

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Thirty-sixth Session

Agenda Item 13

Marine Plastic Pollution and Fisheries and Aquaculture

Statement

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) welcomes the increasing recognition and global commitment to reduce marine plastic pollution, particularly from fishing operations and acknowledge the contributions of FAO to prevent and reduce ALDFG. Consistent with CCRF, fishing grounds for passive and active fishing gear operations may be segregated. A litter-free environment may be provided to undertake small-scale fishing.

Technologies, materials and operational methods may be developed and applied to reduce ghost fishing effects of ALDFG. In this context, non-entangling fishing gear designs and materials, natural, improved-natural, and biodegradable material need to be promoted in the construction of FADs and fabrication of fishing nets/traps/pots along with awareness raising among fishing communities. Marine traffic may be organized in such a manner to prevent damage to, and loss of, fishing gear.

Also, in line with CCRF, we encourage implementing a gear marking system applicable to small-scale fishing, in consultation with fishers, together with reporting, recovery and safe disposal of ALDFG, taking into account how gear marking can reduce conflicts, help monitor and retrieve ALDFG, combat IUU fishing and improve sea safety.

Subsidies may be provided to reduce ALDFG through gear modifications, to move to biodegradable fishing gear, to buyback used gear and to provide gear replacements with a particular focus on small-scale fishing. These subsidies may be treated as good subsidies contributing to improved fisheries management.

In the context of combating ALDFG, ICSF would recommend adoption of social protection measures to offset income losses arising from fishing gear modifications and reduced catch efficiency, from extended closed areas and seasons, and from the introduction of a gear marking system.

Cost effective marine litter recovery, recycling and disposal may be introduced with coastal fishing communities. Women, for example, can participate in remunerated litter segregation and recycling programmes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.