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Report of the Thirty-third Session of the

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Rome, 9–13 July 2018

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the Thirty-third Session of the Committee on Fisheries, held in Rome from 9 to 13 July 2018.

ABSTRACT

The Thirty-third Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Rome, Italy, from 9 to 13 July 2018. The Committee:

- a) commended FAO for the 2018 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication, but strongly requested the Secretariat to address the timing issue with a clear deadline for subsequent sessions;
- b) welcomed the improvement in the 2018 questionnaire on the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and noted the progress of Members on the implementation of the Code and related instruments, but also identified gaps and constraints and underscored the important role of FAO in assisting Members. The Committee called upon FAO to consult with Members on matters of potential confidentiality in the use of the country information and emphasized the need for Members to validate the use of the information for SDG reporting;
- c) endorsed the reports of the Sixteenth Session of the Sub Committee on Fish Trade and the Ninth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- d) welcomed the increasing number of Parties to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA), and encouraged further adherence to the Agreement. The Committee commended the launch of the public version of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessel and Supply Vessels (Global Record). The Committee expressed concern about transshipment activities that may contribute to IUU fishing and welcomed the global study on transshipment and called for in-depth studies to support the development of guidelines on best practices for regulating, monitoring and controlling transshipment. The Committee expressed support for the work of FAO in continuing to develop the technical guidelines for the estimation of the magnitude and geographic extent of IUU fishing;
- e) welcomed progress in implementing the small-scale fisheries (SSF) Guidelines and requested FAO to further develop an implementation monitoring system for the SSF Guidelines. The Committee welcomed the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022;
- f) noted the increasing importance of sustainable aquaculture development for food security and nutrition and its potential to meet growing demand to fill the gap in global fish supply. The Committee recognized the need to implement best practices in aquaculture and recommended the FAO develop sustainable aquaculture guidelines – especially for Africa;
- g) reaffirmed the role of COFI as the most important international forum for policy debate and the adoption of policy instruments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and further commended the participation of FAO in the many relevant international fora. The Committee appreciated the ongoing work to establish a new legally-binding agreement for the conservation of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), noting that it should not undermine existing relevant instruments. It called for FAO to continue its cooperation with Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs);
- h) emphasized the importance of Members achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 14. The Committee requested FAO to continue to assist Members in strengthening statistical capacity and delivery of their data and information. The Committee requested FAO to review potential opportunities of Blue Growth and Blue Economy initiative. The Committee further requested

- FAO to support members in inland fisheries and develop best practices for management of inland fisheries;
- i) commended the work of FAO in the area of climate change in fisheries and aquaculture including the comprehensive review on the impacts of climate change in fisheries and aquaculture and adaptation options. The Committee endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear. The Committee welcomed the work of FAO on bycatch, including work on marine mammal bycatch;
 - j) endorsed the priority areas of work for 2018-2019 noting the importance of the work of FAO in support of achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 14;
 - k) approved the progress report of the MYPOW 2016-2019 and requested the insertion of, and strongly urged adherence to the following indicator in MYPOW 2018-2021, “All COFI documents, including SOFIA, are to be made available in all FAO languages at least four weeks before the session commences”;
 - l) elected the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the 34th Session of COFI.

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**GLOBAL POLICY AND REGULATORY MATTERS
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE**

- i) State of world fisheries and aquaculture (para. 10).
- ii) The Committee supported and encouraged the close collaboration between FAO and other relevant international and regional organizations including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) (para. 12, 20, 27, 29, 30, 40, 44, 45, 51, 57, 58, 75, 78,79, 81, 82, 83, 102, 103 and 115).
- iii) Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (para. 32 and 54).
- iv) FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) (para. 50, 51 and 52).
- v) Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) (para. 53).
- vi) Transshipment (para. 55).
- vii) Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries (para. 61 and 66).
- viii) International year of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture (para. 69).
- ix) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (para. 93, 96 and 97).
- x) Climate change and other environment related matters (para. 101, 104, 106 and 107).

**PROGRAMME AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL**

- i) State of world fisheries and aquaculture (para. 8, 9 and 12).
- ii) Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments (para. 17, 19 and 20).
- iii) Decisions and recommendations of the 16th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Busan, the Republic of Korea, 4-8 September 2017 (para. 27, 29, 30 and 32).
- iv) Decisions and recommendations of the 9th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Rome, 24-27 October 2017 (para. 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44 and 45).
- v) Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing (para. 48, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57 and 58).
- vi) Small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance (para. 61, 62, 65, 66, 67 and 69).
- vii) Global and regional ocean processes (para. 73, 75, 78, 79, 82 and 83).
- viii) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (para. 93, 96 and 97).
- ix) Climate change and other environment related matters (para. 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107 and 108).
- x) FAO's programme of work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework (para. 110, 113, 114, 115, 118 and 119).
- xi) Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee (para. 122 and 123).
- xii) Any other matters (para. 126, 127 and 128).

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Thirty-third session in Rome from 9 to 13 July 2018. The session was attended by 107 Members of the Committee, by observers from 14 other FAO Member Nations, the Holy See and Palestine, and one Associate Member of FAO, by representatives from ten specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations and by observers from 44 intergovernmental organizations, one Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and 33 international non-governmental organizations. A list of delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.
2. Mr William Gibbons-Fly, Chairperson, Thirty-third session of COFI, opened the session and welcomed the participants.
3. Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, inaugurated the session and delivered a statement. The text of his statement is attached in Appendix D.
4. Mr Peter Thompson, UN Special Envoy for the Ocean, delivered a statement as attached in Appendix E.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

5. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the session with the addition of two items: 14.2(a) Report from the Republic of Korea on the progress of the pilot programme for the World Fisheries University; and 14.2(b) A proposal for the establishment of a new sub-committee on fisheries management. The Agenda is attached as Appendix A to this report. The list of documents which were placed before the Committee is attached as Appendix C.

DESIGNATION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

6. The following Members were elected to the Drafting Committee: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Uganda. Côte d'Ivoire chaired the Drafting Committee.

STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

7. The Committee commended FAO for the *2018 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (SOFIA) publication. It reiterated that SOFIA constituted a global reference for development status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture that was supported by data, statistics and information, and was a tool to help states improve the sustainability of fisheries under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially SDG 14. The Committee reiterated the importance of operational national data collection systems to support scientific and decision-making processes, emphasizing the need for capacity building in developing countries and wide dissemination of the SOFIA report.
8. The Committee noted the improving quality of this publication and provided constructive recommendations as to how this could be continued. The Committee recommended a more robust peer review process, sharing the report with Members well in advance of publishing, and the potential to draw from additional data sets to fill particular data gaps, such as estimates of fish losses.

