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## COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

### Thirty-second Session

Rome, 11-15 July 2016

### DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE OF FISH TRADE, AGADIR, MOROCCO, 22-26 FEBRUARY 2016

### Executive Summary

This document contains highlights of the topics discussed at the fifteenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and summarizes its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2016/Inf.9.

### Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade; and
- Provide guidance on the follow up to the issues raised in the report.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fifteenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade was held in Agadir, Morocco from 22 to 26 February 2016 at the kind invitation of the Kingdom of Morocco. It was attended by 47 Members of FAO, by one representative from a Specialized Agency of the UN and by observers from 15 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations.
2. Mr Youssef Ouati (Morocco) was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Mr Bong-hyun Nam (Korea, Republic of) was elected First Vice-Chairperson and Bangladesh and Estonia were elected as the other Vice-Chairs.
3. The paragraph numbers indicated in the following sections are those from the report (COFI/2016/Inf.9).

## II. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SESSION

### ***REPORT ON FISH TRADE-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN FAO***

4. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat for the relevance of the comprehensive information provided and for the broad range of fish trade-related activities carried out by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. (Para. 8)
5. The Sub-Committee highlighted the key role played by the fisheries and aquaculture sector in world food security, as a source of food and as a contributor to economic growth and development, livelihoods and income. The Sub-Committee encouraged improved access to market information along the value chain and support for small-scale fishers to access regional and international markets. (Para. 9)
6. The Sub-Committee underlined the importance of FAO's work in capacity-building for developing countries and urged FAO to continue providing technical support to facilitate market access, value addition, post-harvest activities and seafood safety. (Para. 10)
7. The Sub-Committee welcomed the growing collaboration of FAO with other international organizations, such as CODEX Alimentarius, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). (Para. 11)
8. The Sub-Committee expressed its support to the work of FAO to improve the Harmonized System Classification (HS) for fish products and the continued collaboration with the WCO. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to continue this work and made suggestions on possible areas of improvement to complement the HS. This includes a better breakdown of species which need to be monitored more precisely, such as sharks and rays. To that end, some Members noted that the WCO did not take up the proposals for HS2017 to adopt new codes for certain species of sharks and rays at its meeting in 2015 and urged FAO to pursue these changes for the 2022 Version. (Para. 12)
9. The Sub-Committee also referred to the usefulness of the GLOBEFISH project in providing analysis and information on trends in international fish markets. (Para. 13)
10. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to continue the work on post-harvest losses, which represent a major challenge for countries not having adequate processing and storage facilities. (Para. 15)
11. The Sub-Committee congratulated FAO for its work on the Fish Price Index, underlining the value of demand, supply and price studies for policy makers and made recommendations on improving the user interface and for providing information on fish price drivers. (Para. 16)

12. The Sub-Committee unanimously called on Member States who have not already done so, to ratify the Port State Measures Agreement as a key action for addressing the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Sub-Committee also noted the role of traceability along the value chain, catch documentation schemes and other market access measures as tools to prevent the entry of illegal fish into international trade and domestic markets. (Para. 17)

13. The Sub-Committee commended the work reported in “Analysis of gaps and inconsistencies in the seafood traceability standards and norms” by FAO and noted its usefulness in developing catch documentation and food safety schemes. (Para. 18)

### ***RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FISH TRADE***

14. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat for the comprehensive description and analysis provided and suggested areas to be examined in future analysis of developments in fish trade. Some recent trends in trade and consumption of fish and fishery products at the country level, together with the main issues affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector were also shared. (Para. 21)

15. The Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of information sharing. The key role played by FAO fisheries statistics in fisheries monitoring and management and in the analysis of national, regional and global trends was also noted. (Para. 22)

16. The Sub-Committee expressed concern about the growing pressures and measures impacting trade in fish and fishery products. It emphasized the importance of a transparent and open trading system. With respect to existing, and in advance of new market requirements, the Sub-Committee also underlined the importance of dialogue and consultation among international organizations, member countries and relevant stakeholders. (Para. 23)

17. The Sub-Committee also noted the emerging challenges faced by many exporting developing countries to access international markets. The Sub-Committee renewed its support to the key role FAO plays in capacity building, in particular to developing countries, with emphasis on small-scale fisheries, trade and marketing. (Para. 24)

18. The Sub-Committee expressed strong support for measures which lead to the prevention, deterrence and elimination of IUU fishing. Some Members noted the need to prohibit subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing. (Para. 25)

