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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE UNDER THE FAO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of FAO's achievements in fisheries and aquaculture in the 2014-2015 biennium and a perspective on FAO's work in the fisheries and aquaculture sector during 2016-17, in the context of the Strategic Framework. In addition, global developments and trends that are likely to influence FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture are presented in order to provide guidance on priority areas to be taken into account in the quadrennial review of the Strategic Framework and the preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2018-21.

Suggested Action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Advise on the global and sectoral developments and trends identified; and
- Provide guidance on the main priorities for FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture to be taken into account in the review of the Strategic Framework and the preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2018-21.
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As foreseen in the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system put in place by the Conference in 2009, the Organization's Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17 was reviewed during 2014, taking into account trends and developments in the external environment and the guidance provided by the Regional Conferences, Technical Committees, Programme and Finance Committees and the Council. The MTP 2014-17 (reviewed)¹ was approved by the FAO Conference in June 2015.

2. There has been strong and consistent support expressed by the FAO governing bodies for continuity in the strategic direction of the Organization in order to realize the full impact of the Strategic Framework (see Annex 1). While global developments and emerging trends highlighted in the MTP 2014-17 (reviewed) remain relevant, several important global developments occurred during 2015-2016, which will provide the broad framework for FAO's work in the future. These are as follows:

- a) The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda setting the framework for mobilizing the means of implementation;
- b) The Paris Agreement, adopted as an outcome of the UN Global Climate Change Conference (COP21), which aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty;
- c) The ICN2 and the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action on Nutrition;
- d) The World Humanitarian Summit, proposing a broad agenda of reforming and rejuvenating the global humanitarian system.

3. The quadrennial review of the FAO Strategic Framework and preparation of a new MTP 2018-21 will take place during 2016, through the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees, for approval by the Council and Conference in the first half of 2017. This offers the opportunity to further focus FAO's work aiming for more concrete results, particularly at the country level. In its 153rd session in December 2015, the FAO Council welcomed the alignment of FAO's Strategic Framework with the SDGs, noting that there would be opportunity for bringing further coherence while preparing the MTP 2018-21.

4. In this context, the document provides information on FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture, organized as follows:

- Brief overview of FAO's achievements in fisheries and aquaculture contributing to the Strategic Objectives in the 2014-15 biennium;
- Global and sector specific developments and trends influencing FAO's work and to be taken into account in the review of the Strategic Framework and preparation of the MTP 2018-21;
- Areas of priority action in 2016-17 and beyond in the context of the global trends and developments identified.

¹ C 2015/3

II. ACHIEVEMENTS IN FAO's WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN 2014-15

5. The Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) gained recognition in 2014-2015 as the leading means for FAO's work on fisheries and aquaculture in support of food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and sustainable management of living aquatic resources. Its four streams of work on i) capture fisheries, ii) sustainable development of aquaculture, iii) livelihoods and food systems and iv) eco-system services, directly support achievement of FAO's cross-sectoral Strategic Objectives (SO) and Outcomes. Achievements in 2014-15 in each of the four work streams are summarized below and are discussed in more detail in other COFI documents referred to under the various topics.²

6. In the area of capture fisheries, the BGI builds on and promotes implementation of the international legislative and policy framework centred around the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related international agreements, guidelines and plans of action for managing fishing capacity, combatting Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, the international guidelines on securing sustainable small scale fisheries, the FAO/ILO/IMO instruments on the safety of fishing vessels and fishers, and the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), as well as the Guidelines on Flag State Performance. Progress on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments is discussed in COFI/2016/2.

7. The emphasis on evidence-based decision-making in governments and organizations at all levels has put a greater focus on fisheries statistics and their role in measuring and monitoring progress toward national and international development goals and targets. FAO fisheries statistics continued to play a pivotal role in support of global governance and members' managerial and technical capacities and to lead consensus building toward improved conservation and sustainable use of capture fisheries, and to highlight the role of fish in Food Security and Nutrition including with future projections. The issue of improving Member States' catch statistics reporting to FAO in response to UNGA's request to distinguish catches within and outside EEZs has been reviewed and ways forward suggested during the 2016 Resumed Review Conference on the UNFSA. FAO statistics and the trend information they provide have been the basis for the formulation of fisheries policy and management, and continued to be used extensively by governments, academia, civil society, and the donor community.

