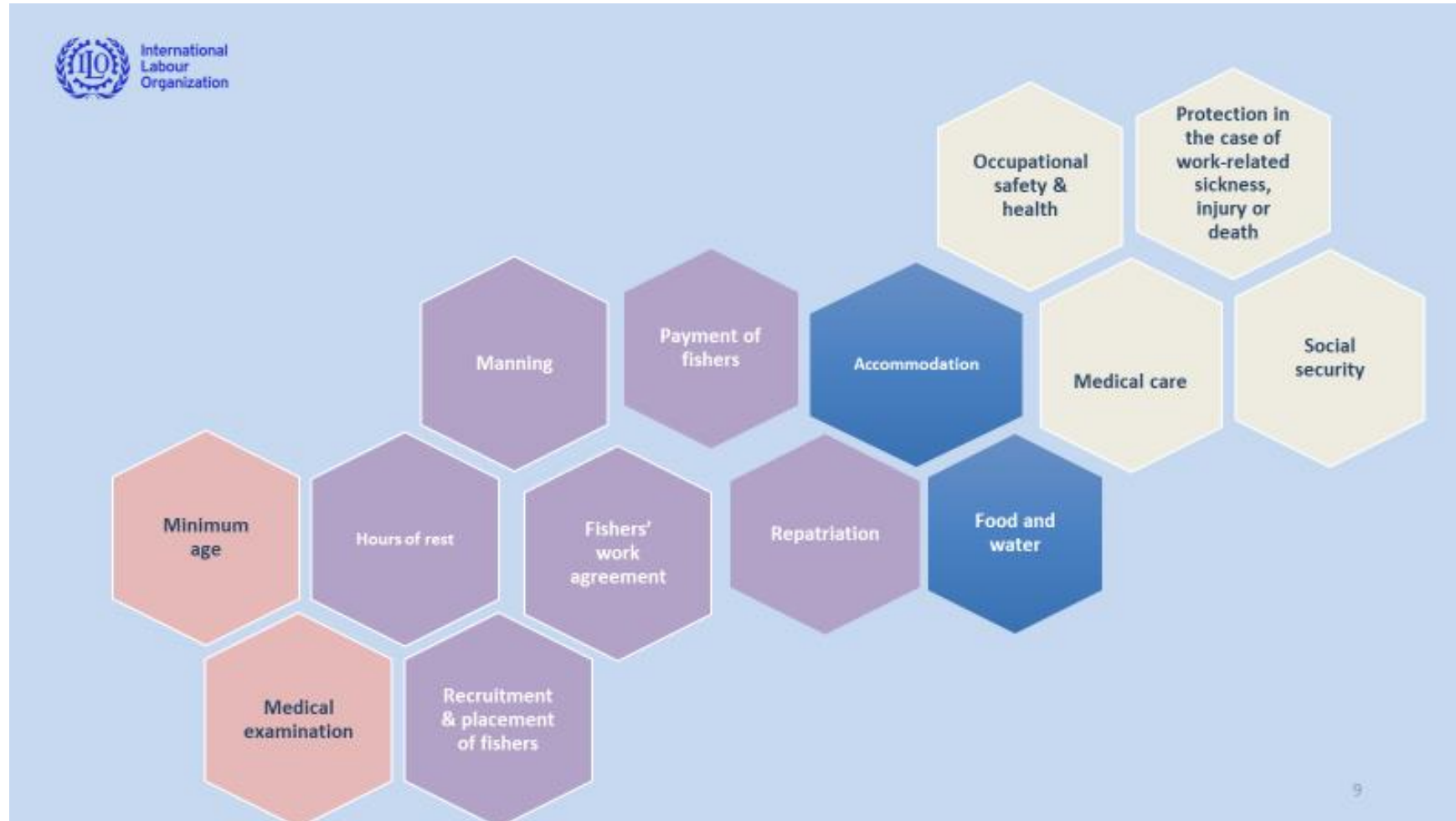
The increase in forced labor was driven entirely by forced labor in the private economy

128,000 fishers are trapped in forced labour aboard fishing vessels, often on the high sea, a workplace characterised by extreme isolation, hazardousness, and with gaps in regulatory oversight.



