

**Report of the nineteenth session of the**

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**COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

**Rome, Italy, 8-12 April 1991**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**



REPORT  
of the  
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES  
Rome, 8-12 April 1991

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## PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the Nineteenth Session of the Committee on Fisheries.

### Distribution:

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FAO Fisheries Department  
Fishery Officers in FAO Regional Offices

FAO

Report of the nineteenth session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 8-12 April 1991.

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#### ABSTRACT

The Nineteenth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, April 1991, confirmed the validity of the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development endorsed by the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference and recommended areas which required increased emphasis. It highlighted issues related to the sustainable development of fisheries and environmental protection including constraints and possible remedial measures in order to attain the sustainability goal.

The Committee welcomed the initiatives taken by FAO to enhance the role of women in fisheries development and endorsed further actions proposed for strengthening it.

The Committee reviewed the actions taken by the Director-General in response to the directives of the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference concerning large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/225 (as complemented in 1990 by Resolution 44/197) on the same subject. It appealed for the timely implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution and recommended that FAO should strengthen its work on gear selectivity and behaviour of marine animals in relation to fishing gear with a view to elaborating guidelines or a code of practice for responsible fishing. The majority of the delegations agreed that FAO should convene, in consultation with the member countries and international organizations concerned, an expert consultation on high sea fishing and subsequently an ad hoc governmental consultation, and report the outcome of the meetings to its next session.

The Committee endorsed the proposals that FAO should play a leading role in the coordination of international applied fisheries research including research planning and training of scientists.

In response to the directives of the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference, the Committee reviewed progress in implementing the field programme of FAO in fisheries. It agreed that the World Fisheries Conference's five Programmes of Action should continue to provide a valid international framework for fisheries management and development. It gave high priority to Programmes of Action No. I on the Planning, Management and Development of Fisheries and No. III on Aquaculture Development.

The Committee endorsed the Medium-Term Plan 1992-97 and approved the Summary Programme of Work and Budget in Fisheries for 1992-93.



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12 April 1991

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Nineteenth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, which was held in Rome from 8 to 12 April 1991.

Accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Maria de Los Angeles Moreno  
Chairperson  
Committee on Fisheries

His Excellency  
Antoine Saintraint  
Independent Chairman  
Council of FAO



CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION BY THE COUNCIL	ix - xiii	
INTRODUCTION		1 - 2
ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN		3
Statement by the Director-General		4
Statement by the Chairperson		5
Statements by Ministers Responsible for Fisheries		6 - 8
ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION		9 - 10
WORLD FISHERIES SITUATION		11 - 69
(a) Progress in implementing the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development		11 - 30
(b) Environment and sustainability in fisheries		31 - 53
(c) The role of women in fisheries development		54 - 69
SPECIAL ISSUES		70 - 98
(a) Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing		70 - 85
(b) Marking of fishing gear		86 - 89
(c) Fisheries research needs of developing countries		90 - 98
REPORT ON THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, ROME, 4-7 SEPTEMBER 1990		99 - 112
FIELD PROGRAMMES IN FISHERIES		113 - 129
(a) Progress in implementing the 1984 World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action		113 - 124
(b) Review of FAO-executed national projects		125 - 129

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
MEDIUM-TERM PERSPECTIVES AND PROGRAMME PRIORITIES FOR FISHERIES AND THE WORK OF FAO IN FISHERIES DURING 1992-93		130 - 159
ANY OTHER MATTERS		160
DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE		161
ADOPTION OF THE REPORT		162
APPENDIXES		
A Agenda	26	
B List of Delegates and Observers	27	
C List of Documents	51	
D Opening Statement by the Director-General	53	
E Statement by the Chairperson, the Honourable María de los Angeles Moreno Uriegas, Secretary of Fisheries of Mexico	57	

## MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION BY THE COUNCIL

### A. MATTERS FOR DECISION

None

### B. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

#### Progress in implementing the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development

The Committee confirmed the validity of the Strategy and found the principles and guidelines contained therein to be relevant in the design and formulation of fisheries management and development programmes. It recommended that environment and sustainability in fisheries, appropriate fishery management systems, removal of trade barriers and increasing national research capacity be given increased emphasis. The Committee concluded that the implementation of the Strategy had been satisfactory and successful and recommended that FAO should prepare a special publication summarizing all national reports and the debates and highlighting the benefits derived as well as the proposals for a more rapid and streamlined implementation of the Strategy particularly in developing countries. (paras. 14, 29 and 30)

#### Environment and sustainability in fisheries

The Committee stressed the important role FAO would have to play on the above issues at the international, regional and national levels. It accorded high priority to promoting the concept of integrated coastal zone management which needed policies and mechanisms to integrate fisheries conservation into the pattern of resources use at the river basin and coastal areas level. FAO was requested to develop guidelines for use in controlling the environmental impact of and on aquaculture and to combat diseases and limit their spread in wild populations. As regards inland and marine fisheries, the Committee recommended that efforts should continue to maintain fishing intensities at sustainable levels that were economically viable, ecologically sound and socially acceptable and that particular attention should be given to the ecological consequences. (paras. 33, 34, 41 and 42)

It was generally recognized that the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) would be an important tool in high seas and coastal management. In this connection, the Committee requested FAO to intensify its efforts to improve methods for data collection and reporting. (paras. 39 and 40)

The Committee was of the view that one practical aspect of the sustainability issue was in the application of more selective fishing gear and methods. Some delegations suggested that FAO convene an international meeting to examine the fish by-catch issue with a view to reducing catches of non-target species and contributing to sustainable development of fisheries. (para. 45)

The Committee concluded by emphasizing the importance of active collaboration between governments and between international organizations in order to effectively address environment and sustainability in fisheries. It stressed that all efforts should

be made by member countries and FAO to ensure that fisheries interests were well represented in the preparation for and participation in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. (paras. 49 and 52)

### The role of women in fisheries development

The Committee welcomed the initiatives regarding the above issue taken by the FAO Fisheries Department through its Regular and Field Programmes including the establishment of a Departmental Core Group on Women in Fisheries. In identifying a number of elements in gender constraints, it was of the view that extension and training were essential parts in the programme for women in fishing communities. It recommended that FAO should support opportunities for women in technical fields and a better integration of women into professional positions. It recommended further that the Fisheries Department should continue its effort in identifying appropriate data and social economic indicator. The Committee endorsed a proposal to establish a professional post in the Department to strengthen its capacity in promoting the role of women, subject to the availability of funds. (paras. 59, 63, 65-67 and 69)

### Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing

The Committee considered the action taken by the Director-General in response to the recommendations of the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference on the above issue and to meet the General Assembly request. There was general agreement to consider that the General Assembly Resolution 44/225 (as complemented in 1990 by Resolution 44/197) constituted a basis on which all members of the international community have agreed to work. The Committee strongly appealed for its complete and timely implementation in all regions. (paras. 71 and 73)

Several delegations stressed that the Resolution concerned only large-scale operations on the high seas and that it did not address the question of small-scale driftnet fishing operated in coastal waters by developing countries or any other types of fishing such as trawling, purse-seining, and longlining. However, several other delegations mentioned that any fishery, including small-scale driftnet fishing in coastal water areas, could have negative effects on fishery resources. (para. 74)

The Committee generally agreed that two important problems needed further consideration: (i) the selectivity of fishing practices and gear and the criteria for reduction of by-catch and (ii) the rational management of living resources including those of the high seas. The Committee recognized that FAO had an important role to play in promoting international understanding about the responsible conduct of fishing operations. It therefore recommended that FAO should strengthen its work on gear selectivity and behaviour of marine animals in relation to fishing gear particularly but not exclusively those types of fishing gear which are employed in high seas fisheries. Such a technical work could result in the elaboration of guidelines or of a code of practice for responsible fishing which would take into account all the technical, socio-economic and environmental factors involved. The Committee also agreed that FAO was the appropriate body to undertake the collection of more reliable and detailed statistical information on high seas catches and reporting of

statistical data differentiating between areas under national jurisdiction and the high seas. (paras. 81, 82 and 83)

Whilst noting that an expert meeting on the Implementation of the Legal Regime for High Seas Fisheries under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea would be convened in July 1991 by UNOALOS in cooperation with FAO, there was wide support to consider that the complex and complicated matters as indicated in the preceding paragraph should also be considered by an expert consultation and subsequently by an ad hoc intergovernmental consultation which should be convened by FAO and the outcome reported to the next session of the Committee. (paras. 84 and 85)

#### Marking of fishing gear

Noting that the Government of Canada would convene in July 1991 in British Columbia an expert consultation on the marking of fishing gear, the Committee agreed that the above subject should be discussed at its Twentieth Session. (paras. 87 and 89)

#### Fisheries research needs of developing countries

The Committee agreed that there was an urgent need for applied research in fisheries management and development and noted that there was very little funding available for this purpose in developing countries. It acknowledged that priority in providing support to research in developing member countries should be to strengthen the capacity of national institutions, specifically in the context of applied research of direct relevance to national needs and in accordance with national development policies. It was stressed by many delegations that FAO should play a leading role in the coordination of internationally applied fishery research, including research planning and training of scientists. (paras. 94 and 98)

#### Report on the Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Rome, 3-7 September 1990

The Committee noted from the Director-General's opening statement that the Executive Board of the Common Fund for Commodities had designated the Sub-Committee as the International Commodity Body (ICB) for fishery products. It therefore requested the Director-General to submit the Technical Assistance Programme for Fishery Commodities and Marketing Development as approved by the Sub-Committee as soon as possible to the Common Fund in order to initiate the process for securing financing. (paras. 101 and 102)

The Committee agreed that FAO's continued assistance was needed with regard to the arrangements required for a lasting institutional structure for INFOPECSA, INFOPECHE and INFOSAMAK. (para. 104)

Recognizing that the principal aim of the work of the Sub-Committee should be a contribution towards more fish trade without barriers, the Committee felt that FAO should speed up its working cooperation with GATT in relation to the identification of trade barriers and their eventual elimination as well as the elaboration of criteria for fair trade. (para. 105)

### Progress in implementing the 1984 World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action

The Committee agreed that the five Programmes of Action should continue to provide a valid international framework and guidelines for fisheries management and development and that FAO should continue to endeavour to identify viable projects. It appealed to all donors to make every effort possible to meet the target and expressed the wish that UNDP and other donors include fisheries in their priorities in their next programme cycle. (paras. 113 and 114)

Whilst noting with satisfaction that the distribution of funds among the Programmes of Action was now better balanced, the Committee requested FAO to increase its effort to obtain more funds for the Latin American and Caribbean region. (para. 115)

