January/February 2020

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group e-alert
(amalgamation of news alerts issued to SECLG circulation list by email in Jan/Feb 2020)

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group
https://www.seafish.org/article/the-seafood-ethics-common-language-group
https://www.seafish.org/article/ethics-in-seafood

Seafish briefing notes

Seafish summary of fishing references by country in TIP report 2019.

Seafish analysis of Global Slavery Index 2018 fishing risk indicators by country.

UK news
South Western Fish Producer Organisation releases 2019 Business and Human Rights Audit. 10 March 2020.
The inaugural South Western Fish Producer Organisation (SWFPO) Ltd Business and Human Rights Audit dated 10 January 2019 has been released by Human Rights at Sea. Commenced in late 2018 and submitted in January 2019, the comprehensive report was commissioned by SWFPO as part of their internal drive to develop levels of business awareness and standards relating to human rights provisions and protections within their fisheries supply chain. Initially, an internal confidential document, the report triggered internal reviews and development of core supporting policies relating to the 18 recommendations cited. As a result at the SWFPO AGM in July 2019, members agreed a number of new Rules of Membership.

Following the Seafish Seafood Ethics Common Language Group meeting at Fishmonger’s Hall, London, 28 January, Human Rights at Sea has published a copy of the presentation given updating delegates on the ongoing UK Fisheries Human Rights and Social Welfare Project which commenced with a Needs Assessment. The aim of the initial Needs Assessment was focused towards researching and publishing an independent review to answer the basic question of need, or otherwise, for a comprehensive follow-on UK sector-wide Baseline Assessment covering all applicable human rights and social welfare provisions, positions and needs throughout the UK Fisheries Sector.

MCA Fishermen’s safety guide. 30 January 2020.
Guidance for fishermen on and health and safety best practice, and applying merchant shipping and fishing vessel regulations.

Scottish Fisheries Skipper found guilty of assault and racially-aggravated harassment. 28 January 2020.
A Scottish skipper has been found guilty at Peterhead Sheriff’s Court of assault and racially-aggravated harassment of five non-EEA crew members over a period of six years. It is reported that the skipper admitted racially harassing the crew members on board the Serenity on various
occasions between August 2013 and August 2019. He was fined £2,000 for the harassment charges and a further £1,000 for the assault.

ILO 188 legislation came into force a year ago and was brought into law to improve safety and well-being for everyone working on fishing vessels. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is stepping up monitoring of the fishing industry and compliance with ILO 188. The MCA will be taking full advantage of resources and new technology, for example, the use of new fixed-wing aircraft with high quality cameras onboard. When the aircraft are looking for pollution at sea or helping with search operations, they will also be equipped to observe and report on the operations of fishing vessels which are not complying with UK legislation, for example the wearing of personal flotation devices (PFD) and life jackets on a fishing vessel.

**Certification and initiatives**

Forced labor at sea is rarely visible, but its witting and unwitting facilitators span the globe – and even our dinner tables. When a fishing vessel goes out to sea, it almost seems like it has disappeared from the world the rest of us inhabit. For months, the vessel and its crew fish in international waters, with little to no contact with those on land. This isolation creates a higher risk of forced labor, in which fishermen are forced to work in harsh conditions, often without pay or the fulfillment of their basic needs. To take a data-driven approach to some of these challenges, C4ADS has built a database of documented cases of forced labor in the fishing industry, enabling us to derive insights about the mechanisms and facilitators of forced labor in fishing.

**FishWise Casts a Wider Net for Seafood Ethics.** January 2020.
FishWise is pleased to announce a $934,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to advance work against labour abuses and modern-day slavery in seafood. With this new funding, the Walmart Foundation is supporting FishWise to further develop and refine the RISE platform, grow sector-wide engagement through this valuable tool, and build alignment with other international initiatives.

**OPAGAC - Over 40 North-American NGOs interested in the social dimension of the responsible fishing standard of the Spanish tuna fleet.** 31 January 2020.
Early findings suggest that the Spanish standard, which includes the provisions of the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention (C188), complies with the standards of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions requirements and will help show Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) how to factor in social sustainability.

