

TRADES UNION CONGRESS (GHANA)



***TRADE UNION POLICY
FOR DECENT WORK
IN THE FISHING SECTOR
OF GHANA***

2024



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***Trade Union Policy
For Decent Work In The
Fishing Sector of
Ghana***

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Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

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PREFACE

Fishing in Ghana is plagued by several contradictions. On the one hand, fishing is crucial to economic growth, livelihoods, and nutrition in the country. It generates about US\$1 billion and contributes 4.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) annually. An estimated 10 percent of the active labour force in Ghana rely on fishing for their livelihoods. Fish provides almost 60 percent of animal protein consumed in the country. Major legislative, policy, and institutional frameworks have been established for regulation fisheries in Ghana. The Fisheries Act (2002) created the Fisheries Commission to among others, regulate and manage the utilization of fisheries resources. The Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) has been established to oversee training, recruitment, and welfare of seafarers. There is also collaboration between the Marine Police, the Ghana Navy, the Attorney-General's Department, and other state agencies to promote compliance with marine laws and regulations. On the other hand, significant decent work deficits exist in the fishing sector of Ghana. The sector is noted for occupational safety, health, and environment (OSHE) shortfalls, deplorable living and working conditions on fishing vessels, and dwindling incomes. Forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking also occur in the sector. These decent work deficits result from inadequacies in the legislative framework and weak enforcement of laws and regulations.

Trade unions in Ghana need to take action to promote and protect the rights and interest of fishers in Ghana. This policy provides the blueprint to guide trade union efforts towards ameliorating decent work deficits in fishing, especially forced labour and modern slavery. The strength of this policy lies

in the bottom-up and participatory approach in the development of the document i.e., engagement with fishers and other stakeholders in the identification of key objectives and strategic actions of this policy. It is expected that relevant stakeholders shall collaborate with the trade unions in the implementation of this policy.

SIGNED

Dr. Anthony Yaw Baah

Secretary General of TUC (Ghana)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
GAWU	General Agricultural Workers' Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFL	Ghana Federation of Labour
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GITA	Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
GMA	Ghana Maritime Authority
GTA	Ghana Tuna Association
GPHA	Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
LOA	Length Over All
M&E	Monitory and evaluation
MBAF	Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MDU	Maritime and Dockworkers' Union
MEALS	Monitory, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning System
NUSPAW	National Union of Seamen, Ports and Allied Workers
NUTEG	National Union of Teamsters and General Workers
OSHE	Occupational Safety, Health and Environment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
TUC (Ghana)	Trades Union Congress (Ghana)
TUDCN	Trade Union Development Cooperation Network

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

1.1 Introduction

This is a trade union policy for realisation of decent work in the fisheries sector of Ghana. It emerged out of a participatory process within the Trades Union Congress (Ghana) – hereafter the TUC (Ghana) – and its affiliates that organise workers in the fisheries and maritime sectors: the National Union of Seamen, Ports and Allied Workers (NUSPAW), the Maritime and Dockworkers Union (MDU) and the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU). The development of this policy also involved consultations with key stakeholders in the fisheries sector, including the Fisheries Commission, the Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA), and the Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA). The Ghana Tuna Association (GTA), the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), the National Union of Teamsters and General Workers (NUTEG) of Ghana Federation of Labour (GFL), and the Labour Department also participated in the formulation of this policy. The involvements of these stakeholders enabled broad consensus on the policy objectives and strategic actions for achievement of decent work in the fisheries sector of Ghana.

The rational, key objectives, and strategic actions of this policy draw on trade union mission and values, national policy and legal frameworks, and international development protocols and conventions. These include target 7 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – hereafter SDG 8.7 –, the decent work framework of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the National Policy for Management of the Marine Fisheries Sector. The

policy is also underpinned by the national strategy against child labour and human trafficking in fisheries, the tripartite declaration of principles on multinational enterprises and social policy (MNE Declaration), and trade union values and aspirations.

1.2 Trade union mission

This policy is inspired by the mission and core mandate of trade unions: protection and promotion of the rights and interest of workers. The TUC (Ghana) and its member unions seek to ensure that workers in Ghana work in dignity, have employment security and living wage, have access to social security, exercise their rights at work, and participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives. The unions' human development objectives include respect for human rights and realisation of decent work (promotion of jobs and enterprises, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and advancing social dialogue) within the framework of SDGs. These goal and human development objectives of the TUC (Ghana) impose an obligation on trade unions to promote decent work in fisheries in Ghana, including eliminating forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking in the sector.

1.3 Trade union SDG priorities

The necessity to promote decent work in fisheries by of trade unions connects with many of the SDGs. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) identify with the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030, emphasising on six priorities for trade union action. These are SDG 1 – end poverty in all its forms everywhere, SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and SDG10 – reduce inequality within and

among countries. The other trade union priorities are SDG 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, SDG16 – promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, and SDG 8 – promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. SDG 8 lies at the centre of trade union actions on SDGs (ITUC, 2023).

The affiliation of the TUC (Ghana) to the ITUC aligns the former to the abovementioned trade union priority SDGs, imposing an obligation on the TUC (Ghana) and its affiliates to promote decent work in all sectors of the Ghanaian economy. By extension, there is an imperative on trade unions that organise in fisheries to work towards realisation of decent work in the sector. This imperative includes channelling efforts towards the achievement of target 8.7 – take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and end child labour in all its forms – in the fisheries sector of Ghana.

