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منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of the major global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture governance that are implemented with the involvement and support of FAO. It describes the role that FAO plays as a key stakeholder and as the specialized UN entity working on fisheries and aquaculture issues. In particular, given the numerous processes in which FAO is involved in this respect, this paper also highlights the importance of an adequate level of coordination among the relevant organizations in order to achieve the new targets set by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- advise on the appropriate roles and functions FAO could be taking to strengthen fisheries and aquaculture governance, through efforts such as enhanced partnerships across the UN system and with relevant organizations;
- consider encouraging FAO's continuous role in facilitating dialogue and information exchange among all relevant stakeholders involved in major global and regional processes with a view to strengthen synergies and avoid duplications;
- consider and provide guidance on the role that RFBs/RFMOs play in fisheries and aquaculture governance and, as appropriate, aquaculture development, advise on the actions and measures that may be taken to promote their further strengthening, and review their performance and accountability;

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- consider encouraging its Members to make contributions to the Part VII Assistance Fund, including through supporting specific projects within the framework of the Terms of Reference;
- consider and provide guidance on options for the role and participation of FAO and RFMOs at the next Preparatory Committee on the BBNJ; as well as on the submission of an information document to the Chair of the Preparatory Committee on the BBNJ providing the existing activities and potential implications of each element of the “2011 package” on fisheries instruments and institutions;
- consider the suitability of a possible funding model/mechanism for the biennial event of the FAO CITES Expert Panel;
- consider and comment on the FAO corporate climate change strategy and its relevance to the fishery and aquaculture sector (COFI/2016/Inf.17);
- consider and advise on the draft 2017-2020 FAO strategy for fisheries, aquaculture and climate change, particularly regarding its relevance to the needs of COFI Members (COFI/2016/Inf.18);
- consider and advise on ongoing processes related to Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- consider the outcomes of the expert meeting on " Aichi Target 6: Improving progress reporting and working towards implementation" (COFI/2016/SBD.6), its recommendations regarding collaborating with the CBD on reporting on the sustainability of fisheries, and using the CCRF questionnaire as a possible tool;
- consider and comment the information document on mainstreaming of biodiversity across fisheries (COFI/2016/Inf.24);
- Request the FAO Conference to consider, at its next regular session, relevant decisions taken by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD
- comment on FAO work on disaster relief and resilience with particular reference to the fisheries and aquaculture sector, and any support that FAO can provide in this regard through further development of policy assistance and capacity development;
- consider the recommendations from the Expert Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear and provide guidance on further work in light of the Consultation conclusions (COFI/2016/Info.19).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The governance of the world's fisheries and aquaculture is a challenge that involves a multitude of actors working across different sectors, and thus requires improved actions and synergies at the global and regional levels.
2. The pursuit of sustainable development has led to the formulation of a wide spectrum of treaties, agreements, and instruments, with the ambition to reconcile its three pillars, namely the sustainability of natural resources, social equity and economic development. As such these instruments, treaties and agreements, as well as their related processes, have been viewed as key to achieving sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector within a wider sustainable development framework.
3. The international legal framework for ocean governance and fisheries is made up of a multitude of global, regional and bilateral binding and voluntary instruments. The cornerstone of these instruments is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)¹, which provides the international legal basis for the protection and sustainable use of living and non-living resources of the world's oceans. UNCLOS is the point of departure for most, if not all, binding and voluntary international fisheries instruments. Key binding and voluntary international fisheries instruments have progressed to address prominent and emerging fisheries challenges, and have been influenced by the ongoing evolution of global environmental milestones, most notably the 1992 Earth Summit², which adopted Agenda 21, and the Rio Declaration, and highlighted sustainable development as a central tenet. In the past decades global instruments and processes have increased both in scope and number and include: those which directly focus on fisheries (UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related technical and voluntary guidelines and international plans of action, FAO Compliance Agreement, FAO Port State Measures Agreement), those focusing on sustainable development and the environment, and in which fisheries play an important role (Rio+20, Agenda 21, CITES, CBD), in addition to instruments, agreements and processes involving human rights (Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure for Fisheries, Forestry and Land) and trade (WTO Agreements) which have an important impact on fisheries.
4. It is also useful to highlight a few of the more recent key developments that are important in terms of the work of FAO on fisheries and aquaculture: the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the progress towards a new internationally binding instrument under UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)³.
5. In addition to the above-mentioned global processes, it is important to note the role of the regional dimension; in particular that the regionalisation of fisheries and aquaculture governance can be an opportunity to address common concerns, create synergies and to mainstream the global objectives of relevant UN bodies, as well as to broaden the outreach of the global fisheries agenda to the general public.
6. This paper describes the FAO collaborative participation in global and regional processes. The paper also aims to provide an overview of on-going initiatives of particular relevance for fishery and aquaculture governance and related issues, and refers to the role of FAO for consideration by the Committee. Notably not included in this paper are those processes in which FAO is involved, but are

