



**Africa Workshop**  
**IYAFA: Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries**  
**15–18 February 2023 – Accra, Ghana**



### WORKSHOP STATEMENT

We, the 51 representatives of small-scale fishworker associations, cooperatives, trade unions, community-based associations, academicians and non-governmental organizations, from sixteen African countries, accounting for 14% of Africa's coastline and nearly 22% of the global fisheries population;

Having met in Accra, in the context of the *International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)* as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 72/72), appreciating the emphasis on the participation of small-scale fisheries stakeholders in policy development and fisheries management strategies, and also in the context of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)* and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Welcoming the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the master plan for re-dedication towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of *an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena*, and that Agenda 2063 is the concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve this vision within 50 years from 2013 to 2063, we emphasize that this Agenda should ensure free and equitable access to Africa's seas, oceans, lakes, rivers and floodplains and the resources within;

Particularly concerned about the destructive impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion, and emphasizing that the cost of in-action, which can lead to internal and external migration, is far greater than the cost of early investments in mitigation and adaptive management measures;

Upholding the principles of regional and international cooperation, as well as collaboration and consensus-building among all types of small-scale fishworkers, support organizations, and governments, and the collective negotiations needed to achieve concrete results;

Celebrating the valuable knowledge and skills of Indigenous Peoples and marine and inland small-scale fishing communities;

**Call upon the African national governments, African Union, ECOWAS, regional fisheries advisory bodies, and FAO to:**

Implement a uniform closed season to protect shared fish stocks in Africa, and explore the possibilities of closed areas and the employment of input control methods;

Develop measures to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities that continue to constitute a serious threat to many marine fish stocks and ecosystems, including

the destructive fishing techniques employed by small-scale fishing communities, which is detrimental to the realization of sustainable fisheries;

Adopt a sound fisheries management system for artisanal fisheries at the national level to address over-capacity and overfishing problems, particularly by disincentivizing the indiscriminate expansion of fishing efforts;

Promote the certification of fisheries products at the national level to regulate and ensure production and consumption of safe and healthy food from small-scale fish processing facilities, especially through creating awareness of and promoting the use of improved smoking and handling technologies and tools, including by providing fisheries and fish products certification training programmes;

Designate and implement artisanal and small-scale fishing zones to provide secure tenure and protect the access rights of small-scale fishers to their traditional fishing grounds and resources, including through strict monitoring, control and surveillance of these zones;

Protect customary rights and traditional methods for granting tenure to small-scale fisheries communities by traditional and Indigenous leaders and prevent the privatization of water bodies;

Promote and strengthen regional cooperation for fisheries management, both marine and inland, and develop effective monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms to coordinate and harmonize stakeholders' efforts and capacities for the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources;

Ensure that bilateral fisheries access agreements protect the rights of small-scale fishers to their traditional fishing grounds and resources consistent with international laws and national legislation;

Control the capacity and efforts of all fishing fleets, reduce the size of industrial fishing fleets, and minimize the negative impacts of fishing gear and practices on small-scale fishing communities, such as by using strict gear regulations;

Remove barriers to regional trade in fish and fish products to promote greater access to fish as a source of food and nutrition, and promote equitable access to trade policy and market information for fishers and fish processors;

Ensure consultation, participation, transparency and accountability in declaring Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and government implementation of the 30x30 agenda, and ensure the protection of mangroves, nursery grounds and water bodies from pollution;

Develop policies for economic activities in coastal areas, including tourism, ports, fish landing facilities, oil and gas extraction, and blue economy initiatives, that protect fishers from being evicted from their traditional lands, and protect their human rights;

Ensure that the development of tourism also includes opportunities for fishers to engage in alternative livelihoods;

Reaffirm the importance of small-scale fishing communities' participation in fisheries governance, including in participatory management or co-management of fisheries resources, and skills and capacity development;

Create adequate training and employment opportunities for youth in fishing communities, especially to prevent risky emigration;

Strengthen the social pillar of sustainable fisheries, and improve the participation of fishing communities, especially women, in decision-making processes, including in developing adequate safeguards against the criminalization of fishers and fishworkers;

Recognize the crucial social reproduction role of women, support and empower women's organizations, and develop policies to transgress the perpetuation of gender-related discrimination in informal fisheries;

Reduce overlapping challenges and hardships faced by women, by developing specific measures to address their issues as both fish and shellfish harvesters and processors;

Develop culturally-appropriate platforms and modern fish processing and storage facilities for women, and accessible public transportation facilities for women vendors;

Prioritize fisheries research and data collection, both in marine and inland fisheries, and improve data on small-scale fisheries, including on safer and more sustainable fishing and processing technologies to support decent working conditions for fishers and fishworkers;

Introduce guidelines for safety at sea and in inland waters to protect the lives and gears of small-scale fishers and fishing communities, and improve safety conditions related to weather forecasts and landing site infrastructure;

Develop national level guidelines for value addition in the post-harvest sector, and provide easy and fair access to credit, especially by providing preferential rates for fishers and fishworkers;

Develop adequate forms of social protection schemes, occupational health care facilities, and provide direct support during health crises such as pandemics.

**We urge governments, agencies and organizations, working closely with the African Regional Advisory Group, to implement the SSF Guidelines in a participatory manner at national level.**