19. The Sub-Committee also supported the growing collaboration of FAO with other international organizations, such as the WTO. The Sub-Committee underlined the importance of revitalizing negotiations on fisheries subsidies in the WTO. FAO’s important role in providing specialized technical expertise to the WTO on this and other issues was highlighted, stressing the different yet complementary mandates and roles of both organizations. (Para. 26)

20. The Sub-Committee also remarked on the need to reduce fish waste and losses in order to meet growing demand and reduce pressure on the environment and to make better use of by-products, including as a source of raw material for food and feed. (Para. 27)

21. The Sub-Committee also highlighted the increasing concern about social and labour conditions in the industry and the need to raise these issues in international fora. (Para. 28)

### ***FISH TRADE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE ALONG THE VALUE CHAIN***

22. The Secretariat highlighted the new strategy of the FAO for increasing the resilience of communities and their livelihoods to threats and crises. The Sub-Committee emphasized the importance of this topic in an era of climate change and vulnerability of coastal communities to natural and man-made disasters. The Sub-Committee noted that different shocks have disparate impacts on the seafood value chains requiring different and tailored interventions. It further emphasized that

responses should incorporate longer-term strategies and be designed to address the specific needs of the affected or vulnerable communities. (Para. 29)

23. Noting the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Sub-Committee considered that fish consumption should play a more prominent role in responses to disasters and in prevention strategies in order to tackle food insecurity and micronutrient deficiencies, especially where fish is part of the traditional diet or where it is acceptable and locally accessible. In recognition of the nutritional benefits of fish, the Sub-Committee recommended the inclusion of climate change and disaster issues in the development of fisheries trade policies to influence development strategies and investment. (Para. 30)

24. To complement actions geared towards building resilient fishing communities, the Sub-Committee suggested developing fisheries and aquaculture management frameworks that jointly integrate climate change and disaster issues and recommended continued efforts to gather accurate fisheries and climate data. It was stressed that open, dynamic and flexible markets are important for resilience and to make food, including fish products, available in case of emergency situations. The Sub-Committee was informed that there are ongoing initiatives on insurance schemes and on financial compensation to fisherfolk for the economic losses incurred due to these events. (Para. 31)

25. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the important role of FAO in providing guidance and training to respond to emergencies that affect the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, particularly for the small-scale fishers and producers along the value chain and in line with the concept of “building back better” and sustainability principles. The Sub-Committee requested further details on how FAO is promoting such guidance in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. (Para. 32)

26. The Sub-Committee noted that there is no common definition of resilience within the UN system. The Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of providing technical assistance at all levels to increase the capacity to respond to natural and man-made disasters in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. (Para. 33)

### ***GUIDELINES FOR CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES (CDS)***

27. The Sub-Committee reiterated the importance and value of CDS as an effective tool to combat IUU fishing and commended the Secretariat and the Expert Consultation for its important work on the development of the draft Guidelines. (Para. 35)

28. In discussing this agenda item, the Sub-Committee looked at the draft report of the Expert Consultation on the Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (COFI:FT/XV/2016/Inf.6) held in July 2015 and an alternative draft paper (COFI:FT/XV/2016/Inf.7) prepared by a Member in consultation with several others. (Para. 36)

29. The Sub-Committee agreed that COFI:FT/XV/2016/Inf.7 should constitute the starting point for the deliberations at the upcoming Technical Consultation aimed at finalizing the Guidelines for CDS together with the following considerations that:

- proper attention be given to technical assistance, capacity building and small-scale fisheries;
  - responsibility of validation of catch document to be with competent authorities of flag States;
  - accurate information be available along the supply chain; and
  - relevant elements from the Expert Consultation draft CDS Guidelines be taken into account.
- (Para. 38)

30. The Sub-Committee encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the work of the Technical Consultation scheduled for April 2016 strictly follows the COFI 31 mandate for CDS Guidelines and be aligned with the six principles identified at COFI 31. (Para. 39)

31. The Sub-Committee suggested that special consideration should be given to the needs of developing countries including the development of electronic systems, and encouraged governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and financial institutions to support capacity building and technical assistance. (Para. 41)
32. The Sub-Committee underlined the importance of international cooperation and strongly recommended regional or multilateral approaches for optimal effectiveness of CDS. (Para. 42)
33. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that existing well-established CDS, including those of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), should be taken into account to avoid duplication when possible. The Sub-Committee also recognized that each CDS should be risk-based. (Para. 43)
34. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation to Norway for its generous financial support to develop catch documentation guidelines. (Para. 45)

