



COMMISSION OF SMALL SCALE, ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

XVII SESSION

Lima - Peru, 27-29 October 2021

SUMMARY OF AGREEMENTS ADOPTED DURING THE XXXIV FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Introduction

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Thirty-fourth session on 1-5 February 2021. The session was convened online in response to the restrictions imposed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The session was attended by representatives of 96 member states of the Committee; as well as representatives of ten UN specialized agencies; the Holy See and observers from 30 intergovernmental organizations, two organizations of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and 32 international non-governmental organizations. This document provides a summary report of the Thirty-fourth session of the Committee on Fisheries.¹

Summary of the resolutions adopted by COFI

Status, trends, emerging issues and innovative responses to ensure responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture

The Committee requested FAO, in accordance with the COFI Declaration for Fisheries and Aquaculture, to include fisheries and aquaculture into the preparatory discussions for the UN Food Systems Summit.

The Committee adopted the 34th COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, renewing its commitment to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and refocusing the emphasis on ensuring sustainability and strengthening the long-term resilience of ecosystems and communities.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ne907en/ne907en.pdf>



It is recommended that the relevant FAO governing bodies give due consideration to integrating the actions identified in the Declaration of the Thirty-fourth Session of COFI on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, as well as actions related to post-COVID 19 response and recovery in the sector, as priority areas in FAO's Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan, making efforts to improve the visibility of the sector within the Organization.

The Committee acknowledged the progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries since its adoption, but noted that further efforts were needed, and requested FAO to continue to support member countries in overcoming the challenges in the implementation of the Code, especially in view of the additional complexities posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also requested FAO to pursue the primary objective of the Code implementation monitoring questionnaire, as it can also be used to support the Progress Reports of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators.

Decisions and recommendations of the tenth session of the COFI sub-committee on aquaculture. Trondheim, Norway, 23-27 August 2019

The Committee endorsed the report of the last session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, welcoming the endorsement of the Global Integrated Sustainable Aquaculture Programme (GISAP), including its implementation plan considering middle-income countries, and suggested the creation of a component with the possibility of a multi-donor fund, to strengthen biosecurity in aquaculture, in collaboration with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

It welcomed the continuous collaboration among FAO, OIE and the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The Committee supported the need for a FAO Action Plan on AMR for the period 2021-2025, based on scientific evidence and risk analysis, including the need for capacity building in Member countries.

The Committee welcomed the publication of the report on The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and recommended the development of a Global Plan of Action on Aquatic Genetic Resources; and the implementation of an information system, including a register of culture types.

It welcomed the Millennium +20 Global Conference on Aquaculture to be held in Shanghai, China (22-27 September 2021) and welcomed the kind invitation of the Government of Mexico to host the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in the city of Merida (15-18 November 2021).

The Committee welcomed the progress in the construction of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture to be finalized in 2021, as a guiding tool for national policy development for the aquaculture sector and requested FAO to include guidance according to national contexts, capacities and priorities, in the social, economic and environmental domains, including adaptation to climate change.



Decisions and recommendations of the seventeenth session of the COFI sub-committee on fish trade. Vigo, Spain, 25-29 November 2019

The Committee approved the report of the last session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI-FT) and requested FAO to continue to provide technical support in the framework of the WTO negotiations on subsidies to fisheries, as well as to provide non-binding practical guidance on social responsibility in fisheries value chains, based on existing international tools and guidelines.

The Committee requested FAO to continue to support Member countries in the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat IUU fishing.

The Committee expressed its firm support for FAO's scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, reiterating the need for adequate funding, even through voluntary multi-year contributions. It also called for continued collaboration with the OIE and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including scientific and technical advice on proposals for including commercial products from aquatic species.

Contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to the 2030 agenda to sustainable development

The Committee underlined the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to food security and nutrition, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, beyond SDG14.

It requested FAO to continue to assist member countries to strengthen their capacities in data collection and use, and building statistics, particularly in a context common to developing countries, which is the lack of regular and quality data. The Committee emphasized the importance of advising the public that, according to WHO, international trade in livestock and fishery products does not contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

The Committee stressed the need to strengthen the role of aquatic foods in food security and nutrition. It stressed the need to disseminate scientific evidence of the nutritional benefits of aquatic products as part of healthy diets.

The Committee highlighted the need to strengthen gender equality and youth empowerment within national and international development agendas and noted the importance of promoting sustainable and inclusive ocean economies and the implementation of the FAO Blue Growth Initiative, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Support for artisanal fisheries and aquaculture

The Committee called for increasing support to artisanal and small-scale fisheries by: i)improving access to markets for artisanal fishers and small-scale fish farmers; ii)ensuring equitable access to fishing rights; iii)improving and modernizing sectoral legal frameworks; iv)strengthening artisanal and small-scale fisheries organizations; v)improving gender equality and youth empowerment; vi)promoting the use of information and communication technologies; and vii)promoting actions to reduce food loss and waste in artisanal fishery chains.



The Committee requested FAO to intensify its support to member countries building on the Hand in Hand initiative, with a better understanding of the challenges faced by fisheries and aquaculture and reiterated its support to the Global Strategic Framework in Support of the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries. Urged FAO to promote good experiences and practices through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, as well.

The Committee expressed its commitment to the International Year of Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYSAA 2022). It urged to disseminate the importance of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture at relevant events such as the UN Oceans Conference, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the UN Food Systems Summit, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, the Our Ocean conference and the Tokyo Summit on Nutrition for Growth 2021, among others. Encouraged collaboration with the UN Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development and participation in the UN Decade of Family Farming.

Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)

The Committee thanked FAO for its technical assistance to Developing States and Small Island Developing States to effectively implement the Port State Measures Agreement to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) and relevant international instruments and regional mechanisms to combat IUU fishing through the PSMA Global Capacity Development Programme and encouraged FAO to continue to strengthen the Programme and reiterated the key role of information exchange in combating IUU fishing.

The Committee recognized the important role played by FAO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Joint Working Group (JWG) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on IUU fishing and related issues, including measures to achieve safe, healthy and just working conditions and to improve safety at sea.

The Committee reiterated the importance of traceability schemes to combat IUU fishing, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes, exchanging information on said documentation; considered the latest developments in the negotiations related to the regulation of fisheries subsidies in the WTO and encouraged FAO to continue to provide technical advice to countries.

Climate change and other environmental issues in fisheries and aquaculture

The Committee requested FAO to improve technical guidance on integrating climate adaptation and mitigation into fisheries management and aquaculture development strategies.

The Committee welcomed the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture (2021-2023).

Implementation of the FAO strategy on enhancing biodiversity through fisheries and aquaculture

The Committee noted the importance of considering multiple management tools such as protected areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Biodiversity Targets and requested FAO to



formulate and disseminate practical guidelines to support Members in their identification and implementation.

It requested that FAO continue to work with CITES and related forums to help ensure that decisions taken in these forums and their implementation are based on the best scientific knowledge.

The Committee recognized the important role of Regional Fisheries Organizations (RFOs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in integrating biodiversity into conservation measures and sustainable use of aquatic resources.

Proposal for a new COFI sub-committee on fisheries

The Committee agreed to continue a transparent and inclusive consultation process on the proposal for the establishment of a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries, under the leadership of the COFI Chair, for which it looks forward to the presentation of a proposal at COFI 35.

Terms of reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Farming

The Committee expressed its support for the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and requested FAO to ensure that the activities of the International Platform include issues related to digital technology applications in fisheries and aquaculture.