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Agenda Item 11

SUMMARY REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF FAO REGIONAL BODIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Immediate Plan of Action for FAO's Renewal (IPA) approved by the 35th (Special) Session of the FAO Conference in November 2008 lays the foundation of an enhanced results-based approach to programme planning, implementation and reporting in the Organization. This is coupled with a revitalized and more inclusive intergovernmental process of review of priorities and programme and budget proposals.
2. One of the tools for the development of the Organizational Results for the achievement of the eleven Strategic Objectives includes a structured and consultative development of subregional and regional areas of priority actions through the regional conferences and specialized regional commissions.
3. In this context, a summary report of four regional commissions is presented for discussion and information at the 27th Regional Conference for Europe. Due to the various meeting schedules of the regional commissions concerned and the limited time frame available to benefit for broader consultations on the new approaches for the planning process, the reports of the commissions should be considered as an inventory of the present status and ongoing issues in the various technical fields, rather than as a focussed identification for regional priorities for consideration by the Regional Conference for the upcoming planning period.
4. It is hoped that further dialogue and consultations will result in a harmonization of the sessions of the various regional technical commissions and that their respective reports will be more oriented towards playing an advisory role in the future Regional Conferences for Europe regarding the identification of regional technical priorities and a contribution to their achievement.
5. The present document summarizes the reports of the Joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee/FAO European Forestry Commission, the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) including information on the present status of the establishment of the Central Asia and Caucasus Fisheries Commission and the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EUFMD).

II. JOINT UNECE TIMBER COMMITTEE AND FAO EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF WORK

6. The joint UNECE Timber Committee/FAO European Forestry Commission's integrated programme of work on timber and forestry promotes the strengthening of the forest sector and its contribution to sustainable development. Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are in the forefront of this effort, in recognition of their needs for access to information, networks, platforms and improved subregional and regional cooperation, often against a background of institutional change and reform.
7. The 34th Session of the European Forestry Commission was held in October 2008 as a joint session with the UNECE Timber Committee during the first European Forest Week in Rome.
8. The Plenary Session discussed the themes "Forestry and Climate Change"; "Forests and Energy"; and "Forests and Water", and the session considered forest-related developments in Europe and elements of the continuing good cooperation among various European organizations.
9. The joint session discussed forest products' market developments in 2008 and the prospects for 2009, addressing the theme "Green building impacts on the forest sector." The

individual sessions were aligned with the European Forest Week's daily topics "Sustainable Markets and Climate Change" and "Sustainable Markets and Energy".

10. The joint session welcomed the Strategic Review and Planning process, which took place in 2007-2008 with significant emphasis on feedback from governments and stakeholders and evaluations, in particular regarding the utility of programme outputs. The session noted that the Strategic Plan of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry for the period 2008-2013, encompassing the work programmes 2008-09, 2010-11 and 2012-13, took into account, to the extent possible, country priorities and needs.

11. The joint session adopted the Strategic Plan 2008-13 of the UNECE/FAO integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry, as set out in document ECE/TIM/2008/7-FO:EFC/08/7 including objectives, strategy, activities and programme developments.

12. The joint session recommended that UNECE and FAO further work together in collaboration with other partners in the fields of forests and climate change, forests and energy, forests and water and working together for forests.

13. Regarding the FAO European Forestry Commission issues, the Commission welcomed the progress made in the preparation of the new FAO strategy for forests and forestry. It took note of the fact that feedback had been received and incorporated from all regions, including Europe. The Commission recommended that the finalization of the strategy should take into account the Special Session of the FAO Conference in November 2008 and, when addressing climate change, emphasize the adaptation of the forest sector.

14. The Commission identified a number of issues, including the impact of climate change on forests, the increasing emphasis on renewable energy, including bioenergy, and their impact on forests and the linkages between forests and water for the attention of the 19th Session of the Committee of Forestry (COFO), which was held in 2009.

15. The UNECE/FAO Timber Section, based in Geneva, implements the Integrated Programme of Work in close cooperation with the FAO Subregional Offices for Central and Eastern Europe (SEUR), Budapest, and Central Asia (SEC), Ankara, as well as FAO Headquarters. Consultation on the development of activities in the region takes place regularly with the forestry officers in Budapest and Ankara, and both are invited to the meetings of the Bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission. SEUR and SEC, in cooperation with the UNECE/FAO Timber Section, provide the secretariat for the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This Team constitutes a potentially powerful network of forest policy specialists throughout the region which could serve as a platform for information sharing between the organizations active in the region, and the member countries.

III. EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (EUFMD)

16. Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is the most infectious disease of domestic animals, and even single outbreaks in officially free countries result in losses through trade embargoes and direct costs, worth millions of United States Dollars.

