

Committee on Fisheries: Thirty-sixth Session

Agenda Item 10:

The Role of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Food Security and Nutrition

Statement

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) is appreciative of the fact that COFI36 chooses to focus on the vital role of fisheries and aquaculture in tackling food security and malnutrition. After all, aquatic foods are proven to contribute majorly to healthy diets and human well-being.

This meeting draws attention to the importance of small-scale fisheries in addressing food security and nutrition needs. Marine small-scale fishing settlements are typically spread out along seaboard and serve many local markets, in addition to catering to national and international markets. The contribution of marine and inland small-scale fishers to low-income consumers in the hinterland is less documented. ICSF supports the recognition of the role of small-scale fisheries in feeding proximate non-fisher populations. Fisheries and aquaculture policies, however, pay too little attention to the performance of value chains. ICSF would, therefore, recommend the collection of all supply-chain functions of small-scale fisheries, including those performed by women.

ICSF endorses the attention paid to low-income, poor consumers and the need to pay adequate attention to the affordability of fish as food. Small fish are, in general, cheaper and eaten whole, thereby adding to their nutritional value.

Small-scale fishers are major suppliers of small fish and are relevant for the effort to improve food security and nutrition.

ICSF supports the observation that in some developing countries there is competition between small fish for direct human consumption and for reduction to fishmeal and fish oil. ICSF would strongly recommend that small pelagic fish be used for direct human consumption, and not as feed in aquaculture. We need to protect the contribution of aquatic foods to food security and nutrition of the poor.

Thank you Chair.