

STATEMENT

World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

Agenda Item 4.9: Marine and coastal biodiversity

Madame Chair

Small-scale fishing communities are keenly aware of the need to conserve and sustainably use fisheries resources, and can be critical allies in the conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity. It is highly unfortunate, therefore, that the setting up of MPAs in many countries of the developing world has displaced, excluded and alienated fishing communities, and violated their basic rights to life and livelihood, as some recent studies undertaken by us has indicated.

Given this context, we are deeply concerned about the emphasis on expanding marine areas under protection. We urge delegates to adhere to principles of prior, informed consent and prioritize the implementation of Programme Element 2 of the Protected Area Programme of Work on Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing *before* undertaking any such expansion.

We are also concerned about the confusion created by the use of non-legal terms like ‘open waters’ and ‘deep sea habitats’. Should this be understood to mean areas beyond the continental shelf, that also includes areas within national jurisdiction, we strongly feel that the ecological criteria that have been developed to identify marine areas in need of protection, must be further developed to integrate local and traditional knowledge, as well as social and cultural aspects. In many countries areas beyond the continental shelf are fished by small-scale and indigenous fishing communities. We would, therefore, like to propose the inclusion of a new para as follows (between para 20 and 21):

“Calls on Parties to integrate the scientific, technical and technological knowledge of local and indigenous communities (in keeping with Article 8(j) of the Convention), and to ensure the integration of social and cultural criteria, for the identification of marine areas in need of protection.”

And finally, we would like to join other Parties and organizations in calling for a ban on ocean fertilization.

Thank you