Among the five Programmes of Action, the Committee placed high priority on Programmes of Action No. I (the Planning, Management and Development of Fisheries) and No. III (Aquaculture Development). It expressed great concern over the reduction of funds for these Programmes and requested FAO to increase efforts in identifying funds for activities under these Programmes. (para. 121)

### Review of FAO-executed national projects

The Committee emphasized the need for increased utilization of national expertise, including National Project Directors and professional project personnel. FAO was requested to carefully define the terms of reference of the National Project Directors and FAO Technical Advisors and to intensify the training of national staff. The Committee recommended that projects be designed within the context of national fisheries development plans. (paras. 128 and 129)

### Medium-term perspectives and programme priorities for fisheries and the work of FAO in fisheries during 1992-93

In considering the medium-term perspectives and programme priorities for fisheries, the Committee agreed on the key medium-term objectives of the fisheries programmes as proposed by the Secretariat. It identified the areas of high priority over the medium term: the strengthening of activities in fisheries information and statistics; sound management practices within fisheries and the integration of fisheries with other activities using aquatic resources; aquaculture development; improvement of the quality of life and economic well-being of small-scale fishermen, fish farmers and their families and the promotion of their active participation in the planning and formulation of development activities; improvement of the quality of fishery products for both the domestic market and international trade; provision of policy advice and analysis to member countries; and strengthening of international collaboration in the management and development of fisheries. The Committee recommended that the above should be taken into account in the preparation of the Organization's Medium-term Plan for consideration by the Twenty-sixth Session of the Conference. (paras. 132, 134-141 and 143)

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the clear and concise presentation of the approach adopted in formulating the Organization's proposed Summary Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium. It, however, expressed concern that the fisheries proposals, for the first time, involved a reduction in the budgetary allocation of some 0.8 percent as compared to the provision in the current biennium, and requested that this be reconsidered by the Director-General with a view to increasing the fisheries allocation at least to the 1990-91 level. It expressed its general satisfaction with the fisheries proposals including the establishment of a new professional post responsible for aquaculture statistics and agreed that they provided a sound basis for the elaboration of the full Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization in fisheries for 1992-93.

(paras. 147, 148, 150 and 159)



## INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on Fisheries held its Nineteenth Session in Rome from 8 to 12 April 1991. The Session was attended by 87 members of the Committee, by observers from 7 other FAO Member Nations, one non-Member Nation of FAO, and the Holy See, by representatives of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of Unesco, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT, the World Bank and the European Economic Community and by observers from 14 other intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations. The list of delegates and observers is given as Appendix B to this report.

2. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Zbigniew Karnicki (Poland). In his opening remarks, the Chairman highlighted a number of prevailing problems confronting the fishery sector which needed to be solved through individual and collective efforts.

## ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN

3. As this was the first and only Session being held in the 1990-91 biennium, the Committee was required to elect a Chairman, a First Vice-Chairman and four other Vice-Chairmen. The Honourable María de los Angeles Moreno, (Mexico) was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Committee. Ms Concepción Soto (Spain) was also unanimously elected First Vice-Chairperson, and the Netherlands, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco and the Sudan as other Vice-Chairmen.

### Statement by the Director-General

4. The Session was inaugurated by the Director-General, Dr Edouard Saouma. The text of his opening statement is reproduced in Appendix D.

### Statement by the Chairperson

5. In taking the Chair, the Honourable María de los Angeles Moreno, Secretary of Fisheries of Mexico, expressed the wish that the Session would be fruitful and affirmed the important role of FAO in assisting its member countries in the development and management of their fisheries. She asserted that the Committee on Fisheries was the appropriate body to tackle major fisheries problems and that the views and recommendations of the Committee, being highly representative, had always had a strong impact on the development of this important sector worldwide. She stressed the validity and relevance of the Strategy and Programmes of Action approved by the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference and pointed out that the themes of sustainable use of fishery resources and the protection of environmental degradation were to be discussed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992. The Secretary of Fisheries highlighted problems of fish by-catch, especially in areas of high biological diversity and the need to undertake further studies on these issues, which FAO, in view of its wide experience, should consider of top priority. She commented that developing countries needed increased assistance in their endeavour to develop aquaculture to supplement production from capture fisheries. She concluded her statement by emphasizing the important role of intercountry collaboration both South-South and North-South to attain sustainability in fisheries. The text of her statement is attached as Appendix E.

### Statements by Ministers Responsible for Fisheries

6. The Honourable Akoka Doi, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources of Papua New Guinea spoke on behalf of the island member countries of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency. He drew the attention of the Committee to the importance of fisheries in the economy of a majority of countries in the South Pacific. The Minister pointed out that the various issues which would be discussed at the present Session of the Committee were of relevance to the South Pacific countries. These included sustainable fisheries development and large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing, the role of women in fisheries development and fisheries research needs of developing countries. He pointed out that whilst FAO had played an important role in the agricultural sector in the South Pacific, its involvement in the fisheries sector was limited; however, he mentioned the activities of the two regional and five national fisheries projects in the region. He was of the opinion that FAO should establish closer collaboration with the South Pacific Commission (SPC) and the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in projects and research activities for the benefit of South Pacific countries. He noted that FAO with its expertise could play an increasing role to assist countries in that region on a number of important fisheries issues such as the management of albacore tuna.

7. His Excellency the Minister of Fisheries of Peru congratulated FAO on its prompt response by providing the countries with a development tool in the context of the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference. He stated that there was a new cause for concern this year, the consequences of which would be as far-reaching, if not more so, than those of "El Niño": the irrational treatment of information on the cholera question by national and international media. This was seriously affecting the nutritional, social and economic objectives of the sector. He pointed out that analysis and samplings carried out by national and international laboratories had failed to show the presence of cholera in aquatic resources in general. The Minister stated that unless immediate steps were taken, there could be a dangerous attitude toward world fisheries, and called for a clear statement from FAO that fish was not a cholera-carrying agent, but that the required sanitary conditions had to be observed for fish consumption. He was of the opinion that this new cause for concern in the fisheries sector should be taken into account when reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development. Finally, the Minister requested that a second World Fisheries Conference be held in Lima, Peru, in 1994.

8. The Chairperson of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) expressed the sympathy of the governments of the region with their neighbouring country, Peru, and begged the international community to offer adequate technical and financial assistance to this State to overcome this emergency.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION**

9. The Committee adopted the agenda as shown in Appendix A to this report. The documents which were before the Committee are listed in Appendix C.

10. A Drafting Committee was appointed comprising representatives of France, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sweden and United States of America. It elected Mr Norbert Odera (Kenya) as its Chairman and Mr Gunnar Hoerstadius (Sweden) as Vice-Chairman.

## WORLD FISHERIES SITUATION

### (a) Progress in implementing the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development

11. This agenda item was introduced on the basis of document COFI/91/2 and related information documents. The report, which was the second on the progress achieved in implementing the Strategy endorsed by the 1984 FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, was prepared at the request of the Committee at its Seventeenth Session and the FAO Council and Conference sessions held in 1987. It was largely based upon the contributions received from governments, information provided by international organizations and regional bodies as well as studies undertaken by FAO. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the report contained instructive and valuable information which had been prepared in a frank and analytical manner.

12. It was observed that there had been an increase in the number of contributions received compared with replies received during the preparation of the first progress report four years ago. Most of the national reports received followed closely the suggested standard format, and many of the most comprehensive reports received were from developing countries, despite their often limited and heavily pressed staff resources. It was further noted that the replies received vividly demonstrated the increasing importance and relevance of the Strategy in providing a useful tool to both governments and international organizations as they sought individually and jointly to improve the contribution from fisheries to national social, economic and nutritional goals. The Committee acknowledged that fisheries was an activity of increasing importance for food and social and economic progress.

13. Many delegations described the actions taken by their governments to review or revise their policies and programmes for the fisheries sector in the light of the recommendations of the Strategy. In this connection, several delegations expressed their gratitude to FAO in assisting them to organize national seminars on fisheries policy and planning, and in updating their fisheries legislation. The Committee strongly recommended that these efforts, which had helped to raise the profile of the fisheries sector at the highest levels of government and to create a greater awareness of the need for action to fulfil the often neglected potentials of the sector, be continued.

14. The Committee confirmed the validity of the Strategy and member countries renewed their commitments to continue to promote their fisheries development policies and plans on the basis of the Strategy. The principles and guidelines contained in the Strategy were found to be pertinent and relevant in the design and implementation of fisheries management and development programmes.

15. In connection with international trade, many delegations drew attention to the urgent need for the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers which restricted the market for fish products. Notwithstanding this, one delegation stressed that it was not possible to give the same access condition to the developed countries and to developing countries.

16. A number of delegations expressed concern regarding problems which their countries had encountered in the implementation of certain aspects of the Strategy, due to the fact that the period following the 1984 World Fisheries Conference had been one of extreme economic difficulty for a number of countries, causing government action to fall short of

what was needed. Some delegations noted with regret that adequate international assistance had not been forthcoming to meet their needs.

17. Some other delegations, while generally also acclaiming the validity of the Strategy, suggested that its text be modified to accommodate changing circumstances and trends, and reinforced in particular with respect to environment and sustainability in fisheries, the role of fisheries within coastal area development and gender issues.

18. The Committee again emphasized the flexible and non-mandatory nature of the Strategy which incorporated all the subsector and represented the distillation of experiences encountered and the considerations to be taken into account when seeking the best courses for the management and development of the fisheries sector.

19. It was noted that there was a need for a balance between production and conservation of wild life and protection of the ecosystem. Hence, a multi-species approach of fisheries management in most cases would be more suitable than a single-species oriented system as the former was capable of maintaining the ecological balance in the oceans. One delegation observed that recent moves to restrict fishing in the oceans would create a difficult situation in obtaining optimum utilization of food products from the sea.

20. A number of countries are increasingly preoccupied with the threats to fisheries arising from pollution and other forms of environmental degradation. In this connection, a number of delegations drew attention to the oil pollution in the Persian Gulf in the aftermath of the recent conflict in that region and called for FAO's and other appropriate international organizations' assistance in the protection of the marine ecosystem.

21. A number of delegations also drew attention to the efforts being made by their countries to increase fish production within the limits of sustainable development. The importance attached to aquaculture development was noted by many delegations who referred to increases in production which were being achieved. The need for continuing support in aquaculture development was emphasized by the Committee.