8. Under the aquaculture work stream, FAO assisted countries to adopt guidelines, tools and norms to promote sustainable aquaculture intensification and the associated social benefits in terms of livelihoods and rural development. As a result, more than 30 countries have now adopted policy instruments, 20 countries have adopted policies and strategies to improve market access and 40 countries have adopted policies related to biosecurity, introduced species, genetic resources and biodiversity, environment, social and economic improvement. FAO has collaborated with different stakeholders to promote public-private partnerships in several countries, for the production and distribution of fish seed and feed. A series of initiatives were conducted by FAO to pilot small-scale aquaponics and aquaculture in desert and arid lands, using species such as carps, other cyprinids and tilapia while focusing on local ingredients for aquafeed production.

9. In addressing livelihoods and food systems, work on employment and labour conditions in fisheries and aquaculture was strengthened through the identification of existing international labour norms. Major issues and challenges in mainstreaming the decent rural employment approach in fisheries and aquaculture and within the Blue Growth Initiative were identified, including information needs and possible actions and opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders, with particular emphasis on youth employment and gender issues. Seafood value chain analysis has been expanded, enabling identification of costs and benefits along the chain and supporting policy development to promote their equitable distribution, particularly in the post-harvest sector. Development of best

² See also COFI/2016/Inf.2 Achievement of Fisheries and Aquaculture Programmes 2014-15

practices for traceability and international guidelines for catch documentation schemes emerged as major areas to promote transparent, predictable and robust seafood trade regimes.

10. Under the ecosystems work stream, government authorities and fisheries and aquaculture operators benefitted from training and capacity building sessions in the area of stock assessment, in the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture, in the reduction of by-catch and discard practices, and in data collection schemes to support vulnerable ecosystems. Methodologies for stock and ecosystem assessments and evaluation of fisheries' productivity were promoted and scientific assessments of the state of fishery resources were carried out, including field surveys using the R/V Dr Fridtjof Nansen. In addition, support was provided to national and regional studies and awareness- building on the low carbon footprint of fisheries and aquaculture, carbon binding in sea grass beds, mangroves, climate change adaptation and mitigation and protection from coastal erosion, storm and wave damage.

11. Other key achievements in 2014-15 include:

- a) While FAO has provided technical and policy assistance in the area of fisheries and aquaculture through more than 200 projects with an overall total value of USD 95 million, worldwide, 10 Member Countries were specifically assisted to streamline BG concepts and to develop BG-based fisheries and aquaculture strategies and policies. In some countries, the assistance focussed on Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF), while in other countries assistance was provided to install BG strategic units to promote coherence between the various sectors using oceans and inland waters and restore the productive capacity of aquatic resources.
- b) Promotion of the implementation of The Guidelines for Sustaining Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation (SSF Guidelines) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, both endorsed by COFI 31 in 2014³. More specifically, an umbrella global program to support the implementation of the SSF guidelines has been developed and promoted with governments, academia, donors, CSOs and the private sector. Similar work has been recently undertaken for combatting IUU fishing.
- c) Advocacy for the ratification by Members of the 2009 PSMA has been accelerated under the leadership of the FAO Director-General, enabling the entry into force of the PSMA after 25 parties accessed it in 2016.
- d) High-level advocacy events for the BGI were supported by FAO including 1) the UN SIDS Conference in Apia, Samoa, Sept. 2014; 2) Global Conference on BG in Jakarta, Oct. 2014; 3) FAO/CONXEMAR Sustainability Conference in Vigo, October 2014 and October 2015; 4) the Second Ocean Summit in Valparaiso, Chile. October 2015; 5) 3 events at COP 21 in Paris, France. November 2015; 6) The Round Table on Blue Growth/Blue economy during the international Conference on Feeding Africa. Dakar, Senegal, November 2015; 8) the Annual Session of the CFS, October 2015. FAO was instrumental in promoting the creation and launch of the Global Action Network GAN for BG (Grenada, January 2015 and May 2016). The GAN for BG aims at developing an Action Plan around which the science and economics of BG can be refined, advocacy strengthened, resources mobilized and projects implemented.
- e) The FAO flagship publication: The State of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2014⁴ received much media interest, as did the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2015-2014⁵. Fishery and aquaculture statistics were updated and published, and FAO continued its collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the International Maritime Organization to promote Safety at

³ More information on the implementation of SSF is provided in COFI/2016/7.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4738e.pdf>

sea, fuel efficiency in fishing operations, the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels.

III. GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTORS

12. The trends reported in State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2014⁶ and 2016 reaffirm the key role fisheries and aquaculture continue to play as sources of food, nutrition, income and livelihoods for a large number of people around the world.⁷ Globally, fish continues to be one of the most traded food commodities. Significant growth in fish and seafood production is needed to meet demand and secure food and nutrition for a growing and aging population. This production increase, mainly from aquaculture, must occur in a context of increasingly limited land, water, feed and energy resources.

13. Oceans and inland waters provide vital ecosystem services for climate regulation, carbon sequestration, water filtration, and protection from erosion and extreme weather events, among others. Current sustainability trends in global capture fisheries and the expansion of aquaculture production in some parts of the world have been at the expense of the natural environment and/or requiring high feed inputs from capture fisheries. As a result, aquatic ecosystems are under stress, compounded by issues of localised pollution, declining biodiversity, expansion of invasive species, climate change and ocean acidification. Some 29% of the fish stocks are over-exploited. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing may account for more than 15 per cent of the world's total annual capture fisheries output. Fishing continues to be one, if not the most hazardous occupation in the world, leading to large number of deaths annually, mainly on board small fishing vessels. Disease outbreaks have cost the aquaculture industry tens of billions of dollars over the last 20 years. Natural disasters continue to cause massive loss of life, severe damages to the physical infrastructure of coastal states and leave thousands of people homeless.

14. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides the major context in which these sector specific trends will need to be assessed in the future. The 2030 Agenda is a historic commitment to tackle poverty and hunger, promote sustainable use of natural resources and address climate change through an interconnected set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs recognize that issues concerning food, livelihoods, and the management of natural resources cannot be addressed separately. Four other global developments will shape the work in fisheries and aquaculture as summarized below and treated in separate COFI 2016 documents.

Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

15. FAO's efforts to address IUU fishing have yielded successful results. The 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) entered into force after the accession of 25 Members and has become a key driver for the international community's fight against the scourge of IUU fishing. Besides economic damage, IUU can threaten local biodiversity and food security in many countries. The PSMA, which creates binding obligations, sets standards for the inspection of foreign vessels that seek to enter the port of another State. Importantly, the measures allow a country to block ships it suspects of having engaged in illicit fishing and thereby prevent illegal catches from entering local and international markets. The outcomes and recommendations from work carried out to compare methodologies to estimate IUU fishing are presented in COFI/2016/5. In the context of PSMA, the follow-up to the conclusions drawn by the 2016 Resumed Review Conference on the UNFSA on fishery statistics could accompany a general call for a full transparency of fisheries activities requesting States to collect and make

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e/index.html>

⁷ Confirmed by recent high level reports of CFS, ICN2, UNGA

available timely, complete, reliable and detailed catch statistics according to standards set up by FAO and RFMOs (see COFI/2016/Inf.21)

Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

16. On 8–9 October 2015, 600 delegates representing 70 Members of FAO, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations met in Vigo, Spain, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code), and to take stock of the achievements and obstacles encountered in its implementation. The meeting confirmed both the central role of the Code for the sustainable management of living aquatic resources, and the need to accelerate its implementation to meet the relevant SDG targets, in particular those of SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development).

Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

17. The ICN2 confirmed the importance of fish and seafood as a source of nutrition and health for many coastal communities that depend on their proteins and essential micronutrients, in particular for women of child-bearing age and young children and highlighted the unique window of opportunity that fisheries and aquaculture can provide for ICN2 follow-up towards achieving healthy diets.

Paris Agreement on Climate Change (COP21)

18. In December 2015, the landmark Paris Agreement for post-2020 climate action was adopted by the UN Conference of the Parties in its 21st session (COP21). The climate regulation and carbon sequestration services provided by oceans, inland waters and aquatic ecosystems featured prominently in COP21, highlighting the urgency of reversing current trends, restoring aquatic ecosystems and their productive capacity.

19. Addressing these global developments and their sectoral implications, as well as fisheries and aquaculture specific developments and trends will continue to frame the work of FAO in fisheries and aquaculture beyond 2017, and provide inputs to the review of the Strategic Framework and the MTP 2018-2021.

