

*CSO Statement*

**Agenda Item 10 (a): Update on the development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries**

Chairperson

Governmental delegations and Members of COFI

Fraternal Greetings from the millions of men and women artisanal fishworkers, who we are proud to represent.

My name is Cairo Roberto Laguna. I am an artisanal fisheries producer and vessel owner from Nicaragua, where I am currently the President of the Nicaraguan Artisanal Fishing Federation (FENICPESCA), Secretary of the Steering Committee of the Central American Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen (CONFEPESCA) and Latin American Representative of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF).

Here I speak on behalf of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers and the Internal Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

The development of the guidelines on small-scale fisheries presents us with a unique opportunity: the opportunity to enhance the contribution of our sector to food security and poverty eradication, to socio-cultural diversity, to decent employment and livelihoods, to local and national economies, and to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, both inland and marine.

We, organizations that represent and support small-scale fisheries and fishing communities, have, therefore, welcomed the guidelines. We have also committed to engaging with the process of developing them. We have set up a co-ordination group comprising representatives from our organizations for the purpose of engaging with this process.

We urge the Committee on Fisheries to respect and recognize our commitment and facilitate our further meaningful participation with this process. We urge you to ensure that our voices are well represented at the inter-governmental technical negotiations on these guidelines to be held in 2013. In particular we request that:

- A specified number of civil society representatives, nominated by us, be enabled to make interventions during plenary discussions;
- Our representatives be allowed to participate in breakout sessions/ working groups of the technical consultation;
- Our representatives be allowed to submit and present written contributions and proposals.

Many such steps to enhance civil society participation have been taken within earlier FAO processes.

Facilitating our active participation will ensure that the Guidelines adopted represent a shared vision, and that they are owned widely, particularly by small-scale fishing communities themselves. This is essential if the guidelines are to be implemented effectively.

Mr Chair, COFI delegates, in our view this new international instrument should be global in scope so that it can be applied wherever appropriate.

Finally we would like to request COFI to commit financial resources to ensure the participation of our representatives in the negotiations process.

Thank you for your attention