22. The Committee noted that the review by FAO re-affirmed the vital importance of training and transfer of appropriate technologies so as to improve the self-reliance of developing countries in planning and implementing fisheries development and management programmes. It also welcomed the emphasis placed in the report upon the critical need for better and more comprehensive biological and socio-economic data. Special attention was called for strengthening national capabilities in the assessment and management of fisheries resources. In this respect, FAO's key role in providing training and advice was underscored, particularly in planning, in research and in the gathering, analysis and dissemination of statistics and other types of information.

23. A number of delegations pointed out that the formulation and implementation of the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development would depend on the existence of expertise and competence which FAO is invited to make available in order to provide the necessary technical support to developing countries in this regard.

24. Some delegations underlined the need for further advice and assistance in introducing and operating efficient monitoring, control and surveillance systems in many developing countries.

25. The Committee noted that inshore and inland fisheries were frequently heavily exploited and needed support to protect and enhance the socio-economic well-being of artisanal fishing communities which are dependent upon them; they made significant contributions to food supplies.

26. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the assistance provided to developing countries in the development of their fisheries, but noted that this had declined in real terms in recent years. Many delegations appealed to the industrialized nations and donor agencies to increase the level of their support and solidarity in the implementation of the Strategy.

27. A number of delegations noted the encouragement that was being given in support of private investment in joint ventures for industrial as well as artisanal fisheries and the Committee agreed that such involvement by the private sector should be promoted. One delegation also pointed out the need to benefit from experience in other countries in the field of privatization of state fishery companies.

28. The Committee noted that regional cooperation was important to enhance the contribution of fisheries to national economic, social and nutritional goals. Strong emphasis was placed upon international and regional collaboration with regard to the implementation of fisheries management and control measures. The role of FAO regional fisheries bodies as well as non-FAO bodies such as the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Organización Latinoamericana de Desarrollo Pesquero (OLDEPESCA), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Ministerial Conference for Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean was underlined.

29. Regarding the opportunities and challenges arising from extended national jurisdiction over fisheries, the Committee observed that for many countries new policies adopted in the light of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Convention had produced beneficial and positive results. These included access to new valuable resources, thereby increasing substantially the contribution of fisheries to national economic, social and nutritional goals, greater self-sufficiency in fish supplies, enhanced national priority to the fisheries sector, and greater benefits from regional and international cooperation. However, some other countries had experienced a negative impact of the new legal regime on their fisheries because of their loss of access to traditional fishing grounds and, in other cases, to distant-water resources. The Committee recognized that, overall, the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and the World Fisheries Conference's Strategy continued to provide a valid and useful guidance for the development of appropriate national fisheries policy and plans. Nevertheless, it was underscored that certain areas, such as environment and sustainability in fisheries, appropriate fishery management systems, removal of trade barriers and increasing national research capacity, required more emphasis.

30. The Committee concluded that the implementation of the Strategy had been satisfactory and successful. It recommended that FAO should prepare a special publication summarizing all national reports and the debates and highlighting the benefits derived as well as the proposals for a more rapid and streamlined implementation of the Strategy particularly in developing countries. It was noted that such information would also be included in the Special Chapter of the 1992 edition of the State of Food and Agriculture.

(b) Environment and sustainability in fisheries

31. The Committee examined document COFI/91/3, which addressed issues concerning sustainable development of fisheries and the protection of the aquatic environment. It was pointed out that sustainable development of fisheries implied not only the rational management and utilization of aquatic resources, but also harmonization with the aquatic environment and ecosystems. Industrial, urban, and agricultural development of the land, waters and shallow coastal areas could pose a risk to the maintenance of adequate environmental quality and biological diversity. Likewise, unsound practices in capture fisheries and aquaculture could be detrimental to the environment and to the sustainable use of aquatic resources. It was recognized that more careful balancing of short-term social, political and economic considerations with longer-term needs and goals was essential to the sustainability of the production capacity of the aquatic environment.

32. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to discuss these important issues. Whilst at the national level efforts had already been started, plans for integrated development and management had still to be elaborated and related technical capacities had to be developed. In this connection, technical and financial assistance would be required.

33. The Committee stressed the important role FAO would have to play in this context at the international, regional and national levels and commented on specific subjects in which FAO could become increasingly active in the future in order to promote sustainable development of fisheries and the protection of the aquatic environment.

34. The Committee accorded high priority to promoting the concept of integrated coastal zone management, which had been applied effectively in some countries. At the national level, inter-ministerial coordination should be established to deal with conflicts for the uses of the aquatic resources and their environment, taking due account of the need to ensure global sustainability and alleviate environmental constraints. Policies and mechanisms were needed to integrate fisheries conservation into the pattern of resource use at the river basin and coastal areas level, and thus encouraging an integrated management and development approach. The need to involve fisherfolk directly in decision-making was stressed.

35. It was emphasized that efforts should be made at all levels to highlight issues related to sustainable development, food security and the environment, in particular, the issues concerning multiple and potentially conflicting uses of coastal areas and watersheds. The resulting environmental problems should be included in fisheries training and education programmes.

36. The Committee noted that major efforts would be needed to alleviate environmental degradation and to reduce effects from other users on fisheries in inland waters and coastal areas (especially in enclosed and semi-enclosed seas). Land-based sources of pollution should be better controlled and dumping of non-biodegradable wastes (including loss and discarding of fishing gear) into seas, rivers and lakes should be avoided. Some delegations made reference to the recent large-scale oil spill in the Persian Gulf and to its possible effects on living aquatic resources. There was an urgent need for an assessment of short- and long-term consequences of the spill and eventually the establishment of a programme to rehabilitate the coastal environment and its resources.

37. Some delegations described the infestation of estuaries and lakes with water hyacinths and *Salvinia*, in particular in Africa, and the need for FAO and donor agencies' assistance in tackling this problem was highlighted.

38. The Committee referred to the impact of climatic changes on inland and coastal populations' habitats and resources. These impacts must be assessed and contingency plans to mitigate them should be prepared at national and regional levels. Particular attention should be given to coastal plains and deltas as well as to small island States which might be menaced by climatic changes.

39. It was recognized that the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) would be an important tool in high seas and coastal zone management. The system would be used to compile, at the national and regional levels, information concerning species, habitats, fisheries as well as socio-economic information and data. This would promote better use of the data already available. It would also improve the cost-effectiveness of new data collection and facilitate the scientific analysis required for intelligent integrated development planning and management.

40. The Committee was advised that FAO currently was not able to report globally on high-seas catches, as data were provided to the Organization by Member Nations and fisheries commissions by statistical fishing area, and differentiation was not made by distance from the coast. The Committee recommended that requirements should be modified and States whose nationals fish in the high seas should therefore improve their reporting to regional fisheries bodies and to the Organization accordingly. The Committee requested FAO to play a decisive role in the standardization of improved methods for data collection and reporting.

41. It was noted that in many countries aquaculture development was given high priority, and in some cases adverse effects of intensive aquaculture had been recorded on the environment and on the development of the sector itself. FAO could assist member countries in establishing guidelines for use in controlling the environmental impact of and on aquaculture and to combat diseases and limit their spread in wild populations.

42. The Committee stressed that action was required to improve the long-term sustainability of fisheries and to reduce waste. A number of resources were overfished resulting in severe biological and socio-economic consequences. Efforts should therefore continue to maintain fishing intensities in inland waters and in the sea at sustainable levels that were economically viable, ecologically sound and socially acceptable. Particular attention should be given to the ecological consequences in inland fisheries systems and in the high seas. Management of multispecies assemblages must be improved taking into account the requirements for the conservation of biodiversity.

43. Many delegations referred to the need for fisheries management decisions to be based on sound scientific advice and socio-economic analysis. However, several delegations stressed that the absence of full information should not be taken as reason for delaying action.

44. The Committee recommended that FAO should assist developing countries in the evaluation and development of underexploited fishery resources in order to reduce pressure on already overfished stocks.

45. The Committee was of the view that another practical aspect of the sustainability issue was the application of more selective fishing gear and methods. By-catches of non-marketable, undersized or non-targeted species, especially the protected species, were not wanted by the fishermen but fishing gear and methods were often not sufficiently selective. In this connection, some delegations proposed that FAO organize an international meeting to examine the fish by-catch issue. Such a meeting would analyse, on a scientific basis, the situation of incidental catches and contribute to reducing catches of non-target species and to sustainable development of fisheries, thereby augmenting economic and nutritional benefits from the utilization of fishery resources.

46. In this context, one delegation submitted its national programme for the exploitation of tuna and protection of dolphins which represents an effort made by the Government and the industry to achieve both aims.

47. Several delegations pointed out that trade barriers for some fishery products, based on unilateral environmental conservation policies, were threatening the economic viability of some fisheries.

48. With regard to the references to large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing in document COFI/91/3, a number of delegations stated that references to UN General Assembly Resolutions 44/225 and 45/197 should have also been included. It was noted that substantive aspects of this topic should be pursued under Agenda Item 5.1.

49. The Committee emphasized the importance of extensive cooperation at the regional level between governments as well as between international organizations with a mandate to address environment and fishery matters. More attention should be given to protection and restoration of water quality, to appropriate technologies in industry, agriculture and waste disposal, to selective fishing as well as to other measures promoting marine habitat conservation. The summit level initiative of the 1990 Baltic Sea Declaration aiming at the safeguarding and restoring of the marine environment of that sea was cited as an encouraging example in this context.

50. The Committee was of the view that, at international level, collaboration between international specialized organizations needed to develop a holistic understanding of the oceans and their resources and identify the interactions. Experience had shown, however, that a regional approach and sectoral specialization with direct involvement of users was required in order to effect the sustainable use of fishery resources and environmental protection. Collaboration with other organizations working in these fields on matters relating to data collection, research and training programmes for integrated development and management should be strengthened.

51. The Representative of the United Nations Development Programme expressed their support for the concept of integrated coastal management and, together with the Representative of the World Bank, drew the attention of the Committee to the newly-established Global Environment Facility (GEF), jointly managed by UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank and which had received pledges in the range of US\$ 1.5 thousand million from a number of donors. The Facility was prepared to give assistance in fields such as global warming, ozone depletion, biodiversity and marine pollution.

52. The Committee was informed that FAO had been given the lead by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Secretariat in preparing two

documents for the 1992 UNCED related to environment and sustainable development in fisheries. The Committee stressed that all possible efforts should be made by member countries and by FAO to ensure that fisheries interests were well represented in the preparations for and participation in this important Conference.

