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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-first Session

Rome, 9-13 June 2014

STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AND PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS

Executive Summary

This paper provides a summary of the analyses on the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and its related instruments, by FAO Members, regional fishery bodies (RFBs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), since the last report to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2012. It reviews the role of the biennial flagship publication State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) in supporting the work of decision makers in general and that of FAO in particular, and draws attention to some specific messages concerning the current status, recent trends and prospects in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Aspects on combating IUU fishing, developments on issues related to safety at sea in the fisheries sector, counter piracy measures, as well as the management of bycatch and reduction of discards are also addressed. The proposed action by the Committee is set out in the bullet points below.

The Committee is invited to:

- comment on FAO's role in reporting on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture and how COFI can best contribute to this and benefit from it;
- comment on the extent to which the SOFIA publication serves this role and how it can be improved;
- provide guidance for FAO's future work in this regard;
- note the radical improvement in response rate to the questionnaire and encourage Members to maintain/improve their commitment in responding to the questionnaire for subsequent reports;
- advise, on the review of the contents of the questionnaire on the Code and the further development of the related web-based system taking into account paragraph 48;
- note the progress on the implementation of the Code and address the gaps and constraints identified on various components of the Code and related instruments;
- provide guidance on how to continue to broaden and deepen the implementation of the Code;
- note developments on the status and implementation of international instruments and efforts

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to combat IUU fishing;

- note progress concerning safety at sea in the fisheries sector, including through cooperation between FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO); and
- note the progress made and advise on how to accelerate and broaden the effective implementation of the International Guidelines for Bycatch management and Reduction of Discards.

PART I

STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

1. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication has traditionally been produced and launched at COFI just before the Session. Recognizing the relevance of the subject of the state of world fisheries and aquaculture to the work of COFI, it was first decided to include a dedicated item in the Agenda for the Thirtieth Session of COFI.
2. The purpose of the present is to a) consider the role of the SOFIA publication in supporting the work of decision makers in general and that of FAO in particular and b) to present key information in SOFIA 2014 concerning the current status, recent trends and prospects in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
3. This premier advocacy document intends to provide a useful tool for facilitating a comprehensive, objective and global view of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, particularly emerging issues. SOFIA 2014 will be the eleventh edition in the biennial series which started with SOFIA 1994.

Role and influence of SOFIA publication

4. At the Thirtieth Session of COFI the influence, utility and evaluations of past SOFIA publications were reported. Building on the reviews cited, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has undertaken an in-depth analysis on the impact of SOFIA, in partnership with Dalhousie University of Halifax Nova Scotia, as part of a project under the 'Environmental Information: Use and Influence' initiative¹ for which it is planned to produce a FAO Circular in 2015.
5. As reported in an overview conducted in July 2013², preliminary indicators point to a clear and growing interest in SOFIA as measured by media and citation analysis as well as web traffic.
6. Generally speaking, media coverage has grown over the last issues. For the 2012 issue, tracked news and online media coverage totalled nearly 385 reports in various FAO languages in the days just following the launch of SOFIA, with some 60 in top tier news outlets, as well as a dozen of multilingual radio and television interviews. Social media which was used for the first time with the 2012 edition, resonated strongly with online audiences resulting in a wide diffusion of specific messages and information contained within the SOFIA document.
7. A preliminary citation and content analysis of SOFIA³ revealed 6454 unique citations for all issues of SOFIA, with a distinct increase over time when SOFIA editions are categorized by edition. Sources and publishers vary widely, indicating an extensive and diverse use of SOFIA information. Trying to gauge the influence of SOFIA on policy, the analysis revealed an initial total of 232 sources in policy contexts.
8. Web traffic has been increasing with every new issue, partially due to better metrics and tracking as well as the more proliferate use of the Internet as a major source of information. The overview notes that, unsurprisingly, traffic towards older editions tapers with the release of more recent SOFIA publications, however specific topics covered remain visited over time. This provides a solid indication of subject matter that continues to garner interest.