¹ The 1982 UN Law of the Sea Convention:

www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

² 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

³ UNGA Resolution No. 66/231 'Oceans and the law of the sea' (UN doc. A/RES/66/231, of 5 April 2012), at paras 166-168; and UN doc. A/66/119, of 9 June 2011.

covered in other background papers: COFI/2016/5 Rev.1; COFI/2016/7; COFI/2016/7.1; and COFI/2016/7.2.⁴

II. THE GLOBAL SCALE: PROCESSES RELATED TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND RELATED FRAMEWORKS

7. As specifically proposed by COFI and in line with the general call made by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to the whole UN system on the importance of coordination and cooperation, FAO has assisted and cooperated with the UNGA on a number of processes, namely the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, BBNJ, and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the review of UNGA resolutions 61/105 and 64/72. Additionally, FAO has been working in cooperation with a number of UN agencies on areas of common interest and have been involved in the progress of international frameworks which concern fisheries issues; these include cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

The UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the Part VII Assistance Fund

8. The twentieth anniversary of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) was commemorated during the 11th round of Informal Consultations of States Parties (New York, 16-17 March 2015). The importance of the Agreement as a fundamental tool for the conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks and straddling fish stocks, as well as an important instrument to address illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, was highlighted. The crucial role of regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) in implementing the Agreement was also addressed, whilst noting the need to strengthen their functioning in some regions.

9. The UNFSA Resumed Review Conference was held in New York from 23 to 27 May 2016. FAO prepared an updated comprehensive report to be submitted to the resumed Review Conference in 2016. The Conference assessed the implementation of the Agreement, in particular through the application of recommendations, adopted at the previous sessions of the Review Conference in 2006 and 2010, relating to the conservation and management of stocks, mechanisms for international cooperation, monitoring, control and surveillance, compliance and enforcement, and explored ways to further strengthen such implementation.

10. In collaboration with the United Nations, FAO has continued to administer the Assistance Fund established under Part VII of UNFSA through resolution 58/14 of the UN General Assembly. Both Organizations have continued to make calls for contributions to the Assistance Fund at international fora, including the UNFSA Informal Consultations of States Parties and sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as through circular letters to Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations and FAO. To date, the Governments of Canada, Iceland, Lebanon, New Zealand, Norway and the United States of America, all States Parties

⁴ COFI/2016/5 Rev.1: Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; COFI/2016/7: Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: towards implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines); COFI/2016/7.1: Outcome of and follow-up to the Global Conference on Inland Fisheries, Freshwater, Fish and the Future; COFI/2016/7.2: Outcomes of and follow-up to Tenure and Fishing Rights 2015: Advancing knowledge on rights-based approaches for fisheries for enhancing food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

to UNFSA, have made financial contributions to the Assistance Fund totaling \$1,667,455. As at 31 March 2016, the balance of the Assistance Fund was \$107,987. Considering that since 2011 States have exclusively requested support for travel-related expenses, principally to attend meetings of RFMOs and regional fishery bodies (RFBs) and international organizations, broader use of the Assistance Fund, by States and RFBs, on behalf of their developing States Members, in line with purposes listed in Article 14 of its Terms of Reference, is highly encouraged. The UNFSA Resumed Review Conference positively considered this approach.

Conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction

11. Based on the recommendation by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the UNGA, in June 2015, adopted a resolution, whereby “*it decide[d] to develop an international legally-binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction [...] and to that end [...] it decided on the convening of a two-year preparatory committee (starting in 2016 and ending in 2017), that would consider the elements that could comprise the treaty, with a decision [...] on the convening and on the starting date of an intergovernmental conference [...] to consider the recommendations of the preparatory committee on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally-binding instrument under the Convention [...] by the end of its seventy-second session [...] (2018).*” The discussions at the preparatory committee will focus on the elements of the so called “2011 package” agreed by the BBNJ and as identified in Resolution 69/292 that comprises: Marine Genetic Resources, including access and benefit sharing, area based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity building and transfer of technology.

12. FAO is attending the preparatory process to provide fisheries relevant technical information and guidance to the delegations as required and upon request to inform the discussions, given the potential implications this process might have on the fisheries sector. In the annex⁵ to this document reports on key fisheries related instruments, institutions and initiatives, including FAO existing activities of relevance to the elements of the “2011 package”, and the discussion held in the first preparatory session in April 2016.

UN ongoing work on Sustainable Development Goals

13. FAO actively supported the inter-governmental post-2015 process leading to the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁶, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. Several SDGs are highly relevant to fisheries and aquaculture⁷; particularly, SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans) calls for specific actions in fisheries⁸. Other SDGs covering e.g. water, economic growth and decent work, consumption and production, climate, biodiversity, as well as means of implementation, are also very significant for the fisheries and aquaculture, and for the seafood sector’s future, as well as for securing a proper implementation of the FAO’s Blue Growth initiative⁹. FAO has been particularly involved in the Interagency and Expert Group process which has finalized a list of SDG indicators.

