

**Statement at COFI: 35th session on Agenda Item 10: Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Fisheries and Aquaculture**

**By International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the signatories of the Call to Action from Small-Scale Fisheries**

**Presented by Felicito Núñez**

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My name is Felicito Núñez, and I am going to speak on behalf of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the signatories of the Call to Action from Small-Scale Fisheries, which asks FAO members to develop national strategic plans guided by the FAO SSF Guidelines to implement 5 priority actions by 2030.

In my community, we Garifuna fishers are worried when we see that tourism destroys the coral reefs we have taken care of for more than 200 years, or when large industries come and displace us in the name of the blue economy or the conservation of marine species.

Regarding the agenda item that concerns us now, we want to stress that the 30x30 process is only possible if indigenous and fishing peoples' human rights are recognized, respected and ensured by law. Conservation needs to take place with our Free, Prior and Informed Consent and with absolute respect for our forms of traditional governance.

Marine Protected Areas and other area-based solutions only prevent immediate human impacts, such as prohibiting fishing or oil exploration, but do not provide a solution for ocean warming or acidification. To protect ecosystems, increase their resilience to climate change, and enhance their potential to mitigate climate change, the drivers of resource degradation and biodiversity loss that also affect the remaining 70% must be addressed. In our call we therefore ask that we are guaranteed preferential access and allowed to co-manage 100% of the coastal areas.

We also demand to be protected from the competing sectors of the blue economy, and that FAO members do not allow nor support any new use of the oceans that may have a negative impact on ecosystems and the communities that depend on these ecosystems for their livelihoods.

We are caretakers of the territories where we live and their natural resources. We ask FAO members and their partners to listen to us in our efforts to manage our marine resources, and we insist on the urgent need of implementing a human rights-based approach to marine conservation.

Nobody enters another person's house without asking: any decision about the conservation of our territories must have our opinion and consent.