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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE EXPERT CONSULTATION ON TRADE IN FISHERIES SERVICES

1. A group of experts with relevant experience and expertise in different areas of the fisheries sector was brought together for the Expert Consultation on Trade in Fisheries Services, held in Gothenburg, from 20 to 22 March 2018. The Expert Consultation was convened by FAO, at the request of the Sixteenth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (Busan, September 2017), to define a framework on Trade in Fisheries Services. The Expert Consultation was carried out with the financial support of the Government of Sweden, which also provided the host facilities.
2. A final report on trade in fisheries services was produced at the end of the Consultation, covering the following substantive areas:
 - general definitions of service, trade, and trade in services;
 - fisheries and aquaculture-specific definitions;
 - services under fishing access arrangements;
 - developing-countries considerations; and
 - volume and impact assessment;
3. During the discussion, as duly reflected in the report, the participants of the Expert Consultation agreed that in order to analyze the issue of trade in fisheries and aquaculture services, there is no need to rethink already existing definitions of trade, services, and trade in services. In this regard, a set of generic definitions were reproduced in the report. For the definition of service, a two-tier approach was adopted based on the interconnectivity with the production of goods. For services associated with the production of goods, it was assessed that they usually operate on the transformation or handling of that good. To tackle the definition on international trade of goods, the emphasis was put on the location of the supplier and the beneficiary when a service is provided, having the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as a reference.

4. Regarding the specific services definitions applicable to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, the participants concluded that there are no internationally agreed ones, but possible working definitions are:

- fisheries and aquaculture services are intangible products provided to or on behalf of another person or entity in respect of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, including as part of pre-harvesting, extraction/harvesting and post-harvesting activities.
- trade in fisheries and aquaculture services refers to the provision of fisheries services in exchange for money, goods or other services.
- international trade in fisheries and aquaculture services occurs when the provision of intangible products follows any of the four modes of trade in services under GATS.

5. The specific definitions were constructed based on the generic definitions, and they cover both the fisheries and the aquaculture sectors, including any paid form of public services. To facilitate future developments in this area, an illustrative list of fisheries and aquaculture services was presented in the report.

6. During the discussions, the participants of the Expert Consultation dedicated a considerable amount of time analyzing to what extent fisheries access arrangements constitute services or have associated services. In accordance with the participants, the extent of ownership of the fisheries resource and the landing requirements are determining factors for whether an access arrangement has the only possible intrinsic service – the harvesting operation. Other associated services not central to the harvesting activity may or may not exist in accordance with specific conditions of the access arrangements.

7. Taking into consideration that trade in fisheries and aquaculture services provides both opportunities and challenges for developing countries; the Expert Consultation concluded that, in order to allow developing countries to get such benefits, associated risks would need to be mitigated. In this regard, the Expert Consultation noted that to have fairness for developing countries in this trade, issues like protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, ensuring a net macroeconomic benefit and observing the potentially weak capacity to take advantage of this increasing trade must be properly addressed. In addition, it was identified a series of possible issues that could be faced by developing countries considering that they can both be suppliers and beneficiaries of fisheries and aquaculture services. It was also highlighted corollary positive effects of improved and increased participation in trade in fisheries services of small-scale operators in developing countries.

8. Having regard to the absence of a global collection of data on trade in fisheries and aquaculture services, the Expert Consultation suggested possible ways to arrive at a detailed enough classification with trade figures on fisheries and aquaculture services. Such data collection would benefit countries allowing them to assess the volume and impact of trade in fisheries and aquaculture services along the value chain in order to guide policy decisions, ensure safeguarding the interests of local stakeholders, particularly small-scale operators.

9. In concluding, the Expert Consultation recommended a series of steps in order to increase the work by the FAO on trade in fisheries and aquaculture services, in line with its mandate and the relevant SDG targets, taking into consideration the importance of the issue, particularly for developing countries and vulnerable groups. It was particularly highlighted that data scarcity makes it difficult to assess what net benefits this trade generates and the distribution thereof. It was also emphasized that a continuous engagement of the FAO is necessary in order to have a more equitable and transparent environment for parties engaged in the trade of fisheries and aquaculture services.