⁵ COFI/2016/8/Suppl.1

⁶ UN. 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. A/RES/70/1.
www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

⁷ Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals and Fisheries and Aquaculture. COFI/2016/Inf.20.

⁸ SDG 14 calls for action in fisheries inter alia: effectively regulate harvesting; end overfishing and IUU fishing; address fisheries subsidies; increase economic benefits from sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture; provide access for small-scale fishers to resources and markets; implement UNCLOS provisions.

⁹ www.fao.org/zhc/detail-events/en/c/233765/

FAO has been identified as the custodian agency for 20 SDG indicators, three of which are specifically related to fisheries under SDG 14 ("Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development")

14. FAO is advising Members on SDGs implementation policies and processes, including follow-up, monitoring and review, and collaborates with, UN-Oceans, the UN Statistical Division, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development outcomes and means of implementation of Agenda 2030, and other partners. FAO is also contributing to the High Level Political Forum, which is the main platform for SDGs follow-up and review, and which may draw on the work of other intergovernmental bodies and forums that review progress and discuss policies in specific areas, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as well as FAO's Technical Committees.

15. FAO is also actively supporting the preparations for 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". This Conference, which will cover the interests of all Members on oceans and seas, especially small island developing states (SIDS) was established pursuant to UNGA resolution 70/226 and is scheduled to be held from 5 to 9 June 2017 in Fiji.

16. The theme of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which will convene in July 2016 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is "Ensuring that no one is left behind". The President of ECOSOC invited intergovernmental bodies, including COFI, to showcase their contributions towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs that are substantial to the mandate of the respective intergovernmental body.

UNGA related work on oceans and fisheries: Review of the implementation of UNGA resolutions 61/105 and 64/72 on bottom fishing and UN Informal Consultative Process on marine debris and microplastics and UN-Oceans

17. UNGA continues to address ocean-related matters through its two annual resolutions on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, and Sustainable Fisheries. It is within this framework that this year the UNGA is discussing the topic of "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics" during the 17th UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP). FAO contributed to the preparatory process of this year's session, in particular with regard to its work on abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), as well as on the broader issue and challenges posed by microplastics and its impact on fish resources.

18. One of the recommendations of the Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth (The Hague, The Netherlands, 22-25 April 2014) was that UNEP, IMO and FAO work together so as to improve the knowledge base on microplastics and provide policy recommendations and advice on this topic. As a result, the three UN agencies collaborated through the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) to produce an updated technical report on microplastics in the marine environment that includes a section on fisheries and aquaculture.

19. As a follow up to the work undertaken in 2011, this year the UNGA will be discussing the issue of the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks in response to UNGA resolution 64/72 and resolution 66/68 on sustainable fisheries. In this context, FAO provided substantial contributions to the preparatory work leading to the "Workshop on General Assembly resolutions relating to the impacts of bottom fishing" scheduled to be held from 1 to 2 August 2016. In particular, FAO shared its experience in supporting the implementation of sustainable fisheries management practices in line with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, including the work related to the development of the VME DataBase that was requested by UNGA in Resolution 61/105. The VME

DataBase provides information on measures taken by organizations responsible for the management of deep-sea fisheries, and is available online through the FAO website¹⁰.

20. Moreover, FAO has been an active participant in UN-Oceans since its establishment and hosts the UN-Oceans website in consultation with the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS). FAO is also the Secretariat of the UN Atlas of the Oceans, a web portal which allows UN-Oceans members and other relevant entities, to provide relevant information on their respective activities aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of the oceans.

United Nations Environment Programme

21. UNEP is a partner to the Common Oceans Programme and, within this framework, the project "Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Living Marine Resources and Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction" is implemented by FAO, in partnership with UNEP and the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre.

22. FAO and UNEP also work together in the development and implementation of several projects funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The project "Protection of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem" aims to enable the countries of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem to address priority transboundary concerns on declining fisheries, associated biodiversity and water quality through governance reforms, investments and management programs.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

23. FAO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CITES aims at strengthening cooperation on issues related to commercially-exploited aquatic species. Specifically, FAO is tasked to support countries: i) prior to CITES Parties proposing listing amendments; ii) on decision making when listing amendments are being considered; and iii) in the implementation of any subsequent listing related requirements.

24. Once CITES proposals are released, the FAO Expert Panel provides written guidance on the suitability of proposals, taking into account issues of trade and management in addition to the biology and ecology of the species in question. If a listing amendment is adopted by CITES Parties, FAO assists countries improve capacity, processes and systems to deal with the extra requirements imposed on international trade.

25. FAO will continue to liaise closely with countries to define their requirements, and cover a full spectrum of fishery needs; governance, fishery and stock assessment, plus trade and related socio-cultural issues. In relation to governance, FAO continues to support work on regulatory frameworks and management planning, also making the management measures for newly listed species of sharks and rays transparent, through a searchable database of binding and non-binding regulations. FAO also continues to assist in species identification through its 'FishFinder' program.

