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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-first Session

Rome, 9-13 June 2014

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 7-11 OCTOBER 2013

Executive Summary

This document contains an overview of the topics discussed at the Seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2014/Inf.8.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- endorse the revised terms related to culture-based fisheries;
- provide further guidance, as appropriate, with regard to the work of the Department in the field of Aquaculture.

INTRODUCTION

1. The seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA) of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in St. Petersburg, Russia from 7-11 October 2013 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Russian Federation. It was attended by 51 Members of FAO and by observers from six intergovernmental and four international non-Governmental organizations. The full report of the session is provided as document COFI/2014/Inf.8.
2. Mr Mikhail Glubokovsky of the Russian Federation was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Mr Rodrigo Roubach of Brazil was elected first Vice-Chairperson. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Canada were elected second and third Vice-Chairs respectively.
3. The Sub-Committee elected Mr S. Subasinghe (Sri Lanka) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the membership of Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States of America.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SESSION

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture

4. The Sub-Committee approved the draft terms of reference for an Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies. The Secretariat clarified that the scope of the Advisory Working Group will include genetic technologies while specific tasks will be assigned by FAO taking into account the recommendations of COFI and giving special attention to the needs of developing countries.

Progress reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries using the new reporting system

5. Several Members stressed the need to appoint a national response team and national focal point within the time frame in order to improve internal communication, increase the number of responses and the quality of information provided.
6. The Sub-Committee recognized the problems of implementing the questionnaire in Federal systems. The Secretariat indicated that this issue has been recognized; the process can be adapted to use in Federal systems and that more guidance will be provided in the next reporting cycle.
7. The Sub-Committee supported the establishment of a web-based platform for reporting on the implementation of the CCRF for provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries.

Draft Strategic Framework for strengthening the role of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in advancing aquaculture development

8. Whilst many Members supported the Draft Strategic Framework presented, the Secretariat was encouraged to:
 - Further define priorities, an explicit work plan and specific areas of work in the short, medium and long-term in addition to ensuring that these priorities are well integrated to the new FAO's Strategic Objectives;
 - Adopt a regional approach to developing the Strategic Framework. In this regard, regional workshops could be conducted to determine priorities, preferably before the next FAO Regional conferences and pay due attention to innovative and progressive partnerships including South-South cooperation and public-private sector partnerships.
9. Many Members emphasized that when implementing the strategic framework there was a need for FAO to:

- Support regional bodies and networks such as The Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture (CIFAA) and the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) in Africa, the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Committee (EIFAAC) in Europe and the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) in Asia Pacific, and promote collaboration amongst them;
- Strengthen the role of FAO Regional Offices in setting priorities and assisting Members in implementing the Strategic Framework. To this end, some African Members emphasized the urgent need for FAO to quickly fill the posts of Aquaculture Officers in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices.

10. The Sub-Committee expressed strong support of the Global Aquaculture Advancement Partnership (GAAP). Several Members stated that such a programme could be funded through the regular budget as well as extra budgetary support. The Sub-Committee also:

- Requested the FAO Secretariat to clarify the relationship between GAAP and the Sub-Committee's plan of work;
- Insisted on a regional approach in implementing the Programme;
- Underlined the need to adequately involve producers, regional bodies and networks, FAO regional offices and other stakeholders, and to take good account of gender in implementing GAAP.

11. Sri Lanka offered to initiate the establishment of the Global Aquaculture Fund, as a tool for implementing GAAP. In support of the Strategic Framework and the GAAP, the Sub-Committee agreed to the identification of cross cutting and other leading global priorities and proposed the following sequence:

- Hold consultations through regional workshops, networks and/or other mechanisms such as reviewing previous existing knowledge from previous priority settings to determine the regional priorities linked to the FAO Strategic objectives for the work of the Sub-Committee;
- The Secretariat should analyze and synthesize the outcomes of the regional consultations and share the results with Members for discussion at least 6 months before the next session of the Sub-Committee.

12. The Sub-Committee agreed to adjust the current process of appointing the bureau to be in line with the current procedures of COFI. The Sub-Committee stressed that the customary tradition of the host country presiding over the session as the chair shall be maintained.

Evaluation Framework for assessing conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification

13. The Sub-Committee stressed that the implementation of an Evaluation Framework should not lead to any technical barriers to trade.

14. Some Members expressed concerns regarding the Evaluation Framework including:

- The implementation of the Evaluation Framework should not create technical barriers to trade, should be gradual in implementation with pilot phases at national and regional levels and should not affect resource limited smallholders;
- Adequate capacity development for implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture certification should be ensured through FAO technical assistance mechanisms;
- Open ended questions in the Evaluation Framework should be linked to relevant international standards mentioned in the certification guidelines,
- The Evaluation Framework should be amended and revised as necessary, taking into consideration the knowledge gained during the implementation phase.