1.4 The fisheries sector in Ghana

The fisheries sector in Ghana is made up of the marine, freshwater, and aquaculture subsectors. The marine subsector provides about 80 percent of the country’s domestic fish catch (Hasselberg, et. al., 2020: 3). Inland or freshwater fishing in the country mostly happens on the Lake Volta and its tributaries, providing about 16 percent of domestic fish catch in Ghana (ibid.: 4). Figures on Ghana’s aquaculture indicate that there are about 3,000 small-scale fish farms and around 19,000 ponds and cages where about 57,000 mt of fish are harvested annually (ibid.).

Marine fishing in Ghana is classified into three subsectors: artisanal, semi-industrial, and industrial trawl. Artisanal fishing in the country involves 14,275 motorised and non-motorised registered canoes –sizes ranging from 3 to almost 20 meters in Length Over All (LOA)– that use beach seines, encircling nets, hook and lines, drift gill nets, and set nets (Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD), 2022: 10). It contributes between 70-80 percent of annual marine fish catch in Ghana (Asumeng and Folitse, 2019: 4). The semi-industrial subsector is made up of 224 operational boats (wooden hulls with inboard engines) which are classified into two: larger vessels with LOA between 20 and 30 meters and smaller vessels with LOA between 8 to 10 meters (MOFAD, 2022: 11). The larger vessels use bottom trawls while the smaller ones work with small purse seines in fishing (ibid.). The figures show that semi-industrial fishing provides about 11,353 mt of fish catch in Ghana (ibid.: 10). The industrial sub-sector consists of bottom trawl and tuna operations. The trawl is made up of about 76 active vessels that contributes about 37,507 mt of fish (ibid: 11). There are 14 bait boats and 16 purse seiners in tuna operations with a total catch of about 90,000 mt (ibid: 11-12).

The fisheries sector plays a vital role in economic growth, livelihoods, and nutrition in Ghana. It generates about US\$1 billion and contributes 4.5 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually¹. The sector is also an important source of foreign exchange. Ghana’s export earnings from fish and fishery products is estimated at US\$60 million per annum (Asumeng and Folitse, 2019: 2). These contributions to GDP and revenue make fisheries an essential sector of the Ghanaian economy.

¹ see the National Policy for Management of the Marine Fisheries Sector

In addition to the above, the fisheries sector contributes significantly to employment and livelihoods. The fishing value chain in Ghana involves boatyards, fishers, processors, and market women (Hasselberg, et. al., 2020: 5). With a marine coastline of 550 kilometres, fishing plays a major part in the livelihood of several households and communities (Asumeng and Folitse, 2019: 2). Over 200 coastal villages rely on fisheries as their primary source of income (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 5). Ghana has many inland waterbodies covering about 10 percent of the land surface, including Lake Volta which is about 8.482 km² (Hasselberg, et. al., 2020: 2). Fishing is the mainstay of about 10 percent of Ghana's population (see National Policy for Management of Marine Fisheries Sector), including about 2.7 million people in the active labour force cohort (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 5). About 300,000 individuals rely on the inland fisheries sector (Hasselberg, et. al., 2020: 5). Estimates from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation (MBAF) indicate that 135,000 fishers are directly employed in marine fisheries capture (MBAF, 2022: 4). The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) estimates that small-scale fishing provides about 110,000 jobs for men (operating canoes) and 500,000 jobs for women engaged in processing, distribution, and marketing of fish (EJF, 2022: 11).

Apart from the economic and labour market significance, fish is the main source of animal protein in Ghana (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 5). It provides about 60 percent of animal protein consumed in the country (see National Policy for Management of Marine Fisheries Sector). Annual per capita consumption of fish has been estimated at 25kg, making Ghana one of the highest fish dependent countries in Africa (EJF, 2022: 11). Thus, fish plays

an important role in food and nutrition security in Ghana (Hasselberg, et. al., 2020: 2).

1.5 Institutional and legislative framework for the fisheries sector

Ghana has well elaborated legislative, policy, and institutional frameworks for the fisheries sector. At the top of the institutional arrangement is the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD). MOFAD has responsibility to ensure sustainable management of fisheries resources and development of the fishing industry in Ghana. The Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625) established the Fisheries Commission to among others, regulate and manage the utilization of fisheries resources in the country.

There is also the Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) created by Ghana Maritime Authority Act, 2002 (Act 630) to regulate, monitor, and coordinate activities in the maritime industry. The functions of the GMA include ensuring safety of navigation, causing investigations into maritime casualties and taking of appropriate action, and overseeing matters pertaining to training, recruitment, and welfare of Ghanaian seafarers. The GMA has established a Tripartite Committee –made up of key institutions in the sector, including trade unions– which has fashioned recommendations and actions to ameliorated the challenges in marine fishing sector. These include the institutionalisation of the fishers’ contract regime, strengthening of the medicine chest rules, and initiation of ratification of Convention 188 - Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). Key informant narratives show that the GMA and its Tripartite Committee have brought some sanity in the sector.