26. The main emphasis of work in 2016 will be to ensure members have an opportunity to be informed of, and have input to, the 2016 CITES Appendix listing amendment process, which will conclude when CITES Parties vote at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP-17), to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24 September to 5 October 2016.

Convention on Biological Diversity

27. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and FAO have a long-standing history of collaboration with regards to fisheries and biodiversity issues. The principles enshrined in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and in the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)

¹⁰ www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/en/

highlight the need to take biodiversity considerations into account in fisheries management, making FAO a natural partner in efforts to enhance sustainable use of aquatic resources and related biodiversity. Collaboration has taken place in the context of CBD's Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), and of CBD's Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) process and the work on VMEs in the context of deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ. Efforts are also ongoing to enhance collaboration between regional fisheries bodies and UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and Action Plans, and FAO is coordinating with CBD and UNEP about a global meeting of these regional bodies to take place in September 2016.

28. More recently, a major collaboration has taken place in the context of reporting on Aichi Target 6. This target addresses sustainability of fisheries not only in relation to target species but also in relation to impacts of fishing on ecosystems and biodiversity. Achieving this target is therefore a shared goal for both CBD and FAO.

29. An Expert Meeting on improving progress reporting and working towards implementation of this Target was jointly organized by FAO, CBD, The Fisheries Expert Group (IUCN-CEM-FEG) in Rome, Italy, from 9 to 11 February, 2016. The workshop report and its outcomes and recommendations were submitted to the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA; April 2016)¹¹. SBSTTA recommended that Parties collaborate with FAO and RFBs on improving reporting on and implementing Aichi Target 6 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/6).

30. This type of collaboration offers a key opportunity to create synergies with regard to facilitating the achievement of Aichi Target 6 and improving the related reporting by building on existing areas of work within the two respective organizations. The Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CBD (COP-13) will be held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016¹².

State of World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

31. In 2007 the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) called upon its Members to initiate steps to report on the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (*SoW AqGR*). FAO has been actively working to increase awareness and capacity in the members of the Commission to comply with this call. Three capacity building workshops have been held in Asia, Africa and Latin America – and three workshops will be held in 2016 in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, respectively. The *SoW AqGR* will be the first global assessment of aquatic genetic resources based on national reporting. The scope of the assessment will be farmed aquatic species and their wild relatives within national jurisdiction that are used in fisheries and aquaculture.

32. In 2012 following the process established by CGRFA, FAO invited countries to nominate National Focal Points and to prepare and submit country reports that will be the main source of information for the preparation of the *SoW AqGR*. The information provided through country reports will be complemented by four thematic background studies and by additional data collected from relevant international organizations.

33. The FAO has received to date nominations of 73 National Focal Points and 30 officially submitted country reports on the status of aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture. The draft *SoW AqGR* report will be submitted to the *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources of the Commission in June 2016, for review. The final *SoW AqGR* report will be submitted to the 16th Session of the CGRFA (30 January – 3 February 2017) for endorsement.

¹¹COFI/2016/SBD.6

¹²COFI/2016/Inf.24

Fisheries Subsidies negotiations at the World Trade Organization

34. FAO, at the request of countries, continues its efforts to provide timely expert views on definitions and parameters, current practices and existing international codes or agreements that could be relevant to the discussion of any proposal put forward at World Trade Organization (WTO) on fisheries subsidies.

35. In early 2015, after a long period of inactivity, some countries circulated proposals at the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules, including relevant parameters to be taken into consideration, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) and sustainability criteria, as well as improvements to transparency and notification procedures. In late 2015, the documents produced at the end of the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference (the Ministerial Declaration and the “Nairobi Package”) did not contain any specific provision on fisheries subsidies. Nevertheless, a group of 28 countries issued a communication during the Ministerial Conference aimed at achieving effective disciplines in fisheries subsidies at the multilateral level.

36. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reinforced the necessity of the regulation of fisheries subsidies by WTO. SDG target 14.6 explicitly addresses the prohibition and elimination of certain forms of fisheries subsidies by 2020, the special needs of developing countries and the role of WTO to regulate this area. Capacity building on the history of the negotiation process in the field of fisheries subsidies, the concepts involved and the possible regulatory framework is an available tool supplied by FAO upon request. FAO has been identified as custodian agency for target 14.6.

The UNFCCC Paris Agreement: A historic moment of change

37. On 12 December 2015 in Paris, the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) concluded negotiations on a landmark agreement (the Paris Agreement¹³) to limit global average temperatures to below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The Agreement will enter into force when it is ratified by at least 55 Parties that in aggregate account for at least 55 percent of total global emissions. The commitment period will commence in 2020 following the close of the extension period for the Kyoto Protocol and last at least until 2030.

38. The Agreement recognizes "the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the impacts of climate change" and underlines the need to "increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience [...] in a manner that does not threaten food production." The Agreement also notes "the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity [...]".

39. Mitigation remains the core objective of the Paris Agreement; however, it reflects increasing attention to adaptation, loss and damage, capacity building, technology development and transfer, and climate finance¹⁴.