Number and prevalence of people in forced labour, by sub-category, 2016 and 2021

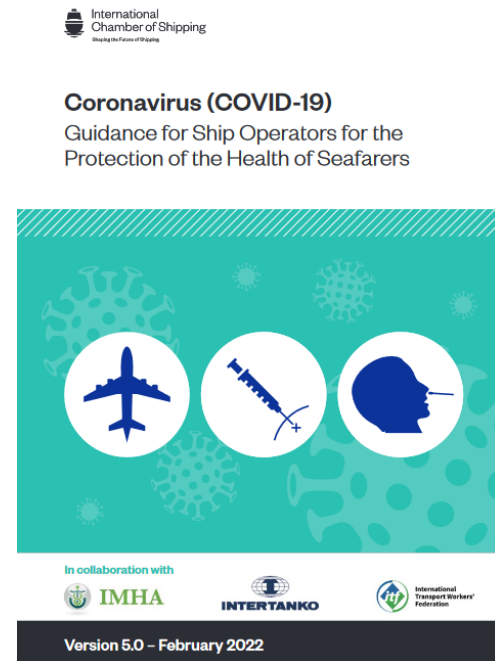
# ILO Convention 188 and approaches to decent work



# Covid-19 Implications for Seafarers



Earlier versions were withdrawn and replaced




## The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change

The Neptune Declaration, signed by more than 850 organizations, outlines the main actions that need to be taken to resolve the crew change crisis.



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## A focus on certifications schemes and their limitations



## Deep dive

Input from the ILO:

**How effective are certifications and conventions for addressing forced labor?**

**How can technology help monitor labor abuses in the fishing industry?**

## Solutions: Labor inspection and strategic compliance

- Ensure labor inspection of fishing vessels, which is often not performed.
  - This can take the form of joint inspections where officials from multiple agencies conduct port-side inspections jointly: e.g., labor, maritime and fisheries inspectors.
  - Labor inspection must include face-to-face interviews of skippers and fishers and document reviews with fishers, skippers, vessel owners
  - Support strategic compliance and targeted inspections through risk assessment: use officials' experience and judgment, fishing data and algorithms to measure forced labor risk and focus efforts on the fisheries, ports and vessels where the risk is highest
- Focus on improving working conditions in a sustainable manner through support to sectoral trade unions and collective bargaining between workers and employers



## Solutions: Monitoring

### ILO Strategy and practices for forced labor identification in fishing (cont.):

#### What to look for

#### Indicator(s) of forced labor risks

What indicators would you look for when inspecting a fishing vessel at sea or in port? What would you observe, what would you ask, what document would you request?



## Solutions: Monitoring

### ILO Strategy and practices for forced labor identification in fishing (cont.):

What to look for	Indicator(s) of forced labor risks
Manning/crew size ratio	Abusive working conditions, excessive overtime
Days at sea	Restriction of movement, isolation, abusive working and living conditions (rebuttable presumption)
Crew list mismatch	Abuse of vulnerability
Invalid/ incomplete	Invalid/ incomplete licensing, taxes, labor records
Repetitive/ uniform hours records	Abusive working conditions, excessive overtime
Repetitive or mismatched pay records	Wage withholding, deception
Port-switching or trans-shipment	Isolation, deception

## Digital technology actors working to address forced labor in fishing

### Technologies for use by workers



### Technologies for use by source/port/coastal states



### Technologies for use by retailers/investors/end-consumers



## Modern slavery statements: Example Trafigura (2022)



### Assessment of our chartered fleet

We recognise that a range of risks to labour rights, including to those of seafarers, are present in our shipping and chartering operations and supply chain. These include risks to the right to freedom from forced labour and rights relating to wages and working hours, discrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining.



2022 Trafigura  
Human  
Rights Report:  
[www.trafigura.com/2022SR](https://www.trafigura.com/2022SR)

# Modern slavery statements: Example Mars (2021)



## Sustainable Sourcing: Extended Supply Chains

### Fish

In 2016, we launched our first Thai Fish Supply Chain Human Rights Action Plan which includes key performance indicators and uses the CARE Framework. As we advance this work, the sector continues to face complex challenges. Nonetheless, we are making progress.

As we continue learning more about how best to collaborate with our suppliers, how to form and activate the right partnerships and how to contribute to driving industry-level change, we remain focused on driving positive impact. Additional details on this work are available [here](#).

In the first phase of our Human Rights Action Plan work, we focused on increasing traceability, developing a better understanding of working conditions in our supply chain, and building relationships of trust across our supply chain and the sector. We mapped our Thai fish supply chain and launched Issara Institute's Inclusive Labor Monitoring (ILM) model during a four-year timeframe with our Tier 1 suppliers – opening access to a multi-lingual hotline and online application where workers could report issues and seek assistance as needed. In 2019, we issued [an update on progress](#) and hired an additional senior leader based in Thailand, bringing deep expertise in human rights to guide this work.

