

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

Thirty-sixth Session

Agenda Item 12:

The implications for fisheries and aquaculture of global biodiversity frameworks and agreements

Statement

Small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples are the primary caretakers of the sea and its resources. SSF continues to contribute over 40% of global aquatic food production. SSF does this through more selective and mainly passive fishing operations, while directly leading the work on protecting local resources through a diversity of governance models like LMMAs/MPAs/Marine Extractive Reserves.

We appreciate the overwhelming show of support from all Member States on the importance of SSF to food production and conservation. We encourage all states to extend this to their commitments to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. We also commend the FAO for its initiatives to integrate fisheries in the Biodiversity Plan, and encourage national Fisheries Ministries to coordinate and communicate with Environmental Ministries participating in the CBD processes to increase representation and visibility of fisheries.

SSF communities' way of life is linked to inland, marine and coastal biodiversity. Therefore, the issue of biodiversity is intrinsically linked to the tenure rights of SSF communities. Implementation of the SSF Guidelines means protecting customary tenure rights, and ensuring that formal tenure legislation also respects and protects these rights. Through the support of the FAO, support organizations and partners, we call on governments to ensure legislations that protect the traditional knowledge and livelihoods of SSF, community-based and controlled fisheries management, and recognition and inclusion of women in decision-making. To promote sustainable aquatic food production is to promote a human rights-based approach to the protection of biodiversity and fisheries resources, which includes the active participation of women, girls and youth.

Securing the livelihoods of SSF is integral to conservation, the protection of biodiversity, and sustainable aquatic food systems – both now and in the future.

ICSF commits to supporting the FAO, COFI Member States, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, and fishers' movements globally in promoting the equitable integration of fisheries in the Biodiversity Plan.