40. To tackle the drivers and impacts of climate change, the Paris Agreement requests countries to develop and implement Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). While countries are not legally bound to achieve their NDC contributions, they have agreed to be bound to report their progress through an enhanced transparency framework to monitor country progress toward their NDCs. NDCs cover all sectors, and mitigation as well as adaptation actions.

¹³ https://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?preref=600008831

¹⁴ http://unfccc.int/focus/climate_finance/items/7001.php#intro

41. In the Agreement, UN Organizations are encouraged to support developing countries on enhancing adaptation actions and to report their efforts to UNFCCC. The Agreement decides that the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund shall serve the Agreement and requests the GCF to expedite support for the least developed countries and other developing country Parties for the formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

42. The UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and UNFCCC COP-22 in Morocco in November 2016 will continue considering issues relating specifically to food security and agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture^{15 16}.

43. Because these processes and national contributions to the UNFCCC will inform country priorities and climate financing and in light of the cross-sector implications of adaptation and mitigation efforts, it is important for the fisheries and aquaculture sector to be prepared for and to engage in the national UNFCCC-linked discussions, such as country submissions, SBSTA agriculture workshops and UNFCCC negotiations.

III. THE REGIONAL SCALE: MATTERS RELATED TO REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Fishery and aquaculture governance from a regional perspective

44. Global instruments and normative process have to be implemented and translated into actions at the country and regional level, as appropriate. In this regard, regionalisation of fisheries and aquaculture governance can be an opportunity and instrumental not only to address common concerns, create synergies and to mainstream the global objectives of relevant UN bodies, but also to broaden the outreach of the global fisheries agenda to the general public, as well as into the work of those regional partners who may not be directly concerned with fisheries. The regional dimension is a central milestone of international fisheries management policy as also proved by the rapid expansion of the family of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs). The global RFB network has now expanded with the establishment of South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) and South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) in 2012 and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) in 2015.

45. The articulated system of RFBs established around the world is constituted of fifty RFBs¹⁷, half of which have a clear management/regulatory mandate (i.e. RFMOs) and the remaining have more an advisory/coordination nature (i.e. RFBs). RFBs that have also (or only) an aquaculture mandate are about 30% of current RFBs. RFB¹⁸ responses to the CCRF questionnaire¹⁹ indicated that the majority of RFBs adopt binding management and conservation measures and that these are generally regarded commensurate with the state of fishery resources. The situation appears more varied with regard to specific issues, such as the relevance given by RFBs to the economic and social dimension of the fisheries, or the consideration given to biodiversity and environmental aspects. The majority of RFB respondents reported that they have addressed issues such as the preservation of

¹⁵ The FAO agriculture submissions to the UNFCCC are www.fao.org/climate-change/international-fora/submissions/en/

¹⁶ Parties and Observers submissions to the UNFCCC are www4.unfccc.int/submissions/SitePages/sessions.aspx

¹⁷ Scientific networks and regional organization/entities with mandate not primarily related to fisheries and/or aquaculture are not included.

¹⁸ The following RFBs answered the questionnaire: ACAP, APFIC, CACFish, CCAMLR, CCSBT, CTMFM, FCWC, GFCM, IATTC, ICCAT, ICES, IOTC, IPHC, NAFO, NASCO, NEAFC, NPAFC, OSPESCA, RECOFI, SEAFDEC, SEAFO, SPC, SPRFMO, SRFC, and WECAFC.

¹⁹ Refer to COFI/2016/2 for additional detailed information.

endangered species and ecosystem biodiversity, including essential fish habitats. Only a minority of RFBs give specific consideration to the economic and social aspects including those related to small-scale fisheries. Other specific issues, such as by-catch management and discard reduction, were reported as addressed by the majority of respondents, while efforts continue to establish vessel monitoring systems. Overall, the majority of respondents believe they apply the precautionary approach in the area of competence of their RFBs.

46. Increasingly RFBs are undergoing performance reviews, in line with the recommendations formulated in several international fora. Recently, FAO provided an overview of independent performance reviews of RFBs from 2004 to 2014 and of the steps that RFBs have undertaken to implement the recommendations of their performance reviews²⁰.

FAO support to the establishment or strengthening of new RFBs/RFMOs and related activities

47. For many years, FAO has promoted and supported RFBs²¹. It has participated directly in the establishment of many of them, formalizing existing opportunities for sharing experiences within a given region, or implementing the processes needed for sustainable management of shared resources. These RFBs have benefited from FAO's advice on technical matters, as well as secretariat, legal and process support.

48. RFBs and RFMOs continue to evolve in response to greater demand for sustainability, improved management and governance, and as a result of lessons learned and stronger commitment by their member States. FAO accompanies its Members in this evolution through firm partnerships and support where necessary.

49. The supporting role played by FAO is especially important in the process of establishing new regional fisheries management agreements and in assisting in the evolution of existing advisory RFBs into management organizations (RFMOs).

