



National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA)



Strengthening Occupational Health and Safety in the Fishing Sector

(Synopsis of the Liberian Context)

Tangier, Morocco – June 4-6, 2026

Presented by: NaFAA-LIBERIA

OUTLINE

🌐 Institutional & regulatory
framework

🌐 Accident & disease statistics

🌐 Priority risks at sea

🌐 Prevention, training,
inspection

🌐 Social protection & insurance
gaps

🌐 Major challenges & obstacles
to ILO C188

🌐 Stakeholder engagement

🌐 Progress since 2025

workshop

🌐 Technology & partnerships

🌐 Conclusions & priority
actions

Institutional & Regulatory Framework

Laws, Ratification, and Responsibilities

ILO Convention C188 ratification status:

In progress (*not yet ratified*)

Specific national legislation for fishermen's safety?

No

Institutional responsibilities:

 Maritime safety → Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA)

 Labour inspection → Ministry of Labour (MOL)

 Seafarer Health → Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA)

Data on Accidents & Occupational Diseases

What We Know (and What We Don't)

🌐 **National data collection system?** No

🌐 **Most frequent accidents:**

- 🐟 Falls into the sea
- 🐟 Injuries from fishing gear
- 🐟 Mechanical accidents

🐟 *Also noted:* Conflicts between industrial & artisanal vessels (gear destruction)

🌐 **Reported rates:**

- 🐟 Accident rate – Low
- 🐟 Mortality rate – Low

🌐 **Occupational diseases:**

- 🐟 Sea sickness (especially new trainees)

🌐 **Critical gap:**

- 🐟 Without a data system
true accident/disease burden is unknown.

Priority Risks at Sea

Main Risks Identified by Stakeholders

Top risks:

- Weather conditions
- Lack of training

Presence of specific risks:

-  **Forced labor** → No (not identified)
-  **Lack of rest** → No (not identified)
-  **Non-compliant equipment** → No (not identified)

-  **Action point:** Authorities stay on high alert to immediately investigate any such occurrences where/when applicable.


Prevention, Training & Inspection

Current Safety Systems

- 🐟 **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Always available
- 🐟 **Safety training for fishermen:** Yes, required
- 🐟 **Vessel inspection system:** Yes
- 🐟 **Inspectors trained in C188?** No – **major capacity gap**
- 🐟 **After an accident:**
 - 🐟 Medical assistance at sea – Yes
 - 🐟 Medical evacuation – Yes
 - 🐟 **Insurance – No**
- 🐟 **Key weakness:** No insurance coverage means fishermen bear full financial risk.

Social Protection – A Complete Gap

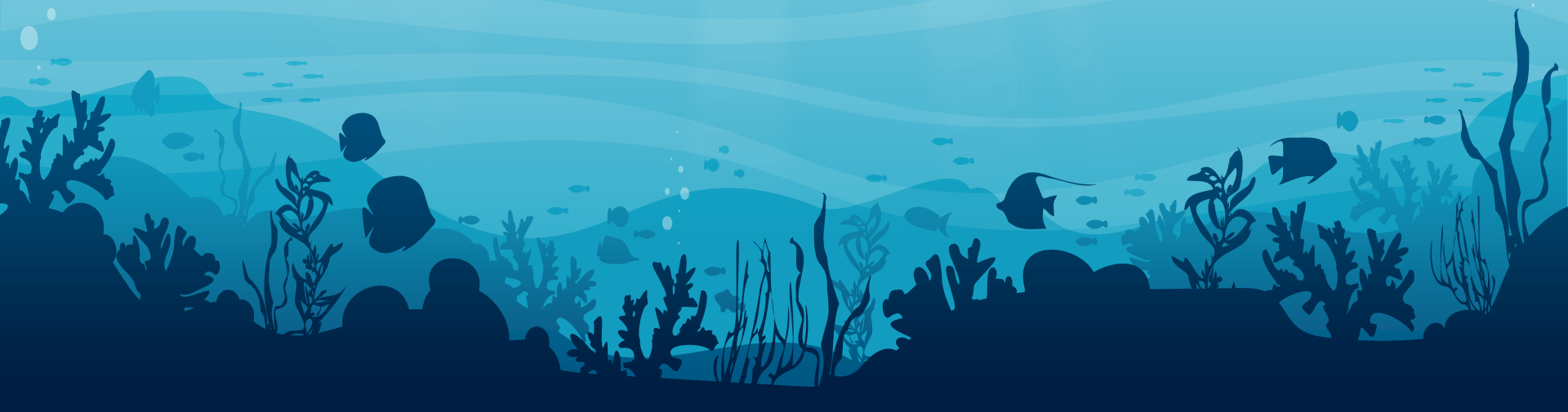
Fishermen Have No Social Protection

 **Do fishermen benefit from social protection (health, pension, unemployment)?**

No

 **ILO C188 requirement:** Ratifying countries must ensure social security for fishermen (medical care, sickness, old-age benefits, etc.)

