



WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP)

Forum mondial des populations de pêcheurs

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Statement of the

World Forum of Fisher People

To the FAO Conference on Small Scale Fisheries, Bangkok, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisher people are standing up to protect their rights, the futures of their coastal communities and the marine ecosystems upon which they depend. The World Forum of Fisher People is demanding that their voices be heard, and that these rights be recognized on the national, regional, and international levels.

The following is the Statement prepared by the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) for the FAO Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries in Bangkok from 13 to 17 October 2008.

This statement is a collaborative effort of the WFFP's member country organizations, and reflects the positions of all its members. In addition many of country organizations will also be presenting their separate positions.

The statement is organized to fit the three conference themes laid out by the FAO. In addition, the WFFP has added fourth theme- food sovereignty.

Because the WFFP strongly advocates a human rights-based approach to fisheries we recognize the indivisibility of: (i) fishery access and user rights, (ii) post-harvest rights and (iii) human rights, and we believe that the development of responsible and sustainable small-scale artisanal and indigenous fisheries is possible only if they are addressed in an integrated manner.

More than ten years ago the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries recognized the crucial role of small scale artisanal and indigenous fisheries and determined that government should give priority to these fisheries (Section 6.18).

6.18 Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction.



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This has not happened. In fact, small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries are threatened as never before. This statement presents a plan for reversing this situation.

B PREAMBLE

Whereas, more than one billion people around the world depend on fish as their primary protein source;

Whereas, artisanal and small-scale fisher organizations and their supporters have for more than two decades argued for the recognition of the importance of social issues in the fisheries debate;

Whereas, there is a strong link between social situation of coastal communities, human rights and the management of natural resources;

Whereas, in several countries fishers are among the poorest and most marginalized. This is because their rights to land and fish resources and to basic services such as education and health, among other things are not recognized. It is also these factors that prevent small-scale fisher people from fulfilling their potential role in contributing more significantly to local and national economies, to responsible fisheries and to food security;

Whereas, the future of small scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries is threatened by the world food crisis, rising energy costs and global warming;

Whereas small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries are more viable than large-scale industrial fisheries, receiving less than 20% of the state subsidies received by the large-scale fleets world wide;

Whereas small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries are the primary source of livelihoods in coastal communities world-wide, directly employing more than 30 million people, as opposed to only half a million employed by the large-scale industrial fleets.

Whereas small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries have less impact on climate change than large-scale industrial fisheries, using less than 13% of the fuel used by these fisheries.

Whereas small-scale fisheries are less destructive to fish stocks and habitat, with minimal discarding of fish, as opposed to as much as 20 million tonnes as year discarded by industrial fleets, and gear types that are not destructive to ocean floor



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THEMES

Theme 1 ACCESS

1.1 Privatization

Measures should be put in place immediately to curb privatization of fisheries- including individual transferable quotas (ITQs), leasing of water bodies, beaches and habitat and all other forms of privatization- which is devastating fish stocks, limiting access, harming local coastal economic and concentrating ownership in the hands of a few.

1.2 Industrial fishing

Measures should be put in place immediately prohibiting industrial fishing in inshore waters, on the grounds that they are damaging fish stocks, habitat, coastal communities and the livelihoods of small-scale artisanal indigenous fishers around the world. In offshore waters, the destructive practices of industrial fishing, including bottom trawling, dumping and discarding have a direct impact on the livelihoods of small-scale fisheries and their coastal communities, and should be prohibited. Fishing for fishmeal should be effectively regulated.

2.3 Industrial Aquaculture

State fisheries policies should reject industrial aquaculture, especially monoculture aquaculture such as salmon and prawns, which continue to devastate coastal habitat, damage wild stocks, and destroy coastal livelihoods, and support should be given to small-scale traditional aquaculture practices.

2.4 Tourism

Measures should be developed which limit tourism development in places where it reduces access of small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries to traditional fishing grounds and coastlines.

2.5 Pollution

Measures should be developed to address all forms of pollution that are degrading the marine and inland aquatic environment and thus progressively destroying the livelihoods of marine and inland fishing communities.

Theme 2 POST-HARVEST

2.1 Self-Governance

The management of inland and marine fishery resources should be devolved to the local level in the region. Programs for devolution of fisheries management should be preceded, and accompanied, by capacity-building programs for fishers' and fishing community organizations to enhance negotiating power as well as to build up capacity for responsible fisheries



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management. Cooperatives managed by the owner-operators fishers should be encouraged. All fisheries management should recognize the right of small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fishers to fully participate in decision-making that affects their fisheries and their communities.

2.2 Women's Role

Specific measures to address, strengthen and protect women's right to enable them to participate fully in the fishery should be developed. These measures should work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and should secure their safety against sexual abuse. All the fisher organizations, coops, trade unions, and other associations representing the welfare and rights of the fishers should be 50/50 male and female representation.