¹ See <http://eiui.ca/>

² Farmer, T. & Li, G. 2013. Investigating and enhancing the policy relevance of marine scientific information (especially grey literature) through multipartner collaboration. Case study: The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) – access and use. (unpublished).

³ Avdic, V. 2013. Measuring use and influence: an assessment of the FAO's flagship report The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. 73 pp. (unpublished).

9. While the Overview section attracts more attention than most other sections, searches also reveal an appetite for information on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries as well as notable interest in the FAO Fish Price Index, first mentioned in SOFIA 2010. For the 2012 edition, content generating most interest was the growth in aquaculture as a source of fish food along with the state of marine fishery stocks.

Some key information in SOFIA 2014

10. Total global capture production of 93.7 million tonnes in 2011 was the second-highest ever. These results should not raise expectations of significant catch increases. Rather, they represent a continuation of the generally stable situation reported previously. In 2012 catches of tuna and tuna-like species resumed growing and set a new record of more than 7 million tonnes and capture production of shrimp species registered a new maximum at 3.4 million tonnes.

11. Global inland waters capture production reached 11.6 million tonnes in 2012. Although its upward trend seems continuous, its share in total global capture production does not exceed 13 percent.

12. World aquaculture production attained another all-time high of 90.4 million tonnes (live weight equivalent) in 2012 (US\$144.4 billion), including 66.6 million tonnes of food fish (US\$137.7 billion) and 23.8 million tonnes of aquatic algae (mostly seaweeds, US\$6.4 billion). Farmed food fish contributed a record 42.2 percent of the total 158 million tonnes of fish produced by capture fisheries (including for non-food uses) and aquaculture in 2012. World food fish aquaculture production expanded at an average annual rate of 6.2 percent in the period 2000–2012, more slowly than in the periods 1980–1990 (10.8 percent) and 1990–2000 (9.5 percent). Asia accounts for about 88 percent of world aquaculture production by volume.

13. In terms of livelihoods, millions of people around the world find a source of income and livelihood in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The most recent estimates indicate that 58.3 million people were engaged in the primary sector of capture fisheries and aquaculture in 2012. The information provided to FAO still lacks sufficient detail to allow full analyses by gender but, based on the data available, it is estimated that, overall, women accounted for more than 15 percent of all people directly engaged in the fisheries primary sector in 2012. The proportion of women exceeded 20 percent in inland water fishing and is considered far more important – possibly as high as 90 percent - in secondary activities, such as processing and distribution. FAO estimates that, overall, fisheries and aquaculture assure the livelihoods of 10–12 percent of the world's population.

14. In the 2014 edition of SOFIA, in response to a request at the Thirtieth Session of COFI, the review of marine fishery resources considers whether stocks are fished at sustainable levels or not. Previously, FAO categorized stocks as non-fully exploited, fully exploited stocks or overexploited. The study shows that the fraction of stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels has exhibited a decreasing trend, declining from 90 percent in 1974 to 71.2 percent in 2011. Thus, in 2011, 28.8 percent of fish stocks were estimated as fished at a biologically unsustainable level and therefore overfished. Of the total number of stocks assessed in 2011, fully fished stocks accounted for 61.3 percent and underfished stocks 9.9 percent.

15. Overall, new highs have been set in the fisheries and aquaculture sector over the last two years. Fish is among the most traded food commodities worldwide. Fishery trade has expanded considerably in recent decades, as the sector operates in an increasingly globalized environment. Trade reached a peak of US\$129.8 billion in 2011, dipping slightly in 2012 to US\$129.2 billion. Consumers' tastes and preferences for fish and fishery products vary, with markets catering to demand for items ranging from live aquatic animals to a variety of processed products. In 2012, 76 percent of the quantity of fish and fishery products exported was destined for human consumption.

