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# COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

**Thirty-fifth Session**

**5–9 September 2022**

**DEVELOPMENTS IN FORA OF IMPORTANCE FOR  
THE MANDATE OF COFI**

## I. FAO CONFERENCE

1. At its 42nd Session, Rome, 14-18 June 2021, the FAO Conference endorsed the Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and in particular welcomed the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture<sup>1</sup>.
2. The Conference supported the change of name of the Fisheries Division to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division<sup>2</sup>.

## II. FAO COUNCIL

3. At its 166th Session, 26 April – 1 May 2021, the FAO Council considered the recommendations contained in the Report of the 34th Session of COFI, and in particular:
  - a) endorsed the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture to renew its commitment to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, recognized the transformations in the sector since the endorsement of the Code, and urged FAO to refocus priorities to secure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector;
  - b) reiterated the importance for the COFI Secretariat to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies in their work;
  - c) looked forward to ensuring that fisheries and aquaculture are fully integrated into the preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit;
  - d) welcomed the further development of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture in 2021 and requested FAO to consider guidance for concrete actions for the sector;
  - e) emphasized the importance of reinforcing support to communities whose livelihoods depend upon small-scale and artisanal fisheries and urged FAO to increase its support to Members, including by promoting the importance of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in relevant events in relation to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) in 2022;
  - f) urged FAO to enhance technical guidance on mainstreaming climate adaptation and mitigation in fisheries management and aquaculture development;
  - g) urged FAO to continue supporting Members in the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and make further efforts to address the challenges faced in combatting IUU fishing including the development of these technical guidelines, such as the draft voluntary guidelines for the regulation, monitoring and control of transshipment;
  - h) encouraged FAO to continue strengthening its work on achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches with relevant global and regional organizations, bodies and initiatives;
  - i) urged FAO to continue to work with the Convention on International Trade for Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and related fora, to help ensure that decisions made in these fora and their implementation are based on the best scientific information available and relevant technical information;
  - j) welcomed the transparent and inclusive consultation process on the proposal for the establishment of a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, under the leadership of the Chairperson of COFI, and looked forward to a proposal being submitted to the 35th Session of COFI; and

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 52, C 2021/REP

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 68 f), C 2021/REP

- k) requested that an Annotated Provisional Agenda for the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries is made available in all FAO languages at least eight weeks before the start of the Session to give Members sufficient time for preparation<sup>3</sup>.
4. The Council also, *inter alia*, to:
- a) highlighted the importance of ensuring an equitable focus on fisheries and forest across the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and the Strategic Framework<sup>4</sup>;
  - b) supported the change of name of the Fisheries Division to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division<sup>5</sup>;
  - c) endorsed observations and recommendations by the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee relating to the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management<sup>6</sup>; and
  - d) welcomed the positive developments and spirit of compromise demonstrated by all parties in the consultations with, *inter alia*, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) with regard to selection and appointment of secretaries of Article XIV bodies<sup>7</sup> and emphasized the urgency of defining a procedure for the selection and appointment of the Secretary of the GFCM<sup>8</sup>.
5. At its 168th Session, 29 November - 4 December 2021, the FAO Council, with regard to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity, invites Members to:
- a) integrate the Commission's sectoral Global Plans of Action, the Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and policy tools into policies, programmes and national and regional plans of action on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, biodiversity, climate change, food security, nutrition and health, and other relevant sectors, as appropriate;
  - b) actively support, as appropriate and according to national contexts, priorities and capacities, the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems that promote the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including genetic resources, leaving no farmer, livestock keeper and pastoralist, forest-based producer, fisher or aquaculturalist behind; and taking into account the contributions and needs of women, indigenous peoples and local communities; and
  - c) consider developing funding proposals on biodiversity for food and agriculture including genetic resources, consistent with their national priorities, as appropriate, when seeking funding from various sources, including the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other funding mechanisms and modalities<sup>9</sup>.
6. At its 170th Session, 13-17 June 2022, the FAO Council considered recommendations of the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee on the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, and in particular:
- a) welcomed the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 with the integration of guidance from relevant Governing Body sessions, such as the 168th Session of the Council, the 2022 Regional Conferences and the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee, and appreciated the open, extensive, inclusive and transparent consultative process for its development;