Other laws, regulations, and institutions that have implications for the fishing and maritime industry in the country are the Ghana Shipping Act, 2003 (Act 645), Maritime Pollution Act, 2016 (Act 932), and the Ghana Maritime Security Act, 2004 (Act 675) and the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS). The GIS is responsible for the application of immigration and employment laws among foreigners in Ghana, including expatriates in the fishing industry. In addition to these legislative and institutional frameworks, the country has implemented a National Policy for Management of the Marine Fisheries Sector. There is also a strategy on anti-child labour and trafficking in fisheries (MOFAD, n.d).

There are important business and employers' associations in Ghana's fishing sector. These include the Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA) and the Ghana Tuna Association (GTA). GITA's members include operators of fish trawlers, importers and exporters of fish and fish processing products, and providers of supplies and support services to trawl vessels. It engages with policy makers and supports its members for the development of the trawling sector. GTA is involved in tuna fisheries development and business advocacy (GTA, n.d). It undertakes national and international advocacy to promote tuna operation, and promotes the interests of crew on tuna vessels and the participation of non-Ghanaians in tuna operation (ibid.). There is also the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC). GNCFC focuses on promoting the welfare of canoe fishermen. As of 2020, it had over 100,000 members made up of fishers, chief fishermen, *konkonhema* (queen fishmongers) and canoe and gear owners (FAO, 2024).

1.6 Institutional and legislative deficits

In spite of the above, there are important omissions and inadequacies in the legislative framework for the fisheries sector in Ghana. The MBAF maintains that fisheries regulations in the country are outdated (MBAF, 2022: 7). Ghana has not ratified two significant international conventions and agreements in marine fisheries sector. So far, the initiative of the GMA and its Tripartite Committee on ratification of C188 has not achieved the desired outcome. The 2012 Cape Town Agreement on minimum standards of vessel safety of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has also not been ratified (EJF, 2022: 13). The basic requirements for work on board fishing vessels that C188 such as minimum wage, medical examination, and conditions of service (manning and hours of rest, fisher's work contract, repatriation, recruitment and placement and payment of fishers) can be useful in ameliorating the decent work deficits in fisheries in Ghana (see section 1.7 for the decent work situation in fishing). In addition, the standards of C188 on accommodation and food, medical care, health protection and social security, and compliance and enforcement rules provide pathways towards promoting the rights and interests of workers in the fisheries sector. Hence, the non-ratification of C188 deprives fishers in the country from benefiting fully from the standards that C188 sets for fishers and fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing operations.

Another inadequacy in the marine fishing sector is weak enforcement of laws and regulations (MOFAD, 2022: vii). Ghana has laid out fisheries sector institutional arrangements for regulation. These include collaboration between the Marine Police, the Ghana Navy, the Attorney General's Department, and other state agencies to ensure adherence to marine laws and

regulations (Government of Ghana, 2019: 57). In addition, the fisheries observer programme requires industrial trawl vessel to have an observer appointed by the state onboard, to monitor activities and conditions on vessels (EJF, 2022: 23). But the mandate of the observers does not extend to workers welfare. This contributes to labour law violations in the trawl sector, including non-adherence to written employment contracts (MBAF, 2022: 7). An official source indicates that enforcement patrols, quayside inspections, beach combing, and surveillance are beset by many challenges, including resistance from fishers, high costs of patrols, and lack of patrol boats (Government of Ghana, 2019: 57). There are also allegations of bribery and intimidation of fisheries observers onboard trawl vessels (MBAF, 2022: 7), which have been connected with the persistence of unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and human rights abuses in the sector (EJF, 2022: 23). The enforcement regime is weak. This is compounded by seasonal glut in fishing workers that makes the fishing labour market an employer's market, limiting the power of workers and compromising their rights and interests.

The political economy of fishing in the country also compromises the rights and interest of Ghanaian fishers and the development of the industry. This can be seen in the licensing regime, vessel ownership and control, and political interference in the industry. Trawl vessels are often linked to politicians, making it difficult for IUU offenses to be prosecuted (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 36). Also, inappropriate trade policies, globalization of the fishing industry, and the dominance of foreign fleets limit the benefits that Ghana gets from fishing (Bank of Ghana, 2008: 7). It has been established that even though fishing licenses are usually registered with Ghanaians in

their joint ventures with the Chinese –Ghanaians usually own a minimum of 51 percent equity–, actual control mostly lies with the Chinese (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 35). Ghanaian crew usually control lower positions on vessels, and are often required to follow the commands of Chinese captains (ibid.). In addition, the political economy of fishing in Ghana constraints enforcement of laws meant to avoid depletion of fish stock in the country. Electoral politics is said to hinder implementation of policies that restrict canoes fishing, as politicians are reluctant to impose such restrictions for fear of electoral loss (ibid.: 44).

Industrialisation, changes in the fisheries sector, and climate change also have long term implications for labour and trade unions in the sector. Aquaculture is on the rise, as investments and resources move from marine fishing to aquaculture. Cage farming system on Lake Volta recorded an annual growth of about 73 percent between 2010 and 2016 (Amenyogbe, 2018: 2). This, coupled with intensive use of technology in marine fishing limits demand for fishers.

