



COMMISSION
Twenty-First Regular Session
28 November to 3 December 2024
Suva, Fiji (Hybrid)

**Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) Position Statements and
Recommendations to WCPFC21**

WCPFC21-2024-OP11
27 November 2024

Submitted by Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI)



**DEWAN PIMPINAN NASIONAL
SERIKAT BURUH MIGRAN INDONESIA**

Komplek Garuda No. 20 RT. 013 RW. 04 Kel. Kalibata Kec. Pancoran
Kota Jakarta Selatan, DKI Jakarta 12740, Telp/Fax: 02179193879
Email: sekretariat@sbmi.or.id | Website: www.sbmi.or.id

**Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI)
Position Statements and Recommendations to WCPFC21**

Introduction

On the occasion of the 21st Regular Session of Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC21), the Indonesia Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) wishes to formally present our key messages, positions and recommendations as outlined below.

1. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) for granting the Indonesia Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) Observer status within the Commission. Additionally, we express our gratitude to the Government of Fiji and the Secretariat for graciously hosting the 21st Regular Session of the WCPFC in Suva, Fiji.
2. The Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) is an organization representing Indonesian migrant workers and their families, dedicated to advocating for their rights and advancing their interests, including those of migrant fishers working as crew members on fishing vessels. SBMI strives to empower migrant workers and their families to escape precarious circumstances and systemic exploitation through various efforts such as organizing, case advocacy, litigation, policy advocacy, education, and economic empowerment initiatives. In the marine and fisheries sector specifically, SBMI currently represents more than 1,700 members who work or have worked as migrant fishers. Many of these members serve on fishing vessels that are registered or authorized by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and operate in the Pacific Ocean region.
3. Between 2013 and 2023, we have provided assistance in 747 cases involving Indonesian migrant fishers who faced employment-related issues. The most prevalent problem encountered was wage theft, followed by cases of forced labor and human trafficking. Through years of advocacy and organizing efforts, it has become evident that these complex issues cannot be resolved by the efforts of a single country alone. Addressing these challenges requires the collaborative engagement of all stakeholders

SBMI Position to WCPFC21

across the supply chain, including the migrant fishers' home countries, fishing vessel owners, port states or transit countries, flag states, as well as businesses and market states.

4. The WCPFC forum serves as a vital platform for fostering collaboration among these parties. It provides an opportunity to collectively address systemic issues and work towards improving the working conditions within the global fishing industry, ensuring decent work for all fishers.
5. We extend our sincere appreciation to Indonesia and New Zealand for their co-leadership in chairing [the Intersessional work on improving labour standards for crew on fishing vessels \(2021–2024\)](#). We also acknowledge and commend the support provided by all Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members (CCMs), and all Observers including the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in the collaborative drafting and development of the Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) on Crew Labor Standards and reflected the spirit of WCPFC [Resolution 2018-01](#) on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels.
6. Forced labor at sea, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and poor fisheries management are intrinsically linked, creating a cycle of human exploitation and environmental harm. Weak oversight in fisheries enables forced labor and illegal practices to flourish, as unscrupulous operators avoid scrutiny. IUU fishing relies on exploitative labor to cut costs, while poor management fails to enforce protections for workers or sustainable practices. Together, these issues compromise marine ecosystems, worker rights, and the integrity of global seafood supply chains, demanding integrated solutions.
7. We do believe ethical and sustainable fisheries management at any level shall protect human rights for all fishers and coastal communities and also must achieve the sustainability of fish resources and marine biodiversity. In order to enable and obtain such cohesiveness of social and environmental objectives and outcomes, mainstreaming of human rights based approaches in fisheries management are urgently required and essential including in the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) like WCPFC.

Hence, we would like to formally present our key messages, positions and recommendations, as outlined in the following highlights and points.

Labor Standards

8. We highly urge the WCPFC to adopt the CMM on Crew Labor Standards during this year's session without further delay. In order to maintain momentum and demonstrate the Commission's commitment to improving labor standards, we strongly advocate for the gap period between the adoption and enforcement of the CMM to be limited to no more than one year. The adoption and the implementation of this measure is crucial for

SBMI Position to WCPFC21

addressing the systemic exploitation of fishing vessel crews and ensuring decent working conditions across the region.

