



## IPC statement in response to Agenda item 2: IMPROVING THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF FISH STOCKS: LESSONS FROM EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Esteemed COFI Members and observers,

I am speaking on behalf of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, which represents millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide. We are environmental stewards, custodians of inland and coastal waters and adjacent land, with diverse traditional knowledge, experience and good practices that have allowed us to feed our communities and sustain healthy fish stocks for generations.

Consistent with the Sub-Committee's efforts to promote greater stakeholder participation, we call upon fisheries management authorities to ensure that small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples are actively included in data collection and stock assessment processes. This requires our traditional knowledge systems should be recognised as a **fundamental basis for culturally appropriate and sustainable ecosystem management and to be formally recognized as valuable sources of fisheries data and information**, and that the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is upheld. Fisheries management decisions must be guided by insights from traditional knowledge – particularly in data-limited contexts where conventional scientific data is insufficient to ensure effective management actions.

Fisheries management measures for small-scale fisheries must be context-specific and fit for purpose, and ensure governments protect fishing communities' tenure rights and access to livelihoods resources. Governments should move beyond symbolic participation to ensure the effective involvement of small-scale fishers in decision-making and management arrangements, with sufficient time allocated to enable inclusive consultations and informed decision making. They should prevent displacement, dispossession and forced evictions. This includes the recognition and protection of both statutory and customary tenure rights in policy and practice, in accordance with the FAO Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines and the Tenure Guidelines.

The sustainability of fisheries management, conservation of fish stocks and the habitats they depend on, hinges upon securing the support and continued participation of small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples through **formally integrating community governance institutions into regulatory frameworks and decision-making processes**.

Thank you.



## **IPC statement in response to Agenda item 3: ASSESSING AND MANAGING MULTISPECIES FISHERIES WITH EMPHASIS ON DATA AND CAPACITY-LIMITED SITUATIONS**

Good morning, and thank you for the organization and hospitality at this meeting of the Fisheries Sub-Committee.

From the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Vía Campesina (LVC), members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), we reiterate our willingness to engage in dialogue and to jointly build public policies that recognize the central role of mangrove, sea, river, inland water, and ocean peoples. We are peoples of artisanal fishing and gathering who, for generations, have sustained food security and sovereignty, cared for ecosystems, and strengthened local economies.

For this reason, we consider it essential that our participation be effective, direct, and respectful in all decision-making spaces that affect our territories and our waters.

We reaffirm that strengthening governance will only be possible if it fully integrates our traditional knowledge, our community practices, and our collective rights as an essential part of the solutions. Truly inclusive management, based on cooperation among States, communities, and social movements, will make it possible to move toward more just, sustainable, and resilient systems.

The peoples of the mangroves, the sea, and all waters—spiritually, culturally, and economically connected to these living spaces—are committed to contributing actively to this process.

### **Finally,**

We greet and congratulate the Black, Cholo, Montubio, and Indigenous peoples, as well as the social movements of Brazil, for their firm commitment to defending the commons and rivers as the heritage of the peoples. We likewise recognize the decision of President Lula da Silva to accept the repeal of Decree 12,600, reaffirming the public nature of water and its social function in service of communities.



## **Declaración del CIP en respuesta al punto 3 del orden del día: Evaluación y gestión de las pesquerías multiespecíficas, con énfasis en situaciones de limitación de datos y de capacidad**

Buenos días, gracias por la organización y acogida en esta reunión del Sub comité de la pesca.

Desde el Foro Mundial de Pueblos Pescadores y Recolectores (WFFP), el Foro Mundial de Pescadores y Trabajadores de la Pesca (WFF), el Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios (IITC), La Vía Campesina (LVC) y el Comité Internacional de Planificación para la Soberanía Alimentaria (IPC), reiteramos nuestra disposición al diálogo y a la construcción conjunta de políticas públicas que reconozcan la centralidad de los pueblos del manglar, del mar, de los ríos, de las aguas continentales y de los océanos. Somos pueblos de la pesca y la recolección artesanal que, desde generaciones, sostenemos la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria, cuidamos los ecosistemas y fortalecemos las economías locales.