53. The Committee endorsed the proposals of the Secretariat, as contained in the summary and conclusions of document COFI/91/3, bearing in mind that discussion of some references in the document had been deferred to Agenda Item 5.1. Concern was expressed, however, on FAO's capacity to undertake the full range of these proposals within the present budgetary constraints, and an appeal was made that it be strengthened.

(c) The role of women in fisheries development

54. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document COFI/91/4, which reviewed prevailing patterns of women's participation in fisheries, aquaculture and related industries and identified the constraints affecting women as distinct from those which were common to the fishing sector in general.

55. The Committee noted that women were involved in subsistence, commercial fishing, gathering and harvesting activities. They were also employed extensively in fish processing operations at subsistence and industrial level. In many countries women took part in aquaculture as fry collectors, caretakers of rural ponds and fish cages and as hatchery technicians and researchers. In all regions women did most of the fish retailing in the small-scale fisheries sector. The greatest single source of income for women in the fishing industry was marketing. There were numerous examples around the world of activities of women which could be classified as fisheries support activities, both at entrepreneurial level and in the provision of extra labour.

56. The Committee recognized the limited scope for increasing the number of women in capture fisheries and that the actual number of employees had decreased as technologies changed and reduced the demand for their labour. It noted, however, that further employment opportunities existed in aquaculture and related activities.

57. The Committee noted further that women of rural fishing communities were engaged in a variety of non-fisheries activities to supplement household incomes. In many countries women were also engaged in professional activities such as research and education, management, administration and public services.

58. The Committee was aware that, due to cultural, traditional and sociological factors, despite their substantial contributions to the fishery sector, and in many areas, they did not enjoy the right to legal control over property and equipment for income-generating.

59. The Committee identified the following as important elements in gender-related constraints:

- lack of access to technical training;
- most extension and credit programmes are designed mainly to address the male sector of fishing communities;
- traditional and cultural bias;

- not being considered "fisherfolk" and thus being excluded from the statistical surveys used by policy-makers in the framing of fisheries legislation and sectoral plans;
- considered as unsuitable candidates for membership of professional organizations, and thus often overlooked for any re-training, (education programmes) or credit provision.

60. The Committee observed that, particularly in rural communities, women's work was labour-intensive and time-consuming. This added to the women's household chores which were essential to family survival. Therefore, careful consideration had to be taken in planning activities for women.

61. It was stressed that special attention must be paid to monitoring and anticipating the negative effects that technology could have on the fishery and non-fishery income-generating activities of women. Due to the marginality of their economic conditions, women could be forced into poverty as an unintentional result of development activities and technologies.

62. The Committee noted that efforts had been made by FAO to promote an increased awareness of the role of the various technical areas of its competence within the general policy guidelines laid down by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1979). In response to those directives and to the principles embodied in the World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development, the FAO Fisheries Department had also given special attention to the integration of women in development programmes. The Committee was informed that the increasing importance placed on the inclusion of women as a special target group, and on incorporating gender issues into FAO fisheries projects, had partly come about through changes in donor policies.

63. The Committee welcomed the initiatives taken by the FAO Fisheries Department through its Regular and Field Programmes, including the establishment of a Departmental Core Group on Women in Fisheries. It was noted that this Group had been participating actively in the Technical Committee established by the FAO Inter-Departmental Working Group on Women in Development. A number of delegations requested that the Secretariat report to future sessions of the Committee on its recruitment of women to the Fisheries Department and as field experts and consultants.

64. A number of delegations and international donors underlined effective strategies tested in the fisheries programmes they had supported, including women's participation in sub-sectors of traditional female engagement and entrenchment of target beneficiaries in all phases of the project cycle, as well as participatory development approaches.

65. The Committee was of the view that extension and training were essential elements of the programme for women in fishing communities, within which higher numbers of women extension workers should be trained and employed. Furthermore, in relation to credit projects, emphasis should be placed on women, and a higher proportion of the available resources should be directed to support their activities.

66. The Committee recommended that FAO should support opportunities for women in technical fields and a better integration of women into professional positions, in particular policy, research, field activities and extension, in order to integrate women's concerns in all aspects of fisheries at local, national and international levels.

67. Noting the importance of gender-specific statistics in formulating national policy objectives in sectoral plans and in project cycles, the Committee suggested that the FAO Fisheries Department continue its effort to identify appropriate data and social economic indicators.

68. The Committee drew attention to the need for strengthening regional approach to women in development and for adjusting the programme activities to the requirements of national institutions and local communities. An observer recommended that the selective way in which women were affected by poverty needed to be addressed in specially targeted investigation leading to project action. FAO was invited to take this aspect into account in its own programmes and to transmit relevant information as soon as possible to its Member States and to greater professionally interested public including recommendations on how to address the poverty issue in practical terms.

69. The Committee endorsed the proposal of the Fisheries Department to establish a professional post in order to strengthen the capacity of the Department in promoting the role of women in fisheries development, subject to the availability of funds.

## SPECIAL ISSUES

### (a) Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing

70. The Committee considered this item on the basis of documents COFI/91/5 and COFI/91/5 Supp.1.<sup>1/</sup> It was informed that at its Twenty-fifth Session in November 1989, the FAO Conference agreed that FAO was the most appropriate technical organization to study this matter. The Conference also agreed that this issue should receive the Organization's close attention and that FAO undertake further action, including analytic scientific work. Later, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 44/225 which *inter alia* requested FAO to urgently study large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and its impact on living marine resources and to report its views to the Secretary-General.

71. The Secretariat summarized the action taken by the Director-General to implement the Conference recommendation and to meet the General Assembly request. In this context it was decided (i) to set up within FAO a special Task Force on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing; (ii) to convene an expert consultation on the same subject; (iii) to include the matter on the agenda of several FAO regional fishery bodies, and (iv) to commission several studies and reports.

72. With respect to (iii) above, the Committee was informed that the Committee for the Management of Indian Ocean Tuna of the Indian Ocean Fishery Commission (IOFC) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) had, in their respective area

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1/ There were references to and recommendations concerning large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing in several COFI documents. A number of delegations proposed that all discussion of these references be consolidated and reflected in the sections of the Committee report addressing agenda item 5.1. These delegations also proposed and it was generally agreed that none of the recommendations made by FAO concerning large-scale pelagic driftnets in documents other than COFI/91/5 be taken as endorsed by the Committee as part of their endorsements on other agenda items

of competence recommended a moratorium on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas in the terms agreed upon by the UN General Assembly. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Director-General was actively following up the implementation of these recommendations. With respect to (iv) above, a special study was prepared by FAO for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and this contribution was noted with appreciation by the General Assembly.

73. There was general agreement to consider that the General Assembly Resolution 44/225 (as complemented in 1990 by Resolution 45/197) which was adopted by consensus, constituted a basis on which all members of the international community have agreed to work. The Committee strongly appealed for its complete and timely implementation in all regions.

74. Several delegations drew attention to specific aspects of the Resolution. It was in particular stressed that it concerned large-scale operations on the high seas and that it did not address the question of small-scale driftnet fishing traditionally conducted in coastal waters, especially by developing countries or any other gear type such as trawling, purse-seining and longlining. Some delegations pointed out that small-scale driftnet fishing as well as other fishing methodologies were a totally distinct issue not raised in the UN General Assembly which should in no way be mixed with the issue addressed by the UN General Assembly Resolutions. However, several other delegations mentioned that any fishery, including small-scale driftnet fishing in the coastal area could have negative effects on the fishery resources. It was also noted that the UN General Assembly Resolutions did not give a precise definition of the length of the nets which might be considered as being large. In this connection a few delegations referred to the maximum length of small-scale driftnets of 2.5 km which was embodied in the Convention for the prohibition of fishing with long driftnets in the South Pacific adopted at Wellington on 24 November 1989. Other delegations, however, recalled that it would be appropriate to adopt a geographical approach to this matter.

75. Attention was drawn to the importance of the provision of the General Assembly Resolution 44/225 encouraging those coastal countries which have exclusive economic zones adjacent to the high seas to take appropriate measures and to cooperate in the collection and submission of scientific information on driftnet fishing in their own exclusive economic zones, bearing in mind the measures taken for the conservation of living marine resources of the high seas. It was also noted that most small-scale driftnets were used by Coastal States within their territorial seas. It was further noted that large-scale driftnet fishing was conducted within the 200 mile zone of some coastal countries.

76. Concern was expressed about the reported reflagging of vessels by some private fishing interests which was contrary to the spirit and content of Resolution 44/225.

77. In the general discussion, some delegations, while reaffirming their commitment to Resolution 44/225 recalled that the moratoria recommended by this Resolution would not be imposed in a region or, if implemented, could be lifted, should effective conservation and management measures be taken based upon statistically sound analysis to be jointly made by concerned parties of the international community with an interest in the fishery resources of the region, to prevent unacceptable impact of such fishing practices on that region and to ensure the conservation of the living marine resources of that region. These delegations described the steps being taken to collect scientific data with a view to establishing effective

conservation and management measures by June 1992 which would limit to the maximum the possible negative effects of the gear.

78. Other delegations, however, stated that there was already enough evidence of the unacceptable impact of large-scale pelagic driftnetting on the high seas resources, both targeted and non-targeted, to justify a total ban of the gear on the high seas. Several other delegations emphasized that the onus of proving that the gear did not have adverse impact on the marine environment was on the fishing country. In the view of these delegations, additional research might simply create unreasonable expectations and should not be used to delay the imposition of the moratoria within the time frame set by the UN General Assembly Resolutions. Reference was made to efforts to develop a management regime for the albacore fishery in the South Pacific region which would not permit the participation of driftnet fishing vessels.

79. The observer from FFA informed the Committee on provisions adopted for the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution, stating that it was not the objective of South Pacific countries to relocate the problem of driftnet fishing from the South Pacific to other oceans. South Pacific nations remain fully committed to the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 44/225 within the time specified. The observers from OECS and ICCAT stated that their organizations had endorsed the UN General Assembly Resolutions for the areas falling within their areas of competence.

80. The observer from the EEC stated that the Community had supported the UN General Assembly Resolutions and envisaged regulating the type of fishing concerned. He underscored that it was a fact that the use of large-scale pelagic driftnets caused serious concern which had already been the subject of discussions and resolutions within international fora. He also recalled that the establishment of any valid and long-lasting policy should be based on scientific grounds and therefore welcomed the FAO initiative to extend research in this field.

81. The Committee generally concurred that, without detracting whatsoever from all efforts at timely implementation of the General Assembly Resolution concerning the use of large-scale pelagic driftnets, two important problems warranted further consideration: (i) the selectivity of fishing practices and gear and the criteria for reduction of by-catch, and (ii) the rational management of living resources including those of the high seas.