1.7 Decent work situation

Fishing in Ghana is noted for many decent work deficits. First, the sector faces OSHE deficiencies. Decks of most fishing boats are congested by fishing gear and equipment, compromising safety of fishermen (Asumeng and Folitse, 2019: 3). Accidents and serious injuries are commonplace because of poorly maintained equipment and lack of safety and protective gears (EJF, 2022: 14). About three quarters of the participants of a study mentioned sighting or experiencing a serious injury or death within 12 months, and nine in ten reported insufficient medicine and first aid

equipment (EJF, 2022: 14). A fisher has reported witnessing the death a colleague who fell sick with cholera aboard a Chinese vessel because the crew refused to bring him ashore for treatment (Wright and Naadi, 2023). Some fishers who participated in the development of this policy indicated that even though their vessels have medicines, the medicine boxes are kept with the captains and inscriptions on the medicines are in the Chinese language. Safety and health problems in the fisheries are also prevalent in the artisanal sector. Small-scale and artisanal fisheries are associated with safety deficits because most of the traditionally built fishing crafts do not have navigation, communication, and safety equipment (Asumeng and Folitse, 2019: 4).

The other decent work deficit in the fisheries sector is deplorable living and working conditions on fishing vessels, albeit some improvement in recent times. Fishers who participated in the development of this policy noted positive changes on tuna vessels. Yet, reports of hazardous working conditions are not uncommon in the trawl sector (MBAF, 2022: 7). Lack of nutritional food and potable water sometimes confronts Ghanaian crew onboard fishing vessels (EJF, 2022: 14). A study found that crew members onboard a Chinese-owned trawler operating in Ghanaian waters were subjected to awful living conditions, including poor food and drink (Verité, 2023: 6). In another study, about 87 percent of the of interviewees decried the unsuitable living conditions they were compelled to endure onboard trawlers, including having to sleep on the deck under a tarpaulin sheet—a set up referred to by some as ‘monkey island’—, lack of bedding or mattresses, and exposure to cockroaches and other insects (EJF, 2022: 14).

Another significant decent work deficit in fisheries is low and dwindling incomes. This is brought about by decline in fish catch. Nine in ten fishers who participated in a recent survey reported a drop in catch over the past 5 years (EJF, 2022: 5). At the macro level, low catch has meant that Ghana spends about \$200 million annually on fish imports to meet national fish demand (EJF, 2022: 11). At the micro level, the average annual income per artisanal canoe has fallen by as much as 40 percent in the last decade (Akpalu, et. al., 2018: 7). Annual landings of round sardinella has declined by almost 90 percent between 1992 and 2019 (EJF, 2022: 11). In 2021, about 85 percent of fishers and fish processors/traders in a study lamented the decline in their incomes (EJF, 2022: 11). Over-exploitation of fish resources has reduced the catch per unit of effort. One can link the rising incidence of poverty and malnutrition on the shores of Ghana (ibid.: 5) to low productivity in fisheries.

Certain demographic groups bear the heaviest burden of low fish catch. Research has shown that negative impacts of declining fish populations is higher on women, the elderly, and migrants (EJF, 2022: 11). Children are also affected by decline in fish catch, as they are sometimes required to assist in income generation, compromising their education (ibid.).

Underlining low fish catch and its negative consequences is depleting marine fish resources because of inappropriate and unsustainable fishing. Over-exploitation of fish resources and use of illegal fishing gears are common in the marine fisheries sector in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2019: 36). Overfishing has been linked to IUU fishing by industrial trawl sector, including the saiko trade; a practice where trawlers target small

pelagic species and sell them on sea (EJF, 2022: 4). Ghana was given a yellow card for, amongst others, illegal transshipment at sea between canoes (saiko) and industrial vessels in June 2021 (MBAF, 2022: 5). The country has been described as a hotspot for overfishing and IUU fishing, the highest number of IUU fishing offences by Chinese-owned vessels in West Africa from 2015 to 2019 occurred in Ghana (Verité, 2023: 4). In this sense, the decline in catch per unit of effort or low productivity in the sector cannot be separated from unconventional fishing.

Climate change is also impacting on fishing in Ghana. In artisanal fishing, extreme weather conditions induced by climate change have begun to burden the operations of fishers. Traditional fishing methods are becoming obsolete in the face changing climate, exposing fishers to losses from tidal waves and other extreme weather conditions (Afedzi, 2023). Bad weather affects the frequency of fishing expedition or the number of time spent at sea (ibid.). In addition, coastal floods, marine erosion, tidal waves, storm surges and other extreme weather conditions hinder fishing expeditions and other operations (ibid.).

1.8 Forced labour, human trafficking, and modern slavery in fisheries

Forced labour, human trafficking, and modern slavery are associated with fishing in Ghana. Many of the indicators of forced labour such as abuse of vulnerability, deception, intimidation and threats, physical violence, abusive working and living conditions, and excessive overtime (Paavilainen, 2023) manifest in the fishing sector of the country. Labour law violations, including non-adherence to written employment contracts are common in the trawl sector (MBAF, 2022: 7). Human rights abuses are also prevalent

(EJF, 2022: 23). According to an eye witness, Ghanaian fishermen are sometimes treated as “slaves [because the Chinese] beat them, they spit on them, they kick them” (Wright and Naadi, 2023). It has also been reported that a Ghanaian bosun –an officer in charge of equipment and crew– was forced to work for three days without sleep and compelled to drink unclean water (ibid.).