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 22, CL 166/REP

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 10 o), CL 166/REP

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 14 t), CL 166/REP

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 23 a), CL 166/REP

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 46 b), CL 166/REP

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 46 d), CL 166/REP

<sup>9</sup> Appendix E, CL 168/REP

- b) underlined the importance of considering FAO's mandate and comparative advantage and the specific contexts, priorities and capacities globally and across regions, countries and the local level in implementing the Strategy;
- c) stressed the need for mechanisms at the international, regional, national and sub-national levels to share information and experiences on the implementation of the Strategy and its action plan;
- d) acknowledged sustainable agrifood systems have become widely recognized and adopted as an integral part of the solution to climate change and highlighted the importance of complementing and supporting countries' efforts in tackling climate change in agrifood systems;
- e) highlighted the complementary, coherent and synergic nature of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change and the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, as well as the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, which, in close articulation and mutually reinforcing, can act as a key driver for boosting sustainability and resilience within agrifood systems; and
- f) concurred with the recommendations of the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee, endorsed the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031, as changed at the 170th Session of the Council, and highlighted the importance of mobilizing additional resources and developing an action plan for its effective implementation<sup>10</sup>.

7. The Council also:

- a) welcomed the initiative to develop FAO's first ever Science and Innovation Strategy with the overall aim of strengthening FAO's capacities to deliver the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through science and innovation;
- b) appreciated the open, inclusive and transparent consultative process that led to its development;
- c) highlighted the complementary and synergistic links between the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement and with the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and stressed the importance of science and innovation in bringing about effective action;
- d) stressed the importance of strengthening the linkage with science-policy interface mechanisms;
- e) noted the importance of increasing investments and strengthening financial resource mobilization, including via public-private partnerships;
- f) concurred with the recommendations of the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee and endorsed the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, as changed at the 170th Session of the Council; and
- g) highlighted the importance of developing an action plan for its effective implementation.

### III. FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES

#### A. Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC)

8. At its 36th Session, Baghdad, Iraq, Senior Officers Meeting 10-13 January and Ministerial Meeting 7-8 February 2022, the Regional Conference for the Near East took note of reports by regional commissions, including the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI)<sup>11</sup>, and recommended FAO, *inter alia*, to:

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 12, CL 170/REP

<sup>11</sup> Paragraphs 20, 21, NERC/22/REP

- a) expedite the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fisheries Organization (RAAFO); and
  - b) continue supporting the Commissions through technical support, partnerships with technical and financial institutions and capacity building to enable the effective implementation of their action plans<sup>12</sup>.
9. The Regional Conference took note of the six priority action areas of greening agriculture, including adoption of an ecosystems approach to fisheries and aquaculture<sup>13</sup>.

### **B. Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC)**

10. At its 36th Session, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 8-11 March 2022, the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific recommended FAO, *inter alia*, to:

- a) develop a regional plan to promote cohesive action on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, including fishery, crops, livestock and forestry in the Pacific region;
- b) build capacity for development and implementation of sustainable fisheries management plans, fisheries stock assessment and sustainable aquaculture systems, in cooperation with relevant regional fishery bodies; and
- c) strengthen the existing mechanisms of the FAO Regional Technical Commissions, including the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), to ensure that these regional bodies contribute to building stronger linkages and collaboration between FAO and the relevant technical line agencies of the Members in the region<sup>14</sup>.

11. During the Ministerial Session from 10 to 11 March 2022, the Regional Conference, *inter alia*, to:

- a) emphasized to support the vital role of smallholders, family farmers and fishers, including women and youth as essential to achieving the SDGs;
- b) note, in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), that digitalization is part of blue transformation and sustainable management of fisheries, offering significant opportunities for providing tracking systems, catch documentation, support to combat IUU fishing and more efficient trade;
- c) highlighted initiatives including improved forestry and fishery management, promotion of sustainable cropping systems, sustainable wood value-chains, coping with water scarcity and their national efforts to reduce agricultures' impacts on vulnerable terrestrial, aquatic and coastal ecosystems;
- d) highlighted priority actions including the building resilient livelihoods and protection of coastal communities, ensuring sustainable development of the fisheries which sustain SIDS' economies and improved biosecurity to manage transboundary pests and diseases; and
- e) highlighted the need to sustain and deepen collaboration with international and regional bodies in the elaboration and implementation of regional food security frameworks, natural resources, regional fisheries and ecosystem-based management, promotion of policy coherence, a One Health (OH), innovative digital technologies, the improvement of food and nutrition security data and enhanced capacity for Big Data management<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 25, NERC/22/REP