82. The Committee recognized that the Organization had an important role to play in promoting international understanding about the responsible conduct of fishing operations and recommended that FAO should strengthen its work on gear selectivity and behaviour of marine animals in relation to fishing gear particularly but not exclusively those types of fishing gear which are employed in high seas fisheries. Such a technical work could result in the elaboration of guidelines or of a code of practice for responsible fishing which would take into account all the technical, socio-economic and environmental factors involved.

83. It was also recognized that it had become necessary to be able to assess the actual extent of high seas fisheries by gathering more reliable and detailed statistical information on high seas catches. The Committee agreed that FAO was the appropriate organization to perform this task and that it should study the possibility of collecting and publishing statistical data differentiating between areas under national jurisdiction and high seas, taking into account the technical, statistical and socio-economic aspects involved, and with the collaboration of all relevant fishery bodies concerned where applicable.

84. Most delegations stated that due consideration will have to be given to the research needs and to the legal, institutional and policy aspects of high seas fishing, for which FAO has also responsibility. Other delegations stated that the UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (OALOS) was the appropriate forum for legal and policy guidance on high seas fishing issues. It was agreed that FAO and OALOS should continue to cooperate in their efforts. Several delegations referred to the expert meeting on the Implementation of the Legal Regime for High Seas Fisheries under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to be organized in July 1991 by the UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (OALOS) in cooperation with FAO.

85. There was wide support to consider that, in view of the complex and delicate nature of all the above-mentioned issues it would be wise to submit them first to an expert consultation and then to an ad hoc intergovernmental consultation which would report to the Committee on Fisheries at its next Session. It was recommended that participation in both meetings be widely open so as to gather the maximum of expertise and advice and that the draft agenda for these meetings be prepared in consultation with member countries. However, some delegations did not support the idea of an expert consultation and of an ad hoc intergovernmental consultation proposed by FAO.

(b) Marking of fishing gear

86. The Secretariat introduced this item on the basis of document COFI/91/6 describing the progress made since its Eighteenth Session with regard to lights and shapes displayed by vessels engaged in fishing and the marking of fishing gear for the purpose of identifying ownership, as an aid to managers of fisheries and those responsible for the protection of fishery resources and the environment.

87. In addition, the Committee was advised that FAO had convened an informal meeting of experts early in 1991, who had concluded that a system for the marking of fishing gear could be developed on the basis of existing technology.

88. The Committee was also informed of the intention of the Government of Canada to convene in July 1991 in British Columbia an expert consultation on the marking of fishing gear and of its invitation to FAO to collaborate.

89. The Committee considered that the subject of the marking of fishing gear should be discussed at its Twentieth Session, at which time the report of the expert consultation, as well as comments of the International Maritime Organization with respect to the safety of navigation would be available.

(c) Fisheries research needs of developing countries

90. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document COFI/91/7, reporting on progress with the Study of International Fishery Research Needs of developing countries. The document was introduced by the Secretariat and by the Representative of UNDP on behalf of the Members of the Steering Committee of the Study, consisting of the World Bank, the Commission of the European Communities, UNDP and FAO.

91. The Committee commended the Secretariat for including this item in the agenda and informing the member countries on the progress made so far. The Committee also

expressed its appreciation for the initiative taken by the Steering Committee and the 12 donors and financing institutions which had funded the Study.

92. The Committee noted that the Study was not yet available and agreed with the views expressed by many delegations that decisions on implementing mechanisms could only be made when the final document had been studied.

93. Several delegations stressed that this matter was part of the strategy relating to financing and requested financing institutions and donors to coordinate among themselves so as to promote investments and thus attain these objectives. It was reported by the World Bank that this was an ongoing activity.

94. The Committee agreed that there was an urgent need for applied research in fisheries management and development and that very little funding was available for this purpose in developing countries. It was generally agreed that whenever possible adaptive research would be conducted.

95. The Committee acknowledged that priority in providing support to research in developing member countries should be to strengthen the capacity of national institutions, specifically in the context of applied research of direct relevance to national needs and in accordance with national development policies. It was noted that research programmes by their nature required long-term support.

96. The Committee encouraged the development of regional research initiatives, pointing out that these should preferably take advantage of existing institutions and regional bodies under the direct responsibility of member countries. Cooperative research programmes and networks at regional level are a useful means for increasing TCDC and North-South exchanges.

97. It was stressed that in this context scientists from developing countries should be given more opportunities for basic and advanced training, and a number of delegations offered assistance in this regard.

98. In recognition of the role the Organization had had through its Regular Programme and Field Programme activities and its close collaboration with other international agencies, such as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, many delegations stressed that FAO should play a leading role in the coordination of international-applied fishery research, including research planning and training of scientists, while other delegations had a contrary view.

#### **REPORT ON THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, ROME, 4-7 SEPTEMBER 1990**

99. This agenda item was introduced by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Mr Peter Franklin (Australia), on the basis of document COFI/91/8 which gave a synopsis of the Sub-Committee's report and the full report provided under COFI/91/Inf.8. His presentation focused on two categories of issues requiring the Committee's attention:

(a) matters deriving from the Sub-Committee's review of world fish trade;

- (b) matters related to the designation of the Sub-Committee as the International Commodity Body (ICB) for fishery products by the Common Fund for Commodities.

100. In reviewing the situation of world fish trade, the Sub-Committee had expressed its hope for a positive outcome from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations in GATT and that GATT would make full use of FAO's technical expertise in the field of food standards. The importance of producing and maintaining high quality fishery products in response to market requirements and the central role which the network of regional fish marketing services created by FAO could play in this process, had been at the centre of the discussion. There had been a frank exchange of views on the problems some members were experiencing in exporting marine products, particularly tuna and shrimp, as a consequence of market access being denied because of incidental catches of mammals and turtles. The discussion had provided a valuable opportunity for the Sub-Committee to gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of these problems and their implications for international fish trade, a process which should contribute to a better understanding by all concerned of the full range of issues involved.

101. Referring to the opening statement by the Director-General at the beginning of the present session of COFI, that the Executive Board of the Common Fund for Commodities had designated the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as the International Commodity Body (ICB) for fishery products, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee pointed out that it could now obtain project support from the second account of the Common Fund. He considered the Sub-Committee now well placed to attract financial support from the Common Fund, a consequence of four years of concerted effort by the Sub-Committee and the Fisheries Department, leading to the formulation of six inter-regional and 15 regional projects covering all developing regions. The Sub-Committee had agreed to establish an Advisory Group on Projects in order to maintain the present momentum and to review progress with the development and implementation of the projects.

102. The designation of the Sub-Committee as the ICB for fishery products by the Common Fund for Commodities was noted with satisfaction and seen as yet another indicator of the Sub-Committee's high status as an international forum dealing with international fish trade matters. The Committee requested the Director-General to submit the Technical Assistance Programme for Fishery Commodities and Marketing Development as approved by the Sub-Committee as soon as possible to the Common Fund in order to initiate the process for securing financing.

103. Noting that the Sub-Committee had agreed to create an Advisory Group on Projects in order to facilitate monitoring and follow-up of project implementation by the Sub-Committee, it was suggested that the terms of reference of the Advisory Group should be interpreted in a flexible manner and reviewed and amended by the Sub-Committee if required.

104. The Committee noted the valuable work accomplished by the Regional Fish Marketing Information and Technical Advisory Services (INFOFISH, INFOPECHE, INFOPECSA and INFOSAMAK) and urged FAO and other donors to maintain and as far as possible expand their support and participation in these services. In this respect one donor country announcement for financial support was noted by the Committee with satisfaction. This would be required to strengthen the very important link which trade represents for the fishery production system. FAO's continued assistance was needed with regard to the arrangements required for a lasting institutional structure for INFOPECSA,

INFOPECHE and INFOSAMAK. In this connection, delegates from several INFOSAMAK member countries referred to the results of the Government Consultation on INFOSAMAK held in Rome on 4 and 5 April 1991. Appreciation was expressed for the willingness of Bahrain to institute INFOSAMAK as a regional organization under national law and with technical supervision by FAO. They requested continued support from the FAO Regional Office for the Near East along with that of the Fisheries Department and appealed to the present donors, UNDP and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, to continue their financial support for at least two more years to allow the new proposed legal structure to be implemented. The Committee was informed of a meeting of experts held in Abidjan on a draft convention aimed at transforming INFOPECHE into an intergovernmental organization. For this purpose, FAO and donor countries were requested to continue giving their technical and financial support to INFOPECHE whatever statute and structure were decided.

105. Recognizing that the principal aim of the work of the Sub-Committee should be a contribution towards more fish trade without barriers, the Committee felt that FAO should speed up its working cooperation with GATT in relation to the identification of trade barriers and their eventual elimination as well as the elaboration of criteria for fair trade. Several delegations referred to the impact on trade emanating from measures taken in importing countries with regard to protecting the environment. Countries disadvantaged by such measures expressed strongly their disagreement with what was seen as a unilateral imposition of market access restrictions despite their own efforts to reduce the undesirable but unavoidable incidental catch of non-target species. In particular, the scientific justification for the restrictions imposed was criticized by some delegations. Situations were mentioned where avoidance of the incidental catch of the non-target species would lead to sub-optimal or only marginal use of a resource or where the catching effort would be directed to juvenile fish or to other fishing areas with severe consequence for all fisheries which rely on this resource.

106. The Committee was informed that all countries participating in the tuna fisheries of the Eastern Central Pacific where the association between tuna and dolphin is not comparable with that in other fishing areas of the world had adopted regulations and programmes achieving substantial reduction in incidental mortality of dolphins and were spending substantial amounts of money on control programmes. While not objecting to the intentions of environmentalists there was strong concern about the order of relative priorities and developed importing countries were urged to take the economic impact of legislation into account to prevent unilateral environmental policies leading to serious market repercussion elsewhere.

107. The delegation of the country whose legislation had induced the debate explained that the legislation was not discriminatory. The requirements to be met by foreign fishermen were equal or less stringent than those for their national fishermen. The Committee was informed that amendments to the legislation concerned were being pursued on the dolphin issue by the administration of this country and that all efforts would be made to try to achieve a flexible application of legal provisions regarding both dolphin and turtle conservation effort. However, no assurances were given to the Committee on the prospects for the success of these efforts.

108. Most delegations considered FAO, COFI and its Sub-Committee on Fish Trade the appropriate fora for consultations on all fish trade related issues. Other delegations indicated that many conservation/trade issues were already being addressed adequately

through existing regional fora. The Committee was aware of the specific roles of other bodies and organizations and that no infringement was intended and duplication of work would be avoided. There was common understanding of the specific role of GATT as the trade policy body where decisions on trade-related disputes would be taken.

