

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group (SECLG)

Note of meeting held at Friends House, London. Tuesday 5 July 2022.

For the Seafood Ethics CLG minutes and meeting presentations see:

<https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/seafood-issues-groups/the-seafood-ethics-common-language-group/>

SECLG in person meeting. Driving improvement through effective implementation of ILO 188

The International Labour Organization Work in Fishing Convention (C. 188) sets out basic standards of decent work in the fishing industry. It came into force in November 2017. The UK ratified the Convention in January 2019. To date it has been ratified by 20 countries. This meeting explored what ratification and implementation means for workers and seafood businesses, and how we can work towards wider adoption of this convention and other key instruments. The afternoon session focussed on the UK and the role of different supply chain actors in supporting effective implementation of C.188. See the presentations:

Attendees

Adam Chevreau-Kareliussen	Lovering Foods
Adam Townley	New England Seafood
Ahmed Sh Ibrahim Sh Aba	Ministry of fisheries and Marine Resources federal Government of Somalia
Alan McCulla	ANIFPO
Andy Hickman	SEA Alliance
Aoife Martin	Seafish
*Brandt Wagner	International Labour Organization
Carl Cooper	Westbridge Foods Ltd
Cecilia Enquist	Seafish
*Chris Williams	International Transport Federation
*Christine Bader	International Labour Organization
Daniel Murphy	Independent consultant
David Hammond	Human Rights at Sea
David Rousseau	Impactt Limited
*Derek Cardno	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
*Elspeth MacDonald	Fishermen's Welfare Alliance
*Estelle Brennan	Lyons Seafoods (Chair)
Felicity Sylvester	Devon and Severn IFCA
Gift Mlambo	Defra
Giles Bartlett	Whitby Seafoods
Harry Wick	NIFPO
Hayley Swanlund	WWF-UK
Helena Orella	Bolton Food S.L.
Huw Thomas	3 Pillars Seafood Ltd
Iain Pollard	Key Traceability Ltd.
*Javier Garat	Cepesca
Jonathan Shepherd	Fishermen's Mission
*Julia Black	Hilton Food Group

Julia Gosling	Seafarer's Charity
*Julie Carlton	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
*Julio Morón Ayala	OpaGac
*Juan Manuel Trujillo	CCOO
Karen Green	Seafish (Secretariat)
Katie Key	Marine Stewardship Council
Lara Funk	Heriot-Watt University
Lia Hayman	Key Traceability
Lief Hendrikz	WWF-UK
*Marc Evans	Fishermen's Mission
Marcelo Hidalgo	Fishing Industry Association of Papua New Guinea
Melanie Siggs	Global Seafood Alliance
Michael Cohen	NFFO
Michael Park	SWFPA
Michael Pennant-Jones	Impactt Limited
Michael Platt	RS Standards
Mike Mitchell	Fair Seas Limited
Rachel Munns	World Wise Foods
Robin Trenbath	Co-op
Romesh Peters	Zindhu Maritime Solutions
Sam Ludlow Taylor	JLP
Sarah Eames	World Wise Foods
Sarah Hussey	Sea Farms Ltd
Sophie Peacey	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
*Tina Barnes	The Seafarers' Charity
Tracy Cambridge	Thai Union
Yemi Oloruntuyi	Marine Stewardship Council
Zacari Edwards	International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF)
*Víctor Jiménez	Consejero de Transportes, Spanish Embassy in London

Apologies (unable to attend at the last moment)

Borja Alonso	Albacora
Carlo Bella	Defra
Jessica Sparks	University of Nottingham
Juliette Hatchman	SWFPO
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Laurence Capstick	MCA
Leah Riley Brown	BRC
Michael Pennant-Jones	Impactt
Paul Williams	Princes
Sarah Mount	Freedom Fund
Stuart Green	Consultant
Thomas van Haaren	DNV

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Estelle Brennan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Drivers to improvement.

[ILO C.188 - the international context](#). Brandt Wagner and Christine Bader, ILO.

