

Submission to the UN Oceans Conference
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WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (DIHR) TO 2022 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

DIHR welcomes the opportunity to submit a written statement to the 2022 UN Oceans Conference. Under its project "[Sustainable Oceans: A human-rights based approach to fisheries and aquaculture](#)" DIHR has worked extensively on the interlinkages between human rights and the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. DIHR also works on coastal and offshore energy development and its impacts.

Based on this work, DIHR would like to highlight the following key issues to the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

1. The development of ocean-based economies will not be truly sustainable without consideration of the social and human rights impacts, as called for in the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development, as well as in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
2. While State and private sector actors in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors have considered environmental impacts and labour rights issues in fisheries, human rights impacts in a broader sense have been largely ignored. In that same vein, human rights actors should also dedicate more attention to the human rights impacts of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
3. Ocean-based industries including the fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, offshore wind energy and tourism sectors have limited knowledge of their human rights impacts. It is therefore important that knowledge on such impacts and how to address these are strengthened through capacity building of relevant government departments and companies in areas such as human rights, labour issues, Indigenous peoples' history, culture and rights.

4. States should promote a human rights-based approach to national SDG follow-up and review processes and define a joint national action plan to implement the SSF Guidelines, reach SDG target 14.B, and realise human rights for small-scale fishers, fish workers and other rights-holders within the fisheries sector.
5. While the conservation and protection of marine resources is necessary to maintain fish stocks and uphold the ecosystem that provides livelihoods to fishing-dependent communities around the world, the introduction of fishing bans, and creation of marine sanctuaries, are measures that risk pushing vulnerable fishermen into desperate poverty. DIHR's and partners' [Sector-Wide Impact Assessment from the small-scale artisanal fisheries sector in Bangladesh](#) has documented that fishers are aware of the degradation of the marine environment and the need to protect the fish stock, but they are not adequately involved in policy-making or monitoring and reporting initiatives. The assessment concludes that fishers' right to an adequate standard of living must be taken into account when conservation measures are put into place, for example through social protection allowances that compensate for the economic loss they incur or support for alternative livelihood practices.
6. Community impacts in the aquaculture sector are rife but have not been adequately documented and addressed. A study conducted by DIHR and the Chilean NHRI on [the human rights impacts of the Chilean salmon industry](#) found that many salmon companies operating in one area have caused harm to the ecosystem. Coastal communities, including indigenous peoples who live and depend on coastal and marine resources, have been affected by salmon farms operating in areas where they used to traditionally fish, affecting biodiversity, and pollution leading to depletion of or affecting fish stocks they depend on. For guidance on state obligations in relation to indigenous peoples' rights in the context of development of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, see [this publication](#)
7. The topic of environmental and human rights defenders, those speaking out against illegal fishing and impacts of large-scale aquaculture projects, should be put higher on the agenda. They play a crucial role in the promotion of truly sustainable governance of oceans and marine resources.
8. The world needs a transition from fossil fuels to clean energies, which includes the development of coastal and offshore wind and solar projects. However, such a transition needs to be just, respecting the rights of workers in the minerals supply chain, and communities living near or depending on resources from the sea. Often renewable energy projects are located in

indigenous territories. We urge that States and renewable energy companies respect the rights of indigenous peoples, enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in ILO Convention No. 169, including their right to consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent in matters that may affect their territories and resources.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.T. Bansal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Tulika Bansal

SENIOR ADVISER, DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS