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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 8.2 of the Provisional Agenda

Seventeenth Regular Session

Rome, 18–22 February 2019

PREPARATION OF *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

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CGRFA 17

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Sixteenth Regular Session, welcomed the draft report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Report). It invited countries that had not yet done so to nominate National Focal Points (NFPs) and submit Country Reports by 30 June 2017; it encouraged countries that had already submitted a Country Report to submit a revised version.¹

2. The Commission requested FAO to prepare a revised draft Report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (revised draft report), taking into account Country Reports, thematic background studies, information provided by international organizations, and the comments and recommendations provided by the Commission and its Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group). The Commission also invited countries to comment on the revised draft report and requested the Committee on Fisheries and its subsidiary bodies, as appropriate to review the revised draft report and provide inputs.² It requested the Working Group to review the revised draft report in light of all comments and inputs received.³

3. This document provides an update on the follow-up to the Commission's requests and shows the status of preparation of the Report. A proofing version of the Report is contained in the document *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – Proofing version*.⁴

II. BACKGROUND

4. At its Eleventh Regular Session, the Commission agreed that improving the collection and sharing of information on aquatic genetic resources (AqGR) is of high priority and included the preparation of the Report into its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW).⁵ At its Thirteenth and Fourteenth Regular Sessions, the Commission considered the scope of the Report and decided, at the latter session, “that the scope of the report would be farmed aquatic species and their wild relatives within national jurisdiction. Countries were also invited to provide a species list of nationally important aquatic genetic resources of capture fisheries within national jurisdiction.”⁶

5. At its Fourteenth Regular Session, the Commission also agreed on the structure of the Report⁷ and requested FAO to adjust the draft Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Reports for *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and to reduce the number of proposed Thematic Background Studies by prioritizing them in line with the agreed scope and focusing on the core issue of genetic diversity.⁸

6. At its Fifteenth Regular Session, the Commission endorsed a revised timeline for the preparation of the Report, an indicative list of Thematic Background Studies and cost estimates, and invited countries to prepare Country Reports for the Report with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The Commission also agreed to establish an *Ad Hoc* Technical Advisory Working Group (Working Group) specifically with the task to guide the preparation of and review the Report.⁹

7. The Working Group, at its First Session, held from 20 to 22 June 2016, reviewed a first draft report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It noted that it was a preliminary analysis based on a limited set of Country Reports, that a higher number of Country

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 39.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 40.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 41.

⁴ CGRFA-17/19/8.2/Inf.1.

⁵ CGRFA-11/07/Report, paragraphs 60–61.

⁶ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 76.

⁷ CGRFA-14/13/Report, Appendix H.

⁸ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 79.

⁹ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 63.

Reports was needed to finalize the Report and made detailed comments and recommendations with regard to the finalization of the Report.¹⁰

8. At its Sixteenth Regular Session, the Commission therefore invited countries that had not yet done so to submit their Country Reports, including updated versions, by 30 June 2017. By that date, 92 officially endorsed Country Reports had been received as listed in *Appendix I*. Importantly, the revised draft Report contains data from the 11 leading aquaculture production countries and all reporting countries account for more than 96 percent of aquaculture production globally.

III. STEPS TOWARDS THE FINALIZATION OF THE REPORT

Consultations

9. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies (COFI Working Group) considered the first draft Report at its second meeting, held on 19 to 20 October 2017, and endorsed the recommendations provided by the Commission's Working Group at its first session.¹¹

10. The COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, at its Ninth Session, held from 24 to 27 October 2017 welcomed the forthcoming Report, which, it stated, would facilitate identification of challenges and opportunities in the development, management and conservation of AqGR. Several Members noted that increased human and financial capacity will be needed to collect and manage information on AqGR for the Report.¹²

11. A revised draft Report was prepared, based on an analysis of all 92 Country Reports, and made available on the FAO website on 13 March 2018. In response to the Commission's request, FAO invited Commission Members and observers, at the beginning of March 2018, through circular state letter, to comment by 31 May 2018 on the revised draft report.

12. As the revised version of the draft report had not been available to the sessions of the COFI Working Group and the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in October 2017, comments were sought from the Members of these bodies in writing in March/April 2018.

13. In response to the Commission's request to also seek relevant information from international organizations, FAO developed a simple survey form soliciting information on AqGR from international organizations and distributed it to relevant organizations worldwide. Six organizations responded to the survey: the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), the Pacific Community (SPC) and the WorldFish.

14. The Commission's Working Group reviewed the revised draft report at its second session on 23–25 April 2018 and provided recommendations for its improvement:

- The Working Group highlighted the importance of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, specifically live gene banking, but noted the importance of maintaining appropriate levels of genetic diversity in conservation schemes to minimize, for example, inbreeding.
- The Working Group discussed the conservation methods used for stock enhancement, noting the importance of minimizing selection for farm conditions to prevent potential adverse effects in the wild population. It requested these topics to be addressed in the Report and its key messages.
- The Working Group noted the need for clarification in the Report of the concepts of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, especially with regard to in situ conservation on-farm and

¹⁰ CGRFA-16/17/10, paragraphs 8–14.

