

# Elevating the Call to Action for Small-Scale Fisheries to the national level

Prepared by Vivienne Solís Rivera and Marvin Fonseca, [CoopeSoliDar R.L](#)

## A Call to Action

Ahead of the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 2022) in Lisbon, Portugal, the Confederation of African Artisanal Fisheries Organizations (CAOPA) and the International Network of Locally Managed Areas (LMMA) – which includes members from Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Pompeii, Fiji and the Solomon Islands – joined small-scale fishing organizations from Latin America and Europe and asked them to join in the preparation of a joint document called [A Call to Action for Artisanal Small-Scale Fisheries](#).

An intense work process, including video conferences and document reviews, resulted in the final text that presents a position that addresses the main actions faced by artisanal fishermen around the world. The Call to Action has been widely disseminated by fishing organizations and their allies in Lisbon but also during COFI-FAO Rome in an effort for governments and other organizations to integrate the vision of artisanal fishermen to the decisions on conservation of the sea and its sustainable use.

Small-scale artisanal fishing faces similar challenges worldwide: recognition of the rights of the sector, participation in decision-making, defending competition for space in the sea against industries that are promoted under the title of blue economy and the undervalued participation of the enormous work of women in the different value chains of these fisheries among others.

The Call to Action presents 5 key demands from governments:

1. Urgently ensure access to and co-management of 100% of coastal areas
2. That women's participation in fisheries be guaranteed and their role in innovation
3. Protect small-scale fishermen from sectors that compete with them in the blue economy sector
4. Make them transparent and accountable in fisheries management
5. Consolidate resilient communities to face climate change and offer prospects to young people

The Call to Action is one of the ways that small-scale artisanal fishers implement the [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#) (SSF Guidelines); guidelines that, together with

the [Sustainable Development Goals for 2030](#), have been signed by governments in their commitment to a more sustainable, fair and equitable conservation of the ocean.

The Call to Action being presented by the artisanal fishermen of the Mesoamerican region to national authorities and fishermen of the region is an indicator of the strength and importance for the development of the points contained in this document. It is extremely important that advocacy actions are carried out at the local level by the same actors in these territories. The conservation of the sea is a matter of global urgency and merits the implementation of concrete actions at the national and local levels.

Undoubtedly, the examples and advances in the Mesoamerican region motivate us to move forward in the implementation of concrete actions that integrate artisanal fishermen throughout the value chain, as well as the incorporation of men, women and young artisanal fishermen in all decision-making spaces about their marine territories of life, a space in which they have usually been absent from.



Photo: CoopeSoliDar R.L 2022. Rolando Ramirez and Maria Carrillo, co-coordinators of the Network of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Territories of Life, present the Call to Action to the Minister of Fisheries of Costa Rica.



Photo: SITRAMAR, 2022. Simón Alfonso Raylan of the Union of Sea Workers (SITRAMAR), presented the Call to Action to the Minister of the Environment of Panama during a visit of the national authority to the local community. A meeting was held with local fisher representatives in which two main struggles of the Gnabe Bugle people were presented:

- The review and adaptation of the restrictions on lobster fishing which were imposed in accordance with a regional agreement that was not consulted with them and which now affects their way of life and subsistence.
- Tenure and governance rights on the Isla del Escudo de Veragua (Shield Island of Veragua) where the ancestral activity of artisanal fishing has been carried out by its inhabitants throughout its history.
  - The Isla del Escudo de Veragua is a protected area in Panama and the Gnabe Bugle people are fighting for the national environmental authorities to recognize their rights to the territory and effective participation in the decision-making spaces and respect for their artisanal fishing traditions.



Photos: CoopeSoliDar R.L, 2022. Felicito Núñez, leader of the Garífuna people of Sambo Creek in the Caribbean of Honduras, presented the Call to Action to representatives of adult and youth fishermen from 18 coastal communities of the marine landscape.