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 44, NERC/22/REP

<sup>14</sup> Paragraphs 30 and 33, APRC/22/REP

<sup>15</sup> Paragraphs 44, 47, 48, 50 and 52, APRC/22/REP

### C. Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)

12. At its 37th Session, Quito, Ecuador, 28 March-1 April 2022, the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, *inter alia*, to:

- a) highlighted FAO's support in combating IUU fishing, in order to contribute to the sustainability of fisheries in the region<sup>16</sup> and recommended that FAO to provide technical assistance and facilitate dialogues to support Members in the struggle against IUU fishing, in order to contribute to the sustainability of fisheries in the region<sup>17</sup> ;
- b) took note of the IYFA 2022<sup>18</sup>;
- c) recommended that FAO to provide technical and financial assistance to Members, in particular Caribbean SIDS, through the FAO Priority Programme Area Better Production 2, "Blue Transformation", to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, including through improving national policies and programmes, promoting technological innovation and engaging the private sector, in order to achieve SDG 14 (Life below water) targets, with the aim of achieving MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable aquatic food systems, and ensuring an increasing contribution to poverty reduction and income generation for small-scale fishers and fish farmers, including youth, in accordance with the "2021 Committee on Fisheries Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture", in line with the Report of the 168th Session of the Council<sup>19</sup>; and
- d) recommended FAO to provide specific support to SIDS, recognizing their unique climate vulnerability, to increasingly access climate finance, develop value chains and capacity-building resources to strengthen their agrifood systems and support the development of oceanographic and fisheries research, through initiatives such as the Nansen expedition vessel, to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture<sup>20</sup>;

13. During the Regional Conference, Members presented innovations for better production that involve, *inter alia*: the use of science, technology and innovation for sustainable and resilient agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. Members presented innovations for a better environment, highlighting, *inter alia*: sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. The innovations presented showed the importance of coherence, coordination and multisectoral synergies at local level, which allowed for complementary approaches to strengthen the agrifood sector. These should be based, in particular, on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, fisheries, forestry, integrated management of landscapes and ecosystem services, and social protection<sup>21</sup>.

14. The Regional Conference reaffirmed FAO's role in the technical secretariats of the Regional Commissions and endorsed the recommendations, *inter alia*, of the Commission on Small-scale, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCALC)<sup>22</sup>.

### D. Regional Conference for Africa (ARC)

15. At its 32nd Session, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 11-14 April 2022, the Regional Conference for Africa, *inter alia*, noted the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on crop, livestock and fisheries productions, on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in food processing and on staple food prices<sup>23</sup>.

16. The Regional Conference encouraged Members, *inter alia*, to invest in innovations, technologies to generate data and knowledge to support ecosystem restoration, the management of natural resources

<sup>16</sup> Paragraph 17, LARC/22/REP

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 20, LARC/22/REP

<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 19, LARC/22/REP

<sup>19</sup> Paragraph 20, LARC/22/REP

<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 24, LARC/22/REP

<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 26, LARC/22/REP

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 28, LARC/22/REP

<sup>23</sup> Paragraph 20, ARC/22/REP/Rev.1

and all productive sectors in agriculture (crops, livestock and fisheries, forestry, etc.) toward a resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation<sup>24</sup>.

### **E. Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

17. At its 33rd Session, Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022, the Regional Conference for Europe, *inter alia*:

- a) welcomed the fact that the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy will consider the knowledge, experiences and concerns of farmers, foresters, fishers and Indigenous Peoples<sup>25</sup>;
- b) recognized that fishery policy should be an important element in the FAO Strategy on Climate Change and that more attention should be given to the impacts of overfishing and promoting sustainable fishing practices<sup>26</sup>; and
- c) recalled the need to strengthen coordination with relevant mechanisms such as, *inter alia*, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (VGSSF), in line with national contexts and capacities<sup>27</sup>.

18. Regional Conference reviewed the Report on the work of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)<sup>28</sup> and:

- a) called upon Members to nominate and support their operational focal points to EIFAAC, as the only pan-European commission on inland fisheries and aquaculture, and to encourage other countries and non-governmental organizations in the region to participate in EIFAAC sessions as observers; and
- b) encouraged Members to join EIFAAC projects of regional interest<sup>29</sup>.