9. The Committee commented that the late release of SOFIA and other COFI documents limited the time for adequate review, noting that this might affect the quality of discussions and efficiency of the Committee. The Committee strongly requested the Secretariat to address this timing issue with a clear deadline for subsequent sessions.

10. The Committee recognized that the situation is very different in different areas of the world, but expressed serious concern about the overall aggregated status of fish stocks, noting the continued increase in the proportion of overfished stocks. Regretting that the global community had been unable to reverse this trend, the Committee emphasized how illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, together with unregulated transshipment and harmful fisheries subsidies, were undermining the sustainability of marine fishery resources. The Committee called upon Members for strong commitment in the fight against IUU fishing, including ratification of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) and underscored the importance of national policy reforms for strong and efficient management action towards achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and the SDGs.

11. To address these challenges, the Committee expressed strong interest in discussing the establishment of a sub-committee on fisheries management in order to assist the international community, especially developing States.

12. The Committee highlighted the role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other regional processes for the sustainable management of common fisheries resources, and called for increased support to Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and national mechanisms for sustainable fishery management.

13. The Committee emphasized the importance of fish in meeting the FAO strategic goal of a world without hunger and malnutrition, noting the key role which trade and aquaculture will continue to play in the provision of livelihoods and satisfying the demand of an ever-growing population. It also noted the contribution of small-scale fisheries (SSF) and aquaculture in rural development.

14. The Committee reiterated the importance of marine and inland SSF in providing livelihoods and food fish, highlighting related challenges of access to resources, gender equity, reduction of fish loss and waste, access to markets, including through strengthened industry standards, and adaptation to climate change for increased resilience. The Committee stressed the need for capacity development to boost implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

15. The Committee recalled the importance of international cooperation across disciplines and sectors in addressing the complex SDG challenges, as fostered through UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organizations joint programmes, and implemented by some Members using a Blue Growth approach.

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS

16. The Committee noted the record-high response rate to the Code questionnaire and encouraged Members to maintain this commitment to respond.

17. The Committee welcomed the improvements to the 2018 questionnaire including the section on SSF and requested that certain areas be made more comprehensive, whilst constraining its length. The Committee requested further enhancement of the web-based application and related data management and processing tools, and called for FAO to ensure the readability of the questionnaire in all languages.

18. The Committee noted the progress of Members in the implementation of the Code and related instruments, but also identified gaps and constraints, such as limited financial and human resources, gaps in technical and regulatory capacity, the need for improved institutional frameworks for responsible fisheries and aquaculture and to reduce post-harvest losses. The Committee underscored the important role of FAO in assisting Members to overcome these challenges.

19. The Committee called upon FAO to consult with Members on matters of potential confidentiality in the use of the country data and information submitted through the Code questionnaire. It further emphasized the need for Members to validate the use of any information obtained from the questionnaire for SDG reporting.

20. The Committee highlighted the importance of safety at sea and working conditions in the fisheries sector and welcomed the close cooperation between FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Members requested FAO to further strengthen international cooperation on occupational health and safety issues in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and to promote decent work for fish workers.

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

21. The Committee endorsed the Report of the Sixteenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, held in Busan, the Republic of Korea (4–8 September 2017), and thanked the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the session.

22. The Committee underlined the crucial function of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as the only specialized multilateral forum for discussion of trade-related issues for fish and fishery products.

23. The Committee expressed support for the capacity building activities of FAO on post-harvest and market access issues, in particular for small-scale producers and processors in developing countries.

24. The Committee noted the challenges arising from increasing market access requirements and emphasized the need to avoid these becoming unnecessary technical barriers to trade (TBTs).

25. The Committee expressed strong support for FAO's provision of scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission noting the need to ensure adequate funding for this work.
26. The Committee supported the outcome of the Expert Consultation on Trade in Fisheries Services and the continued work of FAO in this regard. This includes a best practice review to be presented at the next session of the Sub-Committee.
27. The Committee recommended that future guidance on social sustainability be developed in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including industry and fish worker associations, building on experience from the development of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains.
28. The Committee highlighted the importance of reducing food waste and losses, especially in the post-harvest value chain, and the need to provide technical assistance to developing countries in this regard.
29. The Committee reiterated its support to the work of FAO on commercially-exploited aquatic species of interest to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and underlined the important role of the FAO Expert Advisory Panel in reviewing CITES listing proposals for those species. Some Members encouraged FAO to review the conservation impacts on species already listed.
30. The Committee recalled the report of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade noting the request of some Members to work closely with CITES Secretariat to ensure the timely sharing of the Expert Panel report to enable sufficient time for decision-making. The Committee encouraged FAO to enhance its cooperation with CITES, to improve the current situation.
31. The Committee expressed support for the cooperation of FAO with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on trade issues in general and on fisheries subsidies in particular.
32. The Committee welcomed the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) by the FAO Conference in July 2017, and encouraged their implementation to harmonize CDS and prevent trade in products from IUU fishing while minimizing TBTs.
33. The Committee welcomed the kind invitation from the Government of Spain to host the Seventeenth session of the Sub-Committee.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, ROME, 24-27 OCTOBER 2017

34. The Committee endorsed the Report of the Ninth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture held in Rome, Italy (24–27 October 2017).
35. The Committee highlighted the importance of aquaculture for food security and nutrition, improved livelihoods, poverty alleviation, income generation, job creation and trade, particularly for small-scale producers. Furthermore the Committee noted that sustainable aquaculture has the potential to meet growing demand and to fill the gap in global fish supply, and noted the interest of many Members to develop aquaculture to meet their demands.

36. The Committee expressed support for the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI), as a strategy for the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture, and recognized the Common Vision for Food and Agriculture as a useful framework to support the sustainable growth of aquaculture.

37. The Committee recognized the growing need for implementation of best practices in aquaculture, and recommended that FAO develop sustainable aquaculture guidelines to provide guidance to the sector.

38. The Committee welcomed the draft report on The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and recommended its finalization by the Secretariat and wide distribution. The Committee thanked the COFI Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies and the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for their work in developing the report.

39. The Committee recommended that FAO develop a global information system, including a registry of species, to monitor and assess the status of aquatic genetic resources relevant to aquaculture.

40. The Committee highlighted the important issues of biosecurity, aquatic animal health, and antimicrobial resistance. It recommended that FAO continue its work with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), noting the development of the progressive management pathway towards better biosecurity in aquaculture, and the need to build the capacity of Members to better manage their biosecurity issues.

41. The Committee stressed the importance of increasing attention to aquaculture production in inland areas, diversification of aquaculture, protection of aquatic biodiversity and native species, selective breeding, as well as extension services to support inclusive strengthening of value chains. It also highlighted the need to improve consumer perception of the aquaculture sector.

