



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

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

San Jose, Costa Rica, 29-31 March 2023

SUMMARY OF AGREEMENTS ADOPTED DURING THE XXXVTH FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Introduction

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its 35th Session from 5 to 9 September 2022. The session was held in hybrid mode, as an exceptional and unprecedented event, in the light of the current global pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the concomitant public health concerns, following consultations with the COFI Bureau.

The session was attended by 99 members of the Committee, observers from 21 other FAO member countries, the Holy See and Palestine, representatives of eight United Nations specialised agencies, observers from 44 intergovernmental organisations and 51 international non-governmental organisations. This document provides a summary of the 35th COFI Session report¹

SUMMARY OF THE AGREEMENTS ADOPTED AT COFI

STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AND ADVANCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS

- a) The crucial role of FAO in relation to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture was brought to the fore and FAO was encouraged to continue to strengthen the importance and visibility of fisheries and aquaculture within and outside the Organization, providing adequate resources to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division;

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc3652es/cc3652es.pdf>

- b) FAO was commended for the 2022 edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), in particular, for the special focus on the blue transformation in order to effectively support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was emphasised that SOFIA was the only high-quality reference publication on the status and global trends of fisheries and aquaculture and congratulated the Organization for the wide impact of the public launch of this edition in a high-level event held during the Second United Nations Conference on the Oceans;
- c) appreciation was extended for the information included by FAO on current methodological improvements to better reflect the regional and sub-regional status of fish stocks, acknowledging initiatives to restore stocks and increase the number of stocks being assessed, while ensuring the integrity of the time series;
- d) advances in some regions were highlighted, while expressing concern about the current state of marine fish stocks globally, and emphasised the need to improve fisheries management based on the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach by, inter alia, strengthening collaboration with regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and other relevant regional fisheries advisory bodies (RFBs) and civil society, as appropriate, through capacity building and strengthening the link between fisheries management decision-making and the best available scientific knowledge.;
- e) the increasing involvement of FAO in international processes, bringing its expertise in fisheries management and aquaculture to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation of marine and inland waters, and sustainable and inclusive use of aquatic resources was noted;
- f) while recognizing the difficulties of countries with regard to the management of data categories and sampling, the importance of having operational and compatible national data gathering systems to support decision-making processes was stressed, encouraging collaboration and close consultation between FAO and countries, specifically on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and the impacts of climate change, highlighting the potential benefits of implementing innovative solutions, initiatives and collaborations;
- g) the need to strengthen efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing was stressed, welcoming the recently adopted World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as an important step forward for ocean sustainability and commended FAO for its continued support to this achievement;
- h) the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in meeting future food needs and achieving sustainable and resilient food systems was underlined, welcoming global initiatives aimed at strengthening partnerships and promotion of food from the ocean and inland waters. In keeping with the same, the critical contribution of fishers, fish farmers and workers in small-scale and artisanal fisheries and the need to address gender equality and inequalities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector was further emphasised;
- i) the importance of supporting the sustainable development of aquaculture to meet future food demand, particularly in developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS) was stressed, and called on FAO to finalise the ambitious FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture in an expeditious manner;
- j) the value of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture was reiterated and advances in its implementation since its adoption were acknowledged, while noting the need for further improvements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- k) the decrease in the number of responses to the survey on the implementation of the Code and related instruments was observed with concern and this may be partly due to problems of FAO Members

in using the web application of the survey and welcomed the Organization's efforts to improve the web application;

- l) FAO was urged to provide technical assistance, e.g. through virtual platforms, in order to increase the response rate to the Code survey;
- m) FAO was encouraged to continue to support Members in the implementation of the Code and related tools and the identification of strategic directions, through the development of additional technical guidelines;
- n) FAO was encouraged to collaborate with other international organizations on information about SOFIA, and to promote its findings among a wider audience;
- o) FAO was requested to assess the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the context of global food security.