The assessment is that the risk of forced labour and human trafficking is high in the fisheries sector of Ghana (MBAF, 2022: 4). Continuous instances of IUU fishing and human rights abuses have been found on Chinese-owned fishing vessels operating in Ghana, including use of forced, bonded and slave labour, and trafficked crew (Verité, 2023: 6). There are also reports of widespread abuse of migrant crew (ibid.). Ghana has been identified as an origin, transit, and destination for victims of forced labour and human trafficking (MBAF, 2022: 4). Labour brokers and informal recruiters go to communities to recruit and transport victims into trafficking situations, including forced labour in fishing (Verité, 2023: 7). The downside of forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery is that these enable employers to abuse the rights of fishers. A study has shown that fishers are sometimes compelled to work over 14 hours a day, resting for only one or two hours at a time because they have to respond to demand by captains for constant setting and hauling of nets (EJF, 2022: 13). The victims of forced labour and modern slavery in fishing usually work without written contracts (Verité, 2023: 6).

1.9 Child labour

In addition to the above, child labour and worst form of child labour are common in the fisheries sector, albeit mostly in the artisanal fishing. Available data shows that about 50,000 children are into hazardous child labour or are victims of child trafficking in the sector (see the National Strategy on Anti-child Labour and Trafficking in Fisheries). In some cases, children as young as four years are trafficked and traded as commodities: used as cheap labour and slaves, usually forced to work day and night on the sea and on the Volta Lake (ibid.). A survey conducted in 36 coastal communities in the Central Region of Ghana under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) found that 30 percent of children attended school on regular basis but were also engaged in fishing-related activities after school, during holidays, and weekends while 70 percent of children involved in fisheries related activities full time (MOFAD, n.d).

CHAPTER 2: POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This policy provides guidelines for trade union activities aimed at promoting decent work in the fisheries sector in Ghana. It seeks to promote employment and enterprises, guarantee rights at work, extend social protection, and advance social dialogue as well as enable realisation of SDG 8 target 7 in the fisheries sector. This policy draws on existing trade union, national and international legal, policy, and institutional frameworks. This chapter highlights the rationale, core values, and principles that underpin the policy. It also presents the key objectives of the policy.

2.2 Rationale

Trade unions in Ghana acknowledge the contradiction in the fisheries sector of the country i.e., the fact that even though fishing plays vital role in economic growth, livelihoods, and nutrition in the country, it is characterised by pervasive decent work deficits, including forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking. Therefore, the overall rationale of this policy is to strengthen trade union collaboration with stakeholders in the fishing industry in ways that promote the rights and interests of fishers in order to ameliorate the contradictions in fisheries sector.

In view of the above, this policy is designed to contribute to:

- i. promote decent work in fishing;
- ii. eliminate forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking in fishing;
- iii. ensure adherence to existing legal and policy frameworks;
- iv. realise promulgation/adoption of new regulations in fisheries;

- v. removed barriers that inhibit realisation of the rights and interests of fishers;
- vi. promote collaboration among stakeholders and
- vii. enhance organising in the fishing industry

2.3 Core values and guiding principles

The core values and guiding principles that underline this policy are:

- i. the goal of TUC (Ghana) – ensuring that workers work in dignity, enjoy employment security and living wage, have accesses to social security, exercise their rights at work, and participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives. The union’s human development objectives include promotion of human rights and realisation of decent work within the framework of the SDGs. The TUC (Ghana) connects building workers’ power for improved working and living conditions with 1) inclusion of atypical workers and informal labour into trade unions and 2) promotion of freedom of association and social dialogue (see the Congress Policy Statement and Resolutions of the TUC (Ghana): 2021-2024);
- ii. SDG 8 target 7 – take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and end child labour in all its forms
- iii. decent work agenda – opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men; and

iv. Tripartite declaration of principles on multinational enterprises and social policy (MNE Declaration) – ILO instrument that guides enterprises on social policy and inclusive, responsible, and sustainable workplace practices. This declaration encourages multinational enterprises to contribute towards economic and social progress and realization of decent work for all.

2.4 Goal

The goal of this policy is to promote decent work and eliminate forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking in the fisheries sector in Ghana.

2.5 Key objectives

The key objectives of this policy goal are:

- i. elimination of forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking;
- ii. ratification of convention C188;
- iii. improvement of labour inspection;
- iv. improvement of labour recruitment;
- v. improvement in organising and social dialogue;
- vi. education and training of fishers;
- vii. promotion of employment and income security;
- viii. improving living conditions of canoe fishers;
- ix. elimination of child labour;
- x. extension of social protection; and
- xi. promotion of health and safety;

2.6 Policy/legal context

The realisation of the goal and objectives of this policies are anchored on existing national and international legal, policy, and institutional frameworks (laws, regulations, policies, and institutions) that have implications for employment, working conditions, and labour relations in the fisheries sector. These include:

- i. Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651);
- ii. The Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625)/Fisheries (Amendment) Act, 2014 (Act 880)
- iii. Fisheries Commission;
- iv. Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA);
- v. Ghana Maritime Authority Act, 2002 (Act 630);
- vi. Ghana Shipping Act, 2003 (Act 645);
- vii. Maritime Pollution Act, 2016 (Act 932);
- viii. Ghana Maritime Security Act, 2004 (Act 675);
- ix. National Policy for Management of the Marine Fisheries Sector;
- x. ratified ILO conventions²;
- xi. the Cabotage Regulation (LI 2423);
- xii. framework for aquaculture development on the Volta Lake;
- xiii. Child labour Policy;
- xiv. Congress Policy Statement and Resolutions of the TUC (Ghana);
and
- xv. Recommendations of the Tripartite Committee in the fisheries sector.

² Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006)

C108 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108)

C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE KEY OBJECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the strategic actions to be implemented towards the achievement of the key objectives of this policy. It provides the indicators of the key objectives and the means towards the realisation of the objectives.

3.2 Objective 1: elimination of forced labour, modern day slavery and human trafficking

The risks of forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking are high in the fisheries sector of Ghana. Thus, elimination of forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking is a necessary condition for realisation of decent work in fishing. This key policy objective shall be achieved through the following strategic actions;

- i. development of sensitisation and campaign materials on forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking;
- ii. education and sensitisation of fishers; and
- iii. establishment of anti-forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking committees in fishing communities and at workplaces.

3.3 Objective 2: ratification, domestication, and implementation of C188 - Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)

Despite the efforts of the GMA and its Tripartite Committee, Ghana has not ratified C188. Consequently, fishers in the country are not be benefiting fully from the standards that C188 sets for fishers and fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing operations. As mentioned earlier, C188 has basic requirements for work onboard fishing vessels such as minimum wage, medical examination, and conditions of service (manning and hours of reset, fisher's work contract, repatriation, recruitment and placement and payment of fishers). Other important standards of C188 are accommodation and food, medical care, health protection and social security, and compliance and

enforcement rules. Hence, ratification of C188 shall provide important pathway towards promoting the rights and interests of fishers in Ghana. The attainment of this key policy objective shall be measured by the ratification and implementation of C188. Strategic actions to achieve this objective include the following:

- i. sensitisations of fishers on C188;
- ii. engagement with the Parliament/Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, Fisheries Commission, and employers on C188;
- iii. media engagements
- iv. development of campaign and campaign materials on C188; and
- v. integrating C188 into trade union workplace policies

3.4 Objective 3: improvement of labour inspections

Decent work deficits in fisheries have been linked to inadequacies in labour inspections. Labour and vessel inspections in fishing overlaps and involve multiple public institutions. Ameliorating decent work deficits in the sector requires effective labour inspection. The achievement of this objective shall be measured by the reports on labour inspections. The strategic actions to promote labour inspection are:

- i. campaign for effective pre-departure labour inspection –including medical clearance and health screen before boarding– of artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial vessels;
- ii. advocacy for recruitment for more labour inspectors and training of labour inspectors
- iii. advocacy for effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders; and
- iv. publications of quarterly labour inspection reports.

3.5 Objective 4: improvement of labour recruitment practices

Labour recruitment in fishing involves bosuns, operation managers, agencies. The recruitment practices of these actors have implication for the

labour practices. The indicator for this objective is transparent labour recruitment. This shall be achieved through:

- i. establishment of standard procedures for recruitment;
- ii. improvements in contracts for recruitment;
- iii. deposits and inspection of employment contracts;
- iv. education of fishers on recruitment; and
- v. establishment of recruitment centre

3.6 Objective 5: improvement of organising and social dialogue

Organising and social dialogue in the fisheries sector is limited. There is dearth of trade union coverage in the artisanal fishing and social dialogue mostly in negotiations on working conditions and industrial relations. This is in spite of the ratification of the Tripartite Consultation Convention (C144) and elaborate social dialogue provisions in Act 651. Consequently, fishers do not have significant inputs into the decisions that affect their work. Addressing this requires promoting social dialogue at all levels in the fishing industry through:

- i. expansion of the cabotage committee to include trade unions;
- ii. establishment of annual fishers durbars;
- iii. improvement of complaints and disputes resolution mechanisms;
- iv. advocacy on the implementation of the Cabotage Regulation (LI 2423)
- v. equipping trade unions in fisheries with logistics to organise; and
- vi. unionisation of artisanal fishers;

3.7 Objective 6: education and training of fishers

Education and training are important tools for the promotion and protection of the rights and interests of workers. Workers who are conscious of their rights and responsibilities are more likely to insist on them. The

realisation of this objective shall be measured by the number of sensitisation meetings and educational programmes organised for fishers. The objective seeks to increase workers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities through:

- i. education on fishers on forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking;
- ii. developing education materials on trade unionism;
- iii. organising sensitisation workshops on rights and responsibilities at work;
- iv. education of workers on productivity and work ethics;
- v. cross-cultural exchanges between Chinese/expatriates and Ghanaian fishers;
- vi. undertaking community outreach and sensitisation programmes in fishing communities;
- vii. development of information toolkit on rights at work;
- viii. training and education on OSHE; and
- ix. promotion of skill training.

3.8 Objective 7: promotion of employment and income security

Secured employment and income improve work satisfaction and productivity. But productivity should not be achieved at the expense of labour rights. Employment and job security is beneficial to both fishers and their employers. Achievement of this objective shall be measured by reduced terminations and improved wages. This policy proposes:

- i. establishing a basic wage/lowest wage in the fisheries sector;
- ii. introduction of redundancy payments;
- iii. elimination of unlawful pay deductions; and
- iv. payment of fishers' wages and salaries through banks.

