COMMISSION
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1 – 7 December 2021

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR AGENDA 9.4.3 CREW LABOUR STANDARDS

WCPFC18-2021-OP16
6 December 2021

Submitted by Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL)

Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL), Citizens for Environmental Studies (CIES), and Korean Federation for Environmental Studies (KFEM) would like to thank those leading this important work on improving crew labor standards. We urge the Commission to actively engage in the discussion for the CMM on labor standards for crew on fishing vessels and expedite its approval.

As illustrated by the observer paper WCPFC18-2021-OP09, the WCPFC has clear authority and responsibility to address the labor standards of crew members on fishing boats including within its Convention area. We would like to remind members of their responsibilities under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which impose on state parties a duty to cooperate on a regional basis in formulating standards and procedures to ensure safe and fair labor conditions. Further, other international legal instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights require its parties to respect, protect and fulfil the realization of rights to just and favorable conditions of work. APIL calls on CCMs to fulfill their responsibilities by actively engaging and facilitating the discussion with the goal of adopting the CMM in 2022.

More importantly, we call on the Commission to ensure that the CMM is able to achieve its original purpose, to effectively protect fishers from human rights abuse onboard fishing vessels. The CMM should set up clear standards on issues including and beyond the safety of fishing crews, be universally applied within the Convention area, and set in place mechanisms to identify and protect the victims of abuse and/or forced labor. We strongly urge the Commission to continue to push forward to protect the human rights of fishing crew members.