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee:

- a) highlighted the importance of aquatic food from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security, nutrition and livelihoods all over the world, its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and the need for resources and partnerships to support this contribution;
- b) pointed out the serious implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts, the climate crisis, population growth and biodiversity loss for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and urged members to double efforts in support of an equitable and sustainable recovery;
- c) emphasised the need to promote sustainable aquaculture and fisheries as a positive contribution to sustainable and inclusive economies, for example through the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), combating IUU fishing, the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Achieving Sustainability in Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and the promotion of inclusive and equitable value chains to enable the full contribution of the sector to meeting the SDGs;
- d) acknowledged FAO's role in monitoring and reporting on SDG 14 indicators for which it is responsible, and highlighted the Organization's support to the work of Members to track their progress on SDG 14 indicators;
- e) noted that improving statistical capacity, data gathering and efficient monitoring and reporting remained serious challenges for many Members, but were crucial to understand progress and gaps in relation to meeting the SDGs;
- f) recommended FAO to assist Members to strengthen their capacity to gather and report data and encouraged countries to take ownership of the monitoring and reporting processes of the 2030 Agenda indicators that are relevant to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
- g) reiterated its support to the FAO's resource mobilization efforts with a view to addressing the weakness of the national statistical systems and enabling countries to report on and make effective use of SDG indicators, for example through the Multi-Donor Comprehensive SDG Measurement Programme;
- h) urged Members to increase the funds earmarked for the achievement of SDG 14, given the low levels of funding currently available;
- i) welcomed the adoption of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as a decisive step towards the achievement of SDG target 14.6 and urged Members to accept the Agreement and to continue negotiations with a view to reaching a comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies and further requested FAO to support Members in the implementation of the Agreement, as appropriate;

- j) recognised the need to improve indicator 14.6.1 and its methodology, to address situations currently not covered in the survey, in particular those where Members are not parties to some international instruments and take measures as riparian States, port states or flag states to address the combat against IUU fishing.

SUPPORT TO SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES, INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE.

The Committee:

- a) recognised the importance of small-scale marine and inland fisheries for sustainable development, global food security and nutrition and their contribution to employment, livelihoods and management of resources;
- b) acknowledged the advances of FAO and partners with regard to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and further mainstreaming into policies as a contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and healthy food systems and called for FAO's continued support in this regard;
- c) emphasized the importance of favourable policies and laws, participatory processes and inclusive governance mechanisms involving small-scale fisheries organisations, women, young people and indigenous peoples, as well as local communities, and called for further guidance and capacity development through FAO.
- d) encouraged further work on sustainable use and management of small-scale fisheries resources, including co-management, and reiterated the key role that a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management could play in relation to sustainable small-scale fisheries;
- e) emphasised the need to increase access to resources and support for small-scale fisheries livelihoods and incomes through appropriate technologies, market access and value chain development and encouraged FAO to provide relevant tools, guidance and capacity development;
- f) reconfirmed the importance of small-scale marine and inland fisheries data gathering and analysis, based on the results and methods of the 'Shining a light on hidden catches' study to better guide governance and management;
- g) commended FAO for the celebrations and achievements of the International Year of Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture (2022) so far, in particular the COFI special high-level event on this International Year, and emphasised the unique opportunity to seek commitments and recommendations at a small-scale fisheries summit, which is recommended to be held every two years prior to the COFI session, subject to the availability of resources, to maintain and guide continued support to the sub-sectors;
- h) urged countries to enable the participation of small-scale fishers in the fisheries management decision-making process.

COMBATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING (IUU)

The Committee:

- a) took note of the constant efforts of members to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, in particular through the implementation of relevant international agreements and voluntary guidelines, as well as regional mechanisms, but expressed concern that IUU fishing represented a

serious problem in most areas and called for further cooperation and exchange of information at national, regional and global levels;

