

United Nations General Assembly

Resolution 67/79, 11 December 2012

‘Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments’

Paragraph 168 of *Resolution 67/79* provides as follows:

“168. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all States, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, subregional and regional fisheries management organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, and to invite them to provide the Secretary-General with information relevant to the implementation of the present resolution.”

SUBMISSION BY ILO

Resolution 67/69 draws timely attention to the relationship between decent work and sustainable fisheries development. It aptly recognizes the significant contribution of sustainable fisheries to food security, income, wealth and poverty alleviation for present and future generations.

Oceans as a workplace

1. The world’s oceans and seas are a workplace where millions of people earn their livelihoods harvesting fish and marine resources. Fish is a valuable source of food and nutrition, and one of the most traded food commodities.
2. In many rural and coastal communities, fishing is the principal or only way of making a living. Since the vast majority of the world’s fishers work in small-scale fisheries, sustainable and equitable development approaches are crucial to safeguarding livelihoods and ensuring food security.
3. Fishing takes place in an often challenging marine environment and it has many characteristics that set it apart from work in other sectors. The living and working conditions in the fishing sector have a great impact on fishers and their communities. Decent working conditions are essential, not only to protect fishers, but to ensure their effective stewardship of the marine environment.

Ensuring decent work in fishing

4. Globalization has had a profound impact on the fishing industry and created new challenges for the regulation of conditions of work in fisheries. The widespread ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions covering the fundamental rights and principles at work, and the ratification and implementation of the key sectoral labour standard, the Work in Fishing

Convention, 2007 (No. 188), are vital to ensuring decent work in fishing and the promotion of sustainable fisheries.

5. Convention No. 188 demonstrates the resolve of the fishing industry and international community to ensure decent work for fishers. Its objective is to ensure decent work for fishers with regards to their conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health protection, medical care and social security.
6. It will come into force 12 months after the date on which the ratifications of ten member States have been deposited with the Director-General of the ILO, where eight are coastal States. As of the 28 June 2013, it has been ratified by four ILO member States: Argentina (15 September 2011), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4 February 2010), Morocco (16 May 2013), and South Africa (20 June 2013).
7. The ILO has promoted Convention No. 188 through technical advisory services, technical cooperation projects, training, international/regional/national workshops and seminars, as well as through the preparation of numerous tools and materials.
8. Convention No. 188 can help address global food security by being part of the framework that will enable and promote sustainable fisheries, and food security for fishers by providing comprehensive labour rights which provide social justice, protection and sustainable livelihoods. In the 'Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food', this role was recognized and the need for implementation and ratification of Convention No. 188 was emphasized.¹
9. The ILO has been working with other UN agencies to promote decent work and improve the safety and health of fishers – primarily with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Recently, two new guidance documents have been developed.
 - *Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture* (FAO/ILO, 2013)²
 - *Safety Recommendations for Decked Fishing Vessels of Less than 12 metres in Length and Undecked Fishing Vessels* (FAO/ILO/IMO, 2012)³
10. Reports of cases of severe human rights abuses and exploitation on board fishing vessels led to calls for greater international attention to forced labour and human trafficking in the sector. A new ILO report, *Caught at Sea: Forced labour and trafficking in fisheries*,⁴ examines recent literature and consolidates existing knowledge about forced labour and human trafficking in fisheries.

¹ The right to food. Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. UN General Assembly. 8 August 2012, A/67/268.

² Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3318e/i3318e.pdf>

³ Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/publication/wcms_216664.pdf

⁴ Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/newsitem/wcms_214472.pdf