109. One delegation deplored unfair competition of importing countries stemming from subsidies and reference price policy measures. The possible use of quality control and sanitary regulations as trade barriers was mentioned and FAO was requested to study such regulations and ascertain that they are introduced for consumer protection purposes. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would continue to be concerned with work on commercial non-tariff barriers. One delegation indicated that it should not be limited to market access only but also cover aspects of access to resources. In view of the fact that this statement was made at the end of the debate, it was not discussed.

110. The need for achieving high levels of product quality was generally recognized and FAO's role in providing training in this regard emphasized. Importing countries were urged not to hasten introduction of new regulations since it would require some time before these could be fully adhered to by the industry in developing exporting countries. FAO and the countries introducing new regulations and methods should actively assist exporting developing countries to build up their capacities for adequate quality assurance schemes.

111. The observer from the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT) expressed the satisfaction of his organization on the designation of the Sub-Committee as ICB and expressed the hope that the set of projects prepared by the Sub-Committee be submitted as soon as possible to the Common Fund. The Committee noted that the project package contained two proposals which were intended to be executed by ITC. The ITC observer also reiterated the willingness of his organization to cooperate in the implementation of other projects that may be financed.

112. The Committee recognized the importance of the work of its Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and expressed its support for the recommendations presented in the report. Some delegations considered it of particular value that issues had been discussed from a commercial point of view and it was noted that private sector participation in the work had been manifest and should be encouraged further.

## FIELD PROGRAMMES IN FISHERIES

### (a) Progress in implementing the 1984 World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action

113. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document COFI/91/9. There was a consensus of support for the five Programmes of Action and agreement that they be continued to provide a valid international framework and guidelines for fisheries management and development.

114. The Committee expressed its regret that funds obtained for implementation of the Programmes of Action in 1991 were only about US\$ 14.7 million, below the target of US\$ 20 million it had set in 1989. Appreciation was expressed by the Committee for the generous support to the Programmes of Action by donors and of the catalytic role of FAO in mobilizing this support. However, it was agreed that FAO should continue to make strong efforts to identify viable projects and all donors were requested to make every effort

possible to meet the target. The Committee voiced the wish that UNDP and other donors could include fisheries in their priorities in their next programme cycle.

115. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the distribution of funds among the Programmes of Action was now better balanced. However, delegations from the Latin American and Caribbean countries expressed their serious concern over the allocation of funds between regions since their region's share had been as low as 4 percent in 1990. FAO was requested to increase its effort to obtain more funds for this region.

116. The Committee agreed that this agenda item, together with the item on the review of national FAO-executed projects, were of paramount importance and requested that these be advanced on the agenda for the next COFI session so that more time would be available for detailed discussions.

117. In view of the decline in funding for FAO technical assistance projects in fisheries, it was suggested that an independent evaluation of regional projects should be commissioned to assess their impact on the development and management of fisheries as this could have a possible persuasive effect on donors. Later, the Secretariat confirmed that independent evaluation of regional projects was already a standard procedure in FAO. With respect to FIPIS, which was regarded as a very useful instrument for exchange of information, it was suggested that the data sheets include a series of boxes that would provide more information, to relate individual projects and funding sources to different Programmes of Action. It was further suggested that FIPIS be advertised more widely by FAO to facilitate a better understanding of the status of development assistance projects.

118. The representative of UNDP expressed his satisfaction with FIPIS as well as with the appointment of a Senior Aquaculture Adviser and the absorption of other former activities of the ADCP under the Regular Programme. He further noted that the decline in the UNDP contribution from 1989 to 1990 indicated that UNDP was using execution modalities other than FAO. He suggested that the reason for this be discussed between the two agencies.

119. The significant contribution made by the Programmes of Action was acknowledged, and the Committee was informed that the Government of Japan had recently approved five project proposals totalling about US\$ 1 million, namely Tuna Interaction for the South Pacific and Regional Development of Coastal Fisheries Management System (PA No. 1), Workshop on Women's Participation in Fisheries Development (PA No. 2), Fish Disease and Diagnostic Programmes (PA No. 3), and Fish Handling and Processing in the Asia-Pacific Region (PA No. 4).

120. Like other delegates, the delegate from Israel observed that deep-sea fisheries of their countries had benefitted from good management, resulting from a sound knowledge of the deep-sea resources. The same result could be expected for coastal fisheries and therefore the governments of these countries would be prepared to consider providing training courses for beginners and for vessels up to 150 tons to candidates from developing countries as they had developed considerable expertise in this area.

121. The Committee placed high priority on Programmes of Action No. I (The Planning, Management and Development of Fisheries) and No. III (Aquaculture Development), but expressed great concern over the reduction of funds and therefore requested FAO to make every effort possible to identify funds for activities under these Programmes of Action. In

view of the importance of Programme of Action No. III - Aquaculture Development, particularly for the Africa region, many delegates expressed concern over the decrease in the allocation of funds under this Programme and appealed to FAO and donors to reactivate the African Regional Aquaculture Centre (ARAC) in Nigeria as soon as possible. It was also observed that funding for the Southwest Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP) had terminated recently and FAO and the donors were urged to give this Programme their support.

122. With regard to Programme of Action No. II - The Development of Small Scale Fisheries, some delegates felt that its effect on poor fishermen had been minimal.

123. The observer from the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency expressed his full support to FAO's five Programmes of Action and appreciation for the two fisheries programmes at present executed in that region, namely the Regional Fisheries Support Programme funded by UNDP and the Regional Aquaculture Development Programme funded by Japan. Further, he felt that issues on Asia and the South Pacific should be reported separately for the two regions at future sessions of the Committee.

124. The observer from EEC summarized the activities of the Community with regard to cooperation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture development which represents ECU 127 million. This cooperation concentrates on Africa with some activities in Asia. EEC cooperated with ACP countries in the preparation of a document providing guidelines for the preparation and execution of field projects in the sector of artisanal fisheries.

(b) Review of FAO-executed national projects

125. The Secretariat presented background paper COFI/91/10 on this subject. The Committee agreed that discussions on agenda item 7.2 could be combined with agenda item 8.

126. The need for base-line data at the beginning of projects in order to permit subsequent assessment of project impact on the beneficiaries, and regular and efficient monitoring, review and evaluation during implementation was emphasized.

127. It was further stressed that the formulation of projects should be improved by the inclusion of long-term sustainability aspects in the project documents, and adequate support to Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) activities.

128. The Committee emphasized the need for increased utilization of national expertise, including National Project Directors and other national professional project personnel. FAO was requested to carefully define the respective terms of references of the National Project Directors and FAO Technical Advisers, and to intensify the training of national staff. Adequate periods of transition between FAO implementation and full national implementation should be allowed before the termination of external assistance. For proper implementation of projects, FAO had been requested to make every effort to ensure fruitful cooperation between international experts and national counterparts.

129. It was recommended that projects should be designed within the context of national fisheries development plans. Donors were requested to support such carefully identified projects which had not yet been funded, in order to catalyze national development potentials.

## MEDIUM-TERM PERSPECTIVES AND PROGRAMME PRIORITIES FOR FISHERIES AND THE WORK OF FAO IN FISHERIES DURING 1992-93

130. The Committee noted that the FAO Conference at its Twenty-fifth Session in November 1989, after reviewing certain aspects of FAO's goals and operations, had decided inter alia to introduce a rolling six-year Medium-Term Plan covering three biennia. The plan would deal with priority orientations of the Organization's programmes and activities and would serve as a basis for priority-setting in subsequent biennial Programmes of Work and Budget. The Conference requested the Director-General to prepare for its Twenty-sixth Session in November 1991, the first version of such a plan, taking into account the views of Member Nations, especially those expressed at Regional Conferences, Council Committees, technical statutory bodies and in approved Action Plans. Document COFI/91/11, presenting the perspectives and programme priorities which will form the basis for the fisheries sector of this plan, was introduced by the Secretariat.

131. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the proposals for the Organization's work in fisheries in the medium-term had been elaborated within the framework of the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development and Programmes of Action. The views and recommendations of the FAO World Fisheries Conference had also been taken into account during the Eighteenth Session (April 1989) when the Committee discussed trends and prospects for world fisheries in the next 25 years and the future role of FAO.

132. The Committee agreed that key medium-term objectives of the Major Programme on Fisheries should be:

- (i) to assist in strengthening national self-sufficiency of developing countries for the better management and development of their fisheries, the conservation of aquatic ecosystems, and the prevention of environmental degradation;
- (ii) to support full participation and equitable sharing of benefits among all who are dependent on fishery activities, in particular small-scale fishing communities and small-scale fish farmers in developing countries, so maximizing the contribution of fisheries to rural development;
- (iii) to assist developing countries to increase the productivity of their fisheries through the reduction of by-catch and post-harvest losses, the development of products from underutilized resources, and reduction of production costs;
- (iv) to assist developing countries to increase their participation in international trade in fish and fishery products;
- (v) to assist in accelerating sustainable aquaculture development.

133. The Committee reiterated its view that in order to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources, FAO should respond to recent developments in world fisheries by promoting a more rational basis for capture fisheries and aquaculture development, by abating environmental degradation and by improving fish utilization practices. It also recognized that management decisions should be made on the basis of reliable scientific data and research on the biological, environmental, economic and social aspects of fisheries.

134. The Committee further identified the areas of high priority over the medium term.

135. FAO's activities in fisheries information and statistics should continue to be accorded the highest priority and should be expanded to provide more adequately data and to fund at higher levels. It should treat separately high seas and coastal resources as well as distinguish between inland fisheries and aquaculture production. It was noted that fisheries statistics formed part of the FAO's World Agriculture Information Centre (WAICENT). In this context, attention was drawn to the differences in user needs between fisheries and other sectors falling under FAO's mandate.

136. It was generally felt that sustainability of fisheries and related environmental aspects were assuming greater importance and FAO should, in the medium term, assign high priority both to sound management practices within fisheries and to the integration of fisheries with other activities using aquatic resources. In this respect, the usefulness of the Geographic Information System (GIS) was highlighted.

137. The importance of aquaculture was reaffirmed as providing a major potential for further expansion of the fisheries sector to meet future demand of fishery products. In this context, the inclusion in the Regular Programme of a number of important activities initiated by the FAO/UNDP Aquaculture Development and Coordination Programme was noted with appreciation.

