

# Sixth Session of the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research: Highlights

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*Participants to the Sixth Session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR), FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 17-20 October 2006*

The Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR), established on the recommendation of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) at its Twentieth Session and approved by the FAO Council in 1993, held its Sixth Session in Rome, Italy, from 17 to 20 October 2006.

The main functions of the ACFR are to study and advise the Director-General on the formulation and execution of the Organization's work in respect of all aspects of fisheries research including - (a) conservation and management of marine and inland fishery resources; (b) increasing fish productivity through enhancement of wild resources and through aquaculture; (c) improving the means of converting fishery resources into human food; and (d) studying the dynamics of fishing communities and the socio-economic consequences of government fishery policies.

During the Sixth Session, the Committee reviewed the work of the FAO Fisheries Department (FI) with a focus on fish trade, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee discussed also other relevant work and activities undertaken by the Fisheries Department and related, among others, to human capacity development in fisheries, information on status and trends of capture fisheries, and FI's communication strategy.

The Committee addressed not only research aspects but also policy matters and provided recommendations to further guide the future work of the Department.

The Committee recognized that much of the trade-related work of FAO was cross-cutting in its nature and that, in the FAO fisheries and aquaculture work

programs, care should be taken to integrate the trade and fish utilization work with other relevant fields, especially fisheries resource management, aquaculture production development and social areas such as food security, gender and development of standards and certification.

The Committee appreciated the decision to keep small-scale fisheries as a stand-alone agenda item during COFI. It recognized that there was a need for better assessment tools and methodology for small-scale fisheries but that this would be best developed through a number of case studies. It recommended that the current high profile of deepwater fisheries not be allowed to distort priorities at the expense of other fisheries, especially small-scale fisheries in developing countries, which are much more important in terms of human welfare and ecological impact.

The Committee commended the work of FAO in aquaculture, particularly the state of the world aquaculture and welcomed the timely inclusion of 'fish species' in the Programme of Work of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), as genetic resources were becoming increasingly important in view of their roles in improved aquaculture production and threats to biodiversity and genetic resource conservation.

The Committee discussed a number of future priorities for consideration at its next meeting (in the second half of October 2008 at FAO HQ in Rome) and therefore for work in the interim by FAO/FI. These include the following: (1) trade – spread of benefits; (2) trade – generic certification systems; (3) fish meal, fish as feed and fertiliser trade flows; (4) small-scale fisheries: successes and failures and assessment needs through case studies; (5) measuring the implementation of the CCRF; (6) disease prevention in aquaculture; and (7) inland and culture-based fisheries.

The Committee elected Mr Kwame A. Koranteng of Ghana as Chairperson for the Seventh Session and acknowledged the excellent job of the outgoing Chairperson, Ms Meryl Williams. It expressed its sincere gratitude and thanked her for the outstanding contribution given throughout her term.

The Session was a success and all participants came away satisfied with the levels of interaction and positive outcomes.