March 2020

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group e-alert
(amalgamation of news alerts issued to SECLG circulation list by email in March 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 news and publications
RFVS Draft Standard Criteria approved by Seafish and GSA Boards. 6 April 2020.
After a robust standard development process the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS) Draft Standard Criteria have been approved by both the Seafish and the Global Seafood Assurances Boards, and plans remain on track to publicly release the Standard and complete the transition from Seafish to GSA within May. The RFVS is based on ILOc188 and other ILO standards with a key focus to ensure the RFVS is globally applicable. On-vessel testing (to refine the proposed Certification Model) continues through 2020 with Vessel Certification Pilots planned with UK and international vessels. Current RFS members will continue to be supported throughout the transition to the RFVS throughout 2020.

Seafish Social risk assessment information. This reference document provides an overview of the metrics and scoring methodologies of different open and closed sources of information that offer insight on the social risks posed to UK businesses by seafood trading partners in third countries.

Country profiles. To understand the social risk landscape of countries supplying into the UK seafood market, a series of profiles covering main supply regions are available. There are currently 19 profiles. See: Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United States, and Vietnam. We are collating feedback on these profiles. If you have any comments please E: Karen Green.

Risk assessment reports
Taiwan’s major global tuna supplier shows “blind spots” to illegal fishing practices and modern slavery. 19 March 2020.
A new Greenpeace East Asia investigation “Choppy Waters – Forced Labour and Illegal Fishing in Taiwan’s Distant Water Fisheries” show that labour and human rights abuses continue to exist in Taiwan’s distant water fishing fleets, with one major global seafood trader showing its “blind spots” towards practices such as shark finning, forced labour, and illegal transhipment. Greenpeace East Asia is accusing Bumble Bee's parent company, Taiwan-based Fong Chun Formosa (FCF), of forced labor and environmentally harmful practices aboard at least two vessels linked to the company.

Modern slavery reporting
Countries pushed back against draft guidance on social responsibility in fish value chains developed by the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) when it was first officially presented in November in Vigo, Spain. As a result FAO will spend the next year-plus creating a scoping paper that will more explicitly spell out what should be included in the baseline international standards for human rights, labor conditions, and social responsibility in the seafood industry. The scoping paper,
to be presented at the next COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade meeting in 2021, will state the objectives of the guidance, and what should and should not be included.

**Webinar. 16:00 – 17:00. 22 April 2020. Sustainable Procurement and Modern Slavery Risk: How do you ensure you are meeting global legislation requirements?**

Ardea International in collaboration with Greenstone Plus will be hosting a one hour free webinar discussing how to ensure your organisation is meeting global legislation requirements and integrating modern slavery risk into your sustainable procurement strategy.

**UK government modern slavery statement. 26 March 2020.**

To lead the way for the public sector, the UK government has published its own statement which assesses the risk of modern slavery across around £50bn of its annual spending. The statement sets out the government’s efforts towards eradicating modern slavery from its supply chains, including direct engagement with around 400 suppliers and delivering training to over 250 government commercial staff.


**The human rights impacts of COVID-19**

**Responsible Recruitment Update Forum with a focus on Covid-19 and support for businesses and their workers.**

The online forum is a free, exclusive benefit for RRT subscribers. 2.00 – 3.30pm. 21 April 2020.

**New Briefing: No Worker Left Behind - how might the COVID-19 pandemic impact worker exploitation? 9 April 2020.**

FLEX has published a new briefing examining how the COVID-19 pandemic will impact the risk of labour exploitation. This new briefing assesses the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the most vulnerable groups of workers: workers in low-paid and insecure work; migrant workers and women workers.

**Issara Institute Q&A on COVID-19 Response: What is the Current Situation, and What Can Businesses and Others Do? 8 April 2020.**

This brief is intended to provide a picture of Issara Institute’s response in SE Asia, current conditions relevant to our work, and analysis of steps and considerations for the private sector and others.

**Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund. 8 April 2020.**

The Freedom Fund has set up a covid-19 Emergency Response Fund to offer immediate small-scale funding to some 100 frontline partners working with vulnerable communities in India, Nepal, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Thailand and Brazil. The fund offer partners small-scale funding with short turnaround times and minimal bureaucracy.

**ILO: COVID-19 causes devastating losses in working hours and employment. 7 April 2020.**


**Trapped at Sea by Covid-19 Lockdowns, Crew Members Plead for Help. 25 March 2020.**

Because of the travel and docking restrictions from COVID-19, vessel workers are reportedly not able to leave their vessels and are being made to work to meet COVID demands. An estimated 150,000
crew members with expired work contracts have been forced into continued labour aboard commercial ships worldwide to meet the demands of governments that have closed their borders and yet still want fuel, food and supplies. There is no direct mention of UK vessels or markets.

**Fishing Vessel Safety Course Requirements as per MGN 411 contingency plans.** 25 March 2020. The MCA has put in place contingency plans to mitigate disruption to essential delivered services as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. These measures offer a short term solution to the problems of fishermens’ training not being available during this current lock down period.

**GLAA Temporary Licensing and COVID-19.** March 2020. This brief publishes the latest guidance on the sourcing of workers as a result of COVID-19 and explains how the GLAA will support the maintenance of food supply chains by introducing a temporary licence scheme for the labour supply chain.

**Resources**

- **Ethical Trading Initiative. Modern Slavery Statements: A Framework for Evaluation.** March 2020. The framework is a structured guide to writing or improving your Modern Slavery Statement, as well as a tool to assess the quality of published statements and identify strengths and weaknesses and a best practice standard to measure statements against.

- **IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse.** March 2020. The International Organization for Migration has developed a 298-page handbook that describes best practices for supporting migrants vulnerable to exploitation. This handbook presents a model - the Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability (DOMV) – and is designed to address the protection and assistance needs of a specific subset of migrants: those who have experienced or are vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and abuse before, during or after the migration process.

- **Mekong Club EndSlavery Web App.** 20 March 2020. This app (best viewed on a mobile phone) is about individuals taking simple steps which collectively build action to help end modern slavery.

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