9. We recommend that the CMM Crew Labor Standards:

- Ensure **flag states take full responsibility**. This includes holding flag states accountable for ensuring fair recruitment practices by manning agencies or fishing crews providers and ensuring that fishing vessels under their jurisdiction provide safe and humane working conditions onboard. The WCPFC must enforce robust mechanisms to monitor and hold flag states accountable, as their failure to comply with labor standards perpetuates exploitation and undermines the Commission's credibility in promoting sustainable and humane fisheries management.
- Ensure flag states take full responsibility providing health standards and treatment for work accidents immediately and notifies the responsible Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) or other relevant agencies to report the incident time and location and rescue suffers a serious injury to a crew member and ensure that the crew is insured in case of any work accident, especially if it results in disability.
- Enforce a strict measure prohibiting the burial at sea of deceased fishing vessel crew members. This tragic practice, where workers who die at sea are disposed of in such a manner, not only disrespects the dignity and rights of the deceased but also underscores the lack of accountability for labor conditions in the fishing industry. By banning this practice, WCPFC would ensure that the bodies of crew members are treated with the dignity they deserve and promote a more humane and ethical approach to worker welfare.
- Mandate communication access for all fishers onboard fishing vessels, such as Wi-Fi or satellite phones. This is a critical measure for ensuring the safety and well-being of crew members, allowing them to stay in contact with their families, request emergency assistance, and report any abuses. Providing such access would enhance the overall welfare of fishing crews, fostering safer working conditions and more ethical practices within the industry.
- Mandate guaranteed access for fishers to ports and embassies during their time at sea. Ensuring that fishers can access port facilities and diplomatic support is essential for protecting their rights, addressing emergencies, and providing avenues for reporting abuse or exploitation. By facilitating this access, WCPFC would empower crew members to seek assistance, secure their safety, and uphold their legal rights, particularly in cases of human trafficking, forced labor, or other mistreatment.

Other Matters and Endorsements

10. SBMI highlights and appreciates various great asks, recommendations, collaborations and initiatives by many stakeholders that work to achieve the ethical and sustainable fisheries such as:

- Greenpeace's Sustainability, Labour & Human Rights, and Chain of Custody Asks for Retailers, Brand Owners and Seafood Companies [2020] ([link](#)).
- CSOs Briefing Paper on Ratifying and Implementing ILO Convention 188 in ASEAN Member States ([link](#))
- Team 9 - Roadmap Recommendations for the Ratification of Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (C-188) for Indonesian Governments and Stakeholders [2023] ([link](#))
- Proposal of Indonesian and Taiwanese Civil Society and Trade Unions on the Development of Memorandum of Understanding Between Indonesia Economic Trade Office to Taipei (IETO) and Taipei Economic Trade Office in Jakarta (TETO) on Placement of Migrant Fishers on Board Distant Water Fishing Vessels [2024] ([link](#))
- ASEAN Declaration on The Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers [2023] ([link](#)) and its guideline [2024] ([link](#))
- Equal Access Principles for RFMOs ([link](#))
- Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI) ([link](#))
- Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency ([link](#))
- IOM - IRIS Ethical Recruitment ([link](#))
- High Seas Alliance (HSA) on advocacy of Global Oceans Treaty ([link](#))
- FAO-IMO-ILO ad hoc Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters ([link](#))
- Any other relevant and growing initiatives that enhance traceability, transparency, sustainability, and accountability of global tuna and seafood industries and its supply chains.

11. SBMI is motivated and ready to have open, inclusive, constructive and meaningful dialogues to achieve our collective efforts for adoption of the strong and effective CMM Crew Labor Standards and our collaborative works for ensuring sustainable fisheries management in the WCPO and global oceans.

In solidarity and dignity for protecting fishers and sustaining fishes resources!

Thank you!

Hariyanto

Chair, SBMI

hari@sbmi.or.id;

sekretariat@sbmi.or.id