15. The Sub-Committee approved the draft Evaluation Framework presented to the 7th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, with reservations from some countries as expressed in paragraph 14.

Applying spatial planning for promoting future aquaculture growth

16. Members recommended that spatial analysis should consider the interests of other users of natural resources and ecosystem services in a more systemic approach. It was requested that FAO develop a step-by-step guide for the implementation of spatial planning tools and continue capacity building in developing countries.

17. Several Members expressed concerns on the availability and allocation of suitable space for aquaculture and the need to better integrate aquaculture with other sectors to minimise conflicts of interest. Comparative cost benefit analysis could be introduced along with spatial planning.

The role of aquaculture in improving nutrition

18. The Sub-Committee recommended the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's active participation in the "Second International Conference on Nutrition", scheduled to be held in November 2014.

The role of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in promoting culture-based fisheries

19. The Sub-Committee noted that the FAO Glossaries should be an authoritative source for terminology used in fisheries and aquaculture. However, the definitions in the glossaries need some refinement in light of current use and practice. Suggested revisions and additions are included in Appendix.

20. Recognizing the importance of culture-based fisheries to food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation, and considering the vast experience they have in managing culture-based fisheries, the government of Sri Lanka offered to host the first expert consultation on culture-based fisheries to discuss the issues concerned.

Special event on strengthening international cooperation for accelerating sustainable aquaculture development

21. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the efforts and progress made by the three aquaculture networks in establishing their mandate and services offered in their respective regions and recognized the important role of FAO in facilitating South-South Cooperation arrangements by liaising between the beneficiary countries and donors.

22. Cooperation based on strong partnerships between public and private entities and networking was further recognized as important mechanisms towards the development of a sustainable aquaculture industry.

23. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the growing contribution of farmed fish to the global markets and recommended that:

- The FAO Secretariat take further action to promote this cooperation;
- Interested Members explore opportunities with potential partners;
- The FAO Secretariat to take the necessary steps to establish a "World Aquaculture Day" in the United Nations calendar.

Date and place of the eighth session

24. The Sub-Committee welcomed the offer of Brazil to host the eighth session of the Sub-Committee. The dates and venue will be announced at the 31st session of COFI.

Adoption of the report

25. The report of the seventh session of the Sub-Committee was adopted on 11 October 2013.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

26. The Committee is invited to:
- (a) endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
 - (b) endorse the revised terms related to culture-based fisheries;
 - (c) provide further guidance, as appropriate, with regard to the work of the Department in the field of Aquaculture.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTED REVISIONS TO THE FAO GLOSSARY ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES

The FAO Glossaries of Aquaculture and Fisheries¹ provide an authoritative source of information on key terms used in fisheries and aquaculture. In order to maintain the quality of the information provided in the glossaries, FAO reviewed the terms pertaining to culture-based fisheries. The review revealed that:

- the definition of some terms should be revised;
- one term should be added to the glossaries;
- one term should be deleted from the glossaries.

This appendix provides recommendations for improving the accuracy of the terms associated with culture-based fisheries and stocking.

I. Terms in the glossaries to be revised

The following definitions are taken from the FAO Glossaries of Aquaculture and Fisheries with a critique and suggested modifications included.

- **Culture based fishery:** Activities aimed at supplementing or sustaining the recruitment of one or more aquatic species and raising the total production or the production of selected elements of a fishery beyond a level, which is sustainable through natural processes. In this sense culture-based fisheries include enhancement measures, which may take the form of: introduction of new species; stocking natural and artificial waterbodies, including with material originating from aquaculture installations; fertilization; environmental engineering including habitat improvements and modification of waterbodies; altering species composition including elimination of undesirable species or constituting an artificial fauna of selected species; genetic modification of introduced species.
 - **critique and modified definition: the FAO definition** is not a description of a fishery but a general description of stock enhancement activities that includes activities that are clearly not ‘culture-based’ such as habitat improvement. **Suggested alternative:** *A fishery in which the use of aquaculture facilities is involved in the production of at least part of the life-cycle of a conventionally fished resource; aquaculture is usually the initial hatchery phase that produces larvae or juveniles for release into natural or modified habitats.*
- **Stocking:** The practice of putting artificially reared young fish into a sea, lake or river. These are subsequently caught, preferably at a larger size.
 - **critique and modified definition:** The FAO definition only refers to ‘artificially reared’ fish and needs to include transfers and species introductions that could originate from natural water bodies. The definition also omits stocking for conservation where the species would not be ‘caught’. **Suggested modification:** *The practice of placing aquatic organisms into natural or modified water bodies. Stocked material may originate from aquaculture facilities or translocations from the wild.*
- **Restocking:** The release of cultured or wild caught aquatic species (usually juveniles) into the wild to restore the spawning biomass of severely overfished stocks to levels at which they can once again provide sustainable yields.
 - **critique and modified definition:** - The definition neglects restocking for conservation. **Suggested addition:** *This may also involve re-establishing a commercial species where it is locally extinct due to overfishing, or release of*

¹ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/glossary/en>

juveniles reared in conservation hatcheries” to help restore endangered or threatened species².

