



WWF POSITION ON SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE GLOBAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Introduction

WWF's vision is a future, in which fisheries and aquaculture thrive within healthy ecosystems, benefiting the people and the businesses that depend on them.

Over more than five decades of conservation work, WWF has collaborated with many types of fisheries around the world, from coastal artisanal fisheries to industrial fisheries on the high seas and from small-scale aquaculture farms to large-scale fish farming operations.

In many countries, our biggest challenge has been ensuring that the communities we work with receive not only the environmental but also the social and economic benefits of having well-managed fisheries and aquaculture operations and their respective supply chains.

Addressing social issues in the seafood industry

WWF believes that the seafood industry, including fisheries, aquaculture and the supply chain stakeholders, must play a key role in resolving human rights and labour abuses and supporting sustainable livelihoods for producers.

Some of the issues with which WWF is concerned include:

1. **Forced or compulsory labour.** WWF condemns use of any form of bonded labour, including migrant labour, involved in the fisheries or associated industries that provide seafood products.
2. **Lack of transparency and legality.** The seafood industry must operate within national and international legal frameworks, and work to deliver a high level of transparency in its operations.
3. **Lack of fair remuneration.** All seafood workers should be entitled to meet the minimum national wage for a 'normal week' and be paid in the manner of their choice.
4. **Child labour.** WWF condemns the use of any form of child labor involved in the fisheries or associated industries that provide seafood products.
5. **Discrimination.** Seafood industries, businesses and companies should be free from all forms of discrimination based on, for example, race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, marital status, politics, religion, age, physical condition, illness, and conditions at home.
6. **Lack of health and safety.** A safe and healthy work environment must be provided for all employees working in on-board and on-shore seafood harvesting, processing and associated facilities at all times. This means that companies, industry, farms, fleets and factories must follow basic health and safety regulation for on-board, on-job and in-factory circumstances.
7. **Assurance of fair treatment of seasonal, seafarer and migrant workers.** Migrant workers in the seafood industry (and/ or members of his or her immediate family) must be treated fairly. WWF condemns any torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment and restriction of workers' freedom to leave any country/state/province/region, including their country/state/province/region of origin.
8. **Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining.** All workers should have the right to form groups and unions and join together to bargain without any repercussions from the organisation that they work for.
9. **Working Hours.** An organisation should comply with applicable national laws and industry standards. Workers should be given freedom to accept or reject employment based on the company's working hours policy.
10. **Management systems.** Management staff should be able to demonstrate that the above principles are understood and implemented through an appropriate management system by all senior managers, farm/boat/company owners and any relevant authorities over the personnel.
11. **Cultural norms and traditional lifestyle.** WWF respects the diversity of local wisdom and cultural traditions related to labour use in fishing communities around the globe. Nonetheless, WWF strongly urges the industry and local communities to create a working environment that meets the above-listed principles while honouring local values and norms.

For more information about social issues in supply chains, we suggest consulting with organizations like:

- International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- Social Accountability International (SAI);
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO);
- Environmental Justice Foundation;
- International Labor Rights Forum;
- Migrant Worker Rights Network;
- Verite;
- Oxfam.

Next steps

WWF is currently developing guidance for seafood companies to ensure adherence to fair labour conditions in their supply chain. We welcome consultations and cooperation with organisations and individuals with experience and expertise in addressing the ethical labour issues in the seafood industry.

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Our Smart Fishing Vision and Goals:

Vision: The world's oceans are healthy, well-managed and full of life, providing valuable resources for the welfare of humanity.

2020 Goals: The responsible management and trade of global priority fisheries result in recovering and resilient marine eco-systems, improved livelihoods for coastal communities and strengthened food security for the Planet.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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For more information

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