Por ello, consideramos fundamental que nuestra participación sea efectiva, directa y respetuosa en todos los espacios de toma de decisiones que afectan nuestros territorios y nuestras aguas.

Reafirmamos que el fortalecimiento de la gobernanza solo será posible si integra plenamente nuestros conocimientos tradicionales, nuestras prácticas comunitarias y nuestros derechos colectivos como parte esencial de las soluciones.

Una gestión verdaderamente inclusiva, basada en la cooperación entre Estados, comunidades y movimientos sociales, permitirá avanzar hacia sistemas más justos, sostenibles y resilientes.

Los pueblos del manglar, del mar y de todas las aguas, ligados espiritual, cultural y económicamente a estos espacios de vida, estamos comprometidos a contribuir activamente a este proceso.

### **POR ÚLTIMO**

Saludamos y felicitamos a los pueblos negros, cholos, montubios e indígenas, así como a los movimientos sociales del Brasil, por su firme compromiso en la defensa de los bienes comunes y de los ríos como patrimonio de los pueblos.

Reconocemos igualmente la decisión del presidente Lula da Silva de acoger la derogatoria del Decreto 12.600, reafirmando el carácter público de las aguas y su función social al servicio de las comunidades.





## **IPC statement in response to Agenda item 5: ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF FISHERIES**

Esteemed COFI Members and Observers,

We, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, the International Indian Treaty Council, and La Vía Campesina, members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, welcome the recognition of the social dimension in fisheries management and small-scale harvesting and processing. While we acknowledge the efforts, we must emphasize that for our communities - peoples of the mangroves, the seas, the rivers, and the oceans - this is not simply a “social dimension,” but a matter of fundamental human rights, as established by international labour standards and reflected in the SSF Guidelines. We are not speaking of concessions, but of rights.

While the importance of granting tenure and access rights to small-scale fishers and harvesters is acknowledged, our recent People-Centered Assessments conducted across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, reveal an alarming trend: the expansion of ocean grabbing and the appropriation of marine territories and waters. Small-scale artisanal fishing and harvesting are being displaced by industrial aquaculture, large-scale tourism, and marine protected areas, oil and gas, imposed without the free, prior, and informed consent of communities. For this reason, we call on Governments to formally recognize and restore customary tenure rights within national law, and to ensure that no development project or conservation initiative proceeds without the explicit consent of affected communities.

We urge Governments to ensure formal recognition of small-scale fishers, fish workers, collectors and Indigenous Peoples, especially women, whose labour remains largely invisible as rights-holders and as fundamental political actors. This recognition constitutes a necessary condition to secure our labour rights, and access to social services and decision-making processes.

The SSF Guidelines recommend recognizing and supporting the knowledge, culture, and practices of small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples, to inform responsible governance and sustainable development. We call on Governments to formally recognise the role of fishing communities as holders, providers, and users of knowledge related to fisheries, and to develop culturally appropriate ecosystem management and participatory fisheries management approaches.

Social protection measures must be linked to policies that ensure safe working conditions, income security and dignity for fishers and fish workers, including women engaged in shellfish collecting, pre and post-harvest activities.

Meaningful and effective participation is essential to ensure social dimensions are taken into account in fisheries management plans. In this regard, IPC emphasizes the role of the Small-Scale Fisheries Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) as a partnership mechanism giving small-scale fisheries actors, government representatives and other stakeholders a space to collaborate at a global level. Thank you



## **IPC statement in response to Agenda item 6: REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

Esteemed COFI Members and Observers,

We, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, the International Indian Treaty Council, and La Vía Campesina, members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, recognise the strategic role Regional Fishery Bodies are playing. As underscored by the Committee on Fisheries, Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) are the primary instruments for translating global fisheries commitments into actionable regional measures and managing shared stocks. To achieve effective and sustainable fisheries management, it is imperative for Governments to recognize and actively engage with the Regional Advisory Groups (RAGs) of the Global Strategic Framework for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (the SSF-GSF), which was endorsed by COFI in 2016. The RAGs are formal, self-organized platforms representing small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples at the regional level.

