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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-second Session

Rome, 11–15 July 2016

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, BRASILIA, BRAZIL, 5–9 OCTOBER 2015

Executive Summary

This document contains an overview of the topics discussed at the Eighth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2016/Inf.11.

Suggested Action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- Endorse the proposed work plan of the Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies as presented in Annex 1;
- Provide further guidance, as appropriate, with regard to the work of the Department in the field of Aquaculture

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The eighth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA) of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Brasilia, Brazil from 5 to 9 October 2015 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil. It was attended by forty-nine Members of FAO, by representatives from one specialized agency of the United Nations and by observers from three intergovernmental and five international non-Governmental organizations. The full report of the session is provided as document COFI/2016/Inf.11.
2. Mr Rodrigo Roubach of Brazil was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Mr Hossein Ali Abdolhay of the Islamic Republic of Iran was elected first Vice-Chairperson. Norway and the United States of America were elected second and third Vice-Chairs respectively.
3. The Sub-Committee elected Mr Alistair Struthers (Canada) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the membership of Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Germany, Kenya, Norway and the Republic of Korea.

II. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SESSION

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture

4. The Sub-Committee (SCA) acknowledged the work carried out during the intersessional period covering a wide range of technical and policy issues and expressed their appreciation on the progress achieved, considering the limited financial and human resources available. The Members recognized the important role of aquaculture for food security and nutrition, stressing the need to make available guidance to systematically assess the contribution of small-scale aquaculture.

Progress reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries using the new reporting system

5. The Sub-Committee commended FAO on its efforts in developing and coordinating the new questionnaire on the implementation by Members of the CCRF, on aquaculture and culture-based fisheries. Members stated that the questionnaire can contribute to the development and improvement of national reporting frameworks and will be useful as a self-assessment tool. Members underscored the role and relevance of regional fisheries bodies and aquaculture networks in increasing awareness and the implementation of the Code and the monitoring and reporting of its implementation.

Report from the Secretariat of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade

6. The Sub-Committee expressed its support for the inclusion of the Report of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as a new agenda item and the cooperation between the two sub-committees. It was suggested that with the increased aquaculture production and growing trade, aquaculture should figure more prominently in the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

Towards establishing a Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Role of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in Advancing Aquaculture Development

7. The Sub-Committee supported the Draft Strategic Framework for strengthening the role of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in Advancing Aquaculture Development and identified seven priority areas for its future work including (not in order of priority): biosecurity; environmental interactions; farming and production systems; governance; inputs; socio-economic development; and technology transfer and training. Working documents for future sessions should identify how the proposed actions link up with the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) and overall Strategic Objectives of FAO.

Progress reporting on the Implementation of the Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification and the Evaluation Framework to Assess Conformity of Aquaculture Certification Schemes with the Guidelines

8. The Sub-Committee supported the efforts of FAO in developing the Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, the Evaluation Framework and the partnership with Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI). Several Members requested FAO assistance in capacity building, in implementing the Technical Guidelines and in developing national certification schemes. The Sub-Committee requested additional information on the interaction between the Technical Guidelines, the Evaluation Framework and the Global Benchmark Tool, including more specific details on the GSSI partnership.

FAO's Blue Growth Initiative and Aquaculture

9. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the role of FAO's Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) in promoting sustainable and responsible aquaculture development worldwide, showed strong support to the Initiative and noted the opportunities and challenges for its implementation.

10. The Sub-Committee recommended that the BGI should:

- focus on global cross-cutting issues such as governance including laws and regulations, research, innovation and development, production inputs including seeds and feeds, development of equipment and production processes;
- consider that collective water resources will have a greater role to play in providing food security in the future;
- focus on interactions of aquaculture with capture fisheries more comprehensively;
- focus not only on strategies to reduce negative impacts of aquaculture, but also maximize the positive effects from aquaculture on the environment such as through bivalves and seaweed farming;
- increase the number of participating countries in the piloting phase of the BGI;
- take account of social license (assessment of public perceptions of aquaculture).

Research and Education for Aquaculture Development

11. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the important role that aquaculture education and research can contribute to the development of sustainable aquaculture, and emphasized that aquaculture should have a major thrust from "producing more" to "producing more with less" as a result of resource constraints.

12. The Committee was informed that the Republic of Korea has proposed to establish the FAO World Fisheries University as an independent institution under Article XV of the FAO Constitution. The proposal, together with the FAO feasibility study, will be submitted for review by the relevant FAO Governing Bodies for possible endorsement by the FAO Conference in 2017.

Improving Livelihoods through Decent Employment in Aquaculture

13. The Sub-Committee recognized the importance of promoting decent work in fisheries and aquaculture and commended on-going efforts by FAO in this regard, whilst encouraging the Secretariat to push this work forward under FAO's Strategic Objective 3. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to involve relevant partners in its work and agreed that priorities of decent work promotion could include enhanced youth and women employment and entrepreneurship, farmer networks, access to markets, occupation and safety hazards, capacity development through, for example, South-South cooperation.

