



International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity



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International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty

Informal session of the Twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24)

IPC Declaration

Marine and coastal biodiversity - Item 6

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is a global platform representing 6000 grassroots organizations and social movements of Indigenous Peoples and small-scale food producers involved in the conservation, sustainable use, development and management of agricultural biodiversity, including marine biodiversity.

In the notes by the Executive Secretariat the lack of references to fisheries is not acceptable. When we talk about marine biodiversity the most important driver – in negative or positive – is fisheries. It is time to intervene and to differentiate the damages that industrial fisheries are doing to our seas, and the management of coastal and marine areas of the communities of fisher folks. Therefore, we call the Parties to take into consideration the important role of small-scale fisheries in the draft terms of reference for a “relevant expert advisory group” as presented in the annexes of the document. It is vital to include civil society organizations and small-scale fisher folks in the designing of new ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.

Whatever process the States will decide to implement at the national level, a formal planning system should consider methods of planning and territorial development used by small-scale fishing and other communities with customary tenure systems, and decision-making processes within those communities.

Only in this way, States and other relevant parties can take steps to address issues such as pollution, coastal erosion and destruction of coastal habitats due to human induced non-fisheries-related factors.



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Moreover, while granting the participation of small-scale fisheries in the definition of new areas and modification to the already existing ones, States should facilitate, train and support small-scale fishing communities to participate in and take responsibility for the marine Protected Areas. This should take into consideration their legitimate tenure rights and systems, the management of the resources on which they depend for their well-being and that are traditionally used for their livelihoods. The 30x30 MPA target could be very dangerous if these conditions are not taken into consideration, threatening the livelihoods of many small-scale fishing communities. Their human rights needs to be considered when the MPAs will be planned and implemented.

Finally, we would like to recall that this informal meeting is taking place as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread around the world. This pandemic and the socio-economic impact of the measures that governments have taken to address it have had devastating consequences on small-scale fishers, Indigenous Peoples, fisherwomen and our communities. Our livelihoods as small-scale fishers have been adversely affected and, in many cases, our human rights have been violated. The pandemic has thus further exacerbated structural discrimination, inequalities, marginalisation, and widespread human rights abuses. Several fisher folks communities, whose very survival is at stake, suffer dramatically from the lack of healthcare, loss of work and livelihoods, and harsh lockdowns. Despite this problematic situation, small-scale fisher people have remained the only ones contributing to eradicating poverty and hunger to guarantee their communities healthy and nutritious fish and a source of income and livelihood.

We believe, as representatives of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples, that the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines are the best instrument toward achieving the eradication of poverty, food security, and the sustainable use of the ocean and inland waters. Ensuring the active, free, effective, meaningful, and informed participation of small-scale fishing communities in the whole decision-making process related to the fishery resources and areas where small-scale fisheries operate, and taking into consideration the existing power imbalances, as expressed in section 3.6 of the SSF Guidelines, is an indispensable condition to achieve the goals set in the 2030 Agenda.