17. The EUFMD Commission was established in 1954 with the aim of coordinating the efforts of European countries in the control of FMD, and these efforts succeeded in controlling disease then enabling cessation of vaccination, followed by official recognition of freedom, in 33 of the current 35 Member States of the Commission. Membership of the Commission is open to all European countries that are part of the FAO European Region; gaps in current membership, which include countries at high risk of FMD, include the TransCaucasus countries, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and countries of Central Asia.

18. Following successful elimination of FMD in 33 of the Member States, the focus of actions of the Commission, with support from the European Commission (DG-SANCO), has been to reduce the risk of incursions of FMD from endemic regions, with the principal threats coming from West Eurasia (Republic of Turkey and its eastern neighbours) and from more distant regions, from where infection could travel in live animals and animal products into the European neighbourhood, as occurred in 2001 (Ireland, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and 1996 (Western Balkans).

19. Between 2005 and 2009, the Commission provided support of about EUR 5.5 million to FMD control in Eastern Europe with the majority of funding being provided to support FMD control in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, recognizing the risk of spread from the southern and eastern neighbours.

20. In 2009 the EUFMD Commission adopted a revised Strategy for the period 2009-13, with five priorities, after recognizing the continued risk from countries neighbouring to Turkey, including from the region of the Trans-Caucasus: the need to continue the effort on FMD Virus (FMDV) threat detection (virus intelligence) with a new priority of monitoring progress in FMD control in the seven major virus pools; to upgrade efforts on FMD training as a funded programme and the need for continued technical networking between European experts and those in FMD endemic and at-risk countries in the European neighbourhood.

21. Following adoption of the Strategic Plan, a new financial agreement of EUR 8 million was signed with the European Union for supportive actions to implement the Strategy, covering:

- an East EurAsia FMD roadmap – emphasis is to promote/advocate and technically support countries to develop/implement risk reduction programmes (build on current support to neighbours of Turkey);
- technical networking of European FMD experts with those of the Euro-Mediterranean region, to develop improved guidelines or methods for surveillance, early warning, laboratory preparedness;
- a training programme; European/EUFMD Member States four-year rolling programme for frontline response officers faced with animal disease emergencies;
- viral surveillance for vaccine bank prioritization: builds on small grants and support for FMDV submission to the World Reference Laboratory/Country Reference Laboratory (WRL/CRL) in the first plan, to continue to fill gaps in knowledge for risk assessment on circulating FMDV strains;
- global FMD progress monitoring/risk information across seven virus pools.

22. The EUFMD Commission, working together with an FAO project has organized regional meetings for 14 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia which have been commonly affected by FMD epidemics in the past four years, in order to develop a long-term vision for FMD control in West Eurasia. The first meeting was held in the Islamic Republic of Iran in November 2008 and developed the vision and a Roadmap for FMD control in West Eurasia by 2020. EUFMD or FAO technical support, through FMD surveillance and control projects, was provided following a meeting between the majority of countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria and Turkey from the EUFMD Commission, and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan from FAO projects with Italian funding).

23. In order to evaluate country capacity and actions in FMD control, and to monitor progress on the Roadmap, a new tool (the Progressive Control Pathway – PCP) has been developed by EUFMD/FAO and applied to monitor progress along the West Eurasia Roadmap. At the first progress monitoring meeting in October 2009, about 50 percent of the 14 countries were judged to have changed their progress status, the majority showing progress to establishing a monitoring system (Stage 1 PCP). The progress in the first year was considered to be good, and the Roadmap remains on track to achieve the vision of freedom from clinical cases of FMD being achieved by the year 2020. The continued realization of the vision requires a coordinated set of national efforts under an overall framework of progressive risk reduction, supported by regional services and

sharing of information, technical knowledge and possible donor support, between countries within the region and which are beneficiaries of the action. Almost all countries in the region are in Stage 1 of the PCP, or above, and most continue to invest heavily in FMD vaccination programmes. However, weaknesses in international control of animal movement, and gaps in preventive measures, have allowed the continued circulation of types A, O and Asia-1 in the region, with a regional epidemic of type A Iran 05 in the winter of 2008-9.

24. International organizations indicated their strong continued support for the Roadmap process, with the European Commission, and the EUFMD Commission, indicating their support for regional and national monitoring and control efforts for Turkey and the six bordering countries in 2009-2012, and indicators from the Government of Italy for further support to five Central Asian countries. The support of additional donors and financial sources will be needed to move from monitoring (PCP Stage 1) to improved control at risk points (Stage 2) in the less advanced areas. A secretariat remains necessary (currently provided by the EUFMD Commission) to provide coordination of the supportive services, particularly to promote the laboratory network and services, and the epidemiology and risk monitoring, and for monitoring and communication of progress. The workshop recommended that annual meetings continue to be convened by FAO/EUFMD/World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to monitor progress, with the Second Annual Progress meeting in late 2010.

