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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-third Session

Rome, 9-13 July 2018

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE COFI-SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, BUSAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, 4–8 SEPTEMBER 2017

Executive Summary

This document contains highlights of the topics discussed at the sixteenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI/FT/XVI) and summarizes its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2018/Inf.9.

Suggested action by the Committee

- Endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade; and
- Provide guidance on the follow up to the issues raised in the report.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The sixteenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 4 to 8 September 2017, at the kind invitation of the Republic of Korea. It was attended by 34 Members of FAO, by observers from four intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations.
2. Mr Shain Hee Cho (Republic of Korea) was Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Ms Reina Sotillo de Galgano (Argentina) was First Vice-Chairperson and Indonesia and United States of America were the other Vice-Chairs.
3. The paragraph numbers indicated in the following sections are those from the report.
4. References to events and activities that occurred after COFI:FT/XVI are included in section III of this document.

II. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SESSION

Recent developments in fish trade

5. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat for the relevance and usefulness of the comprehensive description and analysis provided and suggested areas to be examined in future analysis of developments in fish trade. (Para. 7)
6. The Sub-Committee shared information on recent trends in trade of fish and fishery products and on the main issues affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. It also provided guidance for future work and initiatives on these issues. (Para. 8)
7. The Sub-Committee underlined the key role played by the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in global food security, as a source of food and as a contributor to economic growth and development, livelihoods and income. The crucial role of developing countries in production and trade of fish and fishery products was highlighted, and the special characteristics and needs of the small-scale sector were also noted. (Para. 9)
8. The Sub-Committee expressed concern about the growing number of measures that have possible impacts on trade in fish and fishery products, in particular, affecting exports from developing countries. It was noted that those measures are becoming increasingly linked to how fish resources are managed. The growing number of different import document requirements was remarked upon, including the importance of not creating unnecessary barriers to trade. The Sub-Committee underlined the need for more harmonized standards in international trade and called upon FAO to continue its harmonization efforts. (Para. 10)
9. The Sub-Committee expressed support for measures which lead to the prevention, deterrence and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including traceability and catch documentation schemes, noting that these should not become unnecessary technical barriers to trade (TBTs), and reported on national initiatives in implementing such measures. It also noted the need to prohibit subsidies that contribute to overcapacity, overfishing and IUU fishing. The importance of sustainable production and consumption was also remarked. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to undertake a study on the impact of transshipments. (Para. 11)
10. The Sub-Committee supported FAO's role in providing technical capacity building on trade and marketing related issues, including market access, and on increasing the benefits and values deriving from a country's fisheries resources. Some Members suggested that FAO develop know-how in terms of infrastructure and technological development programmes and should facilitate the preparation of studies or projects necessary to support those developing countries having inadequate infrastructure that could limit proper post-harvest handling of resources and participation in international trade. (Para. 12)

11. The Sub-Committee underlined how international trade in fisheries products could benefit from improved dialogue and consultation among countries, international organizations, relevant regional organizations and stakeholders, including the private sector. The importance of active participation in international fora and negotiations was also highlighted, together with the need to improve information sharing and to concentrate actions on core issues. (Para. 13)

12. The Sub-Committee appreciated and supported the growing collaboration of FAO with other international organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). (Para. 14)

13. The Sub-Committee underlined FAO's important role in providing specialized technical expertise to the WTO and its Members on the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies. The Sub-Committee strongly supported the active participation in the eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11) of WTO (10–13 December 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina) and voiced its support for concrete outcomes as related to fisheries subsidies. Some Members encouraged participation by industry and technical experts to inform these negotiations. The Sub-Committee emphasized the importance to reach concrete results before MC11 in order to facilitate agreement at the meeting. Initiatives and proposals taken so far by selected Members were shared. (Para. 15)

Report from the Secretariat of the COFI-Sub-committee on Aquaculture

14. Some Members recognized the importance of potential contributions of sustainable and responsible aquaculture to food security and nutrition in general, as well as to Blue Growth in particular, as these are of mutual interest to both COFI Sub-Committees. (Para. 16)

15. The Sub-Committee agreed that the sustainable use and conservation of resources in aquaculture are key to FAO's Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) and its efforts on responsible aquaculture development. In this context, Members suggested that further emphasis be given to maritime spatial planning, skills enhancement, infrastructure development, access of aquaculture producers to value chains and international markets, decent work and employment. Good aquaculture practices, food safety and traceability of aquaculture products, in addition to giving consideration to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relevant to aquaculture, were also highlighted. (Para. 17)