42. The Committee noted the importance of knowledge-sharing among member countries, notably through regional networks and South-South Cooperation, and specifically recommended that FAO continue its work on aquaculture development in small island developing States (SIDS). In this regard, China offered to work with countries in the sustainable development of aquaculture.

43. The Committee expressed its concern and noted that the role of certifications in national and international markets highlighted the need to strengthen the capacity of small-scale producers to attain certifications to secure and improve market access. It further noted that certifications should not create unnecessary TBTs.

44. The Committee supported the request from the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia Pacific members to hold a global conference on aquaculture in 2020, and requested FAO to collaborate with preparations, building upon the successful experiences of similar conferences in 2000 and 2010.

45. The Committee noted the importance of promoting aquaculture, particularly in Africa. It supported the transfer of the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) initiative to the African

Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and requested FAO to continue to support the network.

46. The Committee welcomed the kind invitation from the Government of Norway to host the Tenth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in 2019.

FISHERIES AND OCEAN GOVERNANCE

Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

47. The Committee noted the initiatives that Members have undertaken to more effectively combat IUU fishing at national, regional and global levels.

48. Members referred to the challenges they are facing in combatting IUU fishing and requested FAO to provide additional technical assistance to improve their performance as coastal, flag, market, processing and port States.

49. The Committee expressed the need for greater cooperation and information sharing between Members, including through mechanisms established by RFMOs and other IGOs.

50. The Committee welcomed the increasing number of Parties to PSMA, and encouraged further adherence to the Agreement. The Committee welcomed the second meeting of the parties to the PSMA, to be hosted by Chile in 2019.

51. The Committee commended the ongoing work of FAO in supporting developing States in preparation for, or implementation of, the PSMA and complementary instruments and tools to combat IUU fishing. It encouraged further cooperation and coordination with States and other relevant IGOs engaged in complementary capacity development initiatives.

52. The Committee welcomed the initial discussions of the Parties on information sharing mechanisms in support of the implementation of the PSMA and recommended that existing regional information exchange mechanisms be taken advantage of when developing a global system for information exchange under the PSMA to avoid duplication of effort.

53. The Committee commended the launch of the public version of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record), recognizing that it plays an important role in the fight against IUU fishing. The Committee noted that the Global Record supports the implementation of the PSMA and other international instruments, and national and regional initiatives, and encouraged Members to submit information to the Global Record and provide regular updates. The Committee recommended that the Global Record be further developed, in particular to allow for automatic uploading from other monitoring, control and surveillance systems.

54. The Committee recognized the value of the Voluntary Guidelines for CDS as part of a comprehensive suite of measures necessary to combat IUU fishing, particularly with respect to improving traceability of fisheries products.

55. The Committee expressed concern about transshipment activities which, when inadequately regulated, monitored and controlled, can contribute to IUU fishing. The Committee welcomed the global study on transshipment conducted by FAO, and called for in-

depth studies to support the development of guidelines on best practices for regulating, monitoring and controlling transshipment.

56. The Committee expressed support for the work of FAO in continuing to develop the technical guidelines for the estimation of the magnitude and geographic extent of IUU fishing, noting the value of these guidelines for the production of consistent and reliable estimates, determining national, regional, global trends, and measuring the impacts of IUU fishing.

57. Considering that certain subsidies may contribute to overcapacity, overfishing and IUU fishing, the Committee called upon FAO to continue providing technical advice to the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies at the WTO.

58. Recognizing the links between IUU fishing, safety at sea and poor working conditions in parts of the fisheries sector, the Committee commended the ongoing cooperation between IMO, ILO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and FAO on IUU fishing and related matters, and encouraged further joint initiatives.

59. The Committee recalled the important role of Flag States in their actual control of their vessels in combatting IUU fishing.

Small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance

60. The Committee recalled the fundamental contribution of inland and marine SSF to food security and nutrition, livelihoods, trade and the 2030 Agenda.

61. The Committee welcomed progress in implementing the SSF Guidelines, including mainstreaming in laws, policies and other initiatives, and encouraged continued work under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme at global, regional and national levels.

62. The Committee requested FAO to further develop an implementation monitoring system for the SSF Guidelines and to report on progress and provide its support to national, sub-regional and regional initiatives, particularly through the national committees.

63. The Committee underscored the active role SSF actors should play in decision-making.

64. The Committee highlighted the need to recognize and address the special role of women and the vulnerability of indigenous and local communities and minorities in SSF.

65. The Committee encouraged FAO to provide capacity development and technical support to SSF, including by addressing socio-economics, gender dimensions, and post-harvest and data collection challenges found in the sector.

66. The Committee highlighted the importance of achieving SDG 14.b on providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets, and encouraged FAO to equally support Members where this concerns inland fisheries resources.

67. The Committee acknowledged the limited statistics available on SSF. It welcomed the efforts of FAO to assess inland and marine fisheries and encouraged further improvements in statistical collection systems to inform national policy and future editions of SOFIA, including the development of best practices for management of inland fisheries and a plan for

implementation of the 10 steps for responsible inland fisheries. The Committee also looked forward to the results of the Hidden Harvest 2 initiative in 2020.

68. The Committee acknowledged the complexity of the SSF sector due to its wider livelihood functions, and role in social cohesion and cultural values. It noted that these need to be included in the analysis of SSF, together with traditional knowledge.

69. The Committee welcomed the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022, encouraged cooperation and support for the celebrations, and requested FAO to develop a planning roadmap.

70. The progress of the Global Strategic Framework in support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines was noted as a mechanism for engagement with multiple actors.

71. The Committee appreciated the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights based Approaches for Fisheries as a means to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and, more generally, to facilitate the formalization of appropriate access and resource rights in fisheries. It noted that these are key factors for food security and reduced conflicts in SSF.

72. The Committee noted the preparations for the User Rights 2018 conference in Yeosu, the Republic of Korea. It further welcomed the proposed development of a repository to inform rights-based fisheries, and invited FAO to support capacity development for fair and equitable tenure systems.

Global and regional ocean processes

73. The Committee reaffirmed the role of COFI as the most important international forum for policy debate and the adoption of policy instruments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and further commended the participation of FAO in the many international fora concerning the oceans, relevant to fisheries and aquaculture, and requested that FAO increase its involvement in these international fora.

74. The Committee also recognized the limited capacity of some countries to participate in the increasing number of oceans fora.

75. The Committee expressed concern about the depletion of Part VII of the Assistance Fund of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and encouraged its replenishment, that may be facilitated by a revision of its terms of reference and conditions.