138. In the medium term, more work needed to be done to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of small-scale fishermen, fish farmers and their families and to promote their active participation in the planning and formulation of development activities. In this connection, the role of women and youths was particularly important.

139. The Committee emphasized the need to give high priority in the work of improving the quality of fishery products for both domestic markets and international trade.

140. The comparative advantage of FAO in the provision of policy advice and analysis to member countries was recognized. It was suggested that work in this important area should be intensified and, at the same time, resources allocated to training and transfer of skills, knowledge and technologies in various aspects of fisheries management and development.

141. Recognizing the vital role of intercountry collaboration in the management and development of fisheries, the Committee recommended that FAO seek to strengthen its regional fishery bodies which had assisted in many ways technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, as also its assistance to and collaboration with other fishery bodies at the regional level.

142. Some delegations were of the view that further work by FAO on the issue of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing was not required to complete the specific actions assigned to it under UN General Assembly Resolution 44/225. Other delegations stressed the need for FAO to continue further work in the areas specified by the UN Resolutions.

143. The Committee endorsed the proposals as contained in document COFI/91/11 and recommended that they be taken into account in the preparation of the Organization's Medium-Term Plan for consideration by the Twenty-sixth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1991.

144. The Committee reviewed document COFI/91/12 which provided an extract of the Director-General's Proposed Summary Programme of Work and Budget 1992-93, to be submitted to the Ninety-ninth session of the Council in June 1991, through the Programme and Finance Committees.

145. The Committee's attention was drawn to the approach adopted in formulating the budgetary proposals for 1992-93 with no overall real programme increase. The Director-General took this decision after the examination of his proposals in "Outline" form by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in January 1991 and as recommended, by consensus, by these Committees.

146. The Committee noted that the Summary Programme of Work and Budget proposals followed the constructive guidance emanating from the FAO Review of the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1989. The Conference, in particular, identified the following as important in formulating budgetary proposals: the areas of FAO's comparative advantage, the factors which should guide its relationship with other organizations, and the manner in which the links between the Regular and Field Programmes could be strengthened further. The guidelines on priority setting endorsed by the Conference had been strictly observed. On this basis, a number of global priorities and areas of increased and reduced resources had been proposed.

147. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the clear and concise presentation of the approach adopted in formulating the Organization's proposed Summary Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium.

148. With respect to the funding level of Major Programme 2.2: Fisheries, the Committee expressed concern that, for the first time, the proposals involved a reduction in the budgetary allocation of some 0.8 percent as compared to the provision in the current biennium. The Committee requested that this be reconsidered by the Director-General with a view to increasing the fisheries allocation, at least to the 1990-91 level.

149. The Committee generally endorsed the main areas of activity proposed under Programme 2.2.1: Fisheries Information. It noted with appreciation that an independent review of the Aquatic Science and Fishery Abstracts was being undertaken and that provision had been made to strengthen the Fisheries Branch Library.

150. The Committee welcomed the proposed separation of aquaculture from inland fisheries as identifiable components of FAO's statistical programme; in this regard the Committee endorsed the proposal for the establishment of a new Professional post at P-4 level to be responsible for aquaculture statistics.

151. The Committee reiterated its view that recent developments and prospects in world fisheries would require broad continuity of action in the fisheries programme including the improvement in the management of fishery resources in marine and inland waters, acceleration of aquaculture development and reduction of post-harvest losses. It accordingly endorsed the proposed activities under Programme 2.2.2: Fisheries Exploitation and Utilization which covered a large number of activities in support of the World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action.

152. Under Sub-programme 2.2.2.1: Marine Resources and Environment, the Committee viewed favourably the proposed overall priority on integrated coastal zone development

which entailed the intensification of work on environmental impact on marine fisheries, including the effects of terrestrial and riverine runoff and coastal development on marine resources, monitoring the impact of climatic changes and improving the yield of fishery resources by habitat enhancement. In addition, the work on the conservation and rational utilization of tuna resources would also be strengthened.

153. With regard to Sub-programme 2.2.2.2: Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Committee welcomed the proposed change in approach to the mechanism for rural aquaculture extension, with increased involvement of other concerned units of the Organization. It also expressed its support to the proposed activities concerning the protection of aquatic environment, but regretted the reduced level of funding for the aquaculture component of the Sub-programme. In this respect, one delegation considered that the allocation of the various elements of the programme under the proposed budget did not reflect the priorities corresponding to the needs of developing countries.

154. The Committee generally endorsed the activities proposed under Sub-programmes 2.2.2.3: Fish Production and 2.2.2.4: Fish Utilization and Marketing. It suggested that the work on reduction of dependence on hardwood for vessel construction be extended also to those countries that had hardwood resources. The work on fish marketing information and product quality assurance was particularly recognized as making significant contributions to developing countries.

155. The vital role of FAO in the provision of policy advice and analysis to the member countries on various aspects of fisheries management, development and investment as well as in the promotion of intercountry collaboration was emphasized by the Committee. In this regard, strong support was given to the efforts under Sub-programme 2.2.3.1: Fisheries Policy and Planning for the provision of direct assistance and advice to governments on fisheries policies, strategies and plans.

156. The Committee also stressed the need to strengthen the work to enhance the role of women in fisheries development.

157. The Committee laid particular emphasis upon the need to strengthen the work of the FAO regional fishery bodies as the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring collaborative actions among countries for the development of fisheries and promoting technical cooperation among developing countries.

158. In reviewing these agenda items, the Committee expressed the opinion that because of the importance of these issues, the Medium-Term Perspectives and the Summary Programme of Work and Budget documents should be considered earlier in the agenda at future sessions.

159. The Committee expressed its general satisfaction with the fisheries proposals and agreed that they provided a sound basis for the elaboration of the full Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization in fisheries for 1992-93.

#### ANY OTHER MATTERS

160. No other matters of business were raised.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

161. It was agreed that the Committee should meet in Rome in the Spring of 1993. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairman.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

162. This report was adopted on 12 April 1991.

## APPENDIX A

### Agenda

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session
3. Election of Officers
4. World fisheries situation
  - 4.1 Progress in implementing the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development
  - 4.2 Environment and sustainability in fisheries
  - 4.3 The role of women in fisheries development
5. Special issues
  - 5.1 Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing
  - 5.2 Marking of fishing gear
  - 5.3 Fisheries research needs of developing countries
6. Report on the Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Rome, 4-7 September 1990
7. Field Programmes in fisheries
  - 7.1 Progress in implementing the 1984 World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action
  - 7.2 FAO-executed national projects
8. Medium-term perspectives and programme priorities for fisheries and the work of FAO in fisheries during 1992-93
9. Any other matters
10. Date and place of the Twentieth Session
11. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

List of Delegates and Observers

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APPENDIX C

List of Documents

- COFI/91/1 Provisional annotated agenda and timetable
- 2 Progress in implementing the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference's Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development
  - 3 Environment and sustainability in fisheries
  - 4 The role of women in fisheries development
  - 5 Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing
  - 5, Supp.1
  - 6 Marking of fishing gear
  - 7 Fisheries research needs of developing countries
  - 8 Report on the Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Rome, 4-7 September 1990
  - 9 Progress in implementing the 1984 World Fisheries Conference's Programmes of Action
  - 10 Review of the FAO-executed national projects
  - 11 Medium-term perspectives and programme priorities for fisheries
  - 12 The work of FAO in fisheries during 1992-93
- COFI/91/Inf.1 List of documents
- Inf.2 List of delegates and observers at the session
  - Inf.3 Opening statement by the Director-General
  - Inf.4 Review of the state of world fishery resources
  - Inf.5 Aquaculture through the eighties - A decade of progress and changes
  - Inf.6 Fishery commodities 1989-90
  - Inf.7 Report of the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 10-14 April 1989
  - Inf.8 Report of the Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Rome, 4-7 September 1990

- Inf.9 Report of the Expert Consultation on Large-scale Pelagic Driftnet Fishery,  
Rome, 2-6 April 1990
- Inf.10 Fishery Investment Project Information System (FIPIS)

APPENDIX D

Opening Statement by the Director-General

Madam Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you all to this Nineteenth Session of the Committee on Fisheries.

Your presence is a further affirmation of the importance attached by your governments and organizations to the work of the Committee. It has earned a unique reputation as an international forum for the regular examination of major technical and policy issues confronting world fisheries and for the consideration of further actions to promote the contribution of the sector to human nutrition and economic and social progress.

Before I turn to the business before you, I would like first to take the opportunity of introducing to you recently appointed senior members of the FAO Fisheries Department:

Dr Yasuhisa KATO of Japan, who has taken over the duties vacated by Mr Nakaji Kojima as Director, Operations Service;

Dr Serge GARCIA of France, whom I have appointed Director, Fishery Resources and Environment Division after the retirement of Dr Francis Henderson;

Madam Chairman, the agenda proposed for this session of the Committee is exceptionally full, challenging and wide-ranging.

The framework for your discussions falls into three main parts.

Firstly, you are invited to examine a number of important aspects of the world fisheries situation.

The second part of your agenda seeks your comments and advice on certain key issues and problems, the resolution of which calls for specific action by FAO as the United Nations agency with special responsibilities for fisheries.

Finally, you will have an opportunity to review medium-term perspectives and programme priorities for fisheries and the proposed work of FAO in fisheries during 1992-93.

World fisheries, Madam Chairman, have witnessed a remarkable growth in production in recent years - from 70 million tons in 1979 to present levels approaching 100 million tons. Trade in fish products has greatly expanded - and the developing countries have a significant share of this international commerce.

However, serious problems remain to be resolved. Demand for fish continues to exceed supplies; the renewability of certain important stocks is threatened; pollution and

other environmental problems are of increasing concern; moreover, behind the abstract terminologies of fisheries management and development, the real world of the artisanal fishermen remains fraught with difficulties, frustration and low rewards.

Encouragement and hope can be drawn from the determined responses being made by countries large and small to confront these challenges.

The second report I have had prepared regarding progress in implementing the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development adopted in 1984 by the FAO World Fisheries Conference records the very positive steps being taken in this respect in many parts of the world.

Notwithstanding the often serious constraints being faced, considerable advances are clearly being achieved to boost the socio-economic and nutritional roles of fisheries, and to enhance the well-being of artisanal fisherfolk. Advances have also been achieved in acquiring greater self-sufficiency in dealing with the unique characteristics of the fisheries sector and in seeking effective means of conserving, managing and utilizing the fish resources.