19. Regional Conference reviewed the Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 7th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)<sup>30</sup> and

- a) encouraged relevant Members of ERC from Central Asia and the Caucasus to announce their intention to join the Commission; and
- b) promoted the celebration of IYAFSA 2022 and propose regional and national artisanal fisheries and aquaculture (AFA)-oriented policies and strategies to optimize the role of AFA<sup>31</sup>.

20. The Regional Conference took note of the Report from the outcome of the debate of the 44th Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)<sup>32</sup>.

### **F. Informal Regional Conference for North America (INARC)**

21. At its 7th Session, United States of America, 12-14 April 2022, the Informal Regional Conference for North America recommended on COFI and Fisheries Issues as follows<sup>33</sup>:

- a) The North American Region noted fisheries management and governance were predicated broadly based on predefined and static stock boundaries. Climate-related changes to marine and aquatic systems such as ocean warming, pollution, and acidification were driving changes in stock location and migration, productivity, and resilience. The Region stated status-quo approaches to fishery management needed to be adaptive to the increasing global challenges of

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<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 22, ARC/22/REP/Rev.1

<sup>25</sup> Paragraph 42, ERC/22/REP

<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 45, ERC/22/REP

<sup>27</sup> ditto

<sup>28</sup> Paragraph 54, ERC/22/REP

<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 55, ERC/22/REP

<sup>30</sup> Paragraph 56, ERC/22/REP

<sup>31</sup> Paragraph 57, ERC/22/REP

<sup>32</sup> Paragraph 59, ERC/22/REP

<sup>33</sup> Paragraphs 48-52, C 2023/LIM/1

promoting social and ecological resilience, providing food and nutrition security, supporting decent work, and reducing the environmental footprint of agri-food systems;

- b) The Region suggested the FAO should act as convenor for the climate-fisheries nexus particularly around programmatic work related to adaptation and mitigation but also on the technical side. Given its breadth and depth of global expertise, Canada and the United States identified greater FAO leadership as expected and needed in this area;
- c) The North American Region commented recent research highlighted opportunities for fisheries and aquaculture, also termed blue/aquatic foods, to address key food and nutrition deficiencies, especially for reducing child wasting and cognitive impairment in developing countries. Recognizing the contribution of aquatic foods to global nutrition, food security, and climate change mitigation/adaptation efforts, the Region called on FAO to be a more prominent advocate for the role fisheries and aquaculture can play in global food security and nutrition, while providing technical support to promote sustainable and resilient aquatic food production;
- d) The United States and Canada noted recent changes to FAO governance, including the loss of an Assistant Director General position, signaled the FAO may be de-prioritizing its role in the fisheries/aquaculture sector. Recognizing the importance of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security, nutrition, and climate change mitigation/adaptation efforts, the Region said FAO needed to deploy its leadership more effectively to ensure that topics related to oceans, fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic foods are properly considered in all relevant international fora, including through improving communication around the progress of work streams to Members. Canada and the United States urged the FAO to ensure its staffing levels were adequate to effectively implement the decisions and initiatives coming out of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and its sub-committees; and
- e) Finally, the North American Region welcomed greater global technical attention on fisheries and aquaculture, but cautioned the FAO against incorporating non-negotiated statements or outcomes, through reference, into UN system work, preferring instead that FAO introduce concepts to Members through deliberations within the FAO's technical bodies.

22. During the Informal Regional Conference, the delegations appreciated the FAO's integration of the One Health Approach in work on food security, sustainable agriculture, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), nutrition, animal and plant health, fisheries/aquaculture, and livelihoods. The United States noted its recent \$10 million USD contribution in this regard to institutionally strengthen the One Health Approach. The North American Region looked forward to further development of the Quadripartite One Health Joint Action Plan. The delegations emphasized that Member States should be consulted and kept apprised of the Quadripartite's One Health work<sup>34</sup>.

