

Redesigning the “M.V. PLALUNG 1” to Serve as Model Fishing Boat Complying with C188

Fisheries is among the top professions that generates big revenues for people engaged in the sector. However, in many cases, the crew and fishers working onboard fishing vessels encounter some difficulties at sea, including minimal safety, inadequate working and living conditions, as well as health and sanitation concerns. To provide a global framework for providing fishers and fishing crews decent working conditions onboard fishing vessels, the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) was adopted during the 96th International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2007, and came into force on 16 November 2017. Targeting all fishers and fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing operations, C188 established the minimum requirements for work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food (Box 1), occupational safety and health protection, medical care, and social security. Although C188 is applicable to fishing vessels measuring 24 meters in length and over, the provisions stated in the Convention could also be applied to vessels between 15 and 24 meters in length if a country's competent authority determines that these are reasonable and practicable. For the Southeast Asian region, although fishing vessels are generally smaller than 24 meters in length, and the C188 is not compulsory for those countries that are yet to ratify it, the national laws of several countries have already been adjusted to accommodate some relevant provisions in C188, such as the minimum age of fishers, fisher's work agreement, number of hours of work, and so on.

Box 1: Provisions in Article 26 under Part V (Accommodation and Food) of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention

Each Member shall adopt laws, regulations or other measures requiring that accommodation on board fishing vessels that fly its flag shall be of sufficient size and quality and appropriately equipped for the service of the vessel and the length of time fishers live on board. In particular, such measures shall address, as appropriate, the following issues:

- a. approval of plans for the construction or modification of fishing vessels in respect of accommodation;
- b. maintenance of accommodation and galley spaces with due regard to hygiene and overall safe, healthy and comfortable conditions
- c. ventilation, heating, cooling and lighting;
- d. mitigation of excessive noise and vibration;
- e. location, size, construction materials, furnishing and equipping of sleeping rooms, mess rooms and other accommodation spaces;
- f. sanitary facilities, including toilets and washing facilities, and supply of sufficient hot and cold water; and
- g. procedures for responding to complaints concerning accommodation that does not meet the requirements of this Convention.

Training Department (TD) offered its M.V. PLALUNG 1, a trawler type research and training boat as a demonstration boat as its design resembles that of typical Thai trawlers. Thus, started this three-year project of modifying the design of the M.V. PLALUNG 1 in August 2016.

Modifying the design of the M.V. PLALUNG 1

The M.V. PLALUNG 1 with length overall (LOA) of 17.5 meters and capacity of 35 GT, was acquired by SEAFDEC in 1982 and used by TD for the onboard training on fishing technology, navigation, onboard fish handling, seamanship, and marine engineering. Upon thorough investigation, modifying the design of this vessel would involve replacing the existing superstructures with larger ones that could accommodate additional navigation equipment such as RADAR, GPS, plotter, and echo sounder, as well as communication equipment (e.g. SSB and VHF). Moreover, renovations would also be made for the service area, including the galley, sleeping quarter (increasing the number of bunks to 10 to accommodate individual crew members), mess room, and toilet. After reaching an agreement on the manner of which the boat design would be modified, the renovation process took place from March to June 2017. In addition to improving the working condition and safety of the crew, the net drum for trawl net operation was installed at the stern deck behind the

Initiative of Thailand to come up with a demonstration boat that complies with C188

Recently, Thailand had been very much concerned with the need to address the pressing requirements with regards to labor in the fisheries sector. Although Thailand has not yet ratified C188, the country has been exerting efforts to comply, wherever possible and practical, with the requirements and provisions stipulated in C188. Construction of a “demonstration boat” was one of the approaches to enhance the country's compliance to C188, together with the application of best practices in fishing, protection of the ocean ecosystems, as well as in ensuring the safety, legality, and dignity of fishing boat workers in Thai waters. The project which aims to come up with a demonstration boat was therefore initiated by the Department of Fisheries (DOF) of Thailand in cooperation with the private sector, i.e. the Thai Union Group and Nestlé Thailand that agreed to provide financial assistance to the project. In support of the initiative of Thailand, SEAFDEC



The M.V. PLALUNG 1 prior to (left) and after the renovation (right)

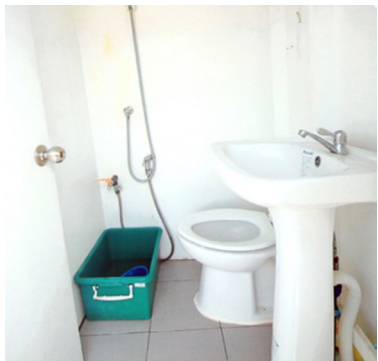
superstructure to facilitate retrieving of trawl net with minimal number of fishing crew. A sewage tank was also installed in the engine room to treat all wastes onboard prior to disposal.

The parties also agreed that after modifying the design of the M.V. PLALUNG 1, SEAFDEC would support the conduct of training on safety at sea and energy optimization; while the Verité, a global, independent, non-profit organization, would support the training on labor and human rights aspect. During the first demonstration and training for fishers in Thailand conducted during 30 November - 4 December 2017 in Trat Province in the Eastern Gulf of Thailand, important issues were expressed by the fisher-trainees, e.g. the size of the superstructure is considerably large for the size of the boat. Nevertheless, the M.V. PLALUNG 1 demonstrated its capability in accommodating the requirements in C188 despite its small size, and where fishing operations could be effectively undertaken after repositioning the installation of the equipment. Thus, for typical trawlers larger than

this aforementioned demonstration boat, there should be no technical difficulty in modifying the design that would promote improved working condition and safety at sea of fishers as well as the vessel crew members.

Inauguration of demonstration boat M.V. PLALUNG 1

Inauguration of the demonstration boat M.V. PLALUNG 1 was held on 28 February 2018 at TD in Samut Prakan, Thailand. The ceremony was opened by the Director-General of Department of Fisheries (DOF) of Thailand and the representatives from Thai Union Group PCL and Nestle. The Renovation of M.V. PLALUNG 1 as a Demonstration Boat was a joint project of the DOF of Thailand, SEAFDEC, Thai Union Group, and Nestle. Thus, the Project was implemented to address labor issues in fishing operations, especially the need to recognize and treat labor in acceptable standards, as well as to improve fishing technologies, and guarantee the welfare of the crew members while sustaining their livelihoods.



Renovation of the sleeping quarter, mess room, toilet, and galley in compliance with C188



SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Dr. Kom Silapajarn and honorable guests during the inauguration of demonstration boat M.V. PLALUNG 1

For further information on the demonstration boat project, please contact: *Mr. Nobphadol Somjit* at nobph@seafdec.org.

