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FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION**



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**MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COFI 32, FAO's 30th
REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA and CACFish 4**

INTRODUCTION

1. This document contains highlights of the topics discussed at the (i) 32nd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 32), held in Rome, Italy, on 11-15 July 2016; the (ii) FAO's 30th Regional Conference for Europe and Central Asia (ERC 30), held in Antalya, Turkey, on 4-6 May 2016 and (iii) the 4th Session of CACFish (CACFish 4), held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 18 - 20 May 2015.

2. The document needs to be read in conjunction with the following information documents: CACFish/V/2016/Inf.3 (Report of Fourth Session of CACFish, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia 18-20 May 2016), CACFish/V/2016/Inf.6 (Report of the 30th session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), Antalya, Turkey, 4 - 6 May 2016), and CACFish/V/2016/Inf.7 (Report of the 32nd session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Rome, Italy, 11-15 July 2016).

Main decisions and recommendations from 32nd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 32)

3. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was established in 1965 as a subsidiary body of FAO. It is currently the only global inter-governmental forum where major fisheries and aquaculture issues are discussed and recommendations are made addressing among others Member States, Regional Fisheries Bodies and NGOs. COFI also provides a forum where international agreements, technical guidelines and action plans are negotiated.

4. COFI 32 was held in Rome, Italy on 11-15 July 2016. The Session celebrated the coming into force of the FAO (2009) Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing¹.

¹ It should be noted here that one of CACFish Member States, namely Turkey signed the Agreement in 2010. To date none of the CACFish members has acceded or ratified the Agreement, but processes are ongoing in some of the member countries.

5. The primary agenda items of COFI 32 were as follows:

- State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries,
- Decisions and recommendations of the sub-committees of COFI,
- Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,
- Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries,
- Global and regional processes, including Regional Fisheries Bodies related matters, and
- FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework

6. Listed below are the main decisions and recommendations of COFI 32²:

The Committee:

- a) commended FAO for the 2016 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication, expressed concern about the state of fish stocks globally and highlighted the threat of Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to the sustainability of marine resources;
- b) welcomed the improvement in the 2015 questionnaire on the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code), agreed that the data submitted through the questionnaire could be used by Members for reporting on sustainable development goals (SDGs) indicators and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and recognized the need for capacity development in developing countries in implementation of the Code;
- c) endorsed the reports of the 15th Session of the Sub Committee on Fish Trade and the 8th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. The Committee authorized the Technical Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (TC: CDS) to resume its session, finalize the Guidelines and submit the Guidelines to the FAO Conference in July 2017 for final adoption;
- d) welcomed the entry into force of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA) and encouraged Parties to convene an inception meeting as well as establish the ad hoc working group under Article 21 by noting the requirement for capacity development;
- e) voiced strong support for the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessel and Supply Vessels (Global Record);
- f) endorsed the proposal to declare an International Day for the Fight against IUU Fishing;
- g) reaffirmed its commitment to follow up on the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) by highlighting the valuable contribution of fish and fish products to meeting nutrition requirements, diversity diets, and provide important health benefits. The Committee endorsed the key areas of work identified for ICN2 follow-up in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
- h) reconfirmed the multi-dimensional function of small-scale fisheries (SSF) in poverty reduction and food security, etc. and stressed the importance of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The Committee welcomed the development of a FAO SSF Umbrella Assistance Programme and agreed on the need for a complementary mechanism in the form of an SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF);
- i) welcomed the outcome of the 2015 Global Conference on Inland Fisheries and the Ten Steps to Responsible Inland Fisheries;

² This list has been copied from the draft COFI 32 report it is possible that minor changes will be made to it.

- j) commended FAO for the global forum on rights-based approaches for fisheries and welcomed the Global Work Programme (GWP);
- k) endorsed the proposal for the Declaration of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- l) commended the role FAO plays in UN fora and processes devoted to fisheries and aquaculture, climate change, SDGs and biodiversity and requested FAO to further enhance its participation and contribution;
- m) appreciated the role of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), the establishment of new Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and emphasized the importance of performance reviews of RFBs;
- n) welcomed the proposed FAO corporate climate change strategy and action plan and the FAO draft Strategy for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Climate Change for 2017-2020;
- o) welcomed the work of FAO with respect to the issue of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and the recommendations from the Expert Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear;
- p) endorsed the priority areas of work for 2016-2017 by reiterating its support for the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) and emphasized the importance of the work to address IUU fishing, implementation of PSMA, fish losses and waste, regional aquaculture network, implementation of SSF Guidelines, development of inland fisheries and the FAO corporate climate change strategy;
- q) took note of the statements by the FAO Secretariat and the Republic of Korea on the revised proposal for the establishment of a World Fisheries University and encouraged agreement on a roadmap for a step-by-step approach;
- r) approved the progress report of the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee (MYPOW) 2014-2017 and the MYPOW 2016-2019;
- s) elected the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the 33rd Session of COFI.

