

**Press Conference: Fisher Peoples in Action –
United Nations Biodiversity Conference 2024
23 October 2024**

Statement

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

A whole-of-society approach to inland, coastal and marine biodiversity can only be achieved by the inclusion of SSF actors and by ensuring their effective participation. It can be realized by paying special attention to including SSF actors, especially fishers and fishworkers, in decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes.

ICSF would very much welcome statements of Parties to include how the rights of *small-scale and artisanal fishers and fishworkers* to their lives and livelihoods are protected in NBSAPs, particularly under 30 x 30 target and as primary partners under Target 5 on Sustainable Use. It is a prerequisite for the achievement of Target 22 [Balance Representation] and 23 [Gender Consideration]. At present, ICSF is of the view that they are very much excluded in this whole-of-society endeavor to conserve biodiversity due to fragmented governance mechanisms.

The SSF communities, inspired by the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) are leading the initiatives towards establishing and maintaining protected areas and other effective conservation measures in several countries. In Asia, for example, countries like the Philippines and Indonesia are pioneers in the establishment of co-managed protected areas where the coastal communities work with their respective local governments in resource management and in ensuring compliance with regulations. Many are doing this on a voluntary basis often employing a couple of their productive fishing days to perform resource management duties. The Philippines has also successfully launched its multi-stakeholder led National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF), a plan of action guided by a human rights-based approach and an ecosystem approach, also aligning the sector's plan of action with the targets of the KM-GBF.

Parties can take a look at this and similar experiences on the application of a whole-of-society approach to the implementation and monitoring of targets related to inland, coastal and marine biodiversity.

To benefit from initiatives of small-scale, artisanal Indigenous Peoples and local fishing communities to conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, the KM-GBF targets need to integrate these initiatives into the NBSAPs. Decent social protection measures may be introduced to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of fishing communities who need to forego fishing opportunities to achieve Targets 1 [Participatory Spatial Planning], 2 [Restoration], 3 [Protected Areas and OECMs], 4 [Threatened Species] and 5 [Sustainable Use] of the KM-GBF.

We also call on the Parties to include SSF in development and implementation of 30x30 targets ensuring that their territories are protected upholding the agency of these communities. With financial support, riparian and coastal communities can continue their role in the governance of inland, coastal and marine areas.

We also call for a whole-of-government approach across government ministries such as environment, climate change, biodiversity, agriculture and fisheries so as to involve all authorities responsible for conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity. ICSF would emphasize the need for a partnership to address both terrestrial and inland, coastal and marine biodiversity targets. The whole-of-government approach also needs to facilitate the participation of local to national governments in the development and implementation of biodiversity action plans, applying a human rights-based approach, particularly based on the principles as highlighted in the SSF Guidelines.