25. In addition to the funding for support actions (West Eurasia Laboratory Network, Epidemiology network, and specific country actions in 2010-12), major investments in FMD control are being made by Turkey, with national and European Union funds (of about EUR 90 million in the period 2008-13). Almost all of the countries in the West Eurasia Roadmap have very significant national funded vaccination programmes, and the Roadmap should assist to optimize the use of these investments.

26. Given the rapid international spread across national borders in the region, and the continued suppression of disease reporting in some Eastern European countries, real challenges lie ahead to address the reasons why epidemics continue to occur. The initial Stages (1 and 2) of the progressive PCP should result in a reducing incidence of FMD to the point where infection cannot circulate. To achieve this usually requires, in addition to vaccination programmes, the ability to regulate animal movements where disease or insufficient vaccination has occurred.

27. The Roadmap and PCP approach should assist countries and donors to develop investment projects that will assist countries to make progress through the stages of the Roadmap, and therefore the Roadmap/PCP approach should provide a framework in which national and international efforts result in outcomes that are internationally recognized. To date, 12 of the 14 countries invited to participate in the West Eurasia Roadmap have replied indicating their support to FAO to continue the Roadmap process.

28. At present the West Eurasia Roadmap has an advisory committee of seven, drawn from OIE, FAO, EUFMD and the European Commission, with three national representatives from the fourteen countries; the President for 2009-2010 is the Chief Veterinary Officer of Turkey.

29. The entry into EUFMD Membership of additional European countries is welcomed, as this would provide benefits for those countries to access support from the EUFMD, and have a voice in an international platform for negotiations involving the major agencies in international animal health.

IV. EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION (EIFAC)

30. The European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) is an FAO Regional Fisheries Body set up under Article VI of the FAO Constitution. The Commission provides advice on inland capture fisheries and aquaculture matters to its 34 members (i.e. 33 countries and

the European Union). Detailed information on EIFAC, including objectives, membership, structure and publications can be found at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/eifac/en> and <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/eifac/fr>. The four Subcommissions of EIFAC deal with Biology and Management, Aquaculture, Protection of the Aquatic Resource, and Social and Economic Issues. The technical work is carried out by working parties under these sub-commissions.

31. The Commission holds a plenary session every two years. In the intersessional period, the Executive Committee guides the business of the Commission. The last plenary session, namely, the 25th Session, was held in Antalya, Turkey, from 21 to 28 May 2008, in concomitance with a symposium on interactions between social, economic and ecological objectives of inland commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture. The Session reviewed EIFAC's activities carried out in the aforementioned fields since the 24th Session in 2006. EIFAC's future programme of work, in particular the activities which should be carried out until the next session of the Commission in 2010, was revised and decided upon. The Session requested the secretariat to ensure that a review of the functioning of EIFAC be carried out.

32. This review process culminated in a workshop held in Mainz, Germany, on 28 and 29 January 2010 where an options paper, elaborated for consideration by the national correspondents that had been invited to the workshop, was presented. This paper provided information on six potential options for the restructuring of EIFAC.

33. The workshop considered that it would be useful for the following three options for the legal basis of EIFAC to be examined at the 26th Session of EIFAC. In each case, participants underlined the need for EIFAC to be converted into a lean, fast-moving organization of practical value for its Members.

a. Continue as an FAO Article VI body but with improved structure and Rules of Procedure, taking into account a “zero” growth budget scenario (compared with the present status).

This option would allow for a continuation of the existing strengths and outputs of EIFAC, but at the same time allow for effective restructuring to streamline operations and introduce accountable procedures. It would be possible for EIFAC to receive funding that could be provided through extrabudgetary contributions by the Members or donors. The participants of the Workshop took note of the FAO Fisheries (FI) Position Statement where it was made clear that FAO, if at all, could make available to EIFAC only limited resources (both funding and human resources) and that any support would have to be adjusted taking into account the true capacity of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. This implies that the Commission has to rely heavily on other funding sources.

b. Convert into an FAO Article XIV body with an independent budget provided by the Members of EIFAC for operations and staffing.

This option would require the FAO Governing Bodies to dissolve EIFAC as an Article VI body and re-establish as an Article XIV body by approving an agreement developed in technical meetings or consultations of the potential Members. It would provide sustainable funding for operations and staffing through an independent budget, but would also have the benefit of being a member of the FAO family of regional fishery bodies (RFBs), including support for administration and technical backstopping. This is the solution that FAO is encouraging countries to adopt.

c. Abolish EIFAC.