- **Stock enhancement:** Process by which the numbers of wild stocks of a particular species in a particular body of water are boosted by releasing large numbers of hatchery raised organisms.
 - **critique and modified definition:** The above refers only to one aspect of stock enhancement – the use of cultured species, and not to the variety of other techniques that have been previously listed incorrectly under the term **Culture-based fisheries**. The original definition of Culture-based fisheries made reference to natural process, but any enhancements would also rely on natural processes to assist in increased production and therefore the phrase ‘existing natural processes’ i.e. before any enhancement, would need to be included. The original definition of stock enhancement refers to numbers of wild stocks, but not to individuals within stocks, which is the more conventional use of the term. **Suggested replacement with a modified definition of Culture-based fisheries:** *Activities aimed at supplementing or sustaining the recruitment of one or more aquatic species and raising the total production or the production of selected elements of a fishery beyond a level, which is sustainable through existing natural processes (see Enhanced Fishery). In this sense stock enhancement includes enhancement measures, which may take the form of: introduction of new species; stocking natural and artificial water bodies, including with material originating from aquaculture installations; fertilization; environmental engineering including habitat improvements and modification of water bodies; altering species composition including elimination of undesirable species or constituting an artificial fauna of selected species; genetic modification and introduction of non-native species or genotypes.*

- **Sea ranching (or Ranching):** Commercial raising of animals, mainly for human consumption, under extensive production systems, within controlled boundaries and paddocks (e.g. in agriculture), or in open space (oceans, lakes) where they grow using natural food supplies. In fisheries: stocking usually of juvenile finfish, crustaceans or mollusks from culture facilities for growth to market size or to maturity in the natural environment. Species usually used are migratory and return close to the point of release (e.g. salmon) or non-migratory and remain for at least a substantial portion of the life-cycle in restricted areas where they enter the local fishery (e.g. red sea bream, *Penaeus japonicus*, etc.).
 - **critique and modified definition:** Ranching is often done by the public sector and therefore ‘commercial’ is too limiting, and the reference to controlled boundaries and agriculture and paddocks is unclear and inappropriate. **Suggested modification:** *The release of cultured juveniles into unenclosed marine and estuarine environments (sea ranching) or inland waters (ranching) where they grow using natural food supplies for harvest at a larger size in “put, grow, and take” operations. Note that the released animals are not expected to contribute to spawning biomass, although this can occur when the size at harvest exceeds the size at first maturity, or when not all the released animals are harvested. Release is usually of juvenile finfish, crustaceans or molluscs from culture facilities for growth until harvest (which may also be by recreational fishers) in the natural environment. Species usually used are migratory and return close to the point of release (e.g. salmon) or non-migratory and remain for at least a substantial portion of the life-cycle in restricted areas where they enter the local fishery (e.g. mollusks, red sea bream and *Penaeus japonicus*).*

² Bell, J.D. et al., 2008. A New Era for Restocking, Stock Enhancement and Sea Ranching of Coastal Fisheries Resources *Reviews in Fisheries Science*, 16(1–3):1–9.

II. Term to be added to the glossaries

The following term is in common usage, but is not currently described in the glossaries.

Enhanced fishery – FAO³: - To be added to FAO Glossary *Fisheries that are supported by activities aimed at supplementing or sustaining the recruitment of one or more aquatic species and raising the total production or the production of selected elements of a fishery beyond a level, which is sustainable through existing natural processes (see stock enhancement).*

III. Term to be deleted from the glossaries

The following term should be deleted from the glossaries.

- **Culture enhanced fishery - FAO Glossary:** Fishery in which the use of aquaculture is involved in at least part of the life-cycle of a conventionally fished resource, usually the initial hatchery phase.
 - **critique and justification for deletion:** this is a description of a culture-based fishery and is incorporated in the definition of culture-based fishery. A search of this term in Scopus returned 0 results indicating it is not being used in the scientific literature on the subject.

³ FAO. 2011. Guidelines on Ecolabelling of fish and fish products from inland capture fisheries. FAO, Rome. 106p.