



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



HUMAN WELFARE

Human welfare encompasses many aspects of an individual's well-being, including their labor rights, working conditions, equitable treatment and access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their sex or gender.

THE CHALLENGE

While the fisheries sector is a leading source of livelihood for the population of Southeast Asia, it is rife with many human welfare, labor rights and gender inequality challenges that are commonly perpetuated by illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices.

IUU fishing is estimated to include thousands of crew members and endangers both human lives and the environment by cutting corners on ship maintenance, crew safety and sanitary conditions. Human welfare abuses can be witnessed across a spectrum that includes unequal or unpaid work, hazardous working conditions, forced labor, and egregious human rights abuses, such as excessive working hours, physical abuse, lack of food and water, coerced indebtedness and abandonment in remote locations. Unethical and illegal labor practices, engaged in by some fishery operators in the region, highlight the urgent need for fisheries management and development initiatives to address the welfare of the millions of humans that are central to its operations.

As fisheries are a major employer in Southeast Asia, the diversity of the sector's workforce must be acknowledged. While traditionally thought of as a sector dominated by men, Southeast Asia's fisheries are in fact almost equally comprised of women who perform many of the preparatory, processing and trade-related functions. As such, it is important for the needs and interests of both men and women to be represented in the process of managing and improving fisheries.

USAID OCEANS' APPROACH

USAID Oceans encourages the adoption of and adherence to safe, legal, equitable, and internationally-approved labor standards within the region's fisheries, including addressing gender equity needs.

(continued on reverse)



PHOTO: LEN GARCES / USAID OCEANS

To achieve these goals, USAID Oceans supports:

CATCH DOCUMENTATION AND TRACEABILITY THAT ADVANCES HUMAN WELFARE MONITORING. USAID Oceans-supported catch documentation and traceability (CDT) systems collect key labor and sex-disaggregated data to help monitor labor practices, enhance both worker protection and voluntary compliance with labor standards and further gender equity. As a result, the actual costs of labor associated with fisheries operations will be more transparently reflected. Workers will also be empowered to make informed employment decisions and will benefit from increased access to enforcement and grievance communication mechanisms.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES THAT SUPPORT HUMAN WELFARE OBJECTIVES. USAID Oceans works with regional and national fisheries management organizations and non-profit organizations to promote the development of legal instruments that protect workers and support gender equity.

NETWORKING AMONG HUMAN WELFARE CHAMPIONS. USAID Oceans promotes regional human welfare initiatives and supports stakeholder participation in regional and national events focused on human welfare and gender equity. USAID Oceans seeks to strengthen a regional network of change-makers striving for fair, equitable and safe fisheries.

USAID Oceans engages regional, national and local partners to improve human welfare across Southeast Asia's fisheries. Working in tandem with the program's CDT, partnership and fisheries management activities, USAID Oceans ensures that all program pursuits support the improvement of human welfare concerns, including labor conditions, worker rights and gender equality. Together with program partners SEAFDEC, CTI-CFF and national fisheries agencies, USAID Oceans has:

- Established a regional Human Welfare Technical Working Group that is working together to develop guidance on gender integration and labor standards in the fisheries sector.
- Conducted in-field assessments of labor conditions and gender integration in program learning sites to support program interventions and the development of USAID Oceans-supported guidelines, recommendations, Sustainable Fisheries Management Plans and CDT system design requirements.
- Developed guidance for human welfare-related Key Data Elements that establish recommended and required CDT elements.
- Initiated grants process in Indonesia and the Philippines to address gender equity needs in specified seafood supply chains.

Learn more at seafdec-oceanspartnership.org or contact us at info@oceans-partnership.org.