



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to Agenda Item 8 - Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,
Dear COFI observers,

We, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), representatives of small-scale fishing communities worldwide, fishermen, women, and Indigenous People, thank COFI member states, FAO and other actors for the efforts towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. We, as fisher people represent approximately 90% of the people involved in fisheries. For us, fishing is not just an economic activity; it is our way of life and culture. Small scale fishers hold the knowledge about the realities in their communities and the status of implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

We are working at global, regional, national, and local levels to ensure that the SSF Guidelines, are successfully implemented along with a human rights-based approach. We call for enhanced efforts to support the SSF Guidelines' implementation to take into account and address the Covid-19 pandemic and its detrimental impact on small-scale fisheries, hindering developments towards ending hunger and alleviating poverty.

We note the progress made under the FAO Umbrella Programme on raising awareness, strengthening the science-policy interface, developing actors' capacity, and supporting implementation. Our organisations are joining these efforts through the SSF-GSF and initiatives of awareness-raising, capacity building, community-based research and monitoring at the local, national, regional and global level, thus ensuring active and meaningful participation of small-scale fisher organizations and civil society in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

We believe that such efforts must continue and be further supported by COFI member states. At the same time, we note that increased efforts are needed to ensure information sharing and participation of civil society in the monitoring, evaluation and learning on the various projects and initiatives towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, through the SSF-GSF. Furthermore, we request that particular attention be devoted to ensuring that research efforts mitigate the risk of breaches and harmful and unethical uses of research data. We call on FAO and member states to further build capacity and develop procedures to ensure that developments on the coastal and the oceans are carried out in line with existing human rights obligations at national and international level. We reiterate that small-scale fishers are placed at the centre of decision-making processes impacting on fishery resources, their lives and livelihoods.



Furthermore, we call on COFI member states and resource agencies to allocate adequate funding to strengthen the capacity of small-scale fishers organizations to participate actively and engage in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the national level and to strengthen institutional frameworks and coordination with local and national state authorities responsible for social development, health, education, land tenure and housing, to join forces to ensure the holistic implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

We congratulate and thank the FAO, members and other actors for the endeavour towards the planning of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA2022). We believe that IYAFA represents an important moment to celebrate, enhance global awareness about, understanding of, and action to support the contribution of small-scale fishing communities to sustainable development and the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. We take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of including the voices of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples' in IYAFA communications, and to ensure that the communication tools, products and messages come from the ground and include voices of women, to enhance the experiences of the fisherfolk. We call on COFI members, FAO and resource agencies to support the planning of IYAFA and the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. In particular to we call for the allocation of resources to promote and support self-organization in small-scale fishing communities, to ensure that the voices of fishing communities, who face numerous challenges especially at these times, are not marginalized.

