

## **Addressing Fisheries and Human Rights Challenges in Squid & Saury Fisheries**

Huang-Cheng CHEN

### **Abstract**

ILO C188 serves as the guideline for safeguarding the rights of fishery workers, regulating labor conditions such as onboard facilities, working hours, wages, and welfare measures. While essential for workers' rights, compliance with ILO C111 can also lead to increased operational cost and complexity. It is important for all stakeholders to work together and pursue a balanced approach to ensure the mutual prosperity of both workers and employers.

In recent years, the squid and saury fisheries industries have implemented a series of measures to improve the rights of fishing workers:

1. Assist fishing vessels to comply with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); safeguard the human rights of crew members so that they are free from safety concerns.

Working at sea entails higher risks. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Fisheries Agency and the Marine Port Bureau, our fishing vessels have obtained SOLAS safety certifications. This marks a significant step forward in establishing safety standards for fishing vessels.

In addition to improving facilities and measures, regular education and drills are essential. This is especially crucial considering that novice crew members often make up 20% of the workforce. Consistent drills serve as a safety guarantee.

2. Make incremental efforts to adhere to all aspects of ILO regulations, including living spaces and facilities, CCTV installation to foster a supportive working environment, grievance mechanism, basic wage guarantee, and personal protection. These measures aim to ensure that the squid and saury fisheries remain up-to-date with current standards.
3. Develop a more efficient time management system to prevent timesheets from becoming a mere formality; thoroughly implement time management, reflect the real hours worked, and ensure the rights and welfare of the fishing workers.
4. Provide crew members with universal access to external communications (Wi-Fi).

To encourage managers to provide broad-scale Wi-Fi, it is necessary to combine efforts from all parties, including fishery managers. These efforts involve providing early prevention, and resolving the concerns of ship owners and crew members, thus mitigating the negative impacts that crew members' external communication may bring to vessel management.

**2024 International Forum on Fisheries and Human Rights:  
Challenges in Implementing the ILO Work in Fishing Convention  
15 April 2024 | Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Agriculture**

---

Offering Wi-Fi to crew members is not solely an issue for distant-water fisheries; it reflects broader issues within fishery management as a whole. Specific actions include:

(1) Fishery administrators should highlight the importance of distant-water fishery industry and provide operators with a business-friendly environment so that ship owners do not need to take risks.

(2) The distant-water fisheries sector is garnering significant global attention. The industry's performance, whether positive or negative, influences Taiwan's reputation and has implications for our export-oriented trade economy, consequently impacting domestic social stability and economic development. Decision-makers must exercise caution and treat this as a matter of national security. Fishery policies should prioritize the sustainable development of the industry while promoting societal stability and national security.

(3) Fishing vessel owners should optimize their management practices and implement measures to foster a more people-oriented, conducive working environment.

Offer onboarding training to enhance the mental resilience of crew members, aiding in their adjustment to working on fishing vessels. Advocate for transparency in brokerage fees, crew debt composition, and settlement mechanisms. Enhance the employment mechanism and adhere to the C188 Convention. Provide onboard support for crew members to ensure peace of mind while working, fostering a mutually beneficial labor-management relationship.

### **Speaker Profile**

Huang-Cheng Chen serves as the chairman of the Taiwan Squid & Saury Fisheries Association. His company oversees operations across five vessels in squid and saury fishing. With 18 years of experience in distant-water fisheries, he actively participates in the public works of the Association. Recognizing the significant challenges confronting the industry, he advocates for the pursuit of a sustainable future. Since assuming his position in 2021, he has spearheaded the Southwest Atlantic Argentine Shortfin Squid Fishery Improvement Project. This initiative aims to enhance the sustainable utilization of aquatic resources and improve human rights conditions within the industry. It seeks to raise awareness among operators regarding their responsibility towards ocean sustainability and human rights protection, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between employees and employers.