¹¹ CGRFA-17/19/8.2/Inf.4, pp.1–3.

¹² CGRFA-17/19/8.2/Inf.3, paragraphs 46–47.

through stock enhancement. The Working Group also noted the challenges of some countries to carry out *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation programmes, and recommended that the Commission request FAO to support countries, upon request and subject to the availability of financial resources, through technology transfer and capacity development.

- The Working Group noted the importance of open-source, peer-reviewed scientific literature as a cost-effective mechanism for sharing information related to AqGR among stakeholders. The Working Group recommended the inclusion in the Report of information on networks that address AqGR, e.g. the International Network for Genetics in Aquaculture and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean.
- The Working Group recommended that the impact of international agreements on stakeholders be more fully elaborated, either in form of text or a table, modelled after the existing Table 9.6.
- The Working Group recommended that FAO review the revised draft report to ensure clarity and accuracy. More specifically, it recommended
 - a. terms be harmonized throughout the Report, and that the Report adhere to established definitions, where they exist;
 - b. linguistic issues be addressed through copy-editing;
 - c. usage of descriptive categories be harmonized throughout the Report;
 - d. text, figures and table titles are accurate and match with their contents and original Country Reports; and
 - e. findings are attributed correctly to farmed species, wild relatives, or the broader AqGR.¹³

15. These recommendations together with feedback provided by Commission Members, international organizations and members of the COFI Working Group, were incorporated into a further version of the draft report, which was presented as session background document to COFI at its 33rd Session.¹⁴ The Committee welcomed the draft report and recommended its finalization by the Secretariat and wide distribution. The Committee thanked the COFI Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies and the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for their work in developing the report. The Committee further recommended that FAO develop a global information system, including a registry of species, to monitor and assess the status of aquatic genetic resources relevant to aquaculture¹⁵

16. Further feedback received, *inter alia*, from the Commission Secretariat and Members of the COFI Working Group were incorporated into a final revision of the document to produce the document *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – Proofing version*.¹⁶

¹³ CGRFA-17/19/8.1, paragraphs 17–21.

¹⁴ COFI/2018/SBD.7.

¹⁵ CGRFA-17/19/8.2/Inf.2, paragraphs 38–39.

¹⁶ CGRFA-17/19/8.2/Inf.1.

Thematic Background Studies

17. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, endorsed an indicative list of Thematic Background Studies to address specific aspects of the Report.¹⁷ The approved Thematic Background Studies have been reviewed, edited and made available, for review by the COFI Working Group and the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.¹⁸ Selected material from these studies has been incorporated into relevant sections of the revised draft Report. These studies, along with the Country Reports, include information on the use of AqGR and on the numbers of aquatic species for food and agriculture that often have not previously been reported to FAO.

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

18. The Commission may wish to:

- acknowledge the progress made in the preparation of *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;
- take note of the proofing version of *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, and provide comments on the key findings presented;
- request FAO to finalize and launch *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and an in brief summary of it in 2019;
- recommend the wide distribution of the Report and the in brief summary.

¹⁷ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 60.

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/aquatic-genetic-resources/background/sow/background-studies/en/>

APPENDIX I

COUNTRIES THAT SUBMITTED REPORTS FOR THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE¹⁹

Africa	Latin America and the Caribbean	Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania
Algeria	Argentina	Armenia	Belgium	Canada	Australia
Benin	Belize	Bangladesh	Bulgaria	United States of America	Fiji
Burkina Faso	Brazil	Bhutan	Croatia		Kiribati
Burundi	Chile	Cambodia	Czechia		Palau
Cabo Verde	Colombia	China	Denmark		Samoa
Cameroon	Costa Rica	Cyprus	Estonia		Tonga
Chad	Cuba	Georgia	Finland		Vanuatu
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Dominican Republic	India	Germany		
Djibouti	Ecuador	Indonesia	Hungary		
Egypt	El Salvador	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Latvia		
Ghana	Guatemala	Iraq	Netherlands		
Kenya	Honduras	Japan	Norway		
Madagascar	Mexico	Kazakhstan	Poland		
Malawi	Nicaragua	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Romania		
Morocco	Panama	Malaysia	Slovenia		
Mozambique	Paraguay	Philippines	Sweden		
Niger	Peru	Republic of Korea	Ukraine		
Nigeria	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Sri Lanka			
Senegal		Thailand			
Sierra Leone		Turkey			
South Africa		Viet Nam			
Sudan					
Togo					
Tunisia					
Uganda					
United Republic of Tanzania					
Zambia					

¹⁹ Assignment to regions follows FAO's analyses of fisheries and aquaculture statistics. Details about countries and territories included in each geographical region for statistics purposes by FAO can be consulted at: UN. 2014. Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.