76. The Committee appreciated the increased cooperation of FAO with relevant entities, notably UN-Oceans, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CITES, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), World Customs Organization, World Health Organization and WTO.

77. The Committee appreciated the ongoing work to establish a new legally-binding agreement for the conservation of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction and recognized that the process should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies.

78. The Committee also encouraged the increased contribution of FAO and other global, regional and sectoral bodies with an interest in fisheries, *inter alia*, RFMOs and other RFBs, to these negotiations, and encouraged Members to send representatives from their fisheries sectors.

79. The Committee welcomed the support of FAO to the CBD towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and FAO participation in the post 2020 vision of CBD. It requested FAO to continue the work concerning area-based management tools and its cooperation with other organizations working on this matter. The Committee requested FAO to continue cooperation with CBD and UN Environment in facilitating formal coordination mechanisms between RFBs and the Regional Seas Programmes.

80. The Committee welcomed the upcoming Our Ocean Conference in Bali, Indonesia, 29–30 October 2018, and noted the importance of future Our Ocean's conferences to continue monitoring the implementation of commitments made by its participants.

81. The Committee expressed appreciation for the work of regional and sectoral bodies, including RFBs and RFMOs, as important mechanisms for the cooperation of States in fisheries management and conservation. Members were encouraged to consider the establishment of RFMOs for species and areas not yet covered, taking into account the sovereignty of coastal States on this issue.

82. The Committee called for FAO to continue its cooperation with RFBs and RFMOs and commended FAO for the support provided to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), noting its important role in facilitating the coordination, exchange of experiences and lessons learned by RFBs. It recommended that FAO dedicate more resources to the work of the RSN.

83. The Committee requested FAO to continue supporting the reorientation from advisory bodies to management bodies of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), facilitate the strengthening of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and provide support for the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fisheries Organization.

84. The Committee appreciated the work of FAO to develop capacity for increasing resilience of the fisheries sector to disasters and expressed appreciation for the disaster relief assistance provided to the fisheries sector in the Caribbean after the hurricanes in 2017.

85. The Committee acknowledged the work of FAO and resource partners in promoting the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), the EAF Nansen Programme, the Common Oceans Programme and the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Programme.

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

86. The Committee emphasized the importance of Members achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 14. It highlighted the coherence of these goals with the policy goals of binding and non-binding international instruments, regional bodies (including RFMOs) and national authorities.

87. Noting that SDG reporting was the responsibility of Members, the Committee acknowledged that FAO was the primary UN agency with responsibility for fisheries (marine and freshwater) and aquaculture and has the important role of assisting competent authorities in tracking their progress in achieving SDG 14 and the other goals of the 2030 Agenda.
88. The Committee reiterated its support for strengthened cooperation between FAO and international, regional and national bodies, as well as the private sector, in strengthening the development and delivery of suitable indicators for monitoring progress towards achieving SDG and Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant to fisheries.
89. The Committee noted the lack of an internationally recognized methodology for lower tier indicators under the custodianship of FAO. It appreciated the technical work of FAO in progressing the development of appropriate methodologies to facilitate indicator reporting by Members.
90. The Committee emphasized the need to ensure comparability and consistency of reporting indicators at global, regional and national levels, whilst minimizing the burden on Members.
91. The Committee agreed that data and information submitted through the Code questionnaire could be used for reporting on SDG indicators and Aichi Biodiversity Targets in aggregate and, where permission is explicitly granted by Members, for reporting on their national progress, subject to adequate consultation and validation of inputs by Members, as stated in paragraph 19 of this report.
92. The Committee highlighted that reporting on these indicators by Members using new methodologies required institutional and human capacity development and resource mobilization, in order for them to achieve independent data collection, monitor and report on SDGs and related international instruments.
93. The Committee requested FAO to continue to assist Members in strengthening statistical capacity and delivery of their data and information, especially in data-poor situations. It further requested support to provide tools and publishing guidelines to assist in this activity.
94. The Committee recognized the synergies between the SDGs and the Blue Economy, with the need for broad cooperation on developing new economic platforms and processes (e.g. Blue Forum, Blue Ports, Blue Fashion) in a sustainable way.
95. The Committee welcomed the upcoming High Level Conference on sustainable blue economy, co-hosted by Canada and Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2018.
96. The Committee expressed the need for FAO to increase communication for clarifying and enhancing awareness of multi-sectoral approaches for Blue Growth and delivery of the 2030 Agenda and better elaborate its plans for the BGI.
97. The Committee further requested FAO to review potential opportunities of Blue Growth and Blue Economy initiatives and present this to the 17th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in 2019.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER ENVIRONMENT RELATED MATTERS

98. The Committee commended the work of FAO in the area of climate change in fisheries and aquaculture, and its engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, also noting the recent inclusion of climate change in a range of international instruments and initiatives.

99. The Committee commended the comprehensive review of FAO on the impacts of climate change in fisheries and aquaculture and adaptation options, noting that it will be an essential support to Members for the strengthening of their Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.

100. The Committee emphasized the vulnerability of fisheries and aquaculture communities to climate change and extreme events, and expressed particular concern for the impacts on SSF and SIDS in this regard.

101. The Committee stressed that effective responses to climate change require effective fisheries management in line with the 2030 Agenda. It requested the development of guidelines on climate change adaptation and mitigation in fisheries and aquaculture, and welcomed the offer from Canada to host an expert workshop on fisheries management in the context of climate change.

102. The Committee commended the work of FAO on biodiversity mainstreaming and requested FAO to prepare and operationalize a fisheries and aquaculture biodiversity plan as part of its Biodiversity Strategy and contribution to the CBD Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, building on its Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform. It also noted the need to see a greater engagement of FAO in international fora focused on the environment where fisheries-related issues are discussed.

103. The Committee noted that FAO, CITES, IUCN and other relevant international bodies use a range of criteria to characterize the state of commercially-exploited aquatic resources and requested FAO to continue cooperating with those other international bodies, to harmonize the criteria used to characterize commercially-exploited aquatic resources to the extent possible. It suggested that FAO could explore the possibility of cooperation with these organizations to monitor the conservation status of these species.

104. The Committee commended the work of FAO in relation to abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG). It encouraged FAO to conduct further work on quantifying the impacts of ALDFG and developing and documenting best practices for addressing ALDFG, including the recovery and recycling of gear, the use of biodegradable gear to minimize its contribution to marine plastic pollution, as well as the reduction of ghost fishing.

105. The Committee welcomed the recommendations of the Technical Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear, and endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear. It supported the development of a comprehensive global strategy to tackle issues relating to ALDFG and to support implementation of the Guidelines, and encouraged the involvement of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and relevant RFMOs, regional fisheries management arrangements and other relevant international bodies.