**Thailand**

**Endline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand.** March 2020.
The ILO Ship to Shore Rights Project, which ran from 2016 to 2019, aims to prevent and reduce forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work, and progressively eliminate the exploitation of workers, particularly migrant workers, in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors. The endline report has found improvements in working conditions in Thailand’s fishing and seafood processing sectors. However, there remain problems with forced labor in the industry. The endline research surveyed 219 fishermen and 251 seafood processing workers and compared the results with its “baseline” study, conducted in 2018. The new research looked into Thailand’s recruitment, contracts, pay, working hours, safety, and worker organizing. The latest report found that recruitment through registered agents and brokers has been reduced, which helps lessen the burden of high fees on workers.
The Issara Institute has released its 5 Year Impact report on trends in worker voice and responsible sourcing: 2014 - 2019. This analysis provides reflection on the organization's growth and effectiveness; what has worked, what has not, and why; observations about the responses of business to labour risks in their supply chains over the years, as well as to emerging issues and opportunities such as ethical recruitment; and, lessons learned for the global responsible sourcing and human rights communities. They examine the effectiveness and benefits of adopting a behaviour change-based model with the goal of eliminating labour abuses, including forced labour and human trafficking, toward transforming the systems and behaviors perpetuating labour exploitation, and empowering the rights-holders within them.

International seafood buyers urge Thailand to stand strong on fisheries reforms. 11 February 2020.
Several retailers and buyers sourcing seafood from Thailand have called on the Southeast Asian nation to preserve major regulations in the fisheries sector amidst fears that recently-made reforms may be rolled back. In an open letter posted on the website of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) last week, the buyers said they “urge the Royal Thai government to continue the path of reform and work constructively with national actors to achieve a transition towards a legal, ethical and sustainable fishing sector.”

How an ILO Protocol has helped combat forced labour in Thai fishing. 6 January 2020.
Since Thailand ratified the International Labour Organization’s 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (P29), conditions for workers in the country’s seafood and fishing industry have improved. The ILO’s Ship to Shore Rights project has supported the Thai government in implementing the changes.

Recruitment and reporting
New ILO tool for labour migration researchers and policy makers. 4 March 2020.
The ILO has created a map that displays a global database of 90 national laws, policies and regulations (policies) that have defined recruitment fees and related costs.

UK retailers announce package of support to drive responsible recruitment of workers in global supply chains. 25 February 2020
UK retailers announced a package of support for suppliers and recruitment businesses in their global supply chains to embed responsible recruitment practices. Recruitment and the supply of temporary, contract and seasonal labour have been identified as presenting amongst the greatest worker exploitation risks in supply chains. The retailers have joined together as sponsors of the Responsible Recruitment Toolkit (RRT), to enable businesses in their supply chains to gain free access to an online capacity building and self-assessment tool with supporting training on embedding ethical and professional recruitment and labour supply practices.

Stronger Together Progress Reporting Tool (PRT)
This is a pioneering online self-assessment tool which supports companies to measure progress made and to highlight their next steps in addressing modern slavery risks within their businesses and supply chains. The tool benefits businesses by: giving a clear picture of progress in addressing modern slavery risks in their business and supply chains, measured against a set of UN Guiding Principles framed questions. It creates clear downloadable reports and analytics to track progress over time and benchmark performance against peers and competitors in your sector, as well as providing steps and progress made that you can report in modern slavery statements. The tool enables suppliers to benchmark their progress against their peers and retailers to benchmark the data of their supplier base against all other industry data, as well as view specific supplier data when
shared. The PRT is available for free to suppliers of the Stronger Together UK Consumer Goods programme, more sectors and countries to follow.

**Risk assessment reports**


Human Rights at Sea has published the formal Taiwan Government response from the Director General of the Taiwan Fisheries Agency to the charity’s October 2019 “‘Baseline Study on the Awareness and Application of Human Rights in Taiwan’s Fishing Industry’.

WFF. Perfect storm of conditions for modern slavery in the Pacific. 4 March 2020

New research has revealed alarming evidence of modern slavery in Australia, New Zealand, and their Pacific Island neighbours, fuelled by widespread poverty, migration, and the abuse of cultural practices. These vulnerabilities are likely to increase as climate change exacerbates poverty and migration. New report identifies cases of forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and forced marriage across the Pacific region. Widespread poverty, migration, weak governance, and abuse of cultural practices are all factors contributing to vulnerability to modern slavery in the Pacific. Walk Free calls for action from Australian and Pacific Island governments, development partners, businesses, and faith and community leaders to tackle the issue as a priority. The full report, entitled “Murky waters: A qualitative assessment of modern slavery in the Pacific region” can be viewed [here](#).

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