

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO SALMON FISHING IN CHILOÉ, CHILE (SDG 14)

How is SDG 14 connected to the Human Rights?

At first it can seem difficult to linkage human rights and the fisheries and aquaculture industries but taking into account that ten per cent of the world's population either work in these industries or are depended on them , another picture takes form. The SDG 14 concerns the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; small-scale artisanal fishing being fundamental in its implementation under target 14.b on access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

This target is linked together with human rights as an effective implementation of SDG 14.b requires the realization of a series of human rights, which makes the connection mutually reinforcing in its structure. Some of the most prominent human rights underpinning SDG target 14.b include: "Right to work and to free choice of employment", "The right to an adequate standard of living", "The right to a healthy environment", amongst others.

Human rights-based approach to salmon industry in Chiloé, Chile

The Chilean NHRI, "Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos" (INDH) has been active in their investigations and research on the human rights impact of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors since 2015. In 2016 the INDH carried out an observation mission to the southern island of Chiloé, after nine tons of dead salmon were dumped in the sea by salmon farming companies. This generated a high level of pollution, causing a serious socio-environmental emergency and directly impacting the human rights the "chilotes", the people who reside in Chiloé.

The human right to live in a healthy environment was damaged due to the dumping of waste, increasing fish mortality and influencing other human rights, such as that of the right to work, linking directly to target 14.b, and the right to food. Cultural rights have also been affected as these contaminations severely impacted the traditional culture of the affected communities, in particular the indigenous coastal communities of the "Huilliche" who traditionally attribute a healing and purification power to the sea. In this way the pollution of the sea also affected their spiritual believes and customs.

After concluding the mission, the INDH issued several recommendations to the Chilean Government to ensure that sustainable development policies respect human rights, cultural rights and local ways of life. The INDH called on the Government to ensure that companies on the island of Chiloé respect human rights and abstain from infringing the law, by establishing a regulatory framework that obliges companies to exercise due diligence in their operations and to address and mitigate sustainably the negative impacts they cause.

This case shows how the SDGs can benefit from a human rights-based approach; how they finally are intertwined and mutually reinforced. The SDG 14 is built on a human-rights foundation but is simultaneously creating a goal-oriented urgency to which governments and other stakeholders are obligated to respond.