106. The Committee welcomed the work of FAO on bycatch, including work on marine mammal bycatch and the recommendations of the Expert Workshop on Means and Methods for Reducing Marine Mammal Mortality in Fishing and Aquaculture Operations. The Committee encouraged FAO to continue its work, engaging with Members, relevant experts and organizations, such as the International Whaling Commission and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, in the development of best practices in the form of technical guidelines. This would require further consultations among Members.

107. The Committee expressed concern about the effects of pollution, including microplastics, from gold mining and other sources, on aquatic resources, and encouraged FAO to continue collecting information on its impacts on aquaculture and fishery resources, and implications for food safety, both in marine and freshwater systems, including the work of the EAF-Nansen Programme.

108. The Committee noted with concern, the issue of underwater anthropogenic noise and encouraged FAO to consider to conduct a review of its impact on marine resources, and its socioeconomic consequences.

FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE UNDER THE FAO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

109. The Committee considered FAO's programme of work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework and appreciated the results achieved in 2016–2017. It agreed that these have contributed to the FAO Strategic Objectives, which remained relevant as a guide to FAO work in this sector.

110. The Committee reiterated its support for the BGI, and confirmed its validity as the framework for achieving tangible outcomes for the work of FAO in fisheries and aquaculture. In this respect, FAO was encouraged to integrate existing regional activities on Blue Growth into its programme of work, as well as to support the development of new regional initiatives.

111. The Committee welcomed the engagement of FAO in BGIs and noted its expanding work in oceans. It emphasized the need to maintain the priority of traditional work in support of sustainable global fisheries and aquaculture management.

112. The Committee endorsed the priority areas of work for 2018–2019 noting the importance of the work of FAO in support of achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 14.

113. The Committee requested the FAO Secretariat to take into account climate-related and other global and/or sector-specific developments and trends, as well as the recommendations of the FAO Regional Conferences concerning fisheries and aquaculture, in the implementation of its Programme of Work and Budget.

114. The Committee recommended that the FAO Programme of Work 2018-2019 should pay particular attention to the negative impact of climate change and natural disasters on SIDS in order to improve fisheries and aquaculture in line with SDG 14 and the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.

115. The Committee encouraged FAO to continue to collaborate with other international organizations, RFBs and RFMOs, to advocate the positive contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to sustainable development, and avoid the duplication of effort.

116. The Committee emphasized the value of the technical competence of FAO on fisheries and aquaculture and stressed the importance of maintaining and further strengthening that capacity.

117. The Committee reiterated the importance of the core function of FAO in collecting, analysing and disseminating statistics on fisheries and aquaculture, including gender disaggregated data when possible, to inform the policies and plans of Members towards the attainment of the SDGs.

118. Members requested FAO to maintain a strong presence and visibility at field-level with concrete activities supporting compliance with international agreements and translation of technical guidelines into national and regional policies and plans, in addition to its normative work to set standards and advocate policies and practices for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development.

119. The Committee urged FAO to promote best practices through South-South and triangular cooperation in the fisheries sector in order to enhance food security and nutrition.

120. The Committee encouraged further cooperation between FAO, the NEPAD agency, AU-IBAR, the African Regional Fisheries Bodies and National Fisheries Institutions to support implementation of the 2018-2019 FAO Programme of Work as well as implementation of regional frameworks and reform strategies in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK (MYPOW) OF THE COMMITTEE

121. The Committee approved the progress report of the MYPOW 2016–2019.

122. The Committee requested the insertion of, and strongly urged adherence to the following indicator, “All COFI documents, including SOFIA, are to be made available in all FAO languages at least four weeks before the session commences”, in paragraph 17 of the draft MYPOW 2018–2021 as attached in Appendix F.

123. The Committee requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility of integrating a roadmap, covering a period of at least three COFI sessions, in future MYPOWs.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF COFI

124. The Committee elected Mr Sidi Mouctar Dicko (Guinea) as Chairperson and Mr Shingo Ota (Japan) as First Vice-Chairperson. Canada, Chile, Iceland, Jordan and New Zealand were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.

OTHER MATTERS

Developments in *fora* of importance for the mandate of COFI: for information

125. The Committee noted the information provided on developments in *fora* of importance for the mandate of COFI.

Any other matters

126. The Committee welcomed the report from the Republic of Korea on the progress of the pilot programme for the World Fisheries University. It noted that a number of Members expressed their strong support for the initiative and called for continued cooperation between FAO and the Republic of Korea to make progress on a joint agreement, as part of the agreed step-by-step approach.

127. The Committee also noted that the Republic of Korea was working closely with FAO with the aim to finalize and sign a host country agreement for a partnership and liaison office in the Republic of Korea, which would allow the signing of an MoU between FAO and the Republic of Korea for the Pilot Partnership Programme for the World Fisheries University, and requested to be kept informed of the next steps and their implications.

128. The Committee requested the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Bureau, and mindful of the rules of procedure for establishing subsidiary bodies, to develop a proposal for the possible establishment of a new sub-committee on fisheries management, to be submitted for the consideration of Members at the next session of COFI. The Committee underlined that the proposal should elaborate on all relevant aspects, including financial and administrative implications and terms of reference for such a sub-committee, including identifying ways to achieve efficiencies and avoid duplication with other COFI sub-committees. The Committee noted that such a sub-committee could include a standing agenda item on sustainable SSF. The document should be available at least six months prior to the Thirty-fourth Session of COFI.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

129. The Committee agreed that the Thirty-fourth Session of COFI will be held in Rome in the third quarter of 2020. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the COFI Bureau, for presentation to the next FAO Council in December 2018 and the Forty-first FAO Conference in 2019.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

130. The report of the Thirty-third Session of COFI was adopted, after incorporating all changes agreed upon by consensus on 13 July 2018.

APPENDIX A**Agenda**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session
3. Designation of the Drafting Committee
4. State of world fisheries and aquaculture
5. Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and related instruments
6. Decisions and recommendations of the Sixteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Busan, the Republic of Korea, 4-8 September 2017
7. Decisions and recommendations of the Ninth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Rome, 24-27 October 2017
8. Fisheries and ocean governance
 - 8.1 Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
 - 8.2 Small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance
 - 8.3 Global and regional ocean processes
9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
10. Climate change and other environment related matters
11. FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework
12. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee
13. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Thirty-fourth Session of COFI
14. Other matters
 - 14.1 Developments *in fora* of importance for the mandate of COFI: for information
 - 14.2 Any other matters
15. Date and place of the next Session
16. Adoption of the report

List of delegates and observers

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¹ Based on the membership of COFI at the time of the session. The current membership is available:
www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/committee-fi/en/

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**SOUTH SUDAN/SOUDAN
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**REPRESENTATIVES OF
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**UNITED NATIONS
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PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC/ COMMISSION PERMANENTE DU PACIFIQUE SUD/COMISIÓN PERMANENTE DEL PACÍFICO SUR

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DRAFTING COMMITTEE

The Committee elected Mr Seydou Cissé (Côte d'Ivoire) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, with the following membership: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Uganda.

