



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 4 - MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

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 are concerned about addressing biodiversity, specifically the expansion of conservation efforts, without due consideration for people and the imperative for meaningful Indigenous Peoples' participation. We acknowledge the Blue Economy as a significant driver of biodiversity loss. Development projects, such as converting fertile agricultural fields and mangroves into shrimp farms, or engaging in mining activities in coastal and inland regions, pose threats to our natural habitats. The accumulation of mercury, heavy metals, and pesticides in our environments is adversely affecting our fish and Fisher Peoples.

- Governments have the responsibility to conduct impact and damage studies with the direct participation of affected small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples. These studies should prioritize community benefits and recognize the pivotal role of small-scale fisheries people and Indigenous Peoples as stewards of coastal and inland ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples should also have access to adaptation, mitigation and restoration funds, social development projects and legal guarantees in defense of the coastal and inland territories where they operate
- We emphasize the importance of recognizing and protecting customary tenure rights in small-scale fisheries and upholding the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent when dealing with conservation plans.
- We call Governments to shift from an approach focused on false solutions such as the Carbon Trading System, the 30x30 agenda to people-centered solutions based on the traditional ecological knowledge and practices of SSF communities and Indigenous Peoples
- **We urge for a paradigm shift towards comprehensive biodiversity consideration in fisheries management, emphasizing a holistic perspective** that prioritize resilience, cultural diversity, and the overall well-being of both ecosystems and small-scale fisheries (SSF) communities.



- States and relevant bodies must actively engage in this transformation to ensure the sustainability of our shared environment, the livelihoods of SSF communities and of Global Indigenous Food Systems, as a valuable example based on a holistic interconnectedness.

In conclusion, We renovate our commitment as IPC to closely collaborate with Governments and the FAO to raise SSF voice in the discussion on biodiversity protection and highlight SSF wisdom and heritage as a solution to protect marine and inland Biodiversity as it has been for generations and generations.