- b) recognised that combating IUU fishing was one of the main priorities for members;
- c) welcomed the development of additional documents on methodologies by the Secretariat to estimate the extent of IUU fishing and the use of indicators to assess and monitor the results of the combat against IUU fishing and looked forward to the new guidance document to estimate the impact of IUU fishing;
- d) acknowledged the steady increase in the number of Parties to the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and took note of the conclusions of the third Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA, in particular the decision to develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Agreement; encouraged further adherence to the Agreement and welcomed the organisation of the fourth Meeting of the Parties, to be held in Indonesia in May 2023;
- e) welcomed the launch of the pilot phase of the global information exchange system of the PSMA, stressed the need to fully develop and implement this system to be used by Parties in a manner compatible with their national systems, recognising the importance of exchanging information for the effective implementation of the Agreement, and emphasised the importance of further integration with existing RFMO systems;
- f) acknowledged the role of FAO in combating IUU fishing and commended the Organisation for the technical assistance provided through its global capacity development programme in support of the implementation of the PSMA and other complementary international instruments and for launching the Global Portal on capacity development;
- g) urged FAO to maintain and strengthen its technical work and capacity building efforts in relation to IUU fishing, allocating the necessary resources to this work;
- h) requested FAO to organize a technical workshop for Members to review vessel tracking issues, if external funding was available, the results of which should be considered by the new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management;
- i) welcomed the publication of the second version of The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) and reiterated its call to increase Members' participation in the Global Record and the importance of uploading and updating information on their fleets;
- j) encouraged the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes; thanked FAO for developing technical guidelines so that national authorities could better understand and implement catch documentation schemes and stressed the importance of sharing information, transparency and traceability;
- k) welcomed the adoption of an agreement on subsidies to fisheries under the WTO on 17 June 2022, with the aim, inter alia, to eliminate all forms of subsidies to IUU fishing and fisheries-related activities, and noted that FAO Members should take greater responsibility in adopting measures to effectively address this issue; k) welcomed the adoption of an agreement on fisheries subsidies under the WTO on 17 June 2022, inter alia, to eliminate all forms of subsidies to IUU fishing and fisheries-related activities, and stated that FAO Members should take greater responsibility in adopting measures to effectively address this issue;
- l) reiterated its recommendation that FAO provide technical assistance to Members to analyse and justify fisheries-related subsidies to support the identification and elimination of subsidies related to IUU fishing activities;
- m) endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipments as a new instrument under the Code and called for their implementation through RFMOs and agreements;

- n) endorsed the revised mandate of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters and pointed out the need for the FAO Secretariat to establish the necessary procedures to submit the conclusions of the Joint Working Group to Members for consideration;
- o) took note of the possibility to update the 1989 FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels, in view of global developments and the current lack of harmonization in the marking of fishing vessels. FAO was requested to begin the process and urged the Organization to analyse the costs, benefits and implications of such an update;
- p) urged Members to fulfil their obligations as flag States, port States, riparian States and trading States to combat IUU fishing on the high seas and in areas under their national jurisdiction;
- q) welcomed the publication of the study on the implementation of the FAO Compliance Agreement and called for the consideration of options to strengthen its effective implementation and ensure its enforcement;
- r) called upon members and relevant regional organizations to raise awareness through targeted means among different social categories at regional and local levels of the importance of combating IUU fishing given its negative impact on societies.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE PROPOSAL OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The Committee:

- a) endorsed the proposal to establish a Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management and to make it operational, as proposed by the Working Group;
- b) stressed the importance of addressing the potential financial and administrative burden, especially for developing Member States, and welcomed the financial contribution announced by one member;
- c) welcomed the rotation of modality between the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management and the existing sub-committees as proposed by the Working Group;
- d) also welcomed the review process to be undertaken by the 38th Session of the Committee and expressed concern that the time available for the review process was too short;
- e) stressed the importance of prioritizing and balancing agenda items to avoid duplication with existing sub-committees and to allow for an in-depth dialogue on key fisheries management issues.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE: PROGRESS REPORT AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO STRATEGY ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2022-2031

The Committee:

- a) acknowledged FAO support to address the impacts of climate change on aquatic food systems and the communities they support and highlighted the vulnerability of SIDS and LDCs and the need to support them;
- b) requested FAO to intensify the support to developing country Members, through additional funding from the Green Climate Fund, to build capacities to face climate change and implement related initiatives, with a special focus on the most vulnerable such as SIDS and LDCs;

- c) commended the development of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 as a new institutional framework to enhance climate action at global, regional, national and local levels and ensure alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework in support of meeting the SDGs;
- d) welcomed the development of an Action Plan, took note of the proposed actions for the implementation of the Strategy and recommended the development of a set of actions by FAO focused on climate resilient fisheries and aquaculture;
- e) recognized the importance of mobilizing additional resources to support the implementation of the Action Plan, promoting inclusive collaboration to adopt good low-emission practices and innovative solutions leaving no one behind;
- f) requested FAO to continue to organize open, inclusive, transparent and timely consultation processes and to take into account the guidance provided by Members with a view to refining and further developing the Action Plan;
- g) acknowledged FAO's collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the progress made under the UNFCCC and encouraged FAO to continue to advance the inclusion of aquatic food in global climate fora, including the oceans dialogues under the UNFCCC;
- h) encouraged FAO to increase knowledge and awareness of the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture and to provide guidance on adaptation and mitigation, highlighting the need for guidance on climate-resilient fisheries management, for example, organizing a workshop with RFMOs and RFBs, and encouraged the inclusion of climate change in the FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture.

INTEGRATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

The Committee:

- a) welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the FAO Strategy for Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Agricultural Sectors and encouraged FAO to finalize the Action Plan 2024-27, in particular with regard to actions related to fisheries and aquaculture;
- b) acknowledged the support provided by FAO in the process of developing a 'Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework' (2021-2030), and invited FAO to promote the development of fisheries and aquaculture-related elements within the set of relevant targets and indicators under negotiation;
- c) recognized the importance of area-based management tools in fisheries and aquaculture for biodiversity conservation and encouraged FAO to continue the consultative process to develop and disseminate FAO-led practical guidance on 'other effective area-based conservation measures';
- d) recognised the important role that RFMOs and other regional initiatives play in integrating biodiversity into the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, and urged FAO to further strengthen its support to them in this area;
- e) urged effective cooperation between fisheries and environment-related bodies at global, regional and national levels, stressing the need for collaboration to ensure coherence in policy-making for oceans and inland waters in order to contribute to the protection of biodiversity;
- f) expressed its concern that several seabirds, including the Antipodean Albatross, are endangered species, and urged members to develop regional and national action plans for the protection of seabirds from the effects of fishing, recognising the support provided by FAO and the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels;

- g) welcomed the report of the 7th meeting of the FAO Ad Hoc Expert Advisory Panel to assess proposals to amend Appendices I and II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) concerning commercially-exploited aquatic species. With a view to the 19th Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP 19) to be held in November 2022, members underlined the important role of FAO to ensure that relevant decisions and their implementation are based on CITES criteria and the best available scientific and technical information;
- h) requested FAO to support the intergovernmental conference process on an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction with a view to providing relevant technical assistance, as required;
- i) acknowledged the work of FAO in relation to the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and supported the implementation of the global information system to ensure the effective and sustainable use of aquatic species;
- j) pointed out that marine debris and litter is a threat to biodiversity; supported the work of FAO towards the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Marking of Fishing Gear and encouraged Members' fishery experts to collaborate in International Maritime Organization (IMO) processes, such as binding measures for fishing gear, accordingly.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES RELATED TO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

The Committee:

- a) commended the work of FAO aimed at securing sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches and participation in United Nations fora and processes, including the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and the United Nations Conference on Oceans, and expressed interest in collaborating with relevant global and regional organizations, bodies and initiatives to strengthen such work;
- b) urged Members to participate in informal consultations on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/71 of 9 December 2021, and encouraged all parties to support the replenishment of the Assistance Fund established under Part VII of the Agreement;
- c) encouraged FAO, to provide technical assistance and relevant information as part of its mandate and area of competence, to support the marine biodiversity process in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- d) requested FAO, to provide technical assistance and relevant information, as part of its mandate, on the impacts of fishing activities in the context of the Mining Code within the framework of the International Seabed Authority;
- e) stressed the importance of continuing FAO efforts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, giving priority to improving the processes affecting them;
- f) highlighted the key role of RFMOs, RFABs and other regional fisheries and aquaculture sustainability initiatives and encouraged FAO to continue to provide support to RFMOs and RFABs, in particular through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network, and to develop

cross-sectoral cooperation between RFMOs/RFABs and regional seas conventions and programmes, and also to continue to encourage Members to participate effectively in all RFMOs to which they are parties;

- g) requested FAO to continue to enhance its support to regional and sub-regional organizations related to both marine and inland fisheries, including the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) and the Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries Committee (EECAFC), and to continue to support the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Organization, and took note of the regional consultation on the establishment of such an organization to be held in Saudi Arabia in December 2022;
- h) requested FAO to provide support in relation to the ongoing review of the mandates, performance and relevance and future existence of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), a body established under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution;
- i) acknowledged the joint work of FAO with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and IMO on safety and decent work in fisheries; urged Members, regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) and other relevant international organizations to exchange information and experiences on these issues, and encouraged all Members to ratify and implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 and the 2012 Cape Town Agreement of the IMO;
- j) welcomed FAO's capacity building work on decent working conditions and safety at sea, with particular attention to reducing accidents and fatalities among small-scale fishers, safety standards for fishing vessels, and promoting insurance and social protection in fisheries. Requested FAO to increase FAO's capacity building on decent working conditions and safety at sea, with particular attention to reducing accidents and fatalities among small-scale fishers, safety standards for fishing vessels and promoting insurance and social protection in fisheries, and requested FAO to increase its support to developing countries on fisheries safety issues and to take the lead in establishing a repository of fishers' safety data and information on accidents and fatalities;
- k) welcomed the success of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, as well as the Lisbon Declaration 'Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility' towards the achievement of SDG 14.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE (24-27 MAY 2022)