50. FAO is also actively committed to bolster regional cooperation through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), which provides a forum for promoting consultation and regional dialogue, addressing priority issues of common concern and fostering ongoing cooperation and exchange of information²².

51. An overview of activities of FAO RFBs during the intersessional period is provided in COFI/2016/Inf.16. The below paragraphs highlight the work of some notable RFBs which have recently been quite active in making efforts to improve, followed by a summary on the emergence of aquaculture in RFBs.

Lake Chad Basin Commission

52. The Lake Chad provides food and income for 30 million people, and one of the most important agricultural heritage sites in the world. The Lake Chad Basin Commission is an intergovernmental organization as well as one of the oldest African basin organization (established in May 1964). Since 2016, the Commission is a member of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) which is hosted/facilitated by FAO. In 2014-15, with financial support from the NEPAD FAO Fish Programme, FAO has been supporting the Commission with the development of a Lake Chad fisheries management plan through the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, and with a training on improved technology for fish oil extraction to increase the nutritional benefits of fish in the region and the resilience of its population.

²⁰ FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1108, "The implementation of performance review reports by regional fishery bodies, 2004–2014" (www.fao.org/3/a-i4869e.pdf; COFI/2016/SBD.16).

²¹ www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/en

²² www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en

Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fishery Organization

53. In response to the several calls made at COFI and the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC), FAO has convened four consultation meetings with the Arab and African coastal countries of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, to elaborate the establishment of an RFMO. This support has included facilitating partnerships with other RFMOs to formulate a draft Convention and relevant documents. Currently, a final meeting of the coastal countries for review of the draft Convention is being arranged, after which States may decide to move towards a meeting of plenipotentiaries for signature and formal establishment of the Commission.

Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

54. The members of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) started a strategic reorientation process in 2012, which included a performance review, strategic plan 2014-2020, and an update of the rules and procedures. FAO and its secretariat to WECAFC continued to facilitate the reorientation process, which included in 2015 an independent cost-benefit assessment of the options for strategic reorientation of WECAFC, supported by the European Union. In the reorientation process, FAO/WECAFC also signed in January 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Organization for fisheries and aquaculture of Central America (OSPESCA) for interim coordination on sustainable fisheries in the region. At WECAFC 16 (Guadeloupe, 20-24 June 2016) a way forward was discussed towards the possible evolution of WECAFC to become an RFMO.

South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission

55. The South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) inaugurated a decade of existence at its Seventh Session in Maputo, Mozambique, 12-16 October 2015. It noted with satisfaction its achievements, the work undertaken since the Sixth session, the recent move of the Secretariat from Harare (Zimbabwe) to Maputo (Mozambique), the report and recommendations of the Scientific Committee, and the positive outcomes of the Working Party on Collaboration and Cooperation in Tuna Fisheries. It also discussed the establishment of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance centre in Maputo, established a Steering Committee for the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Growth project (SWIOFISH1), and approved a programme of work until the next session.

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)

56. Recognizing the important achievements of CIFAA during the past forty years and noting the many issues which limit its effectiveness and threaten its very existence, in 2013 FAO undertook a review of CIFAA's role and performance and suggested how the Committee could be strengthened and better serve its Members in a climate of resource depletion, accelerated environmental deterioration and financial constraints. Results of this review were shared in two extraordinary sessions convened in Lusaka, Zambia (December 2014), and in Dakar, Senegal (July 2015), respectively. Members maintained CIFAA as an Article VI body under the FAO Constitution, amended its Statutes and Rules of Procedures by updating its functions, mandate and working modalities, and established, in principle, a CIFAA Multi-donor Trust Fund in support of the Committee's activities.

Emergence of aquaculture in regional bodies and networks

57. FAO recognizes that more than 30 percent of RFBs have aquaculture components in their constitutional frameworks and operational programmes, with evidence of growing interest among many RFBs of expanding work, policy and constituency towards a more significant and visible appreciation of the importance of aquaculture in their agendas and procedures. In addition, there are regional aquaculture networks (RANs) such as NACA, established in the 1990s, and, the more recent

RAA (established 2012), MASA (established 2015), and ANAF (being constituted) indicating considerable priority being given to regional intergovernmental collaboration on aquaculture.

Ongoing regional collaboration with other UN entities

58. FAO continues to collaborate with other UN organizations and agencies on issues of common interest, with the aim of improving regional interagency coordination.

59. In this regard, FAO and UNEP have facilitated discussions between regional fisheries bodies and the regional seas programmes in different regions aimed at bringing the fishery sectors and environment together to strengthen collaboration on issues of common interest, taking into account the different mandates and roles of the relevant bodies.²³ In this respect, initial discussions have taken place to look into the possibility of establishing such collaboration in the Southwest Indian Ocean and in the Arabian Sea. This activity is building on the experiences gained from other such initiatives like the FAO/UNEP/Norway initiative on the development of project proposal on the “Application and Replication of a Model for Cooperation between Regional Fisheries and Environmental Bodies for Sustainable Management of relevant Ocean-related Activities” in West Africa.

