



Mr Audun Lem
Deputy Director, Fisheries Division
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations - FAO
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Brussels / Madrid, 8 February 2019

Subject: FAO guidelines on social sustainability in the fisheries value chain

Dear Mr Lem,

The EU social partners in the fisheries sector (Europêche and ETF), together with the EU Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council (LDAC), would like to congratulate the FAO for taking the initiative to open a public consultation aimed to develop a guidance document to promote social sustainability in the fisheries sector across the fisheries value chain. It will certainly be a useful tool to assist fish value chain actors in the implementation of existing relevant instruments, criteria and measures covering responsible business conduct, observance and respect of human rights and international labour standards.

The EU social partners in the fisheries sector and the LDAC believe, equally or even more important, on the importance to improve the level of ratification and implementation by governments of the existing legal instruments and measures that encompass living and working conditions, safety at sea, human rights and international labour standards. For this purpose, the FAO guidelines should also lay down the principles and foundations for a roadmap to encourage and facilitate a swift ratification and implementation of existing international law conventions by Member states. Namely, we refer to: (a) *IMO Cape Town Agreement 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977 (as amended)*; (b) *IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F)*; (c) *ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (C188)* and (d) *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of the FAO*. EU fisheries stakeholders have been advocating for the ratification of these Conventions for years, as the ratification level is still low.

This objective was one of the main outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Issues relating to Migrant Fishers at the International Labour Organisation in Geneva in September 2017, where ILO was mandated to develop, in close cooperation with other relevant agencies of the United Nations, an effective roadmap for rapid worldwide implementation of the international agreements relating to work in the fishing sector. Particular focus was given on the need to increase the number of countries adhering to ILO C188 and to harmonise fisheries policies with international standards on safety at sea. Greater collaboration between UN agencies and efficient use of available guidelines is therefore of essence in order to avoid duplication of activities and resources.



Both the social partners and the LDAC would like to reiterate their readiness to participate at the consultation and to support and contribute to the work of FAO in the drafting of successful and tailor-made guidelines for the fishing sector. For this purpose, our representatives are willing to assist at any stage the expert team engaged by FAO to perform these tasks. The stakeholders represented by our organisations are fully committed to achieve the aforementioned objectives and make progress on the social dimension of fisheries to ensure a true level of sustainability at global level.

Yours sincerely,

Flemming Smidt

Ment van der Zwan

Iván López van der Veen

ETF Spokesperson

Europêche Spokesperson

LDAC Chairman

Social Dialogue Committee

Social Dialogue Committee

EU Long Distance Fleet AC