I should like to thank governments and organizations for their contributions to this report. It is indeed a tribute to the work and wisdom of their representatives at the World Fisheries Conference - many of whom are with us again today - that the principles set out in the Strategy have been a source of guidance and inspiration to those responsible for the planning and execution of fisheries management and development and that they are widely perceived to be of continuing relevance and value.

A major thrust of FAO's present and proposed programmes is the monitoring and prevention of environmental degradation and the promotion of sustainable and environmentally sound development.

These considerations are of growing importance for the long-term well-being of the world's fishery resources. There already is evidence of the manner in which industrial, urban and agricultural pollution, unrelenting pressures due to demographic and urban growth and unwise practices at sea, in coastal areas, in inland fisheries and in aquaculture, are putting at risk the environmental quality, biological diversity and sustainability of the aquatic resources.

We must confront these issues in a forceful manner. They cannot be solved by the fisheries sector alone. Success in our endeavours is vital not only for the world of today but also for future generations. It is a complex task which demands the closest cooperation between the various technical units of this Organization, with other concerned agencies and with your own governments.

Your debate on these issues will be followed with great interest as we prepare, through expert and inter-governmental consultations, for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in which, I can assure you, this Organization will play its full part. In fact, the Organization is preparing at the request of the Conference's Preparatory Committee two documents, one dealing with the living resources of the oceans and the other with coastal area development.

The coastal areas and the high seas have received and will receive increasing attention in our work. The problems of coastal areas are highlighted in several of the documents before you and your guidance is sought on suggested actions. For the high seas I would draw your attention to the report regarding the increasing use of large-scale pelagic driftnets and the broader issue of the selectivity of fishing gears and responsible fishing methods. Your guidance is sought on the further steps which FAO might take to promote the overall conservation and wise use of the living resources of the high seas. These important matters, which have legal, technical and economic implications for the responsible conduct of fisheries, have already been debated in the context of the high sea driftnet fishing at the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference and the General Assembly of the United Nations. In response to the recommendations arising out of these sessions, I have taken a number of measures including the establishment of a Task Force on High Seas Fisheries for this purpose.

Whilst not wishing to neglect the importance of other items on your agenda - for example, the recommendations of your Sub-Committee on Fish Trade regarding the financing of the proposed Technical Assistance Programme for Fishery Commodities and Marketing Development - I would like to make some observations upon a matter of major interest to you all: FAO's field programmes in fisheries. In particular, I wish to comment upon progress achieved in the further implementation of the five Programmes of Action approved by the World Fisheries Conference.

You will recall that at the last session of your Committee, I was able to report a consistent growth in the funds channelled through FAO for the execution of these Programmes.

Encouraged by this progress and convinced of the importance of the assistance thereby provided to Member Nations, the Committee unanimously agreed to extend and enlarge the Programmes for a further five-year period. It also called for an increase in the indicative target for funding from the US\$ 15 million annually suggested by the World Fisheries Conference to a new target of US\$ 20 million.

It is therefore a matter for concern and regret that, although a better balance has been achieved between the individual Programmes and between the funds benefitting the various regions, recent levels of financial support for the Programmes have not only failed to reach the new target set by COFI but have in fact significantly declined from the US\$ 18 million provided in 1989.

Reference could no doubt be made to the coincidence of a variety of recent negative influences upon the overall availability of such funds. I should like to thank the donors and development agencies which have, either directly or through their own initiatives, generously supported these Programmes of Action. I would also most seriously urge all bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and financial institutions to re-affirm the commitment made at the World Fisheries Conference to concerted action and consistent support for fisheries development and management. I should nevertheless make a special mention here to a positive outcome of our efforts. In response to my request, the Executive Board of the Common Fund for Commodities has recently decided to designate your Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as International Commodity Body for Fishery Products. This is a significant step towards the possible financing by the Common Fund of some project proposals under the Technical Assistance Programme for Fishery Commodities and Marketing Development endorsed by the Sub-Committee.

The five Programmes of Action approved by the World Fisheries Conference are mainly concerned with assistance at the regional and inter-regional levels. You will also have an opportunity later this week to examine a comprehensive review of FAO's field projects in fisheries at the national level.

I wish to stress here that these activities in the field are very closely integrated with and technically supported by the Regular Programme resources allocated to the Fisheries Department here in Rome.

Madam Chairman, I would like to conclude with some remarks on my proposals for the work of FAO in fisheries in 1992-93.

It is with regret that I have to report that the Organization has continued to suffer unprecedented cash-flow crisis because of consecutive years of substantial arrears in the payment of contributions. In the present financial situation, we have had to undertake a number of programme adjustments and we are now forced to reduce many services to our Member Nations. I would therefore like to appeal to all Member Nations to settle their contributions promptly and in full.

As you know, in all the Programmes of Work and Budget which I have submitted to the Conference hitherto, our programmes in fisheries have received recognition of their priority and a corresponding increase in proposed resources.

I continue to recognize the unique importance of our work in fisheries, with programmes of global importance which no other organization even attempts to duplicate. You will note however, that my proposals for the first time involve a small reduction of some 0.8 percent compared to the provision in the current biennium. I have been forced to come to this course of action because of my having accepted to prepare the next Programme of Work and Budget with no overall programme growth. I have done so only in order to permit the next PWB to be approved by consensus by all Member Nations.

Despite this modest decrease in proposed resources, I hope that the Committee will see its way to endorsing my proposals. These place emphasis on sustaining and where possible reinforcing priority areas through careful re-programming and the paring-down of less essential activities. Such reallocations will, for example, permit increased resources for work regarding the environment and sustainable development and the strengthening of our support to aquaculture, to fishery research and to the participation of women in fisheries.

As always, I will value the reactions of the Committee and will take them into careful account in formulating my final proposals in the full Programme of Work and Budget.

Finally, Madam Chairman, may I wish you and the members of your Committee a successful and highly productive meeting. The Committee on Fisheries has earned an enviable reputation not only as an outstanding global technical forum but also for its spirit of cooperation and consensus. Your experienced advice will, I am sure, again be of great value and inspiration not only for FAO but for all those in our Member Nations and sister organizations who are charged with responsibilities for the further advance of this very important sector of human endeavour.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

APPENDIX E

Statement by the Chairperson, the Honourable María de los Angeles Moreno Uriegas,  
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Mr Director-General, Dr Edouard Saouma,  
Mr Director of the Fisheries Department, Dr Armin Lindquist,  
Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to have been elected to chair the FAO Committee on Fisheries. You may be assured that I shall devote my full enthusiasm and energy to the work of meeting the expectations of this important forum.

I should like to thank the distinguished Delegate of Norway, Chairman of the OECD Group and the Honourable Representative of El Salvador, Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, for having put forward Mexico's candidature.

I interpret this honourable appointment as an acknowledgement of Mexico's active and sustained participation in international fisheries fora: a participation which has been strengthened by the present Administration's external liberalization policy.

I assume this delicate charge on behalf of my country with the utmost political commitment and willingness to collaborate in achieving the objectives of international cooperation which sustain this Committee on Fisheries.

We warmly thank Dr Zbigniew Karnicki, the outgoing Chairman of the Committee, for an excellent performance.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries is the most representative international authority in this field and its deliberations, resolutions and recommendations have a major impact on fishery activities throughout the world.

The Agenda before this Committee includes highly complex items of major import linked to international fisheries issues. The presentation and consideration of these issues endorses the pioneering position of FAO, under the worthy and judicious leadership of Dr Edouard Saouma. Similarly, the universality of this forum which provides each country with the opportunity to take initiatives and formulate proposals reaffirms FAO's and the Committee on Fisheries' status as the most appropriate international bodies to conclude agreements and to develop wide-ranging fisheries cooperation.

The Strategy and Programmes of Action stemming from the World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development continue to be at the centre of our attention. We are convinced that the dialogue which we initiate today will produce proposals which will broaden and deepen this action, thereby increasing world food supply and generating employment and foreign exchange.

Our Organization has been sensitive to the increasing importance being attached to sustainable production compatible with environmental conservation. This is particularly relevant today as we prepare for the United Nations Conference on Environment and

Development to be held in 1992. For this reason the Agenda includes topics related to the sustainability of fisheries and the environment as well as driftnet fishing.

These are areas that need to be approached with a sense of joint responsibility for although the dynamics of population growth and poverty have an environmental impact, there is also no denying that the over-exploitation of the world's natural resources has fundamentally arisen through the technological and consumption models imposed by the developed countries.

Similarly, the problem of by-catches which occurs in various fishing areas, but particularly in those with rich biological diversity, should also be tackled with a sense of joint responsibility. Our objective is to maintain maximum resource yield but within the boundaries of ecosystem conservation.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries provides a forum to address these issues through multilateral approaches that accommodate the principles and orientations of the World Fisheries Conference, that respect the provisions of the New Law of the Sea and that reflect the interests and proposals of all the nations involved.

FAO's efforts should concentrate on updating studies on commercial fishery by-catches and on developing selective technologies and fishing gear.

Our discussions should also closely examine how to support the development of aquaculture which, as has been affirmed by FAO, is a means of substantially increasing the supply of fishery products. The transfer of technology and the exchange of experiences through South-South and North-South cooperation should be a central orientation of our Programme of Action to reinforce developing country capacities.

Similarly, research institutions in the less advanced countries need to be rehabilitated and consolidated to enhance the management and development of the fisheries sector.

Also, and in line with the mandate of the Conference, our Committee will examine women's participation in fisheries development. Advances in this field through national actions and international cooperation will undoubtedly boost the woman's share in integrated development. We hope, therefore, that our deliberations will produce proposals that contribute concretely towards accelerating and enhancing the integration of women in the overall fisheries process.

In a different area, the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade submits the report of its Second Session. We welcome its consolidation and recent approval as an international commodities body, which means that its country-targeted programme can be financed by the second account of UNCTAD's Common Fund for Commodities. All the Member Nations will undoubtedly be gratified by this achievement.

Finally, our Committee will have to examine with responsibility and vision the suggestions of the Director-General with regard to fisheries for the Programme of Work and the Budget for the next biennium and in relation to the medium-term plan. This examination will enable us to validate the related proposals to be put forward to the Council and Conference, which are of major importance for the advance of our work.

I am confident that this forum for international exchange and collaboration will fulfil its assignment, for we have been given clear guidelines from the World Fisheries Conference. An examination of the current situation confirms that the Strategy for the Management and Development of Fisheries and the five Programmes of Action continue to hold currency.

I trust that this dialogue will be extremely fruitful. I am confident that the initiatives put forward by the various countries will be received with open-mindedness and comprehension, and that this will once again produce the best options for a combined effort and a renewed impetus from which all participating nations will benefit.

Thank you.