### ***REVIEW OF FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY-RELATED MARKET ACCESS REQUIREMENTS***

35. The Sub-Committee expressed strong support for FAO to continue to work in close cooperation with WHO and the various Codex Committees dealing with fish-related issues and that this work should receive adequate funding to ensure that high quality scientific advice is provided to the Codex standard setting process. (Para. 47)
36. The Sub-Committee supported the development of technical guidance by FAO/WHO for the implementation of the Codex Code of Practice in relation to bivalve sanitation programmes and to ensure recognition of existing guidance relating to bivalve monitoring. (Para. 48)
37. The Sub-Committee called upon FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries for both government food control systems and for support to small-scale fishery communities to ensure food safety based on Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice. The Sub-Committee also suggested that the Secretariat should explore the use of simplified procedures that still ensure compliance and recognize the importance of regional and local markets in protecting consumer health. (Para. 49)
38. The Sub-Committee emphasized the coordination role of FAO in improving dialogue between importing and exporting countries in order to ensure compliance with food safety requirements that support international trade. (Para. 50)
39. The Sub-Committee noted that private standards could become potential trade barriers and called upon FAO to continue cooperating with Codex within the framework of WTO's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement and to ensure distinction between mandatory and voluntary standards. (Para. 51)

### ***TRADE IN FISHERIES SERVICES***

40. The Sub-Committee emphasized the prominence that trade in fisheries-related services plays in the fisheries economy. The Sub-Committee stressed that currently accurate analysis is difficult to undertake and any work by FAO in this regard would be much welcomed, especially taking into consideration the general lack of data and the level of data aggregation available at present. (Para. 53)
41. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the importance that a more detailed analysis of trade in fisheries services might have in terms of highlighting the real magnitude of the fisheries economy, allowing a better examination of fish and fishery products as a whole within its multiple dimensions, with positive implications for making available useful information to support implementing more accurate national policies. (Para. 54)

42. The Sub-Committee further noted the complexity of the subject of trade in fisheries services and the associated difficulties in collecting and defining data sources and elements. In that sense, the Sub-Committee provided indications on the ways forward in setting a framework which should contain a specific scope. It was recommended that FAO should start its work by conducting a literature review and develop an inventory of existing elements in the area of trade in fisheries services and map the sector with a progressive approach where the analysis would move from simpler to more complex elements. The Sub-Committee also emphasized that work in this area should include trade in aquaculture services in its analysis to take into consideration the particular needs and profiles of vulnerable economies and to seek cooperation, when necessary, with other international organizations. (Para. 55)

43. The Sub-Committee highlighted that the development of a framework for trade in fisheries services by FAO would be a welcome value-added element to countries, taking into consideration its comprehensiveness and the social and economic importance of the sector. (Para. 56)

***UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (SSF GUIDELINES)***

44. The Sub-Committee commended FAO for facilitating the development of the SSF Guidelines and confirmed the importance of this international instrument as a guiding tool to improve SSF in inland and marine waters, including important socio-economic issues such as decent work. (Para. 58)

45. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to continue its work on SSF, including improving the availability, use and dissemination of sector-specific information, as initiated through the additional section on SSF in the CCRF questionnaire. (Para. 59)

46. The Sub-Committee stressed the need to ensure the actual implementation of the SSF Guidelines and called on countries, development partners and other stakeholders to mainstream the SSF Guidelines in their work. It also encouraged other Members to contribute to the FAO Umbrella Programme in support of the SSF Guidelines implementation. (Para. 60)

47. The Sub-Committee called on FAO to facilitate the sharing of experiences and practices among Members to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. (Para. 61)

48. The Sub-Committee welcomed countries and regions taking on a leadership role in applying the principles of the SSF Guidelines and developing and promoting national and regional plans of action. (Para. 62)

49. The Sub-Committee noted that SSF actors at the community level need to know about, understand and be empowered to use the SSF Guidelines, and that FAO has a role in capacity development and in support of the SSF Guidelines implementation. (Para. 63)

50. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO undertake further work on SSF value chains, especially for power sharing in order to support an equitable distribution of benefits; to provide guidance for SSF on access to domestic, regional and national markets, including for products from inland fisheries; and to continue its work on post-harvest losses. (Para. 64)

51. The Sub-Committee noted that the extent of regional trade is often underestimated especially in Africa, and would welcome better documentation of the nature, extent and importance of this trade. (Para. 66)

***UPDATE ON THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN  
ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) RELATED  
ACTIVITIES***