16. Developing countries continue to play an increasing role in supplying world markets, accounting for 61 percent of all fish exports by quantity and 54 percent by value in 2012. Their net export revenues (exports minus imports) reached US\$35.3 billion, higher than those for other agricultural products combined including rice, meat, milk, sugar and bananas.

17. At its latest session, COFI proposed that a specific section on the implementation of the Code be included in SOFIA. Much of the publication relates indirectly to the implementation of good practices in line with the Code. However, the present special section is the first of what will probably become a regular feature.

18. Selected issues in SOFIA 2014 cover a wide variety of topics. In small-scale fisheries it looks at how to promote the important role of fisher organizations as well as ways to reduce post-harvest losses. The document underlines how aquaculture can contribute to improving nutrition, particularly given the benefits of consuming fish products. It also emphasizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach to managing inland fisheries. The conservation and management of sharks is examined. Recognizing that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a major global threat to sustainable fisheries, SOFIA also explores key approaches to combatting IUU fishing. It presents the concept of “balanced harvest” which refers to a management strategy that aims at distributing fishing pressure (mortality) across all trophic levels to ensure the maintaining of trophic relationships across species and sizes.

19. Some of the highlights featured include: Fish consumption in the Asia-Pacific region as measured by household surveys; Key elements of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries in the Context of National Food Security for the fisheries sector; and Transition from low-value fish to compound feeds in marine cage farming in Asia Challenges and opportunities in the utilization of fisheries by-products.

20. The SOFIA 2014 Outlook section, building on the OECD-FAO Agriculture Outlook chapter on fish in the previous edition, examines projected fish supply and demand for coming decades. It also discusses assumptions used, issues that may threaten the sector’s ability to meet future fish demand, and preconditions for the international community to be able to meet the challenges. With a focus on the special role of aquaculture in significantly contributing to future demand for fish, the section concludes with a strong message that good governance is required to ensure sustainable growth and equitable distribution of benefits.

PART II

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS

INTRODUCTION

21. Article 4 of the Code states, inter alia, that FAO will report regularly to COFI concerning the implementation of the Code. This report is the ninth prepared by the Secretariat for COFI and is contained in three documents - Part II of this document (COFI/2014/2), COFI/2014/Inf.15/Rev.1 and COFI/2014/SBD.1. The information contained in the report has been supplied by Members, regional fishery bodies (RFBs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Secretariat.

22. At its Thirtieth Session, COFI encouraged Members to respond to the questionnaire on the implementation of the Code and supported web-based reporting for the questionnaire. COFI also supported gathering more information on regional efforts to implement the Code facilitated by a content review of the questionnaires for RFBs and NGOs, along with the introduction of web-based reporting for these entities.

23. In 2013, the COFI Secretariat developed a tailor-made web-based questionnaire⁴ for Members (in the 6 FAO official languages), RFBs and NGOs, together with a related database and information system, with inbuilt data management and data processing tools, useful in analytical and monitoring processes. The questionnaire online system is accessible through a dedicated portal on the FAO domain using unique usernames and passwords, and meets the necessary confidentiality, security and usability requirements. Whilst the contents of the FAO Member questionnaire remained practically unchanged, the format and contents of the RFB and NGO questionnaires were changed substantially, introducing a standard and more efficient reporting process.

24. For the 2014 report, 96 Members⁵ (49 percent of FAO Members⁶) responded to the questionnaire⁷, an increase in response rate of 71 percent compared to 2012. Nine Members reporting this year had never submitted a questionnaire in the past and an additional 8 Members reported this year for the first time since 2002. The greatest increase in response rate (more than trebled) was for the African (25 Members reported) and South West Pacific (9 Members reported) regions which had the lowest response rates before. A significant increase in response rate was also obtained for all other FAO regions, except for Latin America and the Caribbean which maintained a response rate above 50 percent.

25. The response rate for RFBs and NGOs increased by 60 percent and 175 percent respectively, since last submission in 2012, with a total of 24 RFBs⁸ and 11 NGOs⁹ completing the web-based electronic questionnaire.