 **Implication:** This is a fundamental compliance gap even before ratification.





Major Challenges & Obstacles to C188

Why Progress Is Slow

Main challenges:

- ✓ Lack of financial resources
- ✓ Poor control/enforcement
- ✓ Lack of training
- ✓ *Other* ? No social security scheme

Obstacles to implementing C188:

- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Institutional
 -  Technical – no
 -  Socio-economic – no


 **Takeaway:** *Legal and institutional reforms are the most urgent.*

Stakeholder Engagement – Dangerously Low

Low Engagement Across All Groups

Stakeholder	Engagement Level
Administration	Low
Shipowners	Low
Fishermen	Low

 **Scale: Low**

 **Note:** Without ownership from these three groups, no OHS policy will succeed. A concerted awareness and dialogue campaign is critical.

Follow-up on 2025 Workshop Recommendations

Capacity Building & Medical Infrastructure

- 🔍 **National OHS awareness programs?** No
- 🔍 **Target groups (fishermen, owners, inspectors, communities)** – none specifically reached
- 🔍 **Medical infrastructure in fishing areas:** Insufficient
- 🔍 **Emergency communication on board:** Yes, always
- 🔍 **Maritime telemedicine service:** No
- 🔍 **Telemedicine effectiveness (where attempted):** Low
- 🔍 **Positive point:** Emergency coms are good – a foundation to build on.

Legal Reforms & Technology Use




Partial Reforms, High Tech Adoption

- 🔍 **Does current legal framework incorporate new realities?** Partially
- 🔍 **Reforms underway?** Yes
- 🔍 **Technologies in use:**
 - 🐟 GPS / ship tracking
 - 🐟 Security alert systems
 - 🐟 Onboard sensors
 - 🐟 Mobile security apps – not selected
- 🔍 **Technology adoption level:** **High**
- 🔍 **Opportunity:** High tech adoption can be leveraged for training, alerts, and telemedicine.

Cooperation and Partnerships – A Strength

Strong International & Cross-Sector Cooperation

Partnerships exist between:

-  Public administration & private sector
-  Administration & NGOs
-  International cooperation
(bilateral/multilateral)

Level of cooperation: **Strong**

 **Use this strength:** Existing partnerships can fast-track pilot projects (e.g., telemedicine, insurance schemes).

Conclusions – Critical Gaps vs. Assets

Summary of Key Findings

Critical Gaps	Existing Assets
No C188 ratification	Mandatory safety training exists
No specific fishing safety law	PPE always available
No social protection / insurance	Vessel inspection system exists
No accident data system	High tech adoption (GPS, sensors)
Forced labor present	Strong cooperation & partnerships
Inspectors not trained in C188	Emergency coms on board
Insufficient medical / no telemedicine	Reforms underway

Priority Recommendations (Short & Medium Term)

Roadmap for Action

Short-term (0–12 months)

- Ratify ILO C188 and start legal alignment
- Train all fishing inspectors on C188
- Pilot a simple accident reporting system
- Launch forced labor awareness campaign
- Introduce low-cost accident insurance for fishermen

Medium-term (1–3 years)

- Enact specific fishing safety legislation
- Pilot maritime telemedicine in one region
- Improve medical infrastructure in key ports
- Formalize stakeholder working group (admin, owners, fishers)

Long-term (3–5 years)

- Full social security coverage for fishing sector
- National OHS data system
- Regional cooperation on enforcement

An underwater scene with a light blue background. Sunbeams stream down from the top center. The bottom is dark blue with silhouettes of coral, seaweed, and several fish. Bubbles rise from the bottom right. The text 'THANK YOU' is centered in a dark blue, bold, sans-serif font.

THANK YOU