Supporting the call to action from artisanal fisheries

Written statement the UN Ocean Conference 2022

The Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA) is a platform of European and African-based organizations that, since 1992, raises awareness about the impacts of EU policies on third countries artisanal fishing communities. Artisanal small-scale fishers (SSF) are the most numerous ocean users, and their major contributions to livelihoods, employment, food security and revenue, stand in contrast to their marginalisation in decision-making.

CFFA supports the Call to Action from artisanal fishers organisations from Africa, Americas, Pacific, Asia and Europe to decision makers present in Lisbon for the UN Ocean Conference 2022

https://www.cffacape.org/ssf-call-to-action

In the face of climate change and other crisis, to ensure resilient fishing communities, SSF require secure and preferential access to healthy oceans resources and to markets to effectively play their key roles as guardians of the ocean and contributors to food security and nutrition. UNOC’s declaration, entitled ‘Our ocean, our future, our responsibility’, should therefore duly recognise the vast contribution that small-scale fisheries make to food security, employment, income and ocean protection.

The focus of the 2022 Ocean Conference on innovation should recognize the effective innovations, based on local and traditional knowledge, introduced by artisanal fishing communities, to tackle key challenges such as improving fisheries management, improving working and living conditions, accessing good quality raw material, or making better use of renewable energy, particularly for fish processing activities. These innovations are also helping coastal fisheries dependent communities to become more resilient.

We are deeply concerned about the blue acceleration, i.e., the race among diverse and often competing interests for ocean food, resources, and space. We are particularly concerned about the fact that, in this blue acceleration, the voice of artisanal fishers is often dismissed due to epistemic injustice. As highlighted in their call to action, artisanal fishers are greatly concerned about the growing cumulated negative impacts of more powerful sea and land-based sectors, promoted in blue economy strategies (oil and gas exploitation, deep-sea mining, tourism, fishmeal factories), that jeopardize their future. They call for a precautionary approach to be implemented when it comes to new developments and projects undertaken as part of the blue economy.
On protection and conservation, although ambitions to protect larger marine areas is positive, it is of utmost importance to recognize, respect and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, to take duly into account their knowledge and traditional conservation and management methods, and to ensure that human rights are placed at the center of all conservation initiatives, as recently underlined by the UN special rapporteur on human rights and environment.