⁴ www.fao.org/fishery/topic/166326/en

⁵ The European Union responded on behalf of its Member States, except for questions 18, 19, 20 and 32 which related to integration of fisheries into coastal area management and the flagging and / or authorization of fishing vessels to operate on the high seas.

⁶ In this report, reference to "Members" refers to the FAO Members who responded to the questionnaire and whose responses were taken into account in compiling the report.

⁷ The questionnaire was circulated to FAO Members, RFBs and NGOs by email through the Code questionnaire information system on 1st October 2013. Four "registration" reminders and four "submission" reminders were sent between 6th November and 13th December 2013. An additional notification was sent on 18th December 2013 on the extension of the deadline of 20th December 2013 to 15th January 2014. Completed questionnaires were received by email from Bolivia, Peru and the Republic of Guyana after the extended deadline had elapsed; these questionnaires were not submitted through the online system and the information contained therein is not included in the analysis.

⁸ APFIC, CACFISH, CCAMLR, CCSBT, COFREMAR, EIFAAC, FFA, GFCM, IATTC, ICCAT, ICES, LVFO, NACA, NAFO, NASCO, NEAFC, NPAFC, OSPESCA, RECOFI, SEAFDEC, SEAFO, SPC, SPRFMO, WECAFC. The Secretariat received a communication from NPFC informing that the questionnaire could not be completed and submitted through the web-based system since "the Convention of NPFC had not yet entered into force and the participants have voluntary interim measures".

⁹ CI, ENDA, FOS, GAA, GGAP, ICSF, ICSPF, MSC, NACEE, OPRT, PCT.

26. This document presents key findings on the progress of implementation of the Code on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire by FAO members, RFBs and NGOs. A detailed analyses of the information submitted, namely on the activities and applications of the Code at national level, as well as activities of RFBs and NGOs is presented in a supplementary information document COFI/2014/Inf.15/Rev.1. Statistical tables summarizing Members' responses are also made available on the COFI Web site¹⁰ and at COFI as a background document COFI/2014/SBD.1 to be read in conjunction with the information document.

FAO ACTION TO SUPPORT THE CODE'S IMPLEMENTATION

27. FAO supports the Code's implementation in a variety of ways including through regular and field programme activities. Directed activities to support the Code's implementation, including regional and national workshops to deepen the Code's implementation, as well as ongoing work for the development of technical guidelines, the translation of some guidelines and assistance to elaborate national plans of action, are regularly undertaken by FAO.

28. In response to the recommendation of the independent evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code completed in 2012, FAO has committed itself to engage in more strategic and prioritized development and support to the implementation of the Code, improved outreach, closer articulation between the normative and operational work including capacity development, and more attention to the human dimensions.

29. In 2012 FAO published the Technical Guidelines on recreational fisheries, bringing the total number of Technical Guidelines in the series to twenty-eight.

SUMMARY ON THE PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE BY MEMBERS

30. Most Members have a fisheries policy and legislation in full or partial conformity with the Code and have fishery management plans in place for both marine and inland fisheries. The management measures most commonly cited in both marine fisheries and inland fisheries address fishing capacity and provide for the protection of endangered species. Least importance was given to ensuring that the level of fishing is commensurate with the state of marine fisheries resources and to the selectivity of fishing gear in inland fisheries.

31. Several Members have started to implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to contribute to its implementation. Globally, many stocks are being overexploited or are nearing full exploitation, as suggested by numerous reports that specific target reference points were either being approached or exceeded. More than half of the Members considered by-catch and discards as a threat to the sustainability of fish stocks and several have formal monitoring schemes for bycatch and discards in place and /or have implemented management measures to minimize bycatch and discards.

32. Generally, the control of fishing operations, through various means, within EEZs is reported strong while less so in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Members appear to be increasingly committed to implementing VMS.

