



IPC statement in response to Agenda Item 3 - Contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,
Dear COFI observers,

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), as members of the Fisheries Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), and representing millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide, we note positively contributions by COFI member states and FAO towards the goals of ending hunger, eradicating poverty and ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, as expressed in SDG 14.

However, we express concerns about how to achieve these goals, particularly those affecting small scale fisheries. With reference to SDG 5, women working in fisheries continue to be marginalized and do not enjoy equal rights in the sector. Furthermore, our communities are increasingly experiencing the impact of the growth of industrial **aquaculture** initiatives, promoted under the ocean economy agenda. The export-oriented value chain, feeding mainly middle income and rich consumers, does not provide food for people in our communities and cannot be considered as a sustainable solution to the SDGs and food crisis. The very existence of our small-scale fishers is also under continuous threat due to **environmental destruction and pollution**. Large scale development projects are destroying our natural habitats, and mercury and pesticides are accumulating in our environments and poisoning our food.

On the issues of overfishing and fisheries subsidies, we call upon the COFI members to take back the negotiations to where they belong: Addressing overfishing must remain the mandate of the COFI and not WTO.

We, representatives of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples believe that the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines, when duly implemented, are the best instrument toward achieving the eradication of poverty, food security, and the sustainable use of the ocean and inland waters. We need to push the implementation of the SSF Guidelines through the Global Action Plan of the UN Decade on Family Farming. At the same time, the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) will make sure that SDGs can be reached, and rights can be respected.

We therefore call upon COFI Members to implement the SSF Guidelines and support us, as rightsholders, to participate and decide on the use and management of marine resources.