3.9 Objective 8: improving living and working conditions in fishing communities

The deplorable conditions under which most canoe/ artisanal fishers live and work detract from the realisation of decent work in the sector. The indicator of this objectives is improved infrastructure in fishing communities. Hence, enhancing conditions of artisanal fishers requires:

- i. improving accommodation, social, and economic infrastructure in fishing communities;
- ii. extension of social protection (social security, health insurance, close-season income support etc) among fishers;
- iii. improving access to social services in fishing communities;
- iv. provision of, and training on, use of navigational equipment, and;
- v. greater inclusion of fishers in decision making.

3.10 Objective 9: elimination of child labour

Child labour and worst forms of child labour remains in the artisanal fishing sector. This needs to be addressed in order to protect the rights of such children and to enhanced their future labour market prospects. This objective shall be measured by reduction in the number of children involved in child labour in the fishing industry. This policy seeks to eliminate child labour through:

- i. advocacy for the implementation of national policy on child labour in fishing communities;
- ii. promoting involvement of fishing communities in design and implementation of child labour programmes;
- iii. improving education and sensitisation on child labour; and

- iv. active participation of trade unions in programmes on child labour in fishing.

3.11 Objective 10: extension of social protection

One of the decent work deficits in the fishing sector, especially in artisan fishing is limited social protection cover. Most fishers do not have adequate protection against the contingencies of life. This exposes them and their families to significant vulnerabilities during old age, incapacitation, seasonal unemployment, and death. The indicator of this objective is improved social protection cover. This policy propose to promote social protection among fishers through:

- i. establishment informal pensions scheme for artisanal fishers;
- ii. introduction of income replacement schemes to provide incomes during spells of unemployment;
- iii. promoting national health insurance cover among canoe/artisanal fishers; and
- iv. ensuring life insurance cover among industrial and semi-industrial fishers.

3.12 Objective 11: promoting occupational safety and health environment (OSHE)

OSHE is an important decent work element. Yet, there are important safety issues in the fishing sector. This objective shall be measured by the reduction in the number of health and safety incidence in the fishing sector. This objective seeks to address the health and safety situation through:

- i. improved access to first aid kit;
- ii. ensuring that instructions on medicines are in English;

- iii. provision of adequate PPE;
- iv. adherence to rules on rest periods;
- v. proper use of chemicals;
- vi. attention to environmental issues;
- vii. empowering workers to participate in safety decisions/
committees;
- viii. training of fishers on OSHE; and
- ix. safety information dissemination.

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the institutional framework for the implementation of this policy. It highlights the arrangements for implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the policy.

4.2 Implementation Plan

This policy shall be implemented by trade unions that organise in marine fisheries sector in collaboration with the TUC (Ghana). Annual action plans shall be developed out of this policy and integrated into trade union plans and budgets. Key stakeholders that trade unions shall engage in the implementation of this policy include as the Ministry of employment and Labour Relations (MELR), the GMA, and the Fisheries Commission.

4.3 Institutional roles and responsibilities

A policy implementation committee shall be established to oversee the realisation of the key objectives of this policy. Different stakeholders are expected to be involved in the implementation of the policy. The roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders are highlighted in appendix 1:

4.4 Resource mobilisation and financing

Resource mobilisation and financing of this policy shall happen in two ways. First, the activities towards the realisation of the key objectives shall be integrated into annual plans and budgets of trade unions. Second, the TUC (Ghana) shall mobilise resources to complement trade union efforts in

the implementation of the policy. The ILO and other development partners are expected to support the implementation of this policy.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to track progress towards the stated key objectives, a policy implementation committee shall be established which would institute a quarterly monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The M&E system of this policy shall adopt the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEALS) framework. It shall focus on the realisation of key objectives in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

4.6 Sustainability of policy implementation

It is assumed that the implementation of this policy shall extend beyond the current trade union policy cycle i.e. the quadrennial (2020-2024). This assumption is informed by the fact that the key objectives of this policy shall be mainstreamed into annual plans and budgets of trade unions. The sustainability of the implementation of this project is also based on the assumption that trade unions shall retain and improve human resource capacity. Finally, it is assumed that the ILO and other development partners shall support the implementation of this project.

Appendix 1: Institutional role and responsibilities

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
1	Objective 1 elimination of forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking in fishing;	i. development of sensitisation and campaign materials on forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking; ii. education and sensitisation of fishers; and iii. establishment of anti-forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking committees in fishing communities and at workplaces.	i. Campaign materials ii. Committee reports	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission xv. GIS xvi. Police xvii. Regional Maritime University
2	Objective 2 ratification C188 - Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)	i. Sensitisations of fishers on C188 ii. Engagement with the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Fisheries Commission on C188 iii. Development of campaign and campaign materials on C188 iv. Media engagements	i. Workshop reports ii. Campaign materials iii. Meeting reports iv. Media reports	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission xv. Ministry of Transport