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Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division:	Manuel Barange

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Secretary:	H. Watanabe
Secretary, Drafting Committee:	S. Funge-Smith

APPENDIX C**List of documents**

COFI/2018/1	Agenda and Timetable
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COFI/2018/3	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
COFI/2018/4	Decisions and recommendations of the Sixteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Busan, the Republic of Korea, 4-8 September 2017
COFI/2018/5	Decisions and recommendations of the Ninth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Rome, 24-27 October 2017
COFI/2018/6	Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
COFI/2018/7	Small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance
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COFI/2018/9	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
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COFI/2018/11	FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework
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COFI/2018/Inf.1	List of documents
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COFI/2018/Inf.5	Follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 11-15 July 2016
COFI/2018/Inf.6	Report of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 11-15 July 2016

COFI/2018/Inf.7	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
COFI/2018/Inf.8	Safety at sea in the fisheries sector
COFI/2018/Inf.9	Report of the Sixteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Busan, the Republic of Korea, 4-8 September 2017
COFI/2018/Inf.10	Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes
COFI/2018/Inf.11	Towards social sustainability in fishery value chains
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COFI/2018/Inf.13	Report of the Ninth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Rome, 24-27 October 2017
COFI/2018/Inf.14	Summary of the Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Fisheries Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies
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COFI/2018/Inf.20	Regional Fishery Bodies established within the FAO framework
COFI/2018/Inf.21	Scaling Up Agroecology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: Outcomes of the 2nd International Symposium and way forward
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COFI/2018/Inf.25	Report of the Technical Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear
COFI/2018/Inf.26	Bycatch and discards: Global and regional updates
COFI/2018/Inf.27	The use of best available science in developing and promoting best practices for trawl fishing operations
COFI/2018/Inf.28	Biodiversity Mainstreaming in capture fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2018/Inf.29	Development in <i>fora</i> of importance for the mandate of COFI
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APPENDIX D**Opening statement by Mr José Graziano da Silva
Director-General of FAO**

It is an honour to welcome all of you to the 33rd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, COFI.

I would like to start by highlighting two points that I think will be relevant to your discussions during the week.

First, let me refer to the High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal number 14.

As you know very well, the SDG 14 calls for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources.

The Conference was held one year ago, in June 2017, in New York, and adopted a Call for Action that focuses on concrete and action-oriented recommendations on some specific areas.

Let me mention four of them:

One: Ensure that fisheries continue to contribute to food and livelihood security for all;

Two: Improve the management of shared and migratory stocks on the high seas, as well as in coastal sovereign waters;

Three: Increase the resilience of coastal communities especially in SIDS and Least Development Countries.

And Four: Put an end to illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing, what we call the IUU fishing.

All these challenges are at the core of FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture.

FAO is working closely with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, to follow-up on the commitments made at the Conference.

Your discussions this week on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the state of fisheries and ocean governance, will provide further inputs and guidance to FAO's work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The second point that I want to highlight is that almost two months ago, on the 5th of June, FAO organized a special event to celebrate the first UN International Day for the Fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing.

As you will recall, the last session of COFI in 2016 endorsed the creation of this International Day.

It was established in order to mark the entry into force, on the 5th of June of 2016, of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, the PSMA.

As of today, 56 signatories representing 81 countries are already part of the PSMA. And some other countries are in the process of ratification of the Agreement by their parliaments.

Let me renew my appeals to every country to become part of this global effort against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

We need everyone on-board for the PSMA to be very effective.

FAO has also put forward different activities and initiatives to support the effective implementation of the PSMA.

Last year, we launched the first operational version of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels.

Also in 2017, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes was approved.

The objective of the Voluntary Guidelines is to provide assistance to countries, regional organizations and other international organisations to harmonise or review existing Catch Documentation Schemes, as well as to develop new ones following the same standards.

FAO is also developing studies about trans-shipment practices that have increased as more and more countries become part of the PSMA.

So we are creating a strong and comprehensive framework to combat IUU fishing.

And it will be important to hear from you on what should be done to reinforce even more our actions against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The FAO Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Mr Árni M. Mathiesen, will soon present to you the main findings of the 2018 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report (SOFIA 2018).

The report will set the scene for COFI to review the status, issues and needs of global fisheries and aquaculture, and also provide guidance on FAO's work towards sustainable development.

SOFIA 2018 highlights the critical importance of fisheries and aquaculture for global food and nutrition security, as well as for the livelihoods of millions of people.

In 2016, total fish production reached an all-time high of 171 (one hundred and seventy-one) million tonnes, thanks to relatively stable capture fisheries production, reduced wastage and aquaculture growth.

It is important to highlight that aquaculture responds now for about 53% of the supply of fish for human consumption.

So the overall increase of fish production has resulted in a record-high per capita consumption of 20kg of fish in 2016.

Preliminary estimates for 2017 indicate a further increase in the global consumption of fish.

These are good news. Fish is an important element in the promotion of health and nutritious diets, particularly in small island developing states that face high levels of overweight and obesity in their populations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the 2018 session of COFI, you will also review progress on a number of standing items, such as the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, based on the outcome of member's questionnaires.

Another important agenda item is the impacts of climate change.

Let me highlight that FAO will launch this week an extensive report on the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture.

The report aims to provide the most up-to-date information on this issue, and also provide some guidance to countries to put in place adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change.

So I invite all of you to participate in the side event that will take place tomorrow at lunch time.

You will have the opportunity to review the work carried out by FAO also in relation to biodiversity conservation, bycatch reduction and aquatic pollution.

So you have a very busy and an active programme over the next five days.

Your deliberations are crucial to the work of FAO, and we look forward to your decisions.

I wish you every success in your discussions, and encourage you to actively participate not just in the main sessions but also in the rich programme of side events.

Thank you for attention.

APPENDIX E**Statement by Ambassador Peter Thompson,
UN Special Envoy for the Ocean**

Rome, 9 July 2018

Director-General da Silva,
Honorable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All courtesies observed as I speak to you this morning. In my capacity as the Special Envoy for the Ocean, I acknowledge it as a singular honour to have been given this opportunity to address you today, and I give thanks to FAO and COFI for making this so. Meeting biennially, the FAO's Committee on Fisheries is uniquely placed to influence the success or failure of many of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14, SDG14, the Ocean goal. Thus I am here to rally your support for the implementation of SDG14 and its noble aim of conserving and sustainably using the Ocean's resources for sustainable development.

