



**DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

A report on NHRIs training on monitoring of business-related human rights impacts and promoting responsible business conduct in the Blue Economy held from 18-22nd May 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

As national oversight institutions, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a key role in monitoring business respect for human rights by identifying, assessing and tracking respect for human rights in business activities. However, capacity gaps – among other factors – hinder NHRI fulfilment of this mandate. In this regard, the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) has been collaborating with the Danish Institute for Human Rights (the Institute) to, among other objectives, build the capacity of member NHRIs to promote responsible business conduct and Sustainable Oceans. As part of this collaboration, the two institutions jointly developed a guide on NHRI engagement with the Blue Economy, organised a peer-learning workshop on applying a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to conservation and have convened a series of other engagements with NHRIs towards building their capacity to engage with the Blue Economy and small-scale fisheries. Additionally, the two institutions are implementing the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP) Pilot Project¹ in Namibia and Zimbabwe, convened cross-regional virtual learning exchanges on business and human rights (BHR), and organised a series of webinars on various themes, among them being a webinar on NHRIs monitoring of responsible business conduct.

¹ Through this initiative, selected National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Africa are being supported to initiate and strengthen national processes for the development of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights (NAPs).

Building on these engagements, NANHRI and the Institute organised an in-person training workshop for selected African NHRIs on monitoring of business-related human rights impacts and promoting responsible business conduct in the Blue Economy. The training was held on 18-22 May 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting attracted the participation of 15 delegates comprising 11 NHRIs² and 3 CSOs³, 7 being female and 8 male.

Session outline

The first part of the training introduced participants to the foundations of BHR, ensuring a shared understanding of key standards, principles, and the central role of NHRIs in advancing responsible business conduct. Through interactive exercises and group work, participants learned to map and analyse human rights risks in specific business sectors drawing on real-world case examples and sector dynamics relevant to their national contexts.

The second part of the training covered human rights in the Blue Economy and the importance of access rights for small-scale fishing communities to protect the realisation of their economic, social and cultural rights. Through interactive exercises and group work, participants learned to map and analyse human rights impacts of Blue Economy business activities and projects, drawing on case examples and sector dynamics relevant to NHRIs national contexts.

Summary of key outcomes and discussions from the training

- i. The training provided an opportunity for NHRIs to share regional experiences in monitoring business related human rights risks and impacts, including in the Blue Economy. From the discussions;
 - a. NHRIs demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing responsible business conduct including in the Blue Economy, reporting a range of ongoing interventions in these areas. However, due to limited resources (both financial and technical), as well as the complexity of supply chains,

² Kenya, Egypt, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa, Cameroon, Madagascar and Tanzania.

³ Africa Women Fish Network (AWFISHNET), Community Action for Nature Conservation (CANCO) and the UN Global Compact Network Kenya.

especially in fisheries, and sub-contracting arrangements, NHRIs face challenges in undertaking effective monitoring and reporting.

- b. While Blue Economy projects and activities, such as Marine Spatial Planning, portend significant human rights risks for coastal communities and small-scale fisheries, such as land and ocean grabbing or a lack of meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to these projects and activities, there is limited recognition of this among relevant government agencies. This affects the involvement of NHRIs in these processes and therefore limits the application of a HRBA to Marine Spatial Planning.
- ii. The capacity of NHRIs to map and analyse business-related human rights risks and impacts was significantly strengthened. Building on the materials used during the training, they requested support in the development of methodologies and concrete indicators to assess corporate human rights impacts and in building their monitoring capacity. Due to their unique national contexts, they were encouraged to customise the Institute's monitoring tools – which were used as the basis of the training – to fit their unique national contexts and sectors.
- iii. The capacity of NHRIs to identify human rights risks connected to the Blue Economy was enhanced as well as an understanding of how to address these in line with their mandate. Child labour, forced labour and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) risks were identified as high particularly within fishing practices such as trans-shipment and sea-nomadism.⁴ Additionally, risks of displacement of small-scale fishing communities from their fishing areas were identified as particularly prevalent, as well as limited access to remedy due to corruption and power imbalances.
- iv. Opportunities for NHRIs to contribute to monitoring and reporting human rights impact of business including the Blue Economy were identified, such as Sector-wide Impact Assessments (SWIAs), Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs), as well as with engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms through reporting, such as Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

⁴A cultural nomadic lifestyle in Egypt where families live and work entirely on boats.

- v. Opportunities for integration of Blue Economy themes in national policies such as NAPs were identified, as many NHRIs are involved in ongoing NAP processes, including National Baseline Assessments (NBAs), which provides a useful entry point for BHR and Blue Economy interventions. While a majority of NHRIs do not have a dedicated BHR unit or staff or Blue Economy focal persons, they have integrated related interventions across various thematic areas and key mandate areas, particularly legal, complaints handling, investigations, monitoring and public education. To enhance sustainability of interventions, interdepartmental collaboration both at the technical and policy level was strongly encouraged.