

#### "CONSOLIDATING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH COLLABORATION AND ETHICS BETWEEN OCEAN SCIENCE AND RIGHTS HOLDERS"

#### CASE STUDY: BARRA DEL COLORADO, COSTA RICA

This Declaration is the product of a two-year collaborative work between the pilot project of the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability (Towards IPOS) and CoopeSoliDar R.L., aiming to collectively create a space for reflection and learning to better recognize the knowledge of rights holders engaged with small-scale artisanal fisheries indecision-making processes for ocean sustainability. The objective is supporting States in accelerating the achievement of international ocean sustainability objectives. In order to do so, it is necessary to include indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) together with environmental sustainability and social equity.

In this context, Costa Rica was selected to conduct a case study enabling a concrete exercise with the participation of representatives of small-scale fisheries, the Network Marine Areas of Responsible Fishing, the academic sector, and government institutions responsible for marine management and international negotiations. Our objective is to foster discussions and analysis to identify bridges that ensure the fair recognition and valorisation of the critical importance of traditional knowledge in decision-making processes about key marine conservation issues in Costa Rica, based on the following objectives:

- 1. Advance the development of a pilot experience in Costa Rica proposing conceptual and practical approaches to connect ocean sciences with the knowledge of small-scale fishers from Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities, while incorporating the perspectives of different stakeholders, including public institutions and academia.
- 2. Implement free, prior, and informed consent through a participatory and two-way engagement approach to develop a work plan that integrates local knowledge with academic actors. This approach will involve members of the Network Marine Areas of Responsible Fishing and marine territories of life to ensure a human rights-based approach to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, in collaboration with public institutions and the academic sector of Costa Rica.

The results, lessons learned from the case study, and the Declaration are presented at UNOC-3, in Nice, France.

#### BARRA DE COLORADO STATEMENT, by the Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen of Costa Rica

We, small-scale artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen, members of the Network of Responsible Fishing Areas & Marine Territories of Life, from 23 coastal and marine communities of Costa Rica, have gathered in the community of Barra del Colorado, in the province of Limón, on the 17th and 18th of February 2025. This meeting was made possible thanks to the support of CoopeSoliDar R.L. and the Towards IPOS (for International Platform for Ocean Sustainability). Representatives from the University of Costa Rica (UCR), Université Côte d'Azur, UTN, SINAC-MINAE, INCOPESCA and the Ministry of Foreign Relations also participated in this meeting.

This initiative is framed according to the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG-14), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the FAO Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries Sustainability, in the context of food security and poverty reduction.

On this historic occasion, we addressed for the first time the issue of traditional knowledge, science and the generation of public policies related to our territories and activities. In this framework, the Network of Marine Areas of Responsible Fisheries states the following:

### 1 RECOGNITION AND VISIBILITY

We demand that the Network of Responsible Fishing Marine Areas and Marine Life Territories be recognized as a legitimate entity that unites artisanal fishers across the country. We ask that our voices be given the necessary visibility, as we face development and conservation challenges that affect our territories without considering our participation or realities.



### CONNECTION 2

We demand that our deep and intrinsic connection with the sea be recognized, as it is essential not only for our food security but also for the conservation of the ocean and our well-being. This bond must be valued as essential for the sustainability of marine ecosystems and the survival of our communities.

# 3 RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

We demand to be recognized as rights-holders and not merely as generators of data and information without proper due acknowledgment. We call for our active participation in every decision that affects our fishing areas. Furthermore, we request that biological, social, and economic technical studies be conducted before making decisions that impact our activities, and that our organizations be granted prior, free, and informed consent.



### 4 CO-MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION

We demand to be co-managers of the research that affects us, based on principles of shared responsibility, mutual support, and respect. This approach must ensure our primary role in processes that lead both the improvement of our quality of life and the conservation of marine ecosystems.



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# RESPECT FOR 5

We request that the traditional knowledge and experience of people from fishing communities be recognized and respected, co-designing together with the communities protocols and procedures that ensure respect for the knowledge and wisdom of sea peoples, including Indigenous peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant communities.

## 6 RECOGNITION FOR KNOWLEDGE DIVERSITY

We demand the full recognition and valorization of the knowledge of the ocean and its resources brought by women and youth within our communities. We also request that our specific needs be considered to achieve transformative changes in our lives and in the management of our territories.

Elaborado con madera de pejibaye y cuero de animales silvestres como el zaino, iguana o venado.

#### 5. Jícara - Cua

se utilizaba como vaso, cuchara, plato y recipiente para jalar agua. Proviene del fruto del árbol de ifcara

#### 6. Jaba - Covcráñ

officada para cargar los alimentos, y en ella accidenta para cocinar. Se hace con bejuco negro de montaña.



#### 7 DISSEMINATION OF THE INFORMATION

It is essential that the information generated by investigation processes be returned to our communities. This information must serve as a foundation for developing actions and strategies that enable us to move towards the sustainability of our fishing territories.





PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

SPACES TO TAKE UP THE ACTIONS AND
LESSONS LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS
PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES WITH
DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS.

We recognize dialogue as a powerful tool for addressing the complex realities we face. Therefore, we urgently call for the establishment of formal participation mechanisms, including decision-making spaces, that could serve as models for other regions where artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen manage our fishing territories in a shared way.

## PREPRESENTATION AT THE UN OCEANS CONFERENCE

Finally, we request that our voices and experiences are heard at the next UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France. In this way, the initiative Towards IPOS and other international fora could benefit from our recommendations and guarantee equity in the generation of knowledge from small-scale artisanal fisheries will be ensured.



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