

UN to hold international meeting on world fish trade in Bremen, 3-5 June 2008

11th session of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Sub-Committee on Fish Trade

The 11th meeting of the **UN FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade** will be held at the Park Hotel in Bremen from 2 to 6 June 2008.

The event will bring together expert representatives from over 60 governments in discussions on a range of issues related to the international trade in fish and fishery products, valued at \$86 billion annually.

A number of international and non-governmental organizations and agencies such as the WTO and UNEP will also participate.

The meeting is being convened by FAO in cooperation with Messe- und Ausstellungsgesellschaft Hansa GmbH (MGH-Bremen) at the invitation of the Senate of the Free Hanseatic State of Bremen, which is also financially supporting the event.

Bremen has hosted the Sub-Committee's biennial meeting on a regular basis since 1986.

On the agenda:

- Developments in international markets and the growing demand for fish, as well as linkages to other food commodities and rising food prices.
- Establishing minimum requirements and criteria for fish product "ecolabels" in order to move towards international standardization. Ecolabels for fisheries products are a response to growing concerns about the wellbeing of world fisheries. They provide consumers with information regarding a product's provenance and make it possible for them to choose products that have come from sustainably managed fisheries
- Trends in market access requirements in major importing regions and how these pose challenges to fish producers and exporters in developing countries. More and more, fish is coming from abroad. At the same time, importing countries are raising the hurdle for fish imports by imposing increasingly strict safety and quality standards. So far, producing countries have for the most part been successful in upgrading their facilities and improving the quality and safety of their products. Still, challenges remain.
- Catch documentation schemes designed to track fish products as they move through the production chain from the point of capture to the market. Such schemes are seen as a valuable tool in the fight against illegal fishing
- Creation of a set of basic guidelines for responsible fish trade. The guidelines will provide guidance to governments on how to balance the needs for the long term sustainability of fish resources and the short term interests of the various stakeholders in current trade, ranging from fishermen, fish farmers, and processors to traders, retailers and consumers.

About the Sub-Committee

The FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade is an international advisory body which meets every two years to share information, discuss issues related to the fish trade, make recommendations to FAO regarding the Agency's work and agree upon common policies and strategies for managing international trade in fishery products.

Media availabilities

FAO experts will be available for interviews on request.

Additionally, the city of Bremen will be hosting a reception for the Sub-Committee on the evening of Wednesday 4 June at the Bremen Town Hall, to which the press is invited.

Meeting agenda and background documents:

ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/COFI/cofit_11/Default.htm

Fact sheet on the global fish trade, including the profile of Europe and Germany

To come

More information:

MGH?

Bremen Senate media person?

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