60. Moreover, FAO, together with UNEP, cooperates with CBD on a an initiative within the framework of their Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) that aims at facilitating dialogue to exchange experiences and to identify options and opportunities to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration among RFBs and Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs) in addressing issues such as the SDGs, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and EBSAs and VMEs. A meeting of the SOI including key global and regional entities is tentatively scheduled in September 2016 in the Republic of Korea.

²³ See resolution 2/10 "Oceans and seas" adopted by UNEP's second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2), held from 23-27 May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya.

IV. OTHER GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND PROCESSES: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT RELATED MATTERS

FAO's Response to Climate Change

61. In 2007, COFI identified the need to address threats posed by climate change in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and requested FAO to undertake a scoping study²⁴ to identify the key issues on climate change and fisheries, initiate a discussion on how the fishing industry can adapt to climate change, and to take a lead in informing fishers and policy makers about the likely consequences of climate change for fisheries. As a result of this study, the 29th session of COFI (2009) noted climate change to be one of the Fisheries and Aquacultures Department's priority areas of work. Since then, COFI has reiterated the need to improve understanding of the implications of climate change and ocean acidification on fisheries and aquaculture.

62. Over the past fifteen years, the fisheries and aquaculture sector has greatly improved its understanding of climate change implications, through global and local monitoring of the aquatic systems, improved forecasting and impacts models, implementation of vulnerability assessments specific to the sector, climate-proofing sector policies, participatory adaptation processes, as well as analyzing the sector's role in GHG mitigation. The latest IPCC reports²⁵ document much of this improved knowledge, however, they also highlight significant gaps, such as downscaling impacts, adaptation and mitigation information for food security and related food production sectors, and understanding implications for inland aquatic systems. To help remediate these gaps, the IPCC sixth assessment report (AR6) cycle will undertake Special Reports on 1) land use, land degradation and food security, and 2) oceans and cryosphere; countries should ensure the inclusion of the fisheries and aquaculture production systems on both.

63. FAO, along-side many partners, has been assisting countries in understanding climate change and ocean acidification implications to fisheries and aquaculture, in measuring the greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation potentials within the sector, in identifying and implementation adaptation priorities, in representing the sector in national and global climate change discussions and in accessing climate finance²⁶. This work has been guided by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Change Strategy (2011-2016)²⁷, which is nested within the broader strategies and frameworks of FAO and coordinated through the Global Partnership for Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PaCFA). A draft strategic framework for the 2017-2020 period is available in COFI/201/Inf.18.

64. The recent Independent Evaluation of FAO's work on Climate Change²⁸ recommended FAO to develop a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy to "focus FAO's work on the interventions, countries and partnerships where a meaningful difference can be made". To this end, FAO management has committed to prepare a corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan cutting across all its five Strategic Objectives and integrating regional/country priorities.

65. The development of the FAO Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is a consultative process in-house and feedback from member States is being solicited through all of FAO's Technical Committees during their 2016 meetings. The draft proposal is available in COFI/2016/Inf.17 and input

²⁴ www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0994e/i0994e00.htm

²⁵ www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/

²⁶ For an overview of FAO's support to countries and climate change-related publications, please refer to background documents COFI/2016/SBD.19 and COFI/2016/SBD.20

²⁷ Available at

ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/brochure/climate_change/strategy_fi_aq_climate/2011/climate_change_2011.pdf

²⁸ www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-documents-and-reports/en/ To note - the work of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department was positively evaluated.

from the Committees will be incorporated into the Strategy, to be submitted to Council in December 2016.

Resilient livelihoods: Enhancing sustainable fisheries development

66. A recent assessment conducted by FAO reviewing the period 2003–2013 concluded that the agriculture sector in developing countries – including fisheries and aquaculture – absorbs 25 percent of all damage and losses caused by climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts and tropical storms. Fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and their communities are particularly vulnerable to climate-related disasters and other shocks and their related environmental damages (e.g. fish mortality, salinity and pollution). While the occurrence of hazards may seem inescapable, risks and losses from disasters to the fisheries and aquaculture sector can be reduced and even prevented, provided appropriate risk-informed policies, monitoring systems, measures and investment are implemented.

67. FAO is working towards enhancing the resilience of fisheries and aquaculture livelihoods and ecosystems. FAO seeks to develop the capacity of communities and institutions around four pillars, as follows:

- Enable the "Environment" – FAO assists member countries and partners in identifying climate-related vulnerabilities and disaster risks specific to inland and marine fisheries and aquaculture, in order to better inform policy makers, facilitate investments and access to funds and develop appropriate strategies, including disaster risk reduction and management.
- "Watch to safeguard" – FAO is developing guidelines on the use of "Spatial technology", such as satellite remote sensing for disaster assessment and emergency preparedness for aquaculture. In addition, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department contributes to FAO's corporate efforts to develop and institutionalize an information system on damages and losses caused by disasters on the agricultural sectors, including fisheries and aquaculture.
- "Apply risk and vulnerability reduction measures" – This is done through the development of innovative financial instruments for risk and crises management in fisheries and aquaculture, the improvement of the efficiency of the seafood value chains and the promotion of responsible and sustainable management for fisheries and aquaculture following the ecosystem approach to fisheries and to aquaculture. FAO is also developing a micronutrient rich fish based by product that can be used to increase nutrition in emergency context.
- "Prepare and respond" – FAO has completed a 'Fisheries and Aquaculture Emergency Response Guidance' including a training package to develop national and regional capacity and enhance the quality and accountability of response to emergencies affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector along the value chain. FAO continues to provide response to emergencies affecting the fisheries and aquaculture.