Discussion

- **Q. How many more countries are close to ratification?**
A. Ghana, Peru, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Korea, and Spain. We are hoping the EU Directive on enforcement could be a key driver.
- **Q. What is the ratification process?**
- **A.** Governments will consult with the fishing organisations to see what is already in place, as there could already in compliance in many areas. Some Governments want to confirm their commitment and announce early on, some want to make sure absolutely everything in in place.

The situation in Spain

[Implementing social sustainability and C.188/AENOR labour standards in the Spanish fishing industry](#). Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo, Workers' Commissions (Comisiones Obreras, CCOO).

[The AENOR standard for tuna fisheries](#). Dr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC.

[The Spanish experience of ratifying and implementing ILO C. 188](#). Víctor Jiménez Fernández, Counsellor for Transport and Representative of Spain to the IMO (Spanish Embassy in London).

Discussion

- **Q. Have the same conditions been specified for national and migrant workers?**
- **A.** Yes. We see this as good practice.
- **Q. Have there been any prosecutions for human rights issues in the Spanish fleet?**
- **A.** There have been some.

In the UK

[Implementation of ILO C. 188 in the UK](#). Julie Carlton, Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

Discussion

- **Q. Please comment on how the MCA is monitoring conformance, the role of social audits and how the MCA are made aware of the less visible forms of exploitation through worker voice channels?**
- **A.** The inspection regime does involve speaking to fishers, and ILO C. 188 provides a framework to do this.
- **Q. There are specific challenges for the MCA. How can welfare organisations support this? A.** There are specific check lists that the MCA can use.
- **There were comments on the unannounced concentrated inspection campaign and the results. How many crew were actually questioned? Will the surveys continue? What is the follow up?** A large number of vessels had no deficiencies. This does means vessels need to be ready for inspection 24/7. There have been comments on inconsistency between inspectors re the surveys.
- **From the experience of the SFF.**
- MCA proposals have been taken very seriously creating a lot more focus on fishers' welfare.
- ILO C. 188 has been a big change for UK fishers with a big increase in the paper trail. It is now more complicated to manage a UK fishing vessel.

New campaign to achieve Fairness in Fishing. Tina Barnes, Seafarers' Charity.

This includes recommendations to Achieve Fairness in Fishing under five headings: Recruitment, Employment, Payment, Enforcement, and Engagement & Support. These are either short term (less than one year), medium term (one to three years) or long term (three to five years).

UK context - The role of different supply chain actors in supporting effective implementation of ILO C.188. Panel session.

The panel was:

- Elspeth MacDonald, Fishermen's Welfare Alliance
- Tina Barnes, Seafarers Charity
- Julia Black, Hilton Food Group
- Marc Evans, Fishermen's Mission
- Chris Williams, International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

Questions to guide the discussion

- For you, what is the role of ILO C. 188? How does this help you ensure/demonstrate human rights are respected?
- Within your own supply chain, are you seeing a real benefit/change/evidence from the ratification of ILO C. 188?
- The UK, USA and Canada launched the IUU Fishing Action Alliance last week, which included a commitment to better identify, and address forced labour, unsafe working conditions, and other labour abuses in the fishing industry.
- How does implementation of ILO C. 188 relate to the work going in the UK? We know serious issues have been found in the UK, but there are some excellent examples of good practice in the UK fishing industry. How do we roll these out? How do we foster and promote best practice?
- What is the best forum for collaboration to address the issues that have been highlighted in the UK? Who would you like to see leading on this? Who is best placed to take on this role?
- SECLG will continue to regularly meet. If we were to meet again in person in six months' time, what would like to see has happened in that time? What can we commit to do by then?

Key comments

- Industry engagement at the earliest stage possible is paramount.
- For industry to showcase and promote best practice we need to promote the good that is happening. Could there be a market incentive attached to this? This must be a tangible element of supply and demand.
- The amount of media coverage of the small number of cases does show that this has become politicised. There is a different narrative out there. We must not caricature the industry. The vast majority of the UK fleet is small inshore vessels, not large vessels with migrant workers.
- With regards to transit visas, skilled visas, and the English language requirement we need to set out a common position to UK Government (a federated approach) that the whole supply chain supports.
- The establishment of a roundtable would be beneficial, facilitated by an independent chair. Industry has to produce an action plan, or it is vulnerable.
- Consumers need to better understand the seafood industry.