33. Complete and enabling policy, legal and institutional frameworks for aquaculture and integrated coastal area management remain generally scarce. However, several countries have procedures in place to conduct environmental assessments of aquaculture operations, to monitor operations and to minimize harmful effects of alien species introductions, albeit all in need of improvements.

¹⁰ www.fao.org/cofi/cofi2012/64143

34. Food safety and quality assurance is given prime importance by Members, the majority of which have in place a largely complete and enabling effective fish and seafood safety and quality assurance system. Post-harvest losses, bycatch problems and illegal processing and trading, were generally highlighted as problems, but the majority of Members have promoted mitigation measures to address them.

35. Whilst several Members are involved in obtaining reliable estimates on stock status and in collecting statistics on catch and fishing effort, almost half of them reported that they had a lack of qualified personnel available to generate data in support of sustainable fisheries management. Almost all Members reported that management measures are undermined by data gaps. More than half of the Members routinely monitored the state of the marine environment and carry out formal research to assess/predict the impact of climate change on fisheries.

36. Several countries have taken steps to prevent the further build-up of fishing overcapacity, to reduce it and to prevent further negative impacts of existing fishing overcapacity on stocks, notwithstanding that only half of the Members have developed a National Plan of Action (NPOA) for fishing capacity. An increasing commitment by Members to implement the IPOA-Sharks, IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-IUU fishing is clearly evident. Three-quarters of Members are implementing plans and programs for both the Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF) and on Status and Trends of Aquaculture (Strategy-STA).

CONSTRAINTS TO IMPLEMENT THE CODE AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

37. Most Members reported that they faced constraints in implementing the Code, similar to those reported before. The top constraints were related to insufficient financial and human resources, incomplete policy and/or legal frameworks, inadequate scientific research, statistics and information access, and lack of awareness and information about the Code. The top ranking solutions proposed by Members were access to more financial and human resources, more training and awareness, alignment of policy and legal frameworks with the Code, improvement of research, statistics and access to information, and improvement of institutional structures and collaboration.

ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES AND NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)

38. The most common measures in existing marine fisheries management plans, identified by RFBs, relate to the prohibition of destructive fishing methods and practices, the protection of endangered species, measures to ensure that the level of fishing is commensurate with the state of fisheries resources, measures to allow depleted stocks to recover and the selectivity of fishing gear. The prohibition of destructive fishing methods, the protection of endangered species and the interests and rights of small-scale fishers were the most common elements identified for inland fisheries management plans.

39. Reliable stock status estimates are available for about 70 percent of the stocks managed by RFBs¹¹. The majority of RFBs which have developed stock specific reference points reported that they were being exceeded and / or approached. In cases where reference points were exceeded, steps have been taken to limit fishing effort, carry out research, adjust fishing capacity, strengthen MCS, and, in a few cases, close fisheries. Most RFBs reported that the precautionary approach had been applied to the management of fisheries resources within their area of competence. Historical data together with routinely collected data from logbooks, landings, and vessel and licence registers, are the most commonly used sources of information in the fisheries management process by RFBs.

¹¹ A total of 281 stocks managed by the sixteen RFBs which reported on this matter.

40. Several RFBs reported on progress made to enhance MCS, including the implementation of VMS, as well as on measures taken in relation to by-catch management and reduction of discards.

41. Although progress was made by the Members of respective RFBs in undertaking procedures of good practice in aquaculture operations, the need to further strengthen institutional technical capacity was, inter alia, identified as a prerequisite for further improvements in this area.

42. Efforts have been made by many RFBs on several fronts and in different ways to assist in the implementation of the IPOA-Capacity, IPOA-Sharks, IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-IUU. They also reported on their engagements in developing processes which improve the availability of information on the status and trends of the capture fisheries.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

43. The establishment of principles and criteria to implement policies for the conservation of fishery resources and fisheries management and development, was identified by NGOs as the most important objective of the Code which leads to the achievement of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. They also highly regarded the Code as an instrument of reference to improve the legal and institutional framework for appropriate management measures. Out of the eight substantive themes developed in the Code and in the relevant FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, fisheries management, aquaculture and fisheries research were the top three priorities identified by NGOs.