In my weekly addresses to Ocean meetings around the world, the central message is that the health of the Ocean is in deep trouble. Thanks to the effects of Climate Change and accumulating human activities such as marine plastic pollution, we find ourselves fighting a global battle to reverse the cycle of decline into which the Ocean has been placed. We are currently losing that battle on every front, but the good news is that since 2015 we have had in place a universally-adopted plan to fight back, to reverse that cycle of decline, and to fulfill our Ocean stewardship responsibilities in the best interests of our children, our grandchildren, and those still to be born into the wonder of life on this planet.

Put simply, our plan is one of fidelity to the Paris Climate Agreement and to the Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the United Nations in 2015. And of course for the Ocean, the plan's focus is on SDG14, the Ocean goal, in support of which the United Nations convened the Ocean Conference in New York in June, 2017. We saw at that conference how SDG14 touched the interests of all the SDGs, from health and nutrition to decent work, sustainable infrastructure and environmental resilience. In the year that has passed since the New York conference, it has been fortifying to our cause to witness the massive wave of Ocean action that has moved around the globe.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Key commercial fisheries have been in decline over the last 50 years, with decades of overfishing taking a toll not just on the health of the Ocean, but also on human livelihoods and global food security. For the good of people and planet, we need to make global fisheries management the best it can be, in conformity with what our leaders demanded of us when, three years ago, they adopted SDG14. Here at COFI we have the technical expertise and political authority in the fisheries sector to make that so. This is where fisheries and associated Ocean issues come together for effective decisions on guidance and policy; thus COFI has a high calling and never more so than in these challenging times.

From this biennial gathering in Rome, with additional support from FAO and other stakeholders, Member States are empowered to improve their national and regional management of fisheries and the socio-economic conditions of their people and industries at home.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migratory fish and marine currents do not pay heed to the boundaries and borders of humankind. Thus our regional endeavors are crucial to good governance of the Ocean and its resources. It is thus that the RFMO system is such an essential element of our stewardship responsibilities, and I pay homage to those who have worked tirelessly towards helping the RFMOs fulfill their mandates. It is therefore a concern that some RFMOs remain handicapped by limited resources, seriously undermining their effectiveness in important areas. This handicap needs to be rectified, perhaps through the establishment of a joint financial mechanism, for we cannot be satisfied with RFMO success in some quarters of the Ocean, while others are failing. In some cases, RFMOs may need to be reorganized to increase their productivity and effectiveness.

When it comes to the Ocean, we are indeed all connected. So joint action is the answer, and in that regard I'm confident FAO is the right place, with the right leadership, to enable the establishment of a proposed joint financial mechanism and rationalization of the RFMO system as a whole.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As already mentioned, COFI has a key role to play in the achievement of SDG 14's high purpose of conserving and sustainably using the resources of the Ocean for sustainable development. I bring to your attention the fact that in relation to fisheries and aquaculture, the FAO has custodianship of four indicators of SDG14's progress, and that all of these firmly support the three legs of the sustainability stool - ecological, social and economic. Having looked at COFI's agenda, I see them as intrinsic to your discussions over the next few days, so bear with me, in a spirit of global sustainability, as I spell them out.

The four indicators in question are as follows:

14.4.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically-sustainable levels. FAO's analysis shows that we still have a third of fish stocks subject to unsustainable exploitation. While the rate of overfishing has declined, current indications are that the tide has not turned sufficiently to achieve this target. I put it to you that we need to be honest with ourselves in assessing this global target of no overfishing by 2020, and without delay, to put in place the policies and action required. We have less than two years to do so.

14.6.1: Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. We know that IUU fishing lies at the heart of the matter, undermining fisheries management all over the world, and cheating legitimate fishermen. The key to beating it is to improve fisheries management and control through better governance, transparency and international cooperation. Therefore, on behalf of a grateful Ocean community, I give thanks for the progress made to address this problem through FAO's Port State Measures Agreement and complementary instruments. I also

commend the work being done with WTO and UNCTAD in the direction of removing fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and harmful fisheries practices.

However, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is still occurring on a grand scale, with some estimates giving a figure of \$23 billion's worth per annum. This shameful phenomenon undermines national, regional and global efforts to manage fisheries sustainably, and in this day and age should not be countenanced. These are the times for all Member States to ratify the PSMA, to strengthen their fisheries laws and regulations, and to take effective action against non-compliance perpetrators. On the battlefronts to which I earlier referred, if we hold firm in favour of rule of law and good governance, powered by international political will, this is one front where we can win sooner rather than later.

14.7.1: Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in Small Island Developing States, least developed countries and all countries. This indicator is tied to the economic leg of the sustainability stool, particularly relevant to the most Ocean-dependent nations where other economic alternatives are limited. Coming from one of the SIDS, I thank COFI for its focus on fisheries and aquaculture as a provider of food security and sustainable livelihoods.

As we move into the Anthropocene, protecting the livelihoods of vulnerable communities will require vision, innovation and investment, and in that regard, aquaculture must surely be a key priority for humanity.

I also thank the FAO for its active role in the work of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and I note that tomorrow there will be a side-event to launch a significant publication on the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture.

14.b.1: Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries. This indicator relates closely with the social leg of the sustainability stool and it too needs COFI's help. We must ensure the rights of small operators are recognized, that they are valued and given appropriate access to resources as well as markets. COFI can do much to make that so.

Before concluding my reference to the various SDG14 indicators, allow me to highlight one more that would greatly benefit from the attention of the national delegations assembled in Rome today. I refer to:

Target 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information. With less than two years to go, achieving the 10 percent target is a mighty challenge; but it is one that is definitely achievable if we double-down on efforts. We need more partnerships between governments, communities, philanthropies, NGOs, the private sector and the scientific community to deliver nearshore conservation with greater urgency. As well as no-take reserves for spawning grounds, we will all benefit from collaborative fisheries management areas, and better managed coastal and marine areas.

I applaud those countries that have recently declared MPAs, and call on others to come to the party if we are going to hit the SDG14.5 target by 2020. Thereafter we can work to ensure the Ocean's MPAs have adequate monitoring and enforcement, while at the same time

supporting Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures. We look to COFI and FAO for energy and commitment in hitting the 10 percent target by 2020.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Four of SDG14's ten targets mature in 2020. It is for this reason that a Second UN Ocean Conference is being proposed for 2020, co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal in Lisbon. It will be deeply important for all the Sustainable Development Goals that in 2020 we are able to demonstrate success in hitting SDG14's four targets, thereby boding well for the progress of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as a whole. Here at COFI, over the next few days, I ask you all to keep the integrity of implementation of those four targets in the forefront of your considerations.