34. The financial implications of EIFAC as an Article VI and Article XIV body were considered, at both minimum and more or less optimum levels. The position of the FAO/FI regarding limited financial support to EIFAC was noted.
35. The workshop strongly endorsed the need for objectives and a mission statement for an improved EIFAC, regardless of the legal basis that may be determined. This would clarify and enhance the goals and identity of EIFAC.
36. A mission statement would need to be developed and agreed at the 26th Session of EIFAC.
37. The options whereby EIFAC continues as an FAO Article VI body or be converted into an Article XIV body are the ones that workshop participants judged as the most realistic ones. Abolishing EIFAC still remains an option should there be no possibility for the funding of EIFAC in a sustainable way. It was recognized that the conclusions of the workshop do not constitute a final decision but would serve as technical guidance in preparing for the 26th Session in the ministries and during the 26th Session to be held in Zagreb, Croatia, from 17 to 20 May 2010.
38. Based on the discussions in Mainz, and further FAO in-house considerations, FAO/FI is currently developing a decision paper to be presented at the 26th Session for consideration by the EIFAC Members.

V. CENTRAL ASIA AND CAUCASUS FISHERIES COMMISSION (CACFC)

39. The Government of Tajikistan, recognizing the need for regional collaboration in fisheries and aquaculture, requested FAO to support a meeting on the possibilities for regional collaboration. In response, FAO technically assisted a first intergovernmental meeting (Dushanbe) on this subject, hosted by the Government of Tajikistan in November 2008. At this meeting the delegations requested FAO support under the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and in response FAO approved TCP facility project "Establishment of a Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries Organization (TCP/RER/3203)".
40. This regional project made it possible to provide further legal assistance to the process and to organize a meeting of the Steering Committee established by the Dushanbe meeting. The Steering Committee met for the first time in Ankara at the FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia in March 2009. The Steering Committee analysed the various options for regional collaboration and soon after that the countries involved informed FAO that their preference was to establish a regional fishery body under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution.
41. The Government of Turkey offered to host a second intergovernmental meeting (Trabzon meeting) to draft the Agreement on the Central Asia and Caucasus Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, which was held in Trabzon in June 2009. Following the Trabzon meeting the Government of Turkey, on behalf of the delegations of the other countries that attended the Trabzon meeting, requested the Director-General of FAO to support the process.
42. In September 2009 the Eighty-eighth session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) reviewed the draft Agreement as endorsed by the Trabzon meeting and forwarded it for approval by the FAO Council at its Hundred and Thirty-seventh Session. The Agreement was approved by the Council at that Session on 1 October 2009 through Resolution No 1/137 under Article XIV, paragraph 2 of the FAO Constitution.
43. In December 2009 the Director-General of FAO sent the Agreement and related information on the Instrument of Acceptance of the Agreement to the following countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and

Uzbekistan. In February 2010 the first instrument of acceptance was deposited by the Government of Tajikistan, being the first country to accept the Agreement.

44. In February 2010, SEC (which provides the secretariat to the Steering Committee) with the support of the FAO Legal and Ethics Office (LEG), the Policy, Economics and Institutions Service (FIPI) of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) and SEU facilitated the “Second Steering Committee Meeting in preparation for the 3rd Intergovernmental Meeting on Fisheries and Aquaculture in Central Asia and the Caucasus”. This Second Steering Committee Meeting took place in Istanbul, Turkey, and discussed the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and the first five year work plan. The Steering Committee Meeting was facilitated with financial support from the Central Asia Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (GCP/RER/026/TUR).

45. The Government of Kyrgyzstan has offered to host the Third Intergovernmental Meeting on Fisheries and Aquaculture in Central Asia and the Caucasus from 10 to 12 September 2010 on the shores of Lake Issyk-kul. Preparations for this meeting by the FAO Secretariat¹ and the Kyrgyz Government are ongoing.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

46. The 27th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe is invited to take note of the aforementioned summary reports and to take the initiative to invite the regional commissions of FAO for a dialogue on the new role of the regional bodies and the Regional Conference itself in FAO’s new results-based approach to programme planning, implementation and reporting in the Organization.

47. The Regional Conference is encouraged to invite the regional technical commissions to harmonize their session schedules with that of the Regional Conference and as technical advisory bodies identify national, subregional and regional priorities to be included in the Regional Conference recommendations for FAO’s regional Medium-Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget.

¹ More information can be obtained from the Secretary to the Steering Committee, Mr Raymon Van Anrooy, SEC Fishery and Aquaculture Officer. E-mail: raymon.vananrooy@fao.org