16. FAO was requested to ensure that its Blue Growth activities on aquaculture should facilitate additional support and strengthened efforts in its technical assistance and capacity development, in particular for fish trade issues for developing countries including Small Island Developing States (SIDS). (Para. 18)

Report on fish trade-related activities in FAO

17. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat for the relevance of the comprehensive information provided and for the broad range of fish trade-related activities carried out by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. (Para. 19)

18. The Sub-Committee underlined the importance work of FAO in capacity building for developing countries and urged FAO to continue providing technical support to facilitate market access and seafood safety. The Sub-Committee noted the difficulties faced by some developing countries to achieve effective coordination between different national government bodies dealing with fish trade for the implementation of export related or international requirements. (Para. 20)

19. The Sub-Committee reiterated the importance of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) for addressing IUU fishing and as a tool to prevent the entry of illegal fish into international trade and domestic markets. The Sub-Committee also noted the importance of existing capacity building actions regarding the

implementation of PSMA to facilitate the participation of developing countries in this new regulatory framework. (Para. 21)

20. The Sub-Committee recognized the importance of traceability as an important tool in combatting IUU fishing. (Para. 22)

21. The Sub-Committee restated the importance of trade in fisheries services and welcomed the provided literature review. The Sub-Committee agreed to hold an expert consultation on trade in fisheries services that would allow a more detailed analysis, within a clear scope. The Sub-Committee noted with appreciation the support offered by members of the European Union (Member Organization) to contribute to such an expert consultation. (Para. 23)

22. The Sub-Committee welcomed the growing collaboration of FAO with other relevant bodies, such as CODEX Alimentarius, OECD, the World Bank, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), particularly regarding the capacity of FAO to provide scientific advice. (Para. 24)

23. The Sub-Committee expressed its support for the work of FAO to improve the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System for fish and fishery products and the continued collaboration with the World Customs Organization. (Para. 25)

24. The Sub-Committee strongly supported the collaboration of FAO with WTO, particularly in connection with the current negotiations on fisheries subsidies. The Sub-Committee noted the crucial role of FAO in providing expert advice to inform the negotiations on fisheries subsidies, especially taking into consideration the need for a positive outcome at the MC11. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of capacity building and technical assistance on fisheries subsidies for developing countries. (Para. 26)

25. The Sub-Committee welcomed the work of FAO related to the SDGs, especially on the targets related to fish trade in SDG14, and more particularly to fisheries subsidies. The Sub-Committee noted the Voluntary Commitments, including capacity building actions, registered by FAO for implementation of SDG14, during the Ocean Conference, New York, United States of America, 5–9 June 2017. (Para. 27)

Social sustainability in fisheries value chains and the link to trade

26. The Sub-Committee welcomed the inclusion of social sustainability in the agenda and confirmed the significant importance and relevance of social sustainability issues in the value chain, in particular the recognition and protection of human and labour rights in national and international value chains. The Sub-Committee also recommended that FAO continue strengthening its work in this area in a holistic way, in light of its clear mandate and in close collaboration with international partner organizations including ILO, International Maritime Organization, UNCTAD, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, OECD and others. (Para. 28)

27. The Sub-Committee noted the key significance of social and ethical issues for sectoral reputation and emphasized the sector's own responsibility towards people working in fish value chains and for sustainable livelihoods of the communities depending on fish production, processing, distribution and trade. (Para. 29)

28. Members recognized the links between IUU fishing and human and labour right abuses in the sector, emphasizing the need for improved inter-agency collaboration, including between authorities representing fisheries, labour, ports and other relevant functions, as stipulated also by instruments such as the PSMA. (Para. 30)

29. The Sub-Committee emphasized the importance of the implementation of the International Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), the associated human rights-based approaches and

opportunities for involvement and strengthening of local fish producing communities and fostering consultation and participation of local stakeholders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). FAO should continue to provide assistance in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and should enhance awareness of the significance of existing human and labour rights for all fish workers. (Para. 31)