68. The resilience work of FAO is aligned and builds on the 2015 Sendai Framework for DRR, the UNFCCC and recent Paris Agreement (and the UN SG Climate resilience initiative A2R), internationally agreed fisheries instruments. It contributes to attaining the SDGs, in particular SDG 1 (to end poverty), SDG 2 (to end hunger), SDG 13 (to combat climate change and its impacts) and SDG 14 (on oceans).

69. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 ("Sendai Framework") was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), held in March 2015 in Sendai, Miyagi, Japan. The framework is a 15-year voluntary agreement whose aim is

to achieve “a substantial reduction of disaster risks and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries”. The Sendai Framework introduces a number of innovations including a strong emphasis on disaster risk reduction as opposed to disaster management, on reducing existing risks and strengthening resilience, as well as “Building Back Better”. The Sendai Framework identified seven global targets including a target on reducing economic losses by 2030; this is measured by an indicator, amongst others, on direct damage to crop and livestock caused by hazardous events. FAO is currently working with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Indicators and Terminology Relating to Disaster Risk Reduction to expand this indicator to also include fisheries and forestry and to cover indirect loss (in addition to direct loss). The priorities of the Sendai Framework are integrated into FAO’s Strategic Programme 5 (SP 5) on increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

70. The United Nations Secretary-General has called the first ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) which took place in May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. In response to an unprecedented increase in the number of people affected by conflicts and natural disasters, the WHS offered a critical opportunity to accelerate transformation in the humanitarian system, and a chance to re-examine the roles of international, national and local humanitarian actors, and determine where each adds the most value, and to broaden relationships with new partners. FAO has been actively engaged in the global and regional consultations and dialogue since early 2014, particularly through the Thematic Team on ‘Reducing vulnerability and managing risk’.

71. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has also recognised the importance of working across the humanitarian and development divide. The CFS endorsed a Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA) in October 2015, which includes a specific reference to the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Voluntary Guidelines). The CFS-FFA provides a broad framework that can be used by all stakeholders who may have a role in improving or impacting food security and nutrition in protracted crises and is aligned with the key paradigm shifts proposed in the UN Secretary-General’s report for the WHS.

Marking of fishing gear

72. At the 31st Session of COFI (2014) concern was expressed over ghost fishing by abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and called for greater attention to be paid by Members and RFBs to mitigate ALDFG impacts, noting that cost effective technologies and practices were available. In response, FAO convened an Expert Consultation on 4-7 April 2016 with the purpose to develop draft guidelines for the Application of a System for the Marking of Fishing Gear, to be submitted for consideration at the Thirty-second session of COFI.

73. The experts agreed that adequately and systematically marked fishing gears can reduce: ALDFGs, including Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), in the aquatic environment, including Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs); unintended catch of endangered, threatened and protected species of fish and other animals and the level of IUU fishing; dangers to navigation and accidents at sea and the accumulation of ALDFGs in the aquatic environment; and damage to vulnerable and sensitive aquatic habitats and economic losses to fishermen resulting from ghost fishing and degradation of fishing grounds.

74. Moreover, the experts noted capacity development and incentives should be considered to encourage reporting and retrieval of ALDFGs. The experts also expressed concern about placing a disproportionate burden on fisheries authorities and the fishing sector through the implementation of gear marking systems that were high cost, complex in application and constrained in their capacity to

resolve the specific problems of unmarked gear. Risk-based approaches should be used to inform decisions on the type of gear marking systems to be implemented in a fishery or region²⁹.

Global Record of fishing vessels, refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels

75. Developments relating to the Global Record of fishing vessels, refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels are reported under agenda item 7 (Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing). Further information is provided in documents COFI/2016/5, COFI/2016/Inf.12 and COFI/2016/SBD.12-15 as well as in the Global Record website (www.fao.org/fishery/global-record/en).

V. CONCLUSIONS

76. The above-mentioned are the main global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture and in which FAO has a stake as the UN's specialized entity on these topics. These processes require an adequate level of coordination among all the relevant international and regional organizations and stakeholders for them to successfully implement and achieve the new targets set by the 2030 Agenda. The reported processes are consistent with and conducive to the Blue Growth initiative and vision promoted by FAO.

²⁹ Further information is also provided in documents COFI/2016/Inf.19 and COFI/2016/SBD.3