44. Incomplete policy and/or legal frameworks, institutional weaknesses, lack of awareness and information about the Code and inadequate scientific research, statistics and access to information, were among the constraints identified by NGOs to implement the Code. Their efforts in organizing national and international workshops, the development of guidelines, together with the promotion of standards based on the Code were considered to be most effective activities in making the Code more widely known and understood.

45. According to NGOs, the most common measures included in existing marine fisheries management plans, either fully or partially, include measures to ensure the level of fishing is commensurate with the state of fisheries resources, measures to allow depleted stocks to recover, regulation of the selectivity of fishing gear and the prohibition of destructive fishing methods and practices. They added that the prohibition of destructive fishing methods and practices, and the protection of endangered species featured most prominently in inland fisheries management plans.

46. NGOs reported that adequate procedures to undertake environmental assessments of aquaculture operations, monitor aquaculture operations and minimize the harmful effects of the introduction of non-native species or genetically altered stocks used for aquaculture, were either lacking or were in need of improvements.

47. Most NGOs have engaged in efforts to assist in the implementation of the IPOA-Capacity, IPOA-Sharks and IPOA-Seabirds. Some NGOs reported that they contributed to enhancement of the availability of best scientific evidence to support conservation, management and sustainable use of fishery resources, and other activities to assist in the implementation of the Strategy-STF.

THE WEB-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE AND DATABASE

48. The significantly improved response rate suggests that further awareness increasing, fine tuning of the questionnaire and development of the associated information system would be worthwhile. A number of Members, RFBs and NGOs submitted pertinent comments and suggestions in relation to certain questions and there would be merit in considering all of them in the next edition of the questionnaire. In addition, ancillary features and functions for the successful web-based system could be developed to further enhance usability, management of the database and information system, and data processing tools, based on the experience of the first run.

PART III

OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

ASPECTS ON THE COMBAT OF IUU FISHING

49. The entry into force of the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement is expected to strengthen international efforts to curb IUU fishing and, as a result, also contribute to strengthened fisheries management and governance at all levels. However, to be effective, Parties would need to move ahead with developing implementation strategies, supported by sound policy, legal and institutional frameworks, as well as operational mechanisms sustained by sufficient human and financial resources. As at 13 March 2014, ten Members¹² had deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Agreement.

50. Meanwhile, FAO has embarked on the delivery of a global series of regional capacity-development workshops, in collaboration with relevant regional and international organizations, to facilitate the accession to the PSMA in order to bring it into force as soon as possible and to ensure that it is accepted internationally in the widest possible manner. The workshops also aim to contribute to the development of national capacity to maximize the benefits available through the effective use of the Agreement and promote bilateral, subregional and/or regional coordination. Other regional initiatives on the implementation of port State measures and other mechanisms to combat IUU fishing have been undertaken by FAO regional offices and RFBs, along with NGOs which have increased their interest in recent years on the issue. FAO's guide to the background and implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures¹³ has been translated into Spanish and French.

51. In February 2013, the Technical Consultation on Flag State Performance, concluded THE "Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance" to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing through the effective implementation of flag State responsibilities. The agreed Guidelines are expected to provide a valuable tool for strengthening compliance by flag States with their international duties and obligations regarding the flagging and control of fishing vessels. The Guidelines are before the FAO Committee on Fisheries for endorsement.

52. Furthermore, FAO is working in close collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in combating IUU fishing. The IMO Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI) has recently introduced a standing agenda item on "Illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and related matters" with inputs from the IMO Secretariat, FAO, and NGOs.