These are busy times for the Ocean action agenda as we march towards 2020. I urge you all to be familiar with and be part of the Communities of Ocean Action set up by the United Nations and accessible through the oceanconference.un.org website. We have international conferences of direct relevance to you all coming up this year in the shape of the Our Ocean Conference in Bali, Indonesia, at the end of October, and the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in Nairobi at the end of November. At the IOC-UNESCO the content of the UN Decade for Ocean Science is being designed, while in New York preparations are underway for the September commencement of the BBNJ conference. Meanwhile in Jamaica the Mining Code of the International Seabed Authority is taking shape. This is no time for those concerned with the well-being of the Ocean to take their eye off the ball and I will follow with much interest the deliberations and outcomes of the 2018 COFI and look forward to joining you in your work ahead.

I thank you for your consideration.

APPENDIX F**Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee
on Fisheries 2018–2021****I. OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) reviews the Organization's work programme in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, oversees the implementation of such programmes and is mandated to review specific issues pertaining to fisheries and aquaculture that have been referred to the Committee by either the FAO Council, the Director-General, or pursuant to the request of a Member State(s) periodically.

II. RESULTS FOR 2018-2021**A. Review of the World Situation in Fisheries and Aquaculture**

2. Result:

The Council, the Conference and the international community at large are provided with updated information and specific advice on the world situation in fisheries and aquaculture and in relation to the specific issues of significance addressed during the scheduled sessions.

3. Indicators and targets:

Clear, precise and consensual recommendations that are based on updated information of the world situation in fisheries and aquaculture are presented to the Council and the Conference as a solid basis for its guidance and decision.

4. Output:

Clear, precise and consensual recommendations are favourably considered by the Council and the Conference and provide a solid basis for its guidance and decision.

5. Activities:

The Committee undertakes general discussions on the current world situation in fisheries and aquaculture.

Specific issues of topical significance are addressed during the scheduled sessions.

6. Working methods:

Close consultation with the Chairperson and other Bureau Members.

Intersessional work by the Bureau, supported by the Secretariat, to identify topics of significance for agenda setting.

B. Strategy and Priority Setting, and Budget Planning

7. Result:

The Committee's recommendations provide a solid basis for the Council's guidance and decisions on strategy, priorities, programmes and budget for the Organization.

8. Indicators and targets:

The Committee further promotes the FAO's Questionnaire on Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) to solicit responses and reduce obstacles impeding responses.

Members respond to the FAO Questionnaire on the implementation of the Code and provide the relevant information on fisheries and aquaculture for FAO via the Committee and its Sub-Committees.

Clear and specific recommendations are made by the Committee to the Council regarding the strategies, priorities, programmes and budget for fisheries and aquaculture.

The Committee's recommendations made on the pertinent aspects of the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget are reflected in the Council Report.

9. Outputs:

Report of the Committee that provides clear, precise and consensual recommendations for the Council on sectoral strategies, priorities, programmes and budgets.

10. Activities:

Review decisions and recommendations from the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, statutory bodies and other relevant organs or institutions.

Review advice from the Regional Conferences in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

Review the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget in fisheries and aquaculture.

Formulate recommendations on the strategies, priorities, programmes and budget in fisheries and aquaculture.

11. Working methods:

Close consultation with the Chairperson and other Bureau Members.

Close collaboration with the relevant FAO Departments.

Liaise with Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture and other statutory bodies.

Liaise with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters.

Liaise with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters.

Report the outcome of the Committee on the programme and budgetary matters to the Council appropriately.

C. Advise on Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

12. Results

The Committee recommendations provide a sound basis for decisions by the Conference on global policy and regulatory matters.

13. Indicators and targets:

Member Nations obtain value from the deliberations of the Committee, using the advice and recommendations to guide domestic actions and policies as reported by FAO.

Clear and specific recommendations made in a timely manner by the Committee to the Conference regarding global policy and regulatory matters in its areas of mandate.

The Committee's recommendations made on global policy and regulatory matters are reflected in the Conference Report.

14. Output:

The Committee provides clear, precise and consensual recommendations for Conference on policy and regulatory frameworks or instruments.

Members of the Committee undertake all necessary action in order to facilitate the implementation of the instruments, inter alia:

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication;

The Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance;

The Port States Measures Agreement;

The Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes; and

The Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

15. Activities:

Review the status of relevant international instruments in areas of competence for the Committee.

Consider possible solutions with a view to support concerted action by Members themselves or collectively through FAO and other relevant bodies in areas of competence for the Committee.

Report the outcome of the Committee on global policy and regulatory matters to the Conference appropriately.

III. EFFECTIVE WORK PLANNING OF COFI

16. Result:

The Committee works effectively and efficiently, in an action-oriented, inclusive way.

17. Indicators and targets:

The Committee's agendas are focused and reports are concise and containing specific action-oriented recommendations to both the Council and the Conference.

All COFI documents, including SOFIA, are to be made available in all FAO languages at least four weeks before the session commences.

Evaluation of results and implementation of MYPOW for the Committee.

18. Outputs:

Focused agendas and concise reports containing specific action-oriented recommendations to both the Council and the Conference.

Progress report on MYPOW 2016-2019 is endorsed in 2018.

MYPOW 2018-2021 for the Committee is adopted in 2018.

19. Activities:

Review the Committee's practices and rules of procedure, if necessary.

Consider ways to improve the conduct of sessions, including more efficient use of the time available.

Recognizing the importance and usefulness of side events, facilitate more focused and coordinated side events in line with key issues addressed in the main sessions.

Facilitate further coordination and collaboration with the Sub-Committees and other Technical Committees.

Pay continued attention to effective arrangements for the formulation of agendas and drafting of the final report.

IV. WORKING METHODS

20. The Committee collaborates with statutory and other bodies under FAO auspices, liaises with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters, and with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters, as well as other relevant FAO Governing Bodies.

21. It liaises with other international organizations active in the areas of fisheries and aquaculture.

22. The Committee undertakes regular intersessional activities facilitated by the Chairperson and the Bureau with support from the Secretariat. Liaison amongst the Bureaus of the Committee and the Sub-Committees is also further strengthened.

23. It encourages and facilitates participation of observers including civil society's organizations.

24. The Chairperson liaises with FAO through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

The Thirty-third Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Rome, Italy, from 9 to 13 July 2018. This is a report of the Session reflecting the discussions which took place and containing all recommendations and decisions taken by the Committee. A synopsis of the outcome of the Session is presented in the abstract and all supplementary information is included in the appendixes.

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