

## **RIGHT OF REPLY**

As Presidents of the six small-scale artisanal fishing associations which gather 186 fishermen, we hereby state and emphasize that we support the creation of the Marine Area for Responsible Fishing and we request an explanation and a clarification of the false declarations published in this magazine on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2009.

In regards with the information which has circulated after the press release disclosed by Pretoma and a group of commercial fishermen who do not practice artisan fishing activities, it is important to clarify that Mr. Victor Rocha in this opportunity acted on behalf of the Civic Front of Golfo Dulce's Fishing Sector, group to which we do not belong since we are small-scale artisan fishermen.

The Golfo Dulce area has not yet been declared as a Community Fishing Area, nor it belongs to any type of management or conservation model program; that is precisely why we request, as small-scale artisan fishermen, the creation of the Marine Area for Responsible Fishing in Golfo Dulce (MARF-Golfo Dulce), as it has already been established in Palito of Chira with the request and support of the community. Our associations have already formally requested to Incopesca the initiation of the process necessary to establish the MARF in Golfo Dulce.

Since the year 2007, by means of the Incopesca's Board of Directors agreement number 434-2007, live-bait fishing in commercial boats was prohibited, and we, the 186 small-scale artisan fishermen represented by the undersigned, support this measure.

Furthermore, we are very glad that big scale boats, dedicated to capture shrimp with trawling nets in a consensus way left the area; this proves the maturity of the shrimp fishing sector, supporting conservation and responsible fishing projects which collaborate with the economic and alimentary security of our 186 small-scale artisan fishermen.

This exit of the shrimpers was made official by means of an agreement of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture and it is endorsed by an Executive Decree published in The Gazette last November 19th.

As small-scale artisan fishermen we clarify that in the Golfo Dulce there are already sustainable fishing arts being practiced, such as ground lines, hand lines, fishnets as well as others with low environmental impact; and our main interest is to completely avoid harmful fishing arts from being practiced in the area. We refute the declarations which assure that our sector needs training to use these fishing skills and technologies. At the same time we disapprove that we, small-scale artisan fishermen, are only allowed to go fishing three months per year, there is absolutely no restriction which prohibits us from fishing all year round. (Fishermen's request to clarify that they do not have any prohibition to go fishing any month of the year)

Using environmental friendly fishing arts, the Marine Areas for Responsible Fishing promote the conservation of species such as dolphins and marine turtles, as well as the preservation of the juvenile commercial coastal species and the sea beds. The conformation of this model implies a new attitude aiming towards the intelligent use of the marine resources, guaranteeing in the long term the way of living of the coastal communities of our country.

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