30. Members reported on efforts by seafood industry associations, as well as by government authorities, of developing criteria and standards covering social protection (e.g. child and maternal care, rights of women fish workers), occupational safety and health (e.g. safety at sea and in fish processing) and measures to assist in the application of labour regulations and standards for value chain stages or the entire sector. Members confirmed measures for implementing provisions of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention C188 at national and regional levels and for the development of national measures, for instance, requiring re-flagging of foreign vessels fishing in national waters, human rights certification in fisheries and capacity development on human and labour rights in fisheries. (Para. 32)

31. Members requested technical assistance and capacity development support by FAO to developing countries to address social sustainability issues, policies and measures that would enhance the contributions of both fisheries, including small-scale fisheries, and fish value chains to income and employment generation and economic development in local and national contexts. It was recalled that social criteria, including human and labour rights, should apply to both importing and exporting countries. (Para. 33)

32. The Sub-Committee noted the complex tasks and fisheries-specific challenges of addressing social issues relative to human and labour rights in fisheries and fish value chains, including in particular the tasks of applying and implementing existing relevant instruments and guidelines. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO should explore the possibility of developing, in close collaboration with interested partner organizations and stakeholders, a guidance document to assist fish value chain actors in the implementation of existing relevant instruments, criteria and measures covering responsible business conduct, human rights and international labour standards. (Para. 34)

Reduction of Fish food loss and waste

33. The Sub-Committee widely recognized the importance of reducing food loss and waste in the context of food security and nutrition and the work of FAO in this field. It also recognized that the reduction of food loss and waste in the fish value chain is a critical element in the drive towards sustainable management of natural resources. (Para. 35)

34. The Sub-Committee emphasized both the multi-faceted and complex nature of food loss and waste in fish value chains and the simple fact that fish is food and, as such, should be fully utilized. (Para. 36)

35. The Sub-Committee noted that developed and developing countries will have different priorities when addressing food loss and waste at the national level and that FAO should focus on support to developing countries in assessing and reducing food loss and waste in fish value chains, with a focus on small-scale fisheries. (Para. 37)

36. The Sub-Committee noted that some developing countries called for support in technical and technological capacity building on assessing and reducing loss and waste covering pre-harvest issues, discards, bycatch and post-harvest handling, storage and processing. (Para. 38)

37. The Sub-Committee noted the programmes reported by Members to reduce food loss and waste covering a broad range of elements along the fish value chain. Examples included various forms of bycatch and discards management and use, infrastructure development, technological advances, legal frameworks, action plans and policies, economic incentives, public awareness raising and nutrition focused strategies. (Para. 39)

38. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of partnerships to ensure that relevant stakeholders from government, civil society, industry and communities are involved in defining the pathway to reduce losses and waste in the sector. (Para. 40)

39. The Sub-Committee gave strong support for the work, funded by the Government of Norway, on the development by FAO of a pilot global repository that contains guidance to reduce food loss and waste in fish value chains. Some Members showed interest in participating in the development of the web-based guidance repository and called for further financial support to expand this work pending a successful conclusion of the pilot phase. (Para. 41)

Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes

40. The Sub-Committee welcomed the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) by the FAO Conference in July 2017, highlighting their important role in achieving sustainable fisheries, as well as their effectiveness in preventing trade in products from IUU fisheries. (Para. 42) (COF/2018/Inf.10)

41. The Sub-Committee supported the planned work of FAO in raising awareness on CDS Guidelines. It underlined the complementarity of CDS with other international instruments and initiatives, such as the PSMA and the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels, and the need for integrative cost-effective programmes in the CDS implementation as well as in capacity building towards that end. The Sub-Committee also highlighted the role of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), other regional bodies and industry stakeholders in its implementation as well as in capacity-building activities, especially at the regional level. (Para. 43)

42. The Sub-Committee underlined that CDS should be risk-based and not become unnecessary TBTs, highlighting the usefulness of harmonization in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary costs for users. (Para. 44)

43. The Sub-Committee, while noting the importance of many of the components included in the proposed Global Assistance Programme, recommended that the establishment of a separate programme for this purpose is premature. The Sub-Committee suggested that at a future stage, FAO can inform on best practices based on national and regional implementation experiences. (Para. 45)

Update on activities related to food quality, safety and market access

44. The Sub-Committee highlighted the important work of FAO in providing scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission based on outputs of joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) risk assessment bodies. It also endorsed the technical assistance provided to developing and in transition countries to further develop their food safety control and management systems and to facilitate market access. (Para. 46)