52. The Sub-Committee reiterated the potential impact on fish trade of a CITES listing of a commercially-exploited aquatic species, as well as the administrative burden of current and future listings. (Para. 68)
53. The Sub-Committee noted their continued support for FAO – CITES cooperation under the Memorandum of Understanding. The Sub-Committee also encouraged FAO to continue its cooperation on CITES issues with RFMOs and national fisheries authorities. (Para. 69)
54. The Sub-Committee acknowledged FAO's positive contribution in convening the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of CITES proposals and unanimously supported the convening of the FAO's Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to CITES CoP-17 for listing or delisting commercially-exploited aquatic species. Some Members also requested receiving the results of deliberations of the Expert Advisory Panel before COP-17. (Para. 70)
55. The Sub-Committee highlighted the complexity of implementing CITES requirements and that countries need more information on the impacts of listings on fishing communities, food security and livelihoods. (Para. 72)
56. The Sub-Committee was informed that a framework is being developed which offers an opportunity to establish a generally accepted monitoring framework to assist Members, managers and CITES to gain a clearer view of "what is" and "what is not" working in relation to a CITES listing. (Para. 73)
57. The Sub-Committee suggested FAO continue its work in building the necessary capacity in developing countries to implement the CITES requirements. (Para. 74)
58. The Sub-Committee noted its appreciation of FAO species identification tools and requested further assistance with the identification of shark and rays species and products, research and stock assessment for developing countries. (Para. 75)
59. The Sub-Committee noted that FAO should prioritise capacity building for developing countries to enable them to cope with the extra burden of CITES requirements for these new species that may be listed at COP-17. (Para. 76)
60. Many Members reiterated that FAO's work on CITES should be funded from the Regular Programme (RP). The Sub-Committee was informed that RP resources were very limited and Members were encouraged to provide extra-budgetary resources to facilitate the work of FAO on CITES. (Para. 77)

***MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 11 OF THE CODE OF  
CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES***

61. The Sub-Committee welcomed the improved response rate which indicates an increasing level of interest and involvement of FAO Members with almost three quarters of member countries completing the questionnaire. (Para. 79)
62. The Sub-Committee agreed that the adoption of the web-based questionnaire for reporting in order to align the fish trade questionnaire with the CCRF questionnaire and to assist in improving response rates was a success both in terms of the improved response rate and also in the ease of use when completing the questionnaire. (Para. 80)

63. It was suggested that the Secretariat should further strengthen the links to the national authorities as this may assist in further improving response rates and also the precision of the responses. (Para. 81)

64. The Sub-Committee encouraged FAO to analyse further the results of the questionnaire and use them as a basis for planning and implementing its activities as the increased amount of data from improved response rates provides a solid base for better understanding the current status of challenges faced by Members. (Para. 82)

### ***THE IMPACT OF AQUACULTURE SUPPLY ON TRADE AND CONSUMPTION***

65. The Secretariat highlighted that this was the first occasion this particular topic was on the agenda of the COFI-FT. (Para. 83)

66. The Sub-Committee welcomed the paper documenting the important impacts of the aquaculture sector on trade and consumption. It highlighted the need to coordinate the work of the COFI-FT with the work of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture to achieve synergies for more integrated activities and programmes, while avoiding duplication or overlap. The Sub-Committee was informed that the agenda of COFI-FT had been repeatedly discussed and endorsed by the COFI Bureau during its intersessional meetings and that the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture welcomed a greater emphasis on aquaculture products in the agenda of COFI-FT. The Sub-Committee also welcomed the presentation of the main outcomes of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture session held in October 2015. (Para. 84)

67. The Sub-Committee noted the growing role of aquaculture products in national, regional and international markets and welcomed further information and analysis on the post-harvest sector. (Para. 85)

68. The Sub-Committee highlighted the important contribution to the supply of aquaculture products by small-scale producers and their need for support and technical assistance in entering the formal economic sector and seafood value chain including achieving access to international markets. (Para. 86)

### ***ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE***

69. Mr Bong-hyun Nam (Korea, Republic of) was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Ms Reina Sotillo (Argentina) was elected First Vice-Chairperson.

### ***ANY OTHER MATTERS***

70. The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to Professor Lahsen Ababouch, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division for his able leadership in the FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and his dedication and support to COFI-FT, wishing him a healthy and productive retirement. (Para. 89)

71. The Sub-Committee expressed its support to the proposal of the Republic of Korea to create and host the FAO World Fisheries University in Korea, noting that this issue will be further discussed at COFI 32. (Para. 90)

### ***DATE AND PLACE OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION***

72. The Sub-Committee welcomed the kind invitation from the Republic of Korea to host its sixteenth Session. Modalities as well as the date and venue will be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson and in light of the international calendar of meetings. The



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Sub-Committee recommended that the timing of the Sub-Committee should revert to its original schedule to be held in the year before COFI; i.e. 2017. (Para. 91)