



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI agenda item 8:

Enhancing COFI discussions including recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,
Dear COFI observers,

My intervention is on behalf of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty. The IPC represents millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide.

We note with concern the proposal to establish a Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, which would include a standing agenda item on small-scale fisheries. We are concerned that such a sub-committee will not be able to address the overarching issues related to small-scale fisheries – which are much broader in scope than just management – and includes human rights, social development, food security and nutrition, gender equality, and tenure rights in marine and inland fisheries.

Small-scale fisheries issues are closely connected to almost all COFI agenda items, and should therefore be maintained as a stand-alone item in the main COFI sessions. The COFI plenary involves the highest level of participation of both governments and observers, including the IPC – the largest global network of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples participating in the COFI process. Of the 5 options proposed by the Joint Task Force (JYT), we encourage the committee to choose the second option: *to enhance the utilization of existing bodies, including COFI and the two existing sub-committees*. As the most important global forum for policy debate in fisheries, the role of COFI as the main platform for diverse actors to engage and discuss small-scale fisheries issues, must be strengthened and enhanced.