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## 2021 Updates

The next phase of our human rights work in Thailand includes prioritizing the following actions, working together with a range of external partners. In 2021, we progressed on:

- Consolidating our supply chain and shifting our procurement model, where feasible, to increase our visibility, influence and leverage. We are exploring how our sourcing approach can help us reach our environmental and human rights commitments.
- Activating our Next Generation Supplier program over time with all of our Tier 1 suppliers – taking a long-term engagement approach to drive supplier ownership and capacity, and to identify and address forced labor risks and other human rights issues. Priority issues in current programs include responsible recruitment, with a focus on understanding and addressing recruitment fee risks, health and safety and worker engagement.
- Initiating multi-year collaborations designed to improve efforts to monitor, address, and prevent human rights risks for international fishing vessels, supported by third-party experts.
- Continuing to support fishermen drop-in and migrant children learning centers in Southern Thailand run by the nonprofit organization Stella Maris, and collaborating with USAID on a Connectivity @ Sea Technology and Ethical Recruitment. Learnings from our work with USAID are available in [this brief](#).
- Supporting advocacy to ensure nonprofits are able to continue their important work in Thailand and continuing our active role on the Seafood Taskforce to help drive improvements in practices at scale. We are emphasizing the importance of government action to promote responsible recruitment and to strengthen national approaches to human rights and enforcement of labor law.
- Supporting Raks Thai Foundation to implement COVID-19 response work across 11 provinces in Thailand, with a focus on seafood and fishery workers and their communities. More than 55,000 people were reached with support including **cash and emergency supplies**, and community leaders have been trained on health and sanitation, financial management due to loss of income, and access to testing and medical services.

We are encouraged by the effectiveness of fisherman support centers that we have supported since 2019, implemented by Stella Maris. The centers connected more than 13,500 people – primarily migrant workers – to legal services, education and medical support between 2019 and 2021. Together with Stella Maris, we expanded our partnership in 2021 to provide grievance support services to fishery workers on hundreds of fishing vessels at two major landing ports in Thailand.

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## Brands reactions to the AP documentary



An AP investigation helps free slaves  
in the 21st century



WINNER

2016 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service →

“ [...] – and thus even businesses carefully tracking the provenance of the shrimp called the **AP’s findings a surprise.**”

“I want to eliminate this,” said **Dirk Leuenberger, CEO of Aqua Star.** “I think it’s disgusting that it’s even remotely part of my business.”

Some, including **Red Lobster, Whole Foods and H-E-B Supermarkets,** said they were confident – based on assurances from their Thai supplier – that their particular shrimp was not associated with abusive factories. That **Thai supplier** admits it hadn’t known where it was getting all its shrimp and sent a note outlining corrective measures to U.S. businesses demanding answers last week. ”

**AP**

Esther Htusan, Margie Mason, Robin McDowell and  
Martha Mendoza

## Brands – Reviewing Nestlé’s reaction and progress



The  
Guardian

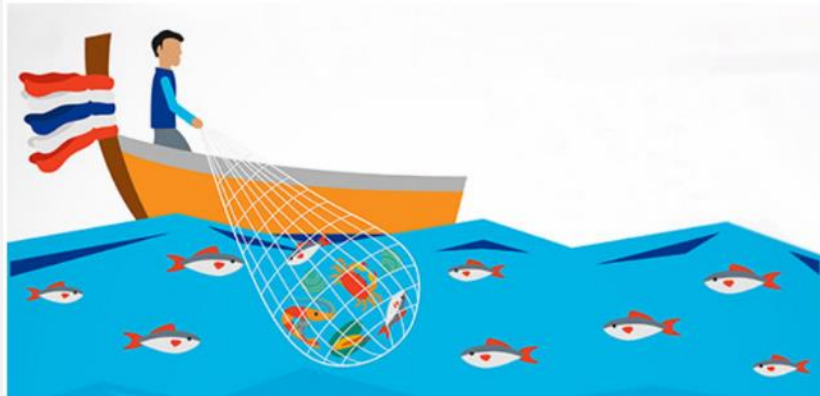
### Nestlé admits to forced labour in its seafood supply chain in Thailand

**In a move praised by anti-slavery groups, global food giant reports abuse of migrant labour among its suppliers in Thai seafood industry, after investigation**

## Nestlé 2015: Response to forced labor in seafood supply chains

NOV 23, 2015

### Nestlé takes action to tackle seafood supply chain abuses



Given increasing concerns about labour and human rights abuses in the seafood supply chain and our commitment to eliminate such practices, Nestlé has published an [Action Plan \(pdf, 650Kb\)](#) on seafood sourced from Thailand. It contains a series of actions designed to protect workers from abuses, improve working conditions and tackle unacceptable practices including juvenile and teenage working.