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
3.	Objective 3 improvement of labour inspection	<p>i. campaign for effective pre-departure labour inspection – including medical clearance and health screen before boarding– of artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial vessels;</p> <p>ii. advocacy for recruitment for more labour inspectors and training of labour inspectors</p> <p>iii. advocacy for effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders; and</p> <p>iv. publications of quarterly labour inspection reports.</p>	<p>i. Campaign materials</p> <p>ii. Inspection reports</p> <p>iii. Increased number of inspectors</p>	<p>i. NUSPAW</p> <p>ii. TUC (Ghana)</p> <p>iii. GAWU</p> <p>iv. MDU</p> <p>v. NUTEG</p> <p>vi. GFL</p> <p>vii. GMA</p> <p>viii. GITA</p> <p>ix. GTA</p> <p>x. GNCFC</p> <p>xi. Labour Department</p> <p>xii. GEFAG</p> <p>xiii. NAFAG</p> <p>xiv. Fisheries Commission</p> <p>xv. Ministry of Transport</p>
4.	Objective 4 improvement of labour recruitment	<p>i. establishment of standard procedures for recruitment;</p> <p>ii. improvements in contracts for recruitment;</p> <p>iii. deposits and inspection of employment contracts;</p> <p>iv. education of fishers on recruitment; and</p> <p>v. establishment of recruitment centre</p> <p>v.</p>	<p>i. Recruitment procedure documents</p> <p>ii. Employment contracts</p> <p>iv. Training reports</p>	<p>i. NUSPAW</p> <p>ii. TUC (Ghana)</p> <p>iii. GAWU</p> <p>iv. MDU</p> <p>v. NUTEG</p> <p>vi. GFL</p> <p>vii. GMA</p> <p>viii. GITA</p> <p>ix. GTA</p> <p>x. GNCFC</p> <p>xi. Labour Department</p> <p>xii. GEFAG</p> <p>xiii. NAFAG</p> <p>xiv. Fisheries Commission</p> <p>xvi. Ministry of Transport</p>

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
5.	Objective 5 improvement organising of social dialogue	i. expansion of the cabotage committee to include trade unions; ii. establishment of annual fishers durbars; iii. improvement of complaints and disputes resolution mechanisms; iv. building social dialogue capacity within trade unions; and v. advocacy on the implementation of the Cabotage Regulation (LI 2423) vi. equipping trade unions in fisheries with logistics to organise; and vii. unionisation of artisanal fishers;	i. cabotage committee reports ii. fisheries durbar reports iii. dispute resolution statements iv. improve d negotiations v. impleme ntation of LI2423	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission xv.
6.	Objective 6 education and training of fishers	i. education on fishers on forced labour, modern day slavery, and human trafficking; ii. developing education materials on trade unionism; iii. organising sensitisation workshops on rights and responsibilities at work; iv. education of workers on productivity and work ethics; v. cross-cultural exchanges between Chinese/expatriates and Ghanaian fishers; vi. undertaking community outreach and sensitisation programmes in fishing communities;	i. Campaign materials ii. Training materials iii. Training reports iv. Improve relations between locals and expatriates	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
		vii. development of information toolkit on rights at work; viii. training and education on OSHE; and ix. promotion of skill training.		
7	Objective 7 promotion of employment and income security	i. establishing minimum wage in the fisheries sector; ii. introduction of redundancy payments; iii. elimination of unlawful pay deductions; and iv. payment of wages and salaries through banks.	i. Adherence to minimum wage provision ii. Payslips	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
8	Objective 8 improving living and working conditions in fishing communities	i. improving accommodation, social, and economic infrastructure in fishing communities; ii. extension of social protection (social security, health insurance, close-season income support etc) among fishers; iii. improving access to social services in fishing communities; iv. provision of, and training on use of navigational equipment, and; v. greater inclusion of fishers in decision making.	i. Improved infrastructure ii. Social protection coverage iii. Use of navigation equipment iv. Involvement in decision-making	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission
9	Objective 9 elimination of child labour	i. advocacy for the implementation of national policy on child labour in fishing communities; ii. promoting involvement of fishing communities in design and implementation of child labour programmes; iii. improving education and sensitisation on child labour; and iv. active participation of trade unions in programmes on child labour in fishing.	i. Advocacy report ii. Participation of fishing communities iii. Sensitisation report	i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission

No.	Objective area	Activity	Indicators	Responsibility/ Collaborators
10	Objective 10 extension of social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. establishment informal pensions scheme for artisanal fishers; ii. introduction of income replacement schemes to provide incomes during spells of unemployment; iii. promoting national health insurance cover among canoe/artisanal fishers; and iv. ensuring life insurance cover among industrial and semi-industrial fishers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Functioning pensions scheme ii. Improved national health insurance coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission
11	Objective 11 promoting health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. improved access to first aid kit; ii. ensuring that instructions on medicines are in English; iii. provision of adequate PPE; iv. adherence to rules on rest periods; v. proper use of chemicals; vi. attention to environmental issues; vii. empowering workers to participate in safety decisions/committees; viii. training of fishers on OSHE; and ix. safety information dissemination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Availability of first aid kits ii. All instructions on medicines in English iii. Improved safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NUSPAW ii. TUC (Ghana) iii. GAWU iv. MDU v. NUTEG vi. GFL vii. GMA viii. GITA ix. GTA x. GNCFC xi. Labour Department xii. GEFAG xiii. NAFAG xiv. Fisheries Commission

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