45. The Sub-Committee expressed strong support for FAO to continue to work in close cooperation with WHO and the various Codex Committees dealing with fish-related issues, and that this work should receive adequate funding to ensure that high quality scientific advice continues to be provided to the Codex standard setting process. (Para. 47)

46. There was support both for the joint work with WHO and the World Organization for Animal Health on antimicrobial resistance and the joint work with other international organizations on the implications of microplastics on the environment, aquatic organisms and food safety. (Para. 48)

47. The Sub-Committee called upon FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries for capacity building in government food control systems and for support to small-scale fishery communities with simple technologies that will ensure food safety based on Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice. The Sub-Committee noted that some developing countries

called for support in identifying opportunities for data collection in support of standards development. (Para. 49)

Update on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) related activities

48. The Sub-Committee expressed its continued support for FAO–CITES cooperation under the 2006 FAO–CITES Memorandum of Understanding. The Sub-Committee also encouraged FAO to continue its cooperation and coordination among relevant agencies and instruments on CITES issues, for example with national fisheries authorities and RFMOs. (Para. 50)

49. The Sub-Committee supported the positive contribution of FAO in convening the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the assessment of CITES proposals, and supported the convening of the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for Listing or Delisting of Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species that are considered by CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) 18. (Para. 51)

50. The Sub-Committee stated the need for FAO to work with the CITES Secretariat to ensure the FAO Expert Advisory Panel report and associated recommendation on proposals to CITES are given full recognition in the lead up to, and at the CITES CoP, noting that FAO is the competent UN body for fisheries. (Para. 52)

51. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO Members who are also parties of CITES to ensure fisheries expertise is available for country delegations responsible for decision making for the CITES listing or delisting process. (Para. 53)

52. The Sub-Committee requested FAO to work with the CITES Secretariat to ensure information on species being considered for inclusion in CITES Appendices is based on best available science and is communicated in an orderly, timely and harmonized, transparent process that offers Members clear guidance well in advance of the CITES CoP, so there is sufficient time for informed decision making. (Para. 54)

53. Some Members requested FAO, in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, to examine, if possible, the potential change of deadlines of listing proposals in order for Members to secure enough time for consideration of scientific advice and recommendations. (Para. 55)

54. The Sub-Committee highlighted the complexity of implementing CITES requirements and suggested FAO continue its work in building the necessary capacity, especially in developing countries, for strengthening fisheries management for implementation of CITES provisions. (Para. 56)

55. The Sub-committee was informed of the upcoming report “Fisheries Management for Sustainable Use of Marine Living Resources in the Face of Changing Systems: Improved knowledge of the impact and implication of CITES listings”. Two Members questioned the mandate of FAO for this study. It was also stated that given the relatively short time period since the implementation of the listings, it was premature to conduct an analysis of their effectiveness. (Para. 57)

56. Some Members encouraged FAO to conduct comprehensive reviews on the impacts caused by CITES listings on conservation and management of fishery resources, as well as on socio-economic aspect relevant to regional communities. (Para. 58)

57. Some Members highlighted the long time period after listing that was needed to develop CITES non-detriment findings for CITES Appendix II listed species, and also the on-going need for Members to receive assistance in implementing CITES provisions. (Para. 59)

58. The Sub-Committee supported FAO spearheading an initiative on understanding fisheries and trade for non-fin products of sharks and rays, a subject not properly understood or documented. (Para. 60)

59. The Sub-Committee supported the ongoing collaboration of FAO with IUCN, especially in the review of the IUCN Red List, in looking for complementarities and differences in the use of marine resource status indicators, to promote coherence and harmonization of practices. (Para. 61)

60. The Sub-Committee requested FAO to improve its public dissemination of information related to the status of commercially-exploited aquatic species and their management, including information on CITES related issues. Some Members thought this would help to counter misleading or unbalanced media information being distributed by some advocacy groups. (Para. 62)

The impact of marine protected areas on livelihoods, trade, food fish supply and consumption

61. The Sub-Committee welcomed the inclusion of this topic on the Agenda, noting the wider implications on supply and trade of fisheries from the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). (Para. 63)

