



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Agenda Item 5: Combating Illegal, Unreported And Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

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.

The **illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU)** remains one of the greatest threats to the fish stocks upon which we depend for food and livelihoods. This cannot be addressed unilaterally by governments on their own. For this reason, we welcome the participation of FAO in strengthening regional collaboration, and the governance of transboundary ecosystems and marine resources.

We, small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples, need support from our governments in the form of **direct and indirect subsidies**, in order to further strengthen our localized value chains and provide healthy and nutritious food for people. We also urge our governments to stop subsidizing the large-scale industry, and in particular, the corporations who own large-scale pelagic and demersal industrial trawlers. These trawlers are not only responsible for most of the overfishing in the world, they also waste enormous volumes of by-catch.

However, we have deep concerns about the WTO subsidy negotiations. These negotiations have unfolded without any meaningful opportunity for small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples to participate. The WTO does not pay due consideration to human rights, and cultural and social development. Its free trade agenda has enriched transnational corporations and facilitated the further concentration of ownership of territories and natural resources in the hands powerful corporations. Furthermore, the procedures of the WTO are not carried out in participatory, democratic way on par with the Committee on Fisheries.

We, small-scale and artisanal fishers and Indigenous Peoples, therefore call upon the COFI members to bring back the negotiations on fisheries subsidies to the COFI to ensure IUU fishing is addressed in a democratic manner, and where we have an opportunity to contribute to negotiations.