



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI agenda item 4: Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including in the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)

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.

This is an important year – the **International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)**. As the co-chair of IYAFA, the IPC has contributed to important initiatives carried out this year in support of small-scale fishers' organizations and communities around the world. However, IYAFA has been an encouragement, and our members will continue to expand efforts as they were doing before to strengthen small-scale fishing communities beyond IYAFA, for their food sovereignty and social welfare, as enshrined in the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines (SSF Guidelines).

As part of our efforts this year, the IPC has developed a **people-centred methodology** for assessing the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, and we have completed a first report involving fisher communities and organizations from 21 countries. This report was presented at the Small-scale Fisheries Summit in Rome during the last few days. In the coming two years, we will roll out assessments in many more countries, and launch a comprehensive people-centred report in time for the 36th COFI session in 2024. We support the call by FAO to build on the success of the first SSF Summit, and organize similar summits every two years prior to the COFI sessions.

COFI 36 also marks a particularly important milestone – the 10th anniversary of the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines. We welcome the progress made regarding the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, but there is still a lot of work to do. The human rights of SSF communities and Indigenous Peoples are still being violated, and we are still being excluded from many decision-making processes. Therefore, we reiterate our **commitment to working closely with governments and the FAO** in the implementation process, as part of the SSF-GSF Advisory Group and the Regional Advisory Groups. We call upon governments to scale-up their implementation efforts, by allocating financial resources and technical support, building institutional capacity, and developing participatory mechanisms, in close collaboration with our organizations around the world.