

March 22, 2023

Valery Alzaga
Deputy Director
Global Labor Justice – International Labor Rights Forum
1634 “I” Street, Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Valery:

Thank you for your February 6 letter informing me of your campaign advocating for the provision of secure Wi-Fi on distant water fishing vessels for use by migrant fishers. Strengthening protections for the rights of migrant workers in Taiwan is among my top priorities as the United States, Taiwan, and other like-minded democracies work together to build safe, reliable, and trustworthy supply chains that deliver economic benefits and reflect our shared values.

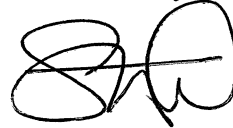
The global seafood marketplace is evolving in response to consumer expectations that their purchases be produced sustainably and free from forced labor. AIT recently concluded a multi-year project in partnership with Taiwan’s Fisheries Agency and FCF Co., Ltd. with a December 13 seminar in Kaohsiung, Taiwan on “Deploying Technology-Enabled Solutions to Protect Labor Rights in Taiwan’s Distant-Waters Fishing Industry.” I came away from this event convinced that technological innovation, combined with a strong commitment across Taiwanese society to uphold human rights, can meaningfully contribute to traceability and sustainability in environmental and labor practices in Taiwan’s fishing sector. AIT will continue urging our public and private sector partners in Taiwan to address the risks of forced labor and labor exploitation in the fishing sector.

The United States has made eliminating forced labor from global supply chains a key foreign policy priority, as evidenced by President Biden’s leadership on the issue at the G7 Leaders’ Summit in 2021. U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai identified the prevalent use of forced labor on fishing vessels as a global challenge that the United States is committed to tackling through mechanisms including the World Trade Organization. The U.S. Department of State’s 2022

Trafficking in Persons Report notes that migrant workers aboard Taiwan's distant waters fishing fleet remain "highly vulnerable." Under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, in June 2021 the United States and Taiwan established a bilateral working group to address labor issues. These discussions continue under the U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's worker-centered trade policy.

I wish you, your organization, and your partners – the Indonesian Seafarers' Gathering Forum (FOSPI), Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR), Stella Maris Kaohsiung, and Human Research Consultancy – the best of luck with your campaign and your broader efforts to strengthen the rights of migrant workers in Taiwan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SO', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sandra Oudkirk
Director

Cc: Kimberly Rogovin, GLJ-ILRF Senior Seafood Campaign Coordinator