Currently, many RFBs face significant challenges ensuring effective representation and capacity of small-scale fisheries to participate in decision-making processes. The RAGs, as the regional branch of the Global Strategic Framework, are uniquely positioned to address these gaps. By ensuring the participation of RAGs in regional fisheries management processes, Governments can leverage meaningful participation of SSF and Indigenous Peoples, which can provide essential SSF-driven qualitative data, as highlighted in the earlier discussion on social dimensions. This participation is crucial for informing regional management measures to ensure social and cultural balance.

The SSF Summit, which COFI Members have formally requested as a biennial platform for dialogue, can also be brought to the regional level, to bridge the gap between local realities and global policies. An example of this is the African SSF Summit organized by the Tanzanian Government in 2024. Regional SSF Summits, like the SSF Forum promoted by the GFCM, would serve as vital bottom-up spaces for Governments to ensure SSF participation in decision-making spaces, contribute to monitoring the implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs), and coordinate efforts across borders.

Strengthening the collaboration between RAGs and RFBs will not only enhance regional coordination but also empower rights-holders to lead the sustainable management of the resources they depend upon for their livelihoods and food security.



Estimados miembros y observadores del COFI:

Nosotros, el Foro Mundial de los Pueblos Pescadores, el Foro Mundial de Pescadores y Trabajadores de la Pesca, el Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios y La Vía Campesina, miembros del Comité Internacional de Planificación para la Soberanía Alimentaria, reconocemos el papel estratégico que están desempeñando los Organismos Regionales de Pesca. Como ha subrayado el Comité de Pesca (COFI), los Organismos Regionales de Pesca (ORP) son los instrumentos principales para traducir los compromisos mundiales en materia de pesca en medidas regionales aplicables y para gestionar las poblaciones compartidas. Para lograr una gestión pesquera eficaz y sostenible, es imprescindible que los Gobiernos reconozcan y se involucren activamente con los Grupos Asesores Regionales (GAR) del Marco Estratégico Mundial para la aplicación de las Directrices para la Pesca en Pequeña Escala, que fue respaldado por el COFI en 2016. Los GAR son plataformas formales y autoorganizadas que representan a los pescadores en pequeña escala y a los Pueblos Indígenas a nivel regional.

Actualmente, muchos ORP enfrentan importantes desafíos para garantizar una representación efectiva y la capacidad de las pesquerías en pequeña escala de participar en los procesos de toma de decisiones. Los GAR, como rama regional del Marco Estratégico Mundial, están en una posición única para abordar estas brechas. Al asegurar la participación de los GAR en los procesos regionales de gestión pesquera, los Gobiernos pueden aprovechar una participación significativa de la pesca en pequeña escala y de los Pueblos Indígenas, lo que puede aportar datos cualitativos esenciales impulsados por la pesca en pequeña escala, como se destacó en el debate anterior sobre las dimensiones sociales. Esta participación es crucial para fundamentar las medidas de gestión regional y garantizar el equilibrio social y cultural.

La Cumbre de la Pesca en Pequeña Escala, que los miembros del COFI han solicitado formalmente como una plataforma bienal de diálogo, también puede llevarse al nivel regional para cerrar la brecha entre las realidades locales y las políticas globales. Un ejemplo de ello es la Cumbre Africana de la Pesca en Pequeña Escala organizada por el Gobierno de Tanzania en 2024. Las Cumbres Regionales de la Pesca en Pequeña Escala, como el Foro de Pesca en Pequeña Escala promovido por la CGPM, servirían como espacios fundamentales de carácter ascendente para que los Gobiernos garanticen la participación de la pesca en pequeña escala en los espacios de toma de decisiones, contribuyan al seguimiento de la implementación de los Planes Nacionales de Acción (PNA) y coordinen los esfuerzos a través de las fronteras.

Fortalecer la colaboración entre los GAR y los ORP no solo mejorará la coordinación regional, sino que también empoderará a los titulares de derechos para liderar la gestión sostenible de los recursos de los que dependen para sus medios de vida y su seguridad alimentaria.