“Nestlé is committed to eliminating forced labour in our seafood supply chain in Thailand, working alongside other stakeholders to tackle this serious and complex issue.”

– **Magdi Batato**, Executive Vice President of Operations at Nestlé (2015)


<https://www.nestle.com/media/news/nestle-tackles-abuses-seafood-supply-chain>



## Nestlé 2015: Action Plan (excerpt)



### Responsible Sourcing of Seafood - Thailand Action plan 2015-2016



Chapter 1		Background
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country: Thailand</li> <li>• Ingredients: Seafood</li> <li>• Sustainability pillar: Labour conditions of sea based workers</li> <li>• Supply chain tier: Fishing vessels</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vision</b> Be an industry leader in determining where the seafood is coming from &amp; demand it is Sourced Responsibly.</p>
<b>Convention Nestlé Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ILO Conventions No. 29, 105, 182, 138, 111, 181, 87 and 98</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Nestlé Supplier Code</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Nestlé Commitment on the Responsible Use of Materials from Agricultural Origin</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Nestlé Responsible Sourcing Guideline</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Mission</b> Through our partnerships with key parties, trace our upstream seafood supply chains, monitor recruitment and labor conditions on fishing vessels and implement practices as necessary to meet our Nestlé policy goals.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate management systems enabling upstream supply chain transparency back to origins,</li> <li>• Deploy monitoring &amp; remediation systems for good labor standards on fishing vessels.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Parties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood suppliers.</li> <li>• VERITE Ltd.</li> <li>• Achilles Ltd.</li> </ul>
<b>Context:</b> <i>Several media outlets have published articles reporting alleged labour and human rights abuses in Thailand's seafood supply chain</i>		

# Nestlé: Collaborations to improve sourcing of fish

## Partnerships and standards:

- Stakeholder collaboration: Thai Government, the Seafood Taskforce (industry association), and suppliers
- NGOs: *Issara Institute* (human trafficking and forced labor, grievance mechanisms), *Verité* (labor abuses in supply chains)
- Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP): sharing purchasing information, Target 75% Champion
- International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List: to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

## Audits, progress monitoring, accountability:

- > 10% of vessels (Thailand) audited against the Seafood Task Force limited scope UL (Underwriters Laboratories) standard
- Independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party vessel audits against the Thai Union Vessel Code of Conduct (VCoC)

## Progress reports:

- Nestlé responsible sourcing standard
- Publication of sourcing regions
- Regular progress reports for Nestlé's seafood sourcing



Focus on  
Thailand but  
also working in  
other countries

## Nestlé 2017: Progress after 2-3 years

FEB 28, 2018

### Inauguration of demo boat, a milestone in Thai fishing industry



Nestlé and Thai Union today officially inaugurated a demonstration boat, marking an important milestone in the collaborative efforts to address the complex issue of labour and human rights abuses in the Thai fishing industry.

**25%** of our seafood purchased in 2017 was responsibly sourced

**57%** of our total whole fish purchased in 2017 was traceable to its source

<https://www.nestle-cwa.com/en/csv/raw-materials/fish-seafood>; <https://www.nestle.com/media/news/inauguration-demo-boat-thai-fishing-industry-Thailand>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTZUDHPts10>

# Nestlé 2020: Latest update on responsible seafood supply chains

Nestlé's 2020 progress report includes sections on:

- Knowing where our seafood comes from and how it is produced
- Collaborating on responsible vessel working conditions
- The Business Case for Safe Working and Living Conditions
- Worker Voice and Remediation
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration



## Towards decent work in the fishing industry

**Example Ghana:** dialogue between government, employers and trade unions



**Example from South Africa:** detention of foreign flagged vessels for non-compliance with ILO Convention no. 188 on Work in Fishing



**Example of Indonesia:** strengthening authorities to conduct joint labor inspections



## Questions?

Do you have any remaining questions or reactions?