62. The Sub-Committee considered spatial management, such as the use of MPAs, as a useful tool for sustainable fisheries management, particularly when approaches are science-based, stakeholder informed and implemented and managed adaptively to achieve specific objectives. MPAs should, however, be complemented with other effective management measures as part of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. (Para. 64)

63. The Sub-Committee noted the significant investment of capacities and resources undertaken in the implementation of MPAs which could be diverted from other primary fisheries management aspects. The Sub-Committee highlighted the on-going need for FAO to support Members on this issue, given the range of different approaches taken to implement MPAs. (Para. 65)

64. The Sub-Committee stated its appreciation for the balanced and scientific approach of FAO when dealing with MPA issues, by including both sustainable use and conservation principles, while recognizing the key socio-cultural issues. (Para. 66)

65. The Sub-Committee requested FAO to continue to improve the level of communication on scientific and technical information on MPAs, including on their positive and negative impacts on fisheries, fish trade and socio-cultural issues. (Para. 67)

66. The Sub-Committee recognized the international initiatives and targets (e.g. SDG14.5 and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 11). The Sub-Committee endorsed the interpretation of FAO that MPAs should be used as a means to achieve defined goals, and not a goal in itself. Some Members expressed concern at the IUCN 30 percent target for 'no take' MPA coverage. (Para. 68)

67. Some Members highlighted that 'other effective area-based measures' that were not necessarily 'no take' MPAs were accepted nationally and internationally as acceptable approaches to delivering on fisheries management and biodiversity conservation (e.g. CBD Aichi Target 11). (Para. 69)

68. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to continue its cooperation and coordination among national authorities, relevant agencies and instruments on MPA related issues, for example cooperation between RFMOs and Regional Seas organizations through the Sustainable Oceans Initiative. (Para. 70)

69. The Sub-Committee highlighted the complexity of implementing MPAs and welcomed and further encouraged the sharing of results of case studies conducted by FAO, especially successful cases, regarding information and experiences of Members on policy frameworks and guidelines, approaches taken and outcomes achieved on national and regional initiatives. (Para. 71)

70. The Sub-Committee noted the on-going difficulties, especially by developing countries, in delivering on international process targets for implementation of MPAs. The Sub-Committee suggested that FAO prioritize capacity development to address challenges in science and administration, including on socio-cultural issues and the development of alternative livelihoods in relation to reallocation of resources when MPAs are implemented. (Para. 72)

The impact of climate change on future fish supply, trade and consumption

71. The Sub-Committee welcomed the information provided and highlighted the relevance of this issue, including its possible impact on consumption and trade. It also noted its complexity, in particular on assessing its current and future consequences. Members shared information on recent national and regional trends related to climate change, including modifications in distribution of certain fish stocks, which can lead to difficulties in the negotiations of shared stocks. (Para. 73)

72. Members reported on recent national strategies focused on better management of fisheries resources and underlined the importance of integrating climate change impacts and related adaptation measures into fisheries management policies and development programmes. Members also remarked that fisheries should be considered within overall climate change policies and programmes. (Para. 74)

73. The Sub-Committee underscored the key function of sound, flexible and robust science-based fishery management as the main tool to cope with climate and environmental changes and challenges to fisheries. FAO remains the principal organization to advise on the type of fishery management tools to be used and on related capacity building. The Sub-Committee indicated that any guidance and capacity building should not be limited to least-developed countries and SIDS as suggested in the document. (Para. 75)

74. The Sub-Committee, while welcoming the inclusion of the impact of climate change in the agenda, underlined that the main focus of the Sub-Committee should remain on issues directly relevant to trade and markets for which Sub-Committee and FAO possess clear technical competences and mandate. (Para. 76)

Monitoring the implementation of Article 11 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

75. The Sub-Committee welcomed the comprehensive analysis of responses and expressed its appreciation to the FAO Members for the excellent and continuously increasing response rate to the questionnaire. (Para. 77)

76. The Sub-Committee underlined the need to keep the questionnaire up-to-date reflecting relevant and evolving issues, while maintaining user friendliness and ensuring confidentiality. (Para. 78)

Statements by Observers

77. ICFA, INFOPECSA, SEAFDEC and the World Conservation Trust thanked the Sub-Committee for the opportunity to participate in the meeting and appreciated the Sub-Committee as a forum for frank and open discussions on trade and market-related issues. (Para. 79)

Election of Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons of the seventeenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade

