



Statement by Coastal 500

International Year of Artisanal Fisheries & Aqua Culture (IYAFA 2022) is a watershed moment to appreciate the contributions of small-scale fishers to local coastal communities and globally

April 12, 2022

We are **Coastal 500**, a **global Network of Mayors and local government leaders**, who have all pledged to work towards thriving coastal communities and surrounding ecosystems. Together we celebrate the recognition of small-scale fishers on a global stage through the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.

As coastal Mayors we are proud to support our small-scale fishers that are the backbone of local communities. It is with great pleasure to promote 4 of the IYAFA key messages and highlight its importance for our communities.

Environmental Sustainability: As custodians of shared resources fishers have a fundamental role in ensuring the responsible management and sustainable use of living aquatic resources and their supporting ecosystems. Combining local efforts to protect critical biodiversity with effective co-management for coastal fisheries, we can ensure food security, support the productive economy, and safeguard livelihoods.

Governance: Effective participation, supported by comprehensive data and information, in decision-making processes ensures that traditional knowledge and voices of fishers, fishfarmers and fishworkers and their organizations shape laws and policies relating to small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. We recognize that collective action and leadership serve as a motivating force for effective change, and that local leaders play a champion role in ensuring all voices are heard.

Food Security: Small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture have a fundamental role in contributing healthy, safe, affordable, and nutritious aquatic foods and products as part of global and local food systems. Sustainable fisheries are an integral part of our food systems transformation and have potential to develop in a sustainable, nature-positive way that demonstrates how local communities are critical to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG14).

Resilience: Fishers are among the world's most vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change. Policies and actions should support building resilience to these threats for long-term continuity of the sectors. The [latest IPCC](#) report notes that small-scale fishers are feeling the climate-driven impacts at unprecedented rates and impacting the economy as well as mental health and cultural activities. It is vital to counteract the inequalities and support small-scale fisheries to ensure social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability.

To see the full set of vitally important messages around economic sustainability, social sustainability, and gender, check out the [IYAFA Global Action Plan](#).

To conclude, we are honored to take this important moment to thank all of our small-scale fishers, to encourage you to listen to [fishers stories](#) and to support, and celebrate IYAFA by you. We're small in scale, big in impact.