53. In line with the guidance provided at the 30th session of COFI, and considering its importance in contributing to the fight against IUU fishing, FAO has proceeded with the development of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels. Progress has been made, particularly, in the development of a prototype system, in consultation with selected RFMOs and other international entities and taking into account existing initiatives. In addition, a strategy document, COFI/2014/SBD.2, has been prepared, to indicate the way forward for the development and implementation of the Global Record. Furthermore, in December 2013 the IMO Assembly agreed to a proposal, co-sponsored by FAO, to include fishing vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above in the IMO Number Scheme, thus making it possible for the IMO Number to be used as the Global Record Unique Vessel Identifier for such vessels. In order to support implementation of the Global Record, a capacity development framework has been developed based on regional workshops and technical assistance to individual countries in those regions.

¹² Chile, European Union, Gabon, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Uruguay have ratified, approved, acceded or accepted the Agreement.

¹³ FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular no. 1074

54. Additional information on international instruments to combat IUU fishing is presented in COFI/2014/4.2.

SAFETY AT SEA IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

55. The issue of safety at sea in fisheries was raised at the 2012 session of COFI where the Committee (a) welcomed the FAO/ILO/IMO collaboration relating to safety-at-sea in the fisheries sector, noting that it should be continued; (b) expressed satisfaction that a new safety standard for small fishing vessels had been completed and was being published and that new FAO/ILO/IMO guidelines to assist competent authorities in the implementation of voluntary instrument on the design, construction and equipment of all fishing vessels of all types and sizes had been completed;¹⁴ and (c) underlined the importance of work in relation to safety-at-sea¹⁵. With regard to cooperation with other UN agencies, the Committee agreed that FAO should focus on challenges relevant to its core mandate and must join efforts with partners, including better coordination with other intergovernmental bodies within the UN System.¹⁶

56. In 2001, FAO published Safety at sea as an integral part of fisheries management¹⁷, a paper that argued that safety at sea should be integrated into the general management of the fisheries in each country. In 2008, as part of a global study, FAO sponsored 16 case studies from around the world to review the issue of the relationship between safety at sea and fisheries management practices for fisheries or for a specific fishery in each country. The purpose of a synthesis report of those case studies, which is in the process of being published, is to document (globally) the relationship between safety at sea and fisheries management practices and to provide practical guidelines for fisheries managers on how they can help to make fishing safer.

57. The 2nd Joint FAO/IMO Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters, held at FAO headquarters in 2007, recommended that IMO, in consultation with FAO, should explore the possibility of preparing a draft Agreement relating to the implementation of the 1993 Protocol. Following the development of a legally binding instrument, an IMO diplomatic conference, held at Cape Town, South Africa, on 11-13 October 2012, adopted the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 on the Implementation of the provisions of the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977. In addition to improving safety at sea in fisheries, it is expected that the Cape Town Agreement, which could enter into force within few years, would become a useful tool in combating IUU Fishing, since fishing vessels falling under the scope of the Agreement would be subject to Port State Control. Recently, FAO agreed to IMO's request for FAO's assistance in developing and conducting regional seminars on the implementation of the Cape Town Agreement, the first ones being planned for 2014.

58. The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) was adopted at the 96th International Labour Conference (ILC) of ILO in 2007. The objectives of the Convention is to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels with regard to minimum requirements for work on board; conditions of service; accommodation and food; occupational safety and health protection; medical care and social security. ILC also adopted a resolution on port State Control that invites ILO to seek technical expertise of FAO and others on this issue.

59. Convention No. 188 will come into effect when it has been ratified by ten of the ILO's member States (including eight coastal States). ILO, which is concerned about the slow progress in ratifying the Convention, organized a Global Dialogue Forum in Geneva on 15-17 May 2013 to discuss challenges in the Convention's implementation, to evaluate how it can be used as a tool to address major issues in the sector, to share good practices and experiences, to report and review promotional activities, and to provide an update on the status of national efforts to implement and

¹⁴ Report of COFI 30, paragraph 26 (j) and (k).

¹⁵ Report of COFI 30, paragraph 66 (g)

¹⁶ Report of COFI 30, paragraph 63.