The Committee:

- a) stressed the importance of aquaculture, and especially small-scale aquaculture, for food security and nutrition, livelihoods, economic development and public health;
- b) stressed the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices to develop aquaculture in a sustainable manner, in particular through South-South and triangular cooperation;
- c) welcomed the adoption of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and recognized the relevance of the Blue Transformation priority programme area to transform global aquaculture into a more productive, efficient, resilient, climate-smart, socially and environmentally responsible food system;
- d) emphasised the need to develop a long-term approach to sustainable aquaculture development and, in so doing, recommended to complete the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture prior to the 12th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture through the establishment of a Task Force to be conducted in an open and inclusive manner;

- e) re-emphasised the need to establish the Integrated Global Aquaculture Sustainability Programme, adopted at the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and to consider the draft Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture as a basis for FAO's programmatic work;
- f) pointed out the potential of seaweed farming, processing and marketing and the importance of sustainable sources of feed;
- g) thanked FAO, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific and the host country, the Government of the People's Republic of China, for the organization of the successful Global Conference on Aquaculture Millennium +20; stressed the relevance of the Conference as an important global forum for the participation of a wide range of aquaculture stakeholders; and encouraged FAO to continue organizing such conferences;
- h) requested FAO to support Members, upon request, to raise awareness, strengthen monitoring, promote the responsible use of antimicrobials in aquatic animals within the framework of the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-25 and the Progressive Management Pathway for Improving Aquaculture and encouraged cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS STEMMING FROM THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE 18TH SESSION (8 APRIL TO 8 MAY AND 7-9 AND 20 JUNE 2022)

The Committee:

- a) emphasised the importance of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as a global forum for post-harvest and trade issues in fisheries and aquaculture;
- b) commended FAO for its work on food safety and Codex Alimentarius, fishing document schemes and traceability and other post-fishing activities;
- c) reaffirmed the importance of disseminating market information for fishery and aquaculture products, mainly for small-scale operators, with a view to facilitating their integration to global markets with greater opportunities;
- d) stressed the importance of a transparent, robust and harmonised trading system, where measures are applied consistently and in a non-discriminatory manner, without creating unnecessary barriers to trade;
- e) urged FAO to continue working to minimise food loss and waste, as aquatic foods play a key role in providing nutrition and food security;
- f) urged FAO to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building, as well as data dissemination on market information;
- g) welcomed the future database on regional trade agreements for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, which will be factual and developed without bias.

FAO WORK PROGRAMME FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FAO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Committee:

- a) welcomed the relevance of fisheries and aquaculture throughout the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and its contribution to SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- b) welcomed the core objectives of the Blue Transformation and their alignment with the 2021 Declaration of the Committee on Fisheries for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and the Strategic Framework 2022-2031;
- c) endorsed the priority areas of work in fisheries and aquaculture selected for the 2022-23 biennium, noting the importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for food security, nutrition and livelihoods;
- d) recommended FAO to consider support to fisheries and aquaculture related to post-COVID-19 response and recovery as a priority area;
- e) restated the role of FAO in the collection, analysis and dissemination of fisheries and aquaculture statistics, including gender-disaggregated data where possible, and recommended FAO to inform Members of the additional needs for improving data collection systems, especially those related to small-scale fisheries and aquaculture;
- f) urged FAO, in collaboration with its partners, to continue to promote the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in relevant fora and initiatives, such as the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 27);
- g) stressed the important technical role of FAO in addressing the impacts of ongoing conflicts on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, especially on small-scale and artisanal marine and inland fishers livelihoods.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR FAO SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STRATEGY (2022-25)

The Committee:

- a) a) commended the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (2022-25) through an inclusive process and its adoption at the 170th Session of the Council;
- b) b) reviewed and welcomed the high-level framework to be used to develop regional action plans for the effective implementation of the Science and Innovation Strategy, taking into account the outcomes and recommendations of the FAO Regional Consultations and Conferences 2022;
- c) c) invited the administration to continue to consider the guidance from Members and inform them on the development of regional action plans and report to the relevant governing bodies, as appropriate, ensuring alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and other FAO strategies, ensuring consistency with texts agreed upon in international fora.