

Statement from CAOPA

At the 34th session of FAO Committee on Fisheries, held in February 2021, members recommended promoting the importance of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in relevant events during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, including the UN Ocean Conference.

Together with other small-scale fishers from Central and South America, Africa, Pacific, Asia, Europe, we call on our governments to:

- Secure preferential access and co-manage 100% of coastal areas
- Guarantee the participation of women and support their role in innovation
- Protect us from competing blue economy sectors
- Be transparent in fisheries management
- Build resilient communities to face climate change and offer prospects to youth

Already, we have been heard by some countries. At the 7th Meeting of OACPS Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, held in Ghana last April, Ministers emphasized that small scale fisheries are small in name only, but big in value. Half a billion people, - 7% of the world's population-, are at least partly dependent on small scale fisheries for food, employment and income. Small-scale fisheries employ more than 90 percent of the world's capture fishers and fish workers, about half of whom are women. They are by far the largest group of ocean users, have contributed the least to the ocean emergency, and are among the most affected by it and yet hold many solutions for stewardship.

We would like that the Ocean Conference also recognizes, by introducing a new paragraph in its final declaration, the fundamental role small-scale fisheries play to eradicate hunger and poverty; to secure sustainable livelihoods and conserve marine ecosystems, and the priority actions that need to be taken by governments to ensure they continue contributing to economies, health, culture and well-being.

Now is the time to act!

Thank you very much.