¹⁷ FAO Fisheries Circular No. 966.

ratify Convention No. 188. The importance of the sector for global food security and of addressing the problems of IUU fishing was highlighted and the Forum invited the Director-General of ILO to continue to expand strategic partnerships with other UN agencies and international organizations to foster policy and programme coherence in the fishing sector to promote the ratification and effective implementation of Convention No. 188.

60. A summary of FAO's activities that support the implementation of the Code with regard to safety at sea in the fisheries sector is provided in document COFI/2014/Inf.14.

COUNTER PIRACY MEASURES

61. On 15 May 2012, IMO held a Conference on Capacity Building to Counter Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. The major output of the conference was the Joint Commitments to a strategic partnership to combat piracy in and off the coast of Somalia, between IMO and other UN agencies, including FAO. At the 28th regular session of the IMO Assembly, which was held from 24 November to 4 December 2013, some delegations, mentioned IUU fishing in the context of illicit activities at sea and called for cooperation with other UN agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BYCATCH MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION OF DISCARDS

62. The Committee may recall that at the Twenty-eighth Session of COFI in 2009, FAO was requested to develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards (the Guidelines). And, at the twenty-ninth session (February 2011), COFI endorsed the Guidelines¹⁸ and further recommended that FAO provide support in capacity development and implementation of the Guidelines. At the thirtieth Session of COFI, the Committee suggested continued attention to bycatch and discards to ensure that they were addressed comprehensively in conservation and management assessments, within an ecosystem approach.

63. Following endorsement of the Guidelines, FAO and its partners have been proactive in developing a series of global and regional bycatch management projects as part of FAO's global implementation strategy. Elaboration of this work is provided in Document COFI/2014/Inf.13.

64. Notwithstanding progress made to date, more effective implementation of the Guidelines could be achieved through:

- Providing an update on discards in the world's marine fisheries and developing tools to monitor, integrate and evaluate discards as a component of food loss and waste in fisheries supply chains;
- Investigating incentives and disincentives linked to (i) uptake of bycatch and discard mitigation technologies by vessel operators, and (ii) the social and economic costs associated with implementing alternative regulatory frameworks;
- Greater technical assistance to support field testing and demonstration of bycatch and discard mitigation technologies including use of new tools such as electronic monitoring and reporting systems;
- Broadening the scope of FAO technical assistance to manage bycatch and reduce discards to other gear types where interactions with endangered, threatened or protected species occurs, such as gillnets and longlines; and
- Increasing dialogue with fishing vessel operators and resource managers and creating bridges between cutting-edge research and technologies, fishermen, processors, wholesalers, retailers, policy makers and consumers.

¹⁸ www.fao.org/docrep/015/ba0022t/ba0022t00.pdf

65. The Committee is invited to review Document COFI/2014/Inf.13 and to comment on how FAOs work to effectively implement the Guidelines could be accelerated and broadened to other priority fisheries where bycatch and discards are a concern.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

66. The Committee is invited to:

- (a) comment on FAO's role in reporting on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture and how COFI can best contribute to this and benefit from it;
- (b) comment on the extent to which the SOFIA publication serves this role and how it can be improved;
- (c) provide guidance for FAO's future work in this regard;
- (d) note the radical improvement in response rate to the questionnaire and encourage Members to maintain/improve their commitment in responding to the questionnaire for subsequent reports;
- (e) advise, on the review of the contents of the questionnaire on the Code and the further development of the related web-based system taking into account paragraph 48;
- (f) note the progress on the implementation of the Code and address the gaps and constraints identified on various components of the Code and related instruments;
- (g) provide guidance on how to continue to broaden and deepen the implementation of the Code;
- (h) note developments on the status and implementation of international instruments and efforts to combat IUU fishing;
- (i) note progress concerning safety at sea in the fisheries sector, including through cooperation between FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO); and
- (j) note the progress made and advise on how to accelerate and broaden the effective implementation of the International Guidelines for Bycatch management and Reduction of Discards.