#### **IV. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

23. At its 130th Session, 22-26 March and 6 April 2021, the Programme Committee:
- a) supported the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and commended the inclusive consultation process conducted;
  - b) noted the recommendations of the Declaration in relation to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and Medium-Term Plan 2022-2025, and recommended the integration process in the Strategic Framework to ensure consistency and balance;
  - c) noted the clarification that the term "blue economy" is used in respect to a foresight analysis of the challenges that emerged around the world from a number of perspectives, emphasized that it is not a multilaterally agreed concept, and requested to use the agreed concept as outlined in the Declaration as sustainable and inclusive ocean economies in the Strategic Framework;
  - d) requested Management to provide further information on the partnerships and resources required to fully implement the Declaration in a future session of the Committee; and

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<sup>34</sup> Paragraph 86, C 2023/LIM/1

- e) in that regard, invited Members to support the implementation of the Declaration, including through extra budgetary resources<sup>35</sup>.
24. The Committee requested the name of the fisheries division to be changed to the fisheries and aquaculture division in order to better reflect its responsibilities and work programme<sup>36</sup>.
25. With regard to the One Health Approach, the Committee, *inter alia*:
- a) highlighted the importance of the One Health Approach, the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with UNEP, and other relevant international organizations, in line with their respective mandates in this respect, the importance of international trade for increasing resilience, addressing the needs of indigenous peoples, giving equal importance to fisheries and aquaculture as well as the need to give more emphasis to environmental issues in the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23<sup>37</sup>; and
- b) welcomed the inclusion of One Health as a Programme Priority Area in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, and the application of the “One Health” approach across FAO’s actions, recognizing the potential synergies in managing health threats to plants, livestock, aquaculture and forestry<sup>38</sup>.
26. With regard to evaluation of FAO’s support to climate action (SDG13) and the implementation of FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017) and management response, the Committee, *inter alia*, encouraged FAO to optimize its comparative advantages and technical expertise especially in crop production, fisheries and food safety<sup>39</sup>.
27. With regard to terms of reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, the Committee, *inter alia*, noted with appreciation the engagement of the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on Forestry and the Committee on Fisheries in the development of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, and welcomed the updated document with the incorporation of guidance from these Technical Committees<sup>40</sup>.
28. With regard to the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee:
- a) acknowledged the need to ensure that the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) addresses all technical issues in relation to fisheries management in an appropriate manner; and
- b) supported the continuation of the transparent and inclusive consultation process carried out on the proposal to establish a subcommittee on fisheries management<sup>41</sup>.
29. At its 133rd Session, 16-20 May 2022, with regard to evaluation of FAO’s contribution to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6) and management’s response, the Programme Committee, *inter alia*, recognized FAO’s technical expertise in supporting its Members on crop production, livestock, fisheries, forestry, aquaculture, agriculture, irrigated agriculture, agrochemicals and other pollutants in relation to their impacts on water quality, and encouraged FAO to strengthen its work in this area<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Paragraph 18, CL 166/9

<sup>36</sup> Paragraph 10 p), CL 166/9

<sup>37</sup> Paragraph 10 n), CL 166/9

<sup>38</sup> Paragraph 20 d), CL 166/9

<sup>39</sup> Paragraph 23 i), CL 166/9

<sup>40</sup> Paragraph 16 a), CL 166/9

<sup>41</sup> Paragraph 16, CL 166/8

<sup>42</sup> Paragraph 18 f), CL 170/11

## V. OTHER TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

### Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)

30. At its 112th Session, 8-10 March 2021, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters considered the procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution<sup>43</sup>, and noted that this item had been considered at the 103rd, 106th, 107th, 110th and 111th Sessions of the CCLM and had also been the subject of extensive consultations by the present Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), Mr Khalid Mehboob, and his predecessor.

31. The ICC provided an update on his consultations with the Chairs of the three Statutory Bodies concerned<sup>1</sup> as well as on the informal consultations with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups and FAO Management. He underlined that the revised proposed procedure (Annex I to CCLM 112/2) involves the Article XIV Bodies in all steps of the recruitment process to a much larger extent than the interim procedure adopted by the Council at its 155th Session in 2016. He recalled that, in the absence of a resolution on a long-term procedure, the interim procedure will apply.

32. The CCLM noted that the consultations conducted by the ICC were still ongoing, praised the efforts of the ICC and welcomed the engagement of the three Article XIV Bodies concerned and FAO Management with the ICC towards an effective solution for the selection of secretaries of Article XIV Bodies in line with the FAO Basic Texts.

