



Governo do Estado do Rio de Janeiro  
Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro  
Reitoria

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be able to speak with all of you. Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro joins forces with the United Nations in defense of our oceans and the peoples of the sea. We warn that there are no healthy seas without rivers and also healthy lagoons. Therefore, we ask that all people who live in and depend on water resources be considered. And the guarantee that everyone has access not only to drinking water (already a challenge to be overcome for decades), but also access to productive means to exploit this very important food source. The challenge of UENF's institutional mission is to contribute to enabling social and economic development that includes all citizens. The wealth produced in the world is enough for us to improve everyone's lives. We have already reached a level of world wealth, both in financial resources and in scientific knowledge, which should allow us to produce without devastating and distribute sufficient economic means to allow every citizen of the world to have access to the conditions of a dignified life. Defending the oceans and the people who live off the sea is a duty of a society that wants to be human. Having clean and protected oceans and their known species protected is a necessity so that future generations can have access to all the wealth we still have. Therefore, the defense of traditional peoples must be part of the defense of the oceans, as recommended by Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), of June 1989. If we want to preserve the oceans, we must protect and recognize that all knowledge is important. That we all depend on the same planet. The people of the sea, or of the waters, are carriers of ancestral knowledge and its transmission requires decades and, however, we run the risk of losing it in years.

In this context, UENF has been running the Pescarte Project since 2014, which is a public policy whose main objective is to strengthen the social organization of artisanal fishing communities, through the generation of work and income. The project is justified by the precarious situation in which artisanal fishermen live, a situation of vulnerability common throughout the world. Fishing communities have lost their territories to pollution, to the oil industry, to industrial fishing and do not receive the proper government support to strengthen the fish production chain. Most sell their fish at an unfair price, as they have nowhere to process and store what they catch. The Pescarte project seeks to strengthen social organization, through the generation of employment and income, with the implementation of projects such as mariculture units, processing and storage of fish, which operate under the principles of solidarity economy and cooperativism. Although the challenges are many, we mobilized fishing communities in 10 municipalities in the State of Rio de Janeiro and since 2014 we have promoted greater participation of these groups in public environmental management. Project participants have occupied important spaces in the management of their territories, such as: river basin committees, environmental councils, among others.

We want to learn from other experiences around the world and share our experience started in 2014. In our view, protecting artisanal fishing communities is one of the fundamental conditions for maintaining the sustainability of the oceans.

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