



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

### IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 3 - ADDRESSING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE CONTEXT OF EFFECTIVE

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

We, 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 members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), represent millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide.

- **We acknowledge the FAO's commendable efforts in enhancing monitoring, control, and surveillance to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.** However, we call on the members of the sub-committee to recognize, support and actively engage with small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples in combating IUU fishing, in collaboration with national governments. We also call to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure as inestimable tool to guide Governments' direction on IUU.
- Despite employing 90% of global fishers, with women constituting nearly half of the workforce, small-scale and artisanal fisheries lack the recognition and support afforded to other industries. This disparity exacerbates challenges from the "blue economy" and heightened competition for marine resources, impacting People's Food Sovereignty. **Governments should play a central role in defining and recognizing SSF at both national and regional levels. Recognition of SSF and their tenure and customary rights is key to combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.** The IPC's ongoing people-centered assessment of the SSF Guidelines sheds light on SSF management practices and SSF's call for recognition, reflecting nuances between inland and ocean small scale fisheries.
- It is crucial to recognize the **pivotal role small scale fisheries communities and Indigenous Peoples play as guardians of coasts, seas, and inland waters.**
- We are concerned on the current approaches to combatting IUU fishing, which focus on technical and legal aspects, without considering the social, economic, and cultural dimensions. For that reason, **we stress the importance of qualitative data and people-centered analysis, positioning SSF as**



**invaluable contributors to maintaining ecosystem equilibrium and contributing to fight IUU fisheries.**

- We also denounces the negative impact of international fishing agreements, subsidies for industrial fishing, and the privatization of fishery resources on the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples. **We therefore propose concrete measures to enhance the participation of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples in fisheries governance, such as the establishment of local co-management committees, recognition of customary and collective rights, promotion of participatory traceability and certification, and public awareness of the value of small-scale fishing.**
- We emphasize our commitment as IPC to closely collaborate with Governments and the FAO to mitigate IUU fisheries. We urge FAO to work with SSF organizations and movements, ensuring meaningful participation in projects like the new project proposed regarding tracking vessels. A bottom-up approach is vital for involving SSF at all levels and follow a human rights-based approach and the right of participation, as mentioned in the SSF Guidelines.

In conclusion, we emphasize the valuable role and significance of Governments in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) to adress the challenges of IUU fishing and strengthening the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and the livelihoods of local communities.