

# COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture will meet in Chile

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The Fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Sub-Committee on Aquaculture will be held from 6-10 October 2008 in Puerto Varas, Chile. All arrangements are underway for this important occasion, hosted by the Government of Chile.

Aquaculture is an important production sector, currently providing nearly 50 percent of the global aquatic food. At the 22nd Session of COFI held in March 1997, this importance was strongly emphasized and COFI underlined the valuable potential of aquaculture in meeting the expected increased demand for aquatic products. The report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of COFI stated: "Given the increasing importance of aquaculture as a means of providing employment and contributing to food security, the Chinese delegation proposed that a Sub-Committee on Aquaculture be established under the Committee" auspices. After several years of discussions and deliberations, during the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI, held in March 2001 in Rome, it was agreed that the COFI Sub-Committee on aquaculture should be established.

Since then we have gone a long way!

Three sessions of the Sub-Committee have been held. First in Beijing, P.R. China in 2002, second in Trondheim, Norway in 2003 and the third in New Delhi, India in 2006, all hosted by the respective governments. All three occasions

have been well participated by FAO membership and many others, and resulted in bringing many important recommendations towards development of sustainable aquaculture, globally. The Sub-Committee on Aquaculture is the only global inter-governmental forum dedicated to aquaculture, making its decisions and recommendations strong and important.

The Sub-Committee discusses timely global, regional or national issues of importance and relevance to aquaculture. The recommendations generally provide insights and opportunities for addressing those concerns or issues at national, regional and/or global basis.

Apart from the standing regular agenda items such as a) progress in the implementation of Sub-Committee recommendations, b) progress in implementing the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the Puerto Varas Sub-Committee session will discuss issues concerning the following: a) improving governance in aquaculture, b) international technical guidelines for the certification of aquaculture, and c) challenges in meeting the rising global demand for food fish from aquaculture.

In an era where the cost of energy is sky-rocketing and large quantities of grains and several other food resources are being converted to bio fuel to compensate the rising cost of energy, aquaculture is facing

a major challenge to reduce cost of production. As the price of several internationally-traded commodities has already come down significantly, the farmers are finding it difficult to continue farming certain species with profit.

An additional 40 million tonnes of aquatic food will be required by 2030 to maintain the current per caput consumption. We believe that the sector can grow fast and sustainably enough to meet the perceived demand while preserving the natural resource base it needs to thrive. With this backdrop, we envision that the decisions and recommendations of the fourth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture will be substantial.

**Dates:** 06-10 October 2008

**Venue:** Hotel Sol-Meliá Patagonia, Klenner 349, Puerto Varas, Lakes Region, CHILE

**Information:** <http://www.fao.org/fi/body/cofi/cofiaq/cofiaq.asp>

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