2.3 Market

Measures should be developed to provide access to infrastructure and access to credit to local processing, trade and marketing initiatives. In this context, greater emphasis should be placed on local, national and regional markets. Further, measures should be put in place to ensure that the benefits of value addition along the fish supply chain are enjoyed by local fishing communities and that vulnerability to middlemen, transporters and global trade processes is minimized. Women fish vendors should be protected and they should have a greeter access to markets.

2.4 Infrastructure

Measures should be developed which ensure that there is adequate state support for marine infrastructure needed for small scale artisanal and indigenous fisheries. Small scale infrastructure and landing centres should be developed in all the areas of beach based fishing, ensuring that fishers have access to the fishing even during bad weather condition.

2.5 Disaster Relief

All the nations should enact a legislation to create autonomous disaster prevention and management authorities, in light of the increasing effects of climate change, based on the need to rebuild and revitalize small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries, which have been affected by natural disasters.

2.6 Ecolabelling

Ecolabelling, certification and green marketing schemes should be internationally recognized only if they include a well-defined socio-economic component. These schemes should be applicable only for export items, so as not to harm small-scale domestic markets.



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Theme 3 RIGHTS

3.1 Equality

All the rights and freedoms that are agreed to as relevant for rights-based approach to fisheries, should apply equally to all men and women of fishing communities.

3.2 UN Declaration

The fishing communities should have the full enjoyment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law, including human rights, economic rights, cultural rights, social, and rights to meet the basic needs of food, water, education, health, shelter of all and equal treatment before the law.

3.3 Indigenous Declaration

The indigenous fishing communities should have the full enjoyment of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). For indigenous fishing communities this includes the right to conservation and protection of their territories and resources, the right to traditional subsistence fisheries, and the right to full, prior and informed consent regarding decisions that affect their fisheries.

3.4 Traditional Rights

Fisheries policies should recognize and respect traditional/customary/community rights of fishers over the coast and inshore waters.

3.5 Health

The rights of fishing communities to safe drinking water, sanitation, health and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services, and education and training, should be recognized.

3.6 Local knowledge

A rights-based approach to fisheries should recognize the customary rights, local knowledge, traditional systems and practices, and the rights to access marine and inland resources of small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fishing communities, as well as the right to land for homestead, fishery-related, and other livelihood-related activities. Furthermore, such an approach should enhance collective, community-based access and management regimes.



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3.7 Human Rights, not Property Rights

The fishing rights should not be treated as a tradable commodity and they should be seen as an integral part of human rights. A rights-based approach to fisheries should not lead to the privatization of fisheries resources.

3.8 Labour Rights

Labour rights and safe working and living conditions of fishers should be guaranteed by the ratification and implementation of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, and by extending its relevant provisions to inland and shore-based fishers and fishing operations

3.9 Safety

Efforts should be made to improve the safety of small-scale and artisanal fishing operations and to ensure safety of fishers in marine and inland waters. Labour rights and safe working and living conditions of fishers should be guaranteed by the ratification and implementation of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, and by extending its relevant provisions to inland and shore-based fishers and fishing operations.

3.10 Women

Specific measures to address, strengthen and protect women's right to enable them to participate fully in the fishery should be developed. These measures should work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and should secure their safety against sexual abuse.

3.11 Organizational support

Financial and capacity-building support should be made available to recognized fishworker organizations, community-based, non-governmental organizations and research institutions to implement programs to promote fishing communities' awareness of rights and to strengthen capacity to lobby and advocate for their rights.

3.12 Coastal Management

Conservation initiatives, including MPAs, coastal area management programs, tourism interventions and industrial aquaculture should respect the rights of coastal communities to unhindered access to beaches, landing sites and fishing grounds. Such conservation initiatives should recognize the right of small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fishers to participate in decision-making that affects their fisheries and their communities.

3.13 Industrial Development of Non-Renewable Resources



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Measures should be put in place to limit industrial development of non-renewable natural resources in cases where it impinges on the fishing rights of small-scale, artisanal and indigenous fisheries.

Theme 4 FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

4.1 Food Sovereignty

National fisheries policies should recognize and support the principles of food sovereignty as stated in the Nyeleni Declaration. This should be part of an overall effort to bring about food sovereignty that includes land and Aquatic Reform that establishes the right over water, coast and land.

4.2 Priority to Subsistence Fisheries

National fisheries policies and legislation should give priorities to local subsistence fisheries over commercial and export fisheries.

4.3 Trade

Trade agreements that compromise food security and local access to seafood should be revoked. Measures and policies should be put in place that supports fair trade initiatives that strengthen local economies and food sovereignty.

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