

Inspection of Working Conditions on Distant-water Fishing Vessels

Shao-Chun HU

Abstract

To safeguard the rights of foreign crew members employed overseas, ensure the enforcement of relevant laws and regulations, and fulfill port state responsibilities, the Fisheries Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture conducts inspections on the working conditions of fishing vessels. More details as follows.

1. **Inspection target:** First, based on the "Regulations on the Authorization and Management of Overseas Employment of Foreign Crew Members", the annual goal is to inspect at least 50% of fishing vessels flying the flag of the Republic of China. Secondly, in accordance with the "Joint Inspection Mechanism for Non-ROC Fishing Vessels Entering ROC Ports," ad-hoc inspections are conducted on foreign fishing vessels (including FOC vessels) entering ROC ports, with the goal of inspecting at least 15% of FOC vessels entering every year.
2. **Inspection items:** Inspectors interview foreign crew members using questionnaires and interpretation assistance to assess aspects such as labor contracts, salary payments, broker fees, working hours, living and working conditions, injury and illness treatment, and more. They also inspect onboard facilities, including medical supplies, timesheets, living quarters, safety equipment, and information on complaint channels.
3. **Inspection locations:** In addition to inspections at domestic ports, inspectors have also been dispatched to ports such as Mauritius, Cape Town in South Africa, the Marshall Islands, and Fiji to inspect ROC-flagged distant-water fishing vessels. Beginning in 2023, impartial third-party institutions have been commissioned to inspect vessels at overseas ports. Onboard inspections are also conducted with the support of Coast Guard patrol vessels.
4. **Professional capabilities of inspectors:** To enhance the professional skills of inspectors, the Fisheries Agency regularly invites domestic and international experts, scholars, NGO representatives, and industry professionals to deliver lectures and share experiences. Inspectors also participate in human trafficking prevention training sessions organized by relevant ministries and in ILO courses focused on inspecting labor conditions aboard fishing vessels.

Once the domestic adoption of ILO C188 is finalized, all fishing vessels and distant-water fishing vessels that remain at sea for at least 3 days and have a length of at least 24 meters will be subject to inspection to ensure compliance with the relevant living and working conditions regulations of the Convention. Certification documents will be issued accordingly. This process involves coordination among the Ministry of

**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**

Agriculture, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Communication, which can pose challenges. It remains to be discussed in the future to improve the inter-ministerial inspection mechanism.

Speaker Profile

Shao-Chun Hu currently serves as the Section Chief of the Foreign Manpower Section at the Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Agriculture. He is tasked with formulating and promoting policies concerning foreign crew members on distant-water fishing vessels, as well as overseeing the domestic legalization process of the ILO C188 Convention. He served as a technical assistant, technician, and technical specialist at the Fisheries Administration Department. During that time, he was responsible for managing fuel subsidies and fishing vessel retirement/replacement policies. He worked with the Ministry of Transportation's Maritime Port Bureau to develop accommodation standards for fishing vessels in line with the ILO C188 Convention. To meet these standards, fishing vessels needed to increase the tonnage, so he led a review aimed at relaxing the vessel replacement policies. In June 2022, he was appointed as a technical specialist at the Distant-water Fisheries Department, tasked with overseeing the implementation of the "Action Plan for Fisheries and Human Rights." He served as a lecturer in the human trafficking prevention education and training courses and international workshops organized by the National Immigration Agency. In October 2023, he was promoted to Section Chief of the Fisheries Manpower Section. With his extensive experience, he holds a deep understanding of the policies and systems aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of foreign crew members on distant water vessels.