



IPC statement in response to Agenda Item 9 - The implications for fisheries and aquaculture of global biodiversity frameworks and agreements

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.

For decades, governments and the scientific community have convened annually to define global frameworks and set collective targets and goals to safeguard and restore our planet's biodiversity. During this time, global civil society has actively participated, voicing its concerns and demands. However, the international community has in several occasions ignored these appeals.

Within the global diversity framework, Target 10 of the Montreal-Kunming Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) ensures that fisheries are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, which can only be achieved through community-led and small-scale fishing principles and practices. But looking at fisheries only through a market-based lens, focusing on production and productivity, goes against the spirit of sustainable and healthy fisheries and ecosystems. It is just another market-based, profit-driven false solution that will only negatively impact coastal areas, freshwater lakes and fisheries.

We, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) object to the notion that that farmed seafood as opposed to land-based meat will meet the growing demand for food and spare enough carbon to meaningfully mitigate climate change impacts. Scientists have found that farmed fish production leads to an overall loss of essential dietary nutrients. These highly funded projects in-turn exacerbate climate change as they experiment with ideas and "solutions" brought by academics and think tanks instead of from the communities themselves.

Instead, Indigenous Peoples and small-scale fishers have proven their abilities to steward and oversee sustainable coastal waters and lakes in a way that was rejuvenating and restorative. So called innovation practices, the creation of fish farms and product driven management practices go against the principles around meaningful conservation and will not contribute to realizing SDG-2 and the goals of eradicating hunger and providing healthy and sustainable livelihoods.

We urge all Governments to give value to small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples and move away from the ideas that innovation, digitalization and automation will save our food systems.