



Virtual Meeting 4 of HSBI WG

16 April 2026 10:00 – 12:00 (Pohnpei time)

Draft High Seas Boarding Inspection Questionnaire

HSBIWG04-2026-03

15 April 2026

Paper submitted by the United States

Developing a Voluntary Regional Guide for the Collection of Information on Labor Practices during High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI)

Discussion Paper by the United States

At the 22nd Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC22), the United States recommended that the High Seas Boarding and Inspections Intersessional Working Group (HSBI IWG) consider developing a new voluntary guide in 2026 to assist inspection teams in collecting and documenting information related to forced labor during a high seas inspection.

The United States created this draft questionnaire using elements from questions our enforcement agencies have used previously in HSBI, the [International Labor Organization's Questionnaire for Fisher Interview](#)¹, and relevant provisions from the WCPFC [Crew Labor CMM 2024-04](#). This draft is meant to provide a starting point for discussion for HSBI IWG members for developing a questionnaire and associated voluntary guide for collecting information on labor practices during HSBI.

This draft questionnaire contains a set of core questions that cover issues related to recruitment, working conditions, and personal safety. The draft questionnaire also contains a number of potential follow-up questions to ask depending on the response to the core question². These questions are meant to elicit any indicators of vulnerability, deception, physical violence, intimidation, threats, abusive working conditions and isolation.

¹ "Towards Freedom at Sea, Handbook for the detection of forced labour in commercial fishing." *International Labour Organization*, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/towards-freedom-sea-handbook-detection-forced-labour-commercial-fishing>

² We would like the HSBI IWG to note that while these questions do cover relevant conditions of the Crew Labor CMM, there are questions absent that the IWG may want to consider including that would better capture provisions of the measure, depending on the situation and time provided for inspections. It is recommended that the IWG determine the optimal scope and depth of the voluntary guide that is to be drafted, including whether a modular approach with multiple parts would allow inspectors greater flexibility in an inspection and that the language in the Crew Labor CMM 2024-04 be utilized when drafting this voluntary guide and any questionnaire associated with it.

Draft High Seas Boarding Inspection Questionnaire

Recruitment and Agreements

- 1) How long have you worked onboard this vessel?
- 2) Did you voluntarily accept employment on this vessel?

If **Yes** for the answer, skip to Question # 3.

If **No** for the answer, ask the following follow-up questions:

- Who organized/facilitated your employment on this vessel?
- Could you refuse to accept work on the vessel?

If **No**;

- Why?
- What would be the consequences?

- 3) Before you agreed to work on the vessel, were you informed how much you would earn, the details of the work, the living and working conditions, and any financial, time or other commitments or requirements in accepting the position?
- 4) Are the pay and conditions the same as what was explained to you and that you agreed to?

If **Yes** for the answer, skip to Question # 5.

If **No** for the answer, ask the following follow-up questions:

Position and Working Conditions

- Who explained the details of employment to you?
- Did you sign a contract to work on the vessel?

If **Yes**, ask the following follow-up questions:

- Was it in your language?
- Did you read and understand the contract, or did someone tell you what was in it?

If **Yes**, who?

- What conditions are different from your understanding when accepting employment on the vessel?

Pay and Financial Deductions

- How often were you told you would be paid?
- How often are you actually being paid?
- How much were you told that you would be paid?
- How much are you actually paid?
- How do you receive this pay?
- Are you required to pay for items (including deductions from earned pay) that were not previously disclosed, such as food, equipment, travel; or which are higher than what was stated?

If **Yes**, describe.

- Were you charged a guarantee or other fees to obtain employment on this vessel?
- Did you go into debt to obtain work, or since beginning work on this vessel?

If **Yes**, ask the following follow-up questions:

- Are you unable to leave the vessel because of this debt?
- What would be the consequences if you left the vessel?
- Do you have access to your passport, seaman's book and other documentation?

Working Conditions

- 5) Were you provided adequate training for this work, and do you feel safe working on the vessel?

If **Yes** for the answer, skip to Question # 6.

If **No** for the answer, ask the following follow-up questions:

- Who provided the training?
- Where was the training provided?
- Was the training provided in your language and in a way that you could understand?
- Are accidents or injuries common on the vessel?

If **Yes**, please describe.

- How does the captain respond to accidents and injuries?

- 6) Does this schedule provide you with adequate time for resting, including recovery time if you become sick or injured?

If **Yes** for the answer, skip to Question # 7.

If **No** for the answer, ask the following follow-up questions:

- Describe your work schedule on the vessel?
 - How many hours are you required to work per day?
 - How many continuous hours are you provided for rest?
 - Are you required to continue to work if sick or injured?
 - How often does the vessel come into port?
- 7) Are you provided with sufficient nutritional food and clean drinking water every day?
If **No**, please describe.
- 8) Are you provided with sufficient medical treatment, if sick or injured?
If **No**, please describe.

Personal Safety

- 9) Do you or any other crew face threats, verbal or physical abuse by anyone onboard the vessel?
If **Yes**, please describe.
- 10) Are you instructed to provide certain answers to officials during inspections?
If **Yes**, ask the following follow-up questions:
- Who instructed you how to answer questions?
 - What are you instructed to say and not say?
 - Were you threatened if you reported any issues or concerns with your conditions on the vessel?