



## **Declaration of the Ocean's People Conference**

### **"Sovereign People care for the ocean commons"**

*Jakarta, the 29<sup>th</sup> of October*

Traditional fisher people, coastal people and people from small islands face a global threat: the selling off of ocean space, or in other words financialization and privatization under the banner of "saving the ocean". All these processes are included in the, so called, 'blue economy' which is discussed without the full participation of fisher people, during the "Our Ocean Conference", in Bali on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October. This event is attended by the Indonesian government, other country representatives, as well as private companies which pollute the sea, privatize and sell its resources, under the pretext of saving the ocean. However, the narrative of this conference and its 6 thematic subjects sound really ironic, as the private companies invited to discuss oceans issues are actually profiting from the ocean destruction, without taking any responsibilities.

Management of marine pollution is discussed blindly, without actually addressing the roots of ocean pollution: land and sea based pollution caused by extractive industries (coal, mining, oil and gas), waste water and households. The Our Ocean Conference naively addresses the problem of pollution collaboratively with the very corporations polluting the ocean. Marine pollution policy cannot be developed, if this process doesn't involve the people who are most directly connected with the sea, namely fisher people, and coastal and small islands communities, who are also victims of pollution. Marine pollution cannot be solved without discussing the corporate responsibility: plastic manufacturers and extractive industries are the one polluting the ocean. In fact, waste and water management public policies need to be developed properly, without privatization.

Regarding climate change, only false solutions are discussed at the Our Ocean Conference, such as blue Carbon which is nothing other than transforming mangroves into an obligation that polluting companies can trade to compensate for their greenhouse gas emissions. As a false solution, blue carbon commodifies mangroves and marginalizes fisherfolks and coastal communities, by criminalizing them when they reject the mangrove privatization. Meanwhile, this process will threaten various coastal communities whose upholding food sovereignty is based on mangroves. The main cause of climate change is fossil fuels, and this sector is still supported by the blue economy framework. While small-scale fishers are one of the main victims of the climate change impacts, they are never invited to raise concerns about climate justice in the decision making process.

Marine spatial planning through the Indonesian Zoning Plans for Coastal and Small Islands Areas (RZWP3K) should be able to protect fishing grounds, secure the people's livelihoods and access the fisheries and land for housing. But on the contrary, in the field, we observe that coastal spatial planning increases the enclosure of many marine areas and on other side is securing the extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas, a sector with already 9710 exploitation permits. If RZWP3K cannot protect their fishing grounds, fisher people will build a movement and develop their knowledge to fight against this marine spatial grabbing.

# REMBUG RAKYAT LAUT

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The government's policy on illegal fishing and regulation of fishing gear doesn't seem to be successful. The ship sinking ceremony is useless if communities are not fully supported to manage the marine resources themselves. The regulation on fishing gear has been decided without further efforts, sharply increasing the number of conflicts at sea. In the meantime, the government does not solve the root of the problem: the weak monitoring, control and surveillance of maritime resources, involving around 13 institutions and ending in a big waste of budget.

The government seems to forget that human rights protection frameworks must be implemented before any infrastructure development at sea such as ports, tourism, reclamation and many others. At the international level, Indonesia has consciously promoted itself as supporting the Small-scale fisheries guidelines in 2014, the only global instrument specifically protecting traditional fisher people and comprehensively covering the small-scale fisheries sector. The guidelines' commitment has already been elaborated into the Law No. 7 of 2016 regarding the Protection and Empowerment of Fisherfolks, Fish and salt Farmers but the government does not really implement it. The government already has a hard time implementing the insurance framework, which is still failing to reach the majority of the people concerned, namely fisherfolks and farmers in the archipelago. On the ground, fish workers are constantly victims of the low implementation of existing legal protections.

Fisherwomen need special attention, and are often absent from the maritime sector narratives, including the Our Ocean Conference which does not discuss at all the issues of women in the fisheries sector. Marine policy needs to clearly recognize the women, and to include them in the Law No. 7 of 2016 Protection and Empowerment of Fisherfolks, Fish farmers and Salt Farmers and its subsidiary. The government seriously needs to respect and protect the rights of women in the fisheries sector, first by understanding their real situation, re-think the central role of women and facilitate womens' participation in the fisheries sector and in the development of marine and spatial policies.

Traditional fisher people and small-scale fisheries in general are a solution to the destruction of the ocean. The issue of marine pollution will not be solved if it only deals with what happens in the sea, without solving waste management on land and without working together with the victims of this pollution: coastal communities. Fisher people, coastal people and small island people play an important role in responding to climate change by protecting mangroves. As food providers, fisherfolks and fish farmers are demanding food sovereignty as a real solution to save the ocean, an ocean where fisherfolks can practice their traditional activities, have access and control over resources they respect and protect. We need Food Sovereignty now!

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Regarding the issues quoted above, we state that

1. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia immediately has to prioritize the protection of traditional fisher people, coastal people, small islands people and fisheries workers;
2. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has to ensure the recognition and respect the rights of fisher women in national maritime policies, respecting high standards of women's rights;
3. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has to stop being part of discussions about financialization of marine resources and Blue Economy.
4. The global movements of fisher people and progressive civil society organizations immediately need to organize and empower people to fight at the global level against financialization and privatization of the sea;

On behalf of the organizers of the Ocean's People Conference:

KNTI, Bina Desa, Jatam, IGJ, IHCS, KIARA, KRuHA, Kontras, SNI, Solidaritas Perempuan, Gerak Lawan