



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

Resolution on Core Principles on Labor Standards in NPFC Fisheries

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),

Recognizing the challenges faced by fishers with respect to health, safety, and welfare due to the inherent dangers of working at sea;

Desiring to uphold the safety of life at sea;

Noting the increasing global attention to instances of poor labor conditions and mistreatment of crews including forced labor and child labor on board fishing vessels;

Recalling the importance of respect for and protection of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948;

Recalling that Articles 6 and 8 of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries sets out international standards, including for the responsible conduct of fishing operations to ensure that fishing facilities and equipment as well as fisheries activities allow for safe, healthy and fair working and living conditions and meet internationally agreed standards adopted by relevant international organizations, and additionally calls upon States to ensure that fishing is conducted with due regard to the safety of human life;

Further Recalling that Article 94 of United Nations Law of the Sea Convention requires States to take measures to ensure safety at sea, including with regard to labor conditions and the training of crews, taking into account the applicable international instruments,

Reaffirming the importance of flag State responsibilities under international law, including with respect to safety at sea and labor conditions on fishing vessels;

Noting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998, the ILO C111 Discrimination Convention, the ILO C188 Work in Fishing Convention 2007 with its objective to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels with regard to minimum requirements for work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health protection, medical care and social security and the IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F) with its aim to promote the safety of life at sea and the protection of the marine environment, taking into account the unique nature of the fishing industry and the fishing working environment;

Emphasizing that the 2023 Report of the resumed Review Conference of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (1995 Agreement) encouraged regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, as appropriate, to adopt standards for decent working conditions for crew, inspectors, and observers within the fisheries within their competence, in accordance with international instruments;

Acknowledging the important role played by crew members in assisting the conduct of fishing

vessel operations in compliance with NPFC Conservation and Management Measures, and the central role that crew members play in contributing to effective fishing operations;

Resolves that:

1. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to ratify relevant international instruments and to address the issue of labor standards in the fisheries sector in the relevant international organizations and fora. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to make every effort to ensure that their policies for the fisheries sector address labor standards.
2. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to make every effort to ensure that their relevant legislation fully extends to all crew working on fishing vessels flying their flag under the competence of the NPFC in the NPFC Convention Area and, where appropriate and applicable, are encouraged to adopt measures into their legislation to establish minimum standards regulating crew labor conditions.
3. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to adopt and implement measures, consistent with applicable international labor minimum standards for crew members on fishing vessels to ensure fair and decent working and living conditions on board for all crew members working on vessels flying their flag and engaged in fishing or fishing-related activity under the competence of NPFC in the NPFC Convention Area. Such measures should address the following, inter alia:
 - a. The absence of forced, trafficked, or any other form of involuntary or compulsory labor;
 - b. A safe and secure working environment with minimum risk to health, safety, and, to the extent possible, well-being;
 - c. Fair and understandable terms of employment that are enshrined in a written contract, or other equivalent or comparable arrangement, which are made available to the employee, in a form and language that facilitates the employee's understanding of the terms, and is agreed to by the employee, while noting the respective rights and obligations under employment contracts are the responsibility of the parties to those contracts;
 - d. Decent working and living conditions on board vessels, including access to potable water and food, vessel and operational safety protections, medical care, adequate periods of rest, and acceptable standards of sanitary hygiene;
 - e. Access to appropriate safety equipment onboard vessels and adequate safety training before first deployment on a vessel and at appropriate intervals thereafter. Such training should be in line with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) safety training standards;
 - f. Access to a communication device at no cost or at a reasonable cost to the crew

- member, and points of contact in case the crew member has concerns related to safety, health, or labor abuses;
- g. Decent and regular remuneration as well as appropriate insurance for the crew, no less favorable than the flag Members and CNCPs domestic laws and regulations;
 - h. Appropriate unemployment, accident, and other worker protections in case of work-related sickness, injury, or death, no less favorable than the flag Members and CNCPs domestic laws and regulations; and
 - i. The opportunity for crew members to disembark, to access their identity documents, to terminate the contract of employment, to communicate with an organization that can render assistance to crew, to submit complaints regarding vessel working conditions, and to seek repatriation.
4. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to make every effort to ensure workplace safety and access to medical supplies and care extend to all crew, including migrant workers, working on vessels flying their flag and operating in fisheries under the competence of NPFC in the NPFC Convention Area.
 5. Members and CNCPs are further encouraged to work with any entities involved in the recruitment of crew members to implement the provisions of this Resolution, including promoting the prohibition of recruitment fees and related costs being charged to crew.
 6. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to apply and, where appropriate, strengthen effective jurisdiction and control over vessels flying their flag and to make every effort to improve, enforce, and prosecute violations of all relevant laws and policies regarding labor conditions and crew member safety on board vessels.
 7. Members and CNCPs are further encouraged to detect possible labor rights violations in a vessel during port inspections, including forced labor. In those inspection efforts, Members and CNCPs can use relevant ILO detection tools. Port Members and CNCPs are encouraged to notify the flag Members/CNCPs of relevant evidence or support investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution by the flag Members/CNCPs, and to take other appropriate action with respect to the vessel and its master consistent with applicable laws.
 8. Members and CNCPs are encouraged to report on the implementation of this Resolution, as part of their Annual Report to the Commission. In addition, Members and CNCPs are encouraged to share information related to indications of potential labor abuses, subject to applicable confidentiality requirements, having occurred on vessels engaged in fishing or fishing-related activities under the competence of the NPFC in the Convention Area.
 9. The Commission will review this Resolution no later than three years after its adoption to consider progress on these issues and other steps to address labor abuses and improve

labor standards. The Commission should take into account, inter alia, information shared by members and CNPCs referred to in paragraph 7 above, input from stakeholders and publicly available reports, and any relevant guidance or standards developed by the relevant international organizations, including, FAO, the ILO, or the IMO or other RFMOs.