33. Noting the positive updates provided by the ICC, the Committee looked forward to prompt resolution of this matter in the upcoming consultations of the ICC with the concerned Bodies and confirmed its readiness to hold an additional Session of the Committee, subject to consensus being reached on a long-term procedure, to be able to bring this issue to a closure at the next Council Session<sup>44</sup>.

### Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)

34. At its 74th Session, 10-12 March 2021, with regard to COVID-19, Agricultural Markets and Trade and FAO's Response, the Committee on Commodity Problems, *inter alia*, underlined the urgency to address the multiple adverse effects caused by the pandemic on agri-food systems, hunger and malnutrition, calling for particular attention to the needs of family and smallholder farmers and fishers as well as indigenous people and local communities during and beyond the pandemic<sup>45</sup>.

### Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

35. At its 47th Session, 8-11 February 2021, the Committee on World Food Security considered the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN), which covers fisheries and aquaculture, and:

- a) expressed its appreciation for the work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Food Systems and Nutrition and acknowledged the effective leadership of the Chair of the OEWG as well as of previous Chairs of this OEWG;
- b) endorsed CFS 2021/47/7 "The Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN)", taking note of their voluntary and non-binding nature;
- c) encouraged all CFS stakeholders to support and promote at all levels within their constituencies, and in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and platforms, the dissemination, use, and application of the VGFSyN to support the development, enhancement and implementation of coordinated and multi-sectoral national policies, laws, programmes, investment plans, and various regional food security and nutrition initiatives, while recognizing

<sup>43</sup> including the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

<sup>44</sup> Paragraphs 9-12, CL 166/11

<sup>45</sup> Paragraph 9 f), C 2021/25

the diversity and complexity of food systems and diets as well as national capacities and priorities;

- d) encouraged all stakeholders to document lessons learned from using the VGFSyN and to share these lessons with the Committee in order to assess their continued relevance, effectiveness, and impact – in line with the standard monitoring practice of the Committee;
- e) commended those countries that have voluntarily pledged to deploy the VGFSyN in their own national policy and/or legislative circumstances, in conjunction with the commitments of the UN Decade of Action on the 2030 Agenda, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), and the UN Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028), and encouraged other countries to take similar steps to actively utilize this CFS product as a tool for national-level, coherent and multi-stakeholder action that promote sustainable food systems and will address malnutrition in all its forms, as well as related social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, consistent with section 4 of the VGFSyN. In addition, the VGFSyN have an essential role also in assisting countries to achieve a number of SDGs directly, with particular attention to targets 2.2 and 2.4;
- f) decided to transmit the VGFSyN to the Governing Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD for their further consideration regarding supporting their utilization at country level, in line with country requests and pursuant to Rule XXXIII, paragraph 17, of the General Rules of the Organization and Rule X, paragraph 1, of the CFS Rules of Procedure, and in accordance with paragraph 22 of the CFS Reform Document;
- g) underlined the valuable input the VGFSyN will provide to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 discussions and any follow-up process;
- h) decided to request the United Nations General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to consider and ensure the wide dissemination of the VGFSyN to all relevant UN Organizations and Agencies, consistent with Rule XXXIII, paragraph 15, of the General Rules of the Organization, Rule X, paragraph 4, of the CFS Rules of Procedure, and paragraph 21 of the CFS Reform Document; and
- i) agreed to include the VGFSyN in the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)<sup>46</sup>.

36. At its 48th Special Session, 4 June 2021, the Committee endorsed CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition, which invites governments, regional, national and local authorities, as appropriate, along with relevant inter-governmental organizations, research organizations, extension agencies, civil society (including producer and consumer organizations) and the private sector (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises), *inter alia*, to raise awareness about the importance of diversified production systems that integrate livestock, aquaculture, cropping and agroforestry, as appropriate, to enhance resilient livelihoods and promote sustainable production for healthy diets<sup>47</sup>.

37. At its 49th Session, 11-14 October 2021, with regard to promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, the Committee took note of comments shared in the plenary discussion, *inter alia*, the need to recognize the diversity of contexts and cultural, social and economic multiplicity of youth, and to promote context-specific employment and labour market policies that target young people, enhance entrepreneurship, employment outcomes, and dignified livelihoods including, but not limited to, farming and fishing, at all levels<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Paragraphs 17-18, CFS 47/Report

<sup>47</sup> Policy Recommendations 3 a), Appendix D, CFS 48 Report

<sup>48</sup> Paragraph 23 e) ii, CFS 49/Report