

ICSF Statement

The following is the ICSF Statement at the Global Dialogue Forum for the Promotion of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), 15-17 May 2013, Geneva

First of all, we would like to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its social partners for ensuring the required number of ratifications for paving the way for entry into force of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, in August this year. Similarly, we hope the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) also would soon enter into force.

Ever since its adoption, the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, has provided a framework for many developing countries to look at the

organized, and poorly informed, workforces; fisheries departments do not necessarily deal with the labour dimension of fishing, and labour authorities, in general, do not often engage with fishing. As a result, information regarding the labour dimension of fishing often is not easily available.

Now, with the idea of ratifying the Fishing Convention, several governments have started looking at the fishing sector more systematically. It has come to their notice that existing laws are too fragmented or inadequate to provide social protection. It has become clear to these governments that several new elements in national legislation are to be developed to make them consistent with C.188.

Elements of C.188 seem to fall within the jurisdiction of the labour authority, the fisheries authority and the maritime safety authority at different levels, and these authorities are yet to work in unison to develop an appropriate legislation to develop all relevant national and subnational standards to ensure social protection of fishers.

Influential sections of fishing vessel owners in some countries believe ratifying C. 188 would lead to non-viable fishing operations, and little effort is made by the national authorities to clarify that a national labour standard based on C.188 can lead to fishers developing a long-term, real interest in fishing, that it can reduce fatigue-induced accidents at sea—a reason for many collisions at sea in recent months—that it can improve compliance with fisheries conservation and management

poorly understood labour dimension of fishing, especially in their maritime sector. Fast-paced technological changes have been taking place in marine fishing ever since the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, leading to fishing operations on board all types of mechanized fishing vessels expanding their operations to new fishing grounds.

As a result, recruitment practices, duration of fishing trips, work and living conditions, and vessel safety in relation to most fishing operations have changed significantly, with implications for the lives and livelihoods of fishers. These changes, however, are not properly documented in most fisheries. Fishers still remain one of the least-

Fishers still remain one of the least-organized, and poorly informed, workforces...

This intervention was made by ICSF (icsf@icsf.net) on 15 May 2013 at the Global Dialogue Forum for the Promotion of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) in Geneva

JOHN HULME / ILO



A fisherman hauling in nets for repair. The working and living conditions of the fisheries workforce still do not receive the attention they deserve

41

measures, that it can provide greater transparency in recruitment of fishers and that it can provide better international market access for fish and fish products.

Finally, it is a question of political will. The working and living conditions of the fisheries workforce still do not receive the attention they deserve. A welfare-based approach to social protection of fishers is still politically given greater preference over a rights-based approach. An organization such as ILO, which is built on the tenet that labour is not a commodity, should convince its member nations that C.188 is the best tool to deal with unprecedented commodification of labour in fishing that has transformed fishing into the most dangerous occupation in many parts of the world. ¶

For more



www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/recommendations-conclusions-of-sectoral-meetings/WCMS_214603/lang-en/index.htm

Points of consensus—Global Dialogue Forum for the Promotion of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)

www.ilo.org/sector/activities/sectoral-meetings/WCMS_204806/lang-en/index.htm

Global Dialogue Forum for the Promotion of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No.188)