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# Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture cannot be achieved without human rights

**Only through concerted efforts across the human rights community and the fisheries and aquaculture sectors actors, can the sectors become sustainable. The 2030 Agenda and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights provide indispensable guidance.**

Around 10 – 12 % of the world’s population depends on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods. If we are to end the depletion of the fisheries resources and fight Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture sectors provide decent work, food security and respect the rights of the communities they operate in, then we need to be guided by international human rights and labour standards.

The increasing commercial exploitation and other labour rights violations of workers in the sectors, marginalisation of small-scale fishers, IUU fishing and impacts on indigenous coastal communities can only be reduced through strong multi-stakeholder initiatives and stronger concerted efforts. Global seafood companies, small-scale fishers, governments, UN agencies, development organisations and National Human Rights Institutions need to work closer together.

Jointly we can develop new initiatives and push for stronger policy coherence and responsible business practices grounded in human rights standards.



Photo: Felix Clay/Duckrabbitt

## THE 2030 AGENDA ENABLES COLLECTIVE ACTION

The 2030 Agenda, and in particular the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) goal 14, constitutes a unique framework for coherence and for effective partnerships that enable collective action and responsible business conduct in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The Agenda is also a human rights agenda as it is underpinned by human rights and other international agreements.

## **UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROVIDE A BLUEPRINT**

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provide a blueprint for businesses and governments to prevent and address negative human rights impacts. The UNGPs can help companies in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to respect human rights in their operations, including their supply chains, through practicing human rights due diligence, while contributing to the realisation of the SDGs. Respecting human rights thus contributes to enhancing accountability in the sustainable development of the sectors.

## **STRENGTHENING SMALL SCALE-FISHERS' ACCESS TO MARINE SOURCES AND MARKETS**

Small scale-fishers are one of the groups suffering the most from weak regulations, and other challenges the sectors face. Until they know and claim their right to food, to an adequate standard of living and to decent work, the sectors cannot be sustainable. This is illustrated by SDG target 14.b which aims to “provide access of small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”. The target provides an indispensable framework for the empowerment of small-scale fishers and positive human rights impact of the sector.

## **PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTORS**

In 2018, the Danish Institute for Human Rights in collaboration with various partners in Chile, Bangladesh and Africa initiated the global project ‘Sustainable Oceans – Pursuing a human rights based approach to fisheries and aquaculture’.

The project will document human rights implications and impacts pertaining to fisheries and aquaculture and aims to address some of these impacts through selected national and global dialogues, policies and strategies for sustainable development and responsible business conduct. The Institute is facilitating the conduct of Sector Wide Impact Assessments (SWIAs), assessing the human rights impacts of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Bangladesh and Chile and shorter analyses in Africa.

Based on the findings of these assessments, we will, in collaboration with our partners, develop guidance on how companies in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors can assess their human rights impacts. Based on the UNGPs and the 2030 Agenda, we will develop policy recommendations for responsible business conduct within the sectors. Finally, we will develop recommendations and tools for stakeholders to hold governments and the private sector accountable for the human rights impacts and for ensuring the implementation of SDG 14.b.

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**

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