

**International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
Working Group on Fisheries**

**IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 2
Current Fisheries Management Practices With Special
Considerations For Small-Scale Fisheries**

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

Representing the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), and contributing to the Fisheries Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), we voice the collective concerns of millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples globally.

- First, in relation to SSF management, **we urge Governments to formally recognize small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples should have access to social protection and insurances, allowing them to enjoy and engage in secure livelihoods.** Particular support and protection should be given to **youth working in fisheries**, in order to ensure generational renewal in the sector, by creating spaces for youth training and participation, and supporting the development of a sector in which young people see a future in fisheries that enables them to stay in and contribute to their communities.
- We demand to address **socio-economic welfare by including direct and fair redistribution of profits from fisheries export revenue.** Governments must involve small-scale fishing communities in decision-making processes related to fisheries management, ensuring their livelihoods are considered without compromising food sovereignty. The establishment of **Fisheries Levy tax systems**, along with collective management of the SSF-related market by SSF organizations, is crucial for the equitable and sustainable development of this sector.
- We reiterate **the need to recognize the intrinsic value of traditional knowledge and practices, and demand the seamless integration of these elements into fisheries management strategies.** Acknowledging our contribution to sustainable resource use and community resilience, this integration is pivotal in fostering effective and culturally sensitive management approaches. In the realm of tenure systems, we emphasize **the importance of recognizing and protecting customary tenure rights in small-scale fisheries.** Aligned with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure and the SSF Guidelines, this includes safeguarding against forced evictions

through robust Environmental and Social Impact Assessments and upholding the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. It is imperative to acknowledge the gender-specific aspects of tenure governance and prioritize the rights of both men and women in the process. To enhance coherence between the Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, policymakers should undergo training that bridges these frameworks. This training should illuminate the interconnected principles of tenure governance and small-scale fisheries management, leading to policies that respect customary tenure rights while promoting sustainability.

- The complexity introduced by **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)** necessitates a redesign that is inclusive and participatory. Small-scale fishers, men and women alike, must actively engage in planning and decision-making processes, ensuring the incorporation of local knowledge and gender dynamics. Fishers should be involved in MSP's planning and decision-making processes and be provided with the necessary resources and capacity- building opportunities to participate effectively.
- **Forced evictions threaten small-scale fishing communities, causing displacement and loss of livelihoods. States must protect tenure rights through consultation and measures to prevent such actions.**

We, IPC members, are carrying out a people-centred methodology for monitoring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, involving a bottom-up process led by fishers' organisations and coastal communities themselves. Two reports are already available, one global and one for Asia which include specific regional recommendation about fisheries management, we demand governments and FAO to take them into consideration for future programming.