78. Mrs Aurora de Blas Carbonero (Spain) was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Ms Reina Sotillo de Galgano (Argentina) was confirmed First Vice-Chairperson. Senegal and New Zealand were elected as the other Vice-Chairs. (Para. 80)

Any other matters

79. The Sub-Committee welcomed the inclusion of new points to the agenda, such as MPAs, climate change and labour and social issues, but reaffirmed the need to keep the main focus of the Sub-Committee on issues related to core elements affecting trade in fish and fishery products. A number of additional topics were suggested to the Secretariat for possible inclusion in future sessions. (Para. 81)

80. The Sub-Committee appreciated the updates provided by the Republic of Korea on the status of the World Fisheries University and encouraged FAO and the Republic of Korea to finalise the formal agreement for its establishment. (Para. 82)

81. The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to Dr Audun Lem, Secretary of the Sub-Committee and Member of the Secretariat since 1998, for his valuable contribution to its work, wishing him all the best in his new assignment as Deputy-Director within the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. (Para. 83)

Date and place of the seventeenth session

82. The Sub-Committee welcomed the kind invitation from Spain to host its seventeenth session in Vigo. Modalities as well as the date and venue will be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson and in light of the international calendar of meetings. (Para. 84)

III. UPDATE ON EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES SUBSEQUENT TO COFI:FT/XVI

Trade in Fisheries Services

83. As recommended by COFI:FT/XVI, FAO convened an Expert Consultation on Trade in Fisheries Services in Gothenburg, Sweden, from 20 to 22 March 2018. Twenty-two experts participated in the consultation funded by the Government of Sweden. The Expert Consultation aimed to identify and describe issues relevant to further work of FAO in the area of trade in fisheries services, providing a first framework for the issue. The discussions confirmed the complexity and wide range of services involved. The final report of the Expert Consultation addresses definitions, including the particularities of services associated with access agreements, developing country perspectives, and associated volume and impact assessments. A summary of the report is presented as document COFI/2018/SBD.4.

84. As concluded by the Expert Consultation, the importance of trade in fisheries services calls for increased work on the topic by FAO in line with its mandate and the relevant SDG targets. This should include capacity-building activities, in particular on the impact on developing countries and small-scale fishers. The Expert Consultation also recommended the development of a guidance document on the issue for consideration at the next COFI:FT.

Progress regarding CITES

85. The CITES sixty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, Switzerland, 27 November to 1 December 2017) discussed potential ways to improve the process for the delivery of scientific and technical advice for Parties on CITES listing proposals for commercially exploited aquatic species (CITES SC69 Doc. 71.1). CITES Standing Committee supported continued collaboration between FAO and the CITES Secretariat on ensuring that CITES Parties have access to the best available scientific and technical information on species proposed for listing, well prior to CITES CoP 18. A more detailed description of issues relating to the CITES Appendix amendment process is also provided in COFI/2018/Inf/22.

FAO work on SDG indicators

86. As part of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's programme of work on the SDGs, a number of expert workshops have been initiated to develop and finalize the methodology for the four indicators for which FAO is the custodian agency under SDG14. It is foreseen that this process will include: a) road testing methodological options with a number of key countries; b) analysis of results; c) sharing the results with countries and achieve national take-up; and d) full rollout of indicators at the national level. The programme of work would also support advancing all the custodian indicators to Tier I level. FAO will seek extra-budgetary resources for the implementation of this programme.

Social sustainability in fisheries value-chains and the link to trade

87. As recommended by COFI:FT/XVI, the Secretariat has started exploring possible modalities for the development of a guidance document to assist fish value chain actors in the implementation of existing relevant instruments, criteria and measures covering responsible business conduct, human rights and international labour standards.

88. In particular, preliminary discussions have been initiated with the FAO units responsible for the OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains published in 2016. This OECD-FAO Guidance document is designed to help enterprises observe existing standards for responsible business conduct along agricultural supply chains but does not address issues and challenges specific to fisheries and aquaculture.

89. FAO has reached out to interested partners including governments, OECD, ILO, UN-OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNODC, industry associations and civil society organizations for collaboration on the development of such a guidance document. The outcome of this multi-stakeholder process will be the topic of an FAO organized expert workshop in Vigo, Spain, in October 2018. FAO will report on this process and the envisaged guidance document to COFI:FT/XVII in 2019.