Efforts towards Improving Aquaculture Data, Information and Statistics: The Past, Present and Future

14. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of reliable and timely information from relevant sources on aquaculture, and expressed strong support to improve aquaculture data, information and statistics compiled by FAO. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO enhance collaboration and harmonization with the other relevant international organizations to facilitate better data collection and dissemination, and to avoid duplication. The Sub-Committee further noted the need to integrate the data collected from the first State of the World Report on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture into FAO's fisheries and aquaculture information systems.

Special Event on Contribution of Aquaculture to Food and Nutrition Security, Poverty Alleviation and National Economies: Evidence-based Experiences

15. The Sub-Committee appreciated the Special Event organized by the FAO Secretariat and recognized the importance of aquaculture for food security, poverty alleviation and national economies. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of increased production and efficient resource use as well as consumption of fish, and highlighted evidence-based national experiences of integrating aquaculture with other production systems such as rice or salt production. The Sub-Committee was informed that there are good examples promoting increased fish consumption and nutrition such as school lunch programmes and national advertising campaigns, and suggested that these examples should be more widely promoted.

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Ninth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture

16. Mr Hossein Ali Abdolhay of the Islamic Republic of Iran was elected Chairperson of the ninth session of the Sub-Committee. Mr Yngve Torgersen of Norway was elected first Vice-Chairperson. Cameroon and the United States of America were elected second and third Vice-Chairs respectively.

Any Other Matters

17. The Sub-Committee was informed of the discussions and recommendations from the first meeting of the COFI Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies convened from 1 to 2 October 2015 in Brasilia (summary in Annex 1, for further details see COFI/2016/SBD.7). The Sub-Committee noted the importance of Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in developing national strategies and facilitating sustainable growth of aquaculture, and recommended that FAO continue its work in this area, particularly with regard to providing capacity building.

18. The Sub-Committee considered recommendations of the “Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)” convened in Rome in November 2014, noted their relevance for aquaculture and stressed the importance of timely follow-up.

Date and Place of the Ninth Session

19. The Sub-Committee welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Ninth Session of the Sub-Committee. The dates and venue will be communicated to Members at the next session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI).

Adoption of the Report

20. The report of the eighth session of the Sub-Committee was adopted on 9 October 2015.

Annex 1. Conclusions and tentative work plan of the first session of the Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies

The relevance of the sustainable use, management and conservation of aquatic genetic resources (AqGR) for food and agriculture is relatively well known and documented, but there is still an urgent need to preserve and better manage existing aquatic diversity to enhance its contribution to food security, nutrition and livelihoods. Aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture include thousands of species, which are found in the world's oceans, seas, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, rice paddies and other wetlands, and also in aquaculture facilities in marine, brackish and fresh waters. Unlike other sectors, all wild relatives of farmed aquatic species still exist in the wild.

The establishment of the Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies (Working Group) and its terms of reference were approved at the 31st session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014, based on a request from the 7th Session of the FAO COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, and in recognition of the tremendous opportunities to increase food production and improve livelihoods from the responsible use, management and conservation of aquatic genetic resources and technologies. The establishment of the Working Group will assist and provide advice to FAO on matters concerning aquatic genetic resources and technologies, and will enhance international cooperation on aquatic genetic resource management. Following FAO standard procedures for the establishment of the Working Group, ten experts were endorsed taking into consideration technical expertise, and gender and geographical balance. These members will serve a two year term with the possibility of renewal. The first meeting of the Working Group was convened from 1–2 October 2015 in Brasilia, Brazil.

The Working Group developed a general work plan which includes the following activities: (1) Establishment of a web page devoted to aquatic genetic resources and technologies under the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture web site; (2) Assistance with producing the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; (3) Assistance with the FAO symposium on "Biotechnologies for aquatic genetic resources in light of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable resource use"; (4) Revision of definitions related to genetic resources in FAO glossaries; (5) Compilation of a list of the best existing guidelines and published material on management and transfer of AqGR; and (6) Development of a road map for countries on minimum requirements for sustainable management, development, conservation and use of aquatic genetic resources.

More specifically, the following steps have been agreed upon, subject to further advice and endorsement by the next session of COFI:

- First meeting held (Brazil, October 2015);
- Biography of Working Group members submitted;
- Shared directory established;
- List of relevant links and publications submitted;
- Web page established;
- Terms of Reference for the Thematic Background Papers reviewed;
- Technical assistance on the national reports provided;
- Advice on the analysis of country reports provided;
- Definitions on AqGR in FAO glossaries reviewed and improvements proposed;
- Draft SoW AqGR reviewed;
- Draft road map developed.
- Road map refined
- Promotion of SoW AqGR enhanced
- Linkages with the Ad Hoc ITWG on AqGR established
- Intersessional meeting (video conference, depending on funds) held
- Work plan revised (based on available resources)
- Second meeting (tentatively in the Islamic Republic of Iran, October 2017)

