



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 5 - CLIMATE RESILIENT FISHERIES

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.**

Our communities worldwide are facing a critical threat to their existence due to climate change, environmental degradation, and pollution. Small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples are particularly vulnerable, experiencing impacts such as rising water levels, temperature changes, drought, reduced fish stocks, altered fish migratory patterns, floods, and more frequent storms. We acknowledge the Blue Economy as a significant driver of biodiversity loss and consequently Climate Change impact.. 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, and negatively impact climate.

- We demand the immediate inclusion of disaster prevention in management plans, extending beyond post-disaster recovery. States must prioritize proactive measures such as early warning systems, risk reduction, and community education to safeguard small-scale fisheries and Indigenous Peoples. **States have a responsibility to act urgently to ensure our communities can continue to coexist with nature and support our call for climate justice.**
- We urged caution against adopting ineffective climate solutions like carbon credits, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Instead, the focus should be on restoring the legitimate traditional, customary, or Indigenous tenure rights of fishing communities and redistributing such rights where they have been infringed upon.
- Fishers are among the most vulnerable groups during storms and cyclones, as they often work in open waters and are exposed to the elements. It is important that the state provides better



accessible early warning systems and search and rescue operations to ensure the safety and security of fishers during such event

- States should prioritize community- centered climate solutions based on traditional ecological knowledge and practices of SSF communities, instead of technocratic and market- based approaches such as seawalls, tetrapods, blue carbon, and conservation carbon credit solutions.

In conclusion, we emphasize the valuable role and significance of Governments in implementing the SSF Guidelines to address the challenges of climate change as invaluable tool to guide Governments in addressing climate disasters and strengthening the sustainability and the livelihood of small-scale and Indigenous Peoples. We maintain our commitment to collaborating with FAO and Governments to enhance the climate disaster resilience of SSF communities and Indigenous peoples.