Main decisions and recommendations from 30th Session of FAO Regional Conference for Europe and Central Asia (ERC 30)

7. FAO Regional Conferences are functioning as an official forum where Ministers of Agriculture and other high officials from all FAO Member States in a given region meet to discuss challenges. The Conferences also provide a forum for the formulations of regional positions on the global policy and regulatory issues within the mandate of FAO. The Conferences also review and advice on the region-related plans, programme or projects of FAO.

8. The Regional Conference for Europe and Central Asia (ERC) has 54 Member States in addition to several observer States. The ERC has its own 2 years Programme of Work. ERC 30 was held in Antalya, Turkey on 4-6 May 2016. ERC 30 had a variety of agenda topics. Included were for instance:

- Sustainable Development Goals and their impacts for Europe and Central Asia;
- Decentralized FAO Offices network;
- Priorities for FAO work in Europe and Central Asia; and
- A summary report on the outcomes of the 28th Session of the European Inland and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).

9. Listed below are the main decisions and recommendations of ERC30 in relation to fisheries and aquaculture in Europe and Central Asia:

The Conference:

- Accepted that EIFAAC reports become an integral part of the Regional Conference.
- Highlighted the importance of achieving higher attendance by Members in EIFAAC sessions, in particular in view of the goal ‘to continue to develop the EIFAAC as the leading Pan-European organization for inland fisheries and aquaculture in Europe’
- Underlined the importance of agriculture, fisheries and forestry and their crucial role in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as climate-change adaptation and mitigation, and responsibility of all actors along the food chain, including farmers, retailers and policy-makers
- Recognized EIFAAC as a good platform for research on topics such as fish migration in European inland waters, predators and invasive species.
- Underscored the need to better link EIFAAC's work to important global issues such as food security and better align its mission and work plan with the SDGs.

10. The Conference also noted that:

- Emphasis needs to be placed on using and implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (VG SSF Guidelines), to recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries (both inland and coastal), and adopt the combined human rights and ecosystems-based approaches advocated
- Traditional sustainable fish(eries) knowledge and practices should be validated and decentralized (community-based), and their co-management promoted. Fishers need to be involved in data collection and analysis.
- Both professional and recreational fishers should benefit equally from management of inland fisheries. Management should be focused on optimizing fish harvesting to enable professional fishers to fish in a sustainable way, and also earn a decent livelihood and provide healthy protein to local communities. The needs of recreational fishers can also be addressed in a noncompetitive way.
- The roles of small-scale fishery workers throughout the value chain need to be recognized and respected, particularly women who make up at least 50% of the workforce. Women are often engaged in pre-harvest and post-harvest activities, and often engaged in support roles that are frequently not recognized and poorly paid.

11. Not any specific reference was made to CACFish or its activities in the ERC 30 report, while the outcomes of CACFish 4 were presented in information document ERC/16/INF/7 “Summary report of the recommendations from Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commissions of the region”. Commissions established under Article-XIV of the FAO Constitution (e.g. GFCM and CACFish) were thus presented as Information Item at the end of the Conference under “Any other business”. At ERC30 none of the member countries commented on this information document, which is why there is no specific mentioning in the report about CACFish.

Main decisions and recommendations of the fourth session of the Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish 4)

12. CACFish 4 was held in Mongolia on 18-20 May 2015. The Commission adopted the following thematic scientific and technical recommendations produced by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at its third meeting held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 16–18 February 2015:

- (i) Fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS);
- (ii) Inland fish hatchery management; and
- (iii) Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

13. The Commission reviewed the progress made in implementing the CACFish Five-Year Regional Work Programme (2015) and endorsed the second-term Five-Year Regional Work Programme covering the period 2016–2020.

14. The Commission adopted its autonomous budget for 2015.

15. Commission decided to hold its regular sessions every two years after its fifth session in 2016.

16. It is worth noting that the 3rd Session of CACFish agreed already to organize TAC Meetings every two years after the 3rd Meeting of TAC (2015). According to these recent decisions the CACFish Sessions and TAC Meetings will be held on a biennial basis.

SUGGESTED ACTION FOR THE COMMISSION

17. The Commission is invited to discuss the decisions and recommendations of the three meetings and propose actions from CACFish and its members for follow-up in 2016 -2017 on the decisions and recommendations made.

18. The Commission is also invited to provide guidance with a view to increasing the compliance with the recommendations of COFI and ERC in the CACFish region and to strengthening the position of Central Asia and Caucasus in these forums.