

43rd Session of the Conference

Introduction to Item 12.3: Report of the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (5-9 September 2022)

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its 35th Session from 5 to 9 September 2022. The session was convened in a hybrid modality on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent in light of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns, following consultation with the COFI Bureau.

The session was attended by 99 Members of the Committee, observers from 21 other FAO Member Nations, the Holy See and Palestine, representatives from eight specialized agencies of the United Nations, 44 intergovernmental organizations and 51 international non-governmental organizations.

The Report of the 35th Session of COFI is submitted to the Conference in document C 2023/24.

Significant outcomes of the Committee included:

- a) endorsement of a new COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management;
- b) endorsement of the new FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment;
- c) support for Blue Transformation and for making it the focus of a very well received State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2022 report;
- d) appreciation for FAO's work and strong support for FAO's Biodiversity, Climate Change and Science and Innovation Strategies and associated action plans;
- e) recognition of the importance of fisheries and aquaculture to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and numerous requests to boost FAO's role in international fora;
- f) continued emphasis on small-scale fisheries (SSF) throughout the meeting and report, including the activities related to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) and recommendation for a SSF summit to be conducted biennially before COFI;
- g) strong support for global aquaculture development alongside the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture, recommended to be finalized before the 12th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- h) noted the importance of the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and FAO's key role in providing technical assistance to the WTO secretariat and to Members for its implementation; and
- i) strong commitment to Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs)/Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), particularly on their critical role of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, and on their importance to the WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies.

The Conference is invited to endorse the findings and recommendations of the Committee, and attention is drawn to global policy and regulatory matters, in particular to:

- a) progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments: paragraphs 11 j)-m);
- b) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: paragraphs 12) a)-j);

- c) supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including in the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA): paragraphs 13 a)-h);
- d) combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing: paragraphs 14 a)-r);
- e) enhancing COFI discussion, including recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, including modalities of operations and the offer of funding: paragraphs 15 a)-g);
- f) addressing climate change in fisheries and aquaculture: reporting on progress and Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031: paragraphs 16 a)-h);
- g) mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture: paragraphs 17 a)-j); and
- h) developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture: paragraphs 18 a)-l).

Mr Shingo Ota, Chairperson of the Committee on Fisheries