



Dear Kimberly,

It was a great honor to meet with you and the organization you represent, GLJ-ILRF, and the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and FOSPI on February 23, 2023. The Ministry of Labor (MOL) would like to take this opportunity to better understand the needs of high seas fishermen who wish to communicate with their friends and relatives through Wi-Fi networks while at sea, and FOSPI members who are involved in promoting Wi-Fi initiatives on fishing vessels. We understand they seek the MOL's assistance in related advocacy activities to exercise their freedom of speech and association. Freedom of speech and freedom of association are universal values. It has always been the goal and position of the Ministry of Labor to create a friendly environment conducive to the organization of labor unions and to ensure that all workers, regardless of nationality, can organize labor unions in accordance with the law or participate in union activities without being suppressed or hindered by their employers.

After receiving the delegation, on March 15, the MOL, led by Vice Minister Chen Ming-Jen, met with Deputy Minister Chen Tien-Shou of the Council of Agriculture (COA) of the Executive Yuan and colleagues from the Fisheries Agency to convey the requests of GLJ-ILRF and FOSPI to promote the full deployment of Wi-Fi on ocean-going fishing vessels for use by crew members, as well as to reflect the problems of harsh deduction of wages or delayed payment of salaries and improper retention of fishermen's documents. COA responded that it would actively evaluate and improve relevant measures and practices to enhance the labor rights of foreign fishermen.

To support FOSPI members participating in the Wi-Fi initiative to exercise their freedom of speech and association, we have issued a letter to the local government of Pingtung County to assist and counsel FOSPI (Forum Silaturahmi Pelaut Indonesia; registered in Taiwan as the Pingtung County Migrant Fishermen's Union). The Pingtung County Government is requested to provide timely assistance in the process of counseling FOSPI members in the exercise of their right to associate, and to protect the rights and interests of workers if they are subjected to improper labor practices such as unfavorable treatment or undue influence as a result of organizing labor unions or participating in trade union activities, etc. The Fisheries Agency of the COA has also written to the National Fishermen's Association and relevant fishery employers'

organizations, asking them to educate the operators of fishing vessels that the basic labor rights of the crew should be protected and the freedom of association and expression of the crew should be safeguarded in accordance with the law.

It has always been the steadfast position of the MOL to support workers to fight for the enhancement of labor rights through organizing trade unions and participating in trade union activities. The MOL will uphold this principle and work with the Fisheries Agency to jointly work to improve fishermen's rights.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ministry of Labor

March 21, 2023