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REGIONAL FISHERIES COMMISSION



NINTH SESSION
9-11 May 2017
Kuwait, State of Kuwait
MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COFI 32, FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (NERC33) AND RECOFI 8

INTRODUCTION

1. This document contains highlights of the key topics discussed and decisions taken at (i) 32nd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 32), held in Rome, Italy, on 11-15 July 2016; (ii) the 33rd Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa (NERC 33), held in Rome, Italy on 9-13 May 2016; and (iii) the 8th Session of RECOFI (RECOFI 8), held in Muscat, Oman on 12-14 May 2015.

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

2. 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, amongst others, Member States, Regional Fisheries Bodies and NGOs. COFI also provides a forum where international agreements, technical guidelines and action plans are negotiated.

3. 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 Fishing. 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.

4. Listed below are the main decisions and recommendations of COFI 32 the Committee:
- 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,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - Voiced strong support for the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessel and Supply Vessels (Global Record),
 - Endorsed the proposal to declare an International Day for the Fight against IUU Fishing,
 - 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,
 - 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),
 - Welcomed the outcome of the 2015 Global Conference on Inland Fisheries and the Ten Steps to Responsible Inland Fisheries; commended FAO for the global forum on rights-based approaches for fisheries and welcomed the Global Work Programme (GWP),
 - Endorsed the proposal for the Declaration of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - 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,

- 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,
- 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,
- Approved the progress report of the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee (MYPOW) 2014-2017 and the MYPOW 2016-2019, and
- Elected the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the 33rd Session of COFI.

Main decisions and recommendations from 33rd Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa (NERC 33)

5. 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 advise on the region related plans, programme or projects of FAO.

6. The 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa (NERC 33) was held in Rome, Italy on 9-13 May 2016. NERC 33 had a variety of agenda topics. Included were for instance:

- Livestock Contribution to Food Security in the Near East and North Africa Region,
- Fisheries and Aquaculture: Application of FAO's Blue Growth Initiative,
- Small-scale Farmers and Women Empowerment in the Near East and North Africa Region, and
- Update on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

7. Listed below are the main decisions and recommendations of NERC33 in relation to fisheries and aquaculture in Near East and North Africa:

The Conference:

- Endorsed the application of the FAO Blue Growth Initiative in the region and its components, including ecosystem services, economic growth, environmental benefits and social development, within the framework of the three Regional Initiatives,
- Noted the offer of Kuwait to be a focus country for the Blue Growth Initiative and FAO technical assistance on fisheries and aquaculture sector, and also to promote value addition along the fish supply chain in the region,.
- Urged countries to safeguard the interests of small-scale and traditional fishing communities in the face of multinational illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing,
- Called on member countries to sign the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) Agreement,
- Requested FAO to:
 - Support Member countries through organising knowledge and experience sharing events, and building capacity to develop sustainable and viable fishery and aquaculture industry in the region,

- Assist countries to assess fishery resources at both country and regional level, information sharing, compilation and dissemination by regional Fish Monitoring Centre, to be established as data and information repository,
 - Develop guidelines on carrying out environmental impact assessments for aquaculture projects,
 - Promote the technical knowledge and capacities in the areas of fisheries and aquaculture, including through South South Cooperation, and
 - Support countries in combating fish related diseases in the region.
- NERC33 also noted the recommendations of the Eighth Session of the RECOFI.

8. The Conference also supported the continuation of the Regional Initiatives of for the 2016-17 biennium: (i) Regional water scarcity initiative; (ii) Small-scale family farming; (iii) Building resilience for enhanced food security and nutrition; as well as attention to food safety, agricultural trade and market information; and looked forward to annual reporting by FAO on results.

Main decisions and recommendations of the Eighth Session of the RECOFI (RECOFI 8)

9. The RECOFI 8 was held in Muscat, Oman on 12-14 May 2015. RECOFI, among others,
- Adopted the RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/8/2015/1 on Minimum Reporting on Aquaculture Data and Information,
 - Agreed that RAIS would include capture fisheries data being collected under RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI area, and
 - Discussed the strengthening of the secretariat, including its location in a RECOFI member country, and proposed that this be considered further and agreed at an ad hoc session. Kuwait offered to host the RECOFI headquarters and secretariat, should they be relocated.

SUGGESTED ACTION FOR THE COMMISSION

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

11. The Commission is also invited to provide guidance with a view to increasing the compliance with the recommendations of COFI and NERC in the RECOFI area.