IV. AREAS OF PRIORITY IN 2016-2017 AND BEYOND

20. Through the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI), FAO's work on fisheries and aquaculture is focused on food security (Strategic Objective 1), conservation, sustainable management and use of aquatic resources (SO2), poverty reduction (SO3), inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems (SO4), and resilience (SO5). Work streams under the BGI contribute to SO Outputs and Outcomes taking account of country and regional priorities and lessons learned from the previous biennium.

21. The work to be undertaken in the 2016-17 biennium will make significant contributions to improving food security and nutrition (SO1), sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production (SO2), animal health and bio-security (SO2 and SO5), decent working conditions and livelihoods (SO3), improved post-harvest practices, consumer protection and fish trade and reduction of seafood waste and loss (SO4), preparedness of coastal communities for addressing climate change and natural disasters (SO5).

22. Some of the BGI activities contributing to SO2 involve cross-sectoral technical work, including promotion of mangrove restoration, reducing the impact of agriculture intensification on aquatic eco-systems, improving aquatic animal health, and promoting coastal zone management.

23. At the national level, countries that have adopted national strategies for blue growth/blue economy are supported by FAO to pilot the implementation of these strategies in collaboration with development partners such as the African Development Bank.
24. At the regional level, activities include the Asia Pacific regional initiative on blue growth for aquaculture intensification, the rice initiative to promote rice fish farming and to unleash the potential of blue growth in the Near East and North Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, FAO, in collaboration with the World Bank, NEPAD, AU-IBAR and African national institutions supports the implementation of regional frameworks such as the policy framework and reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture to improve fisheries governance and institutional arrangements to develop sustainable small-scale fisheries, promote responsible and equitable fish trade and marketing and support coordinated mechanisms among Regional Economic Communities (RECs), RFBs and Large Marine Ecosystem (LME).
25. At the global level, activities continue to align BGI with related initiatives of major organizations such as UNEP, OECD, World Bank and the EU. These organizations have welcomed collaboration with FAO in the achievement of blue growth/blue economy, where, FAO would provide knowledge products such as science based fisheries information, facilitation for extension and advisory services, capacity building for policy development and for the implementation of international instruments and good practices. Results will be channelled through national projects in selected countries to demonstrate their efficacy. Proven solutions would be scaled up for the benefits of further coastal communities and countries. FAO is preparing the first State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SoW AqGR) Report, through a country-driven process. The scope will be on farmed aquatic species and their wild relatives in areas within national jurisdiction.
26. The BGI is an FAO Corporate Area for Resource Mobilization (CARM). Advocacy work undertaken during the last biennium has yielded encouraging results in the form of a new phase of the Dr Fridjof Nansen programme and the GEF funded Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI). Likewise, FAO is working closely with the African Development Bank to promote blue growth/blue economy concepts in fisheries and aquaculture in various African countries. Resources are needed to fund the Umbrella programme for implementing the SSF Guidelines and the Umbrella programme for combatting IUU. The Green Climate Fund and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda represent other funding opportunities that should be pursued along with collaboration with the relevant global and regional institutions.
27. Supporting sustainable management of living aquatic resources, balancing their use and conservation in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible manner will continue to be the major priority areas of action for FAO. In this respect, the conclusions drawn by the 2016 Resumed Review Conference on the UNFSA for understanding how to improve timely collection, sharing and dissemination of fishery data, both within and outside EEZs, including at operational level (COFI/2016/Inf.21), could constitute one important axis of work.

Annex 1: Main components of FAO's Strategic Framework

FAO's vision

A world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Three Global Goals of Members:

eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively ensuring a world in which people at all times have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;
elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all, with increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods; and sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Strategic Objectives

1. Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

Additional Objective

6. Technical quality, knowledge and services

Cross-cutting themes

Gender
Governance
Nutrition
Climate Change

Core Functions

1. Facilitate and support countries in the development and implementation of normative and standard-setting instruments, such as international agreements, codes of conduct, technical standards and others
2. Assemble, analyse, monitor and improve access to data and information, in areas related to FAO's mandate
3. Facilitate, promote and support policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels
4. Advise and support capacity development at country and regional level to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes
5. Advise and support activities that assemble, disseminate and improve the uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices in the areas of FAO's mandate
6. Facilitate partnerships for food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, between governments, development partners, civil society and the private sector
7. Advocate and communicate at national, regional and global levels, in areas of FAO's Mandate

Functional Objectives

Outreach
Information Technology
FAO Governance, oversight and direction
Efficient and effective administration