

XI Session of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade

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FAO's "other" sub-committee within the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, will meet this year in June 2-6 in Bremen, Germany. In this way, both sub-committees will meet in the same year before reporting to COFI next year in Rome.

The agenda of the upcoming COFI-FT meeting is not surprisingly focusing on trade issues but includes a wide range of topics, from an overview of the world supply and demand situation, to ongoing trends in consumption and markets, as well as FAO's trade-related activities in capacity building and normative work with relevance to the sector.

Other important issues are related to CITES, to harmonization of catch documentation schemes, to the use of port-state measures in combating IUU fishing, evolving market access requirements related to quality and safety as well as ecolabeling criteria in marine and inland capture fisheries.

The Trade Sub-committee will also be seeking to recommend that COFI adopt the new technical guidelines for responsible fish trade (Code of Conduct Article 11.2 and 11.3) which were partly finalised in Rome in November 2007 at a technical consultation. This Technical Consultation will be reopened in Bremen in two evening sessions in order to finalise the remaining few paragraphs before submitting the complete draft guidelines for debate in the Sub-Committee itself.

As is only natural, the relationship between the two FAO sub-committees is one of mutual recognition and co-operation, not the least in order to avoid any duplication in terms of agenda items and areas of work in the inter-sessional periods. However, on a number of issues related to trade, one has also started to focus on the



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Gerardo E. Nieto (Under Secretary for Fisheries, Argentina), Mrs Elisa Calvo (Head of Coordination Economic Policy Unit, Argentina) and Hector Lupin (former FAO Senior Fisheries Officer)

particular role of aquaculture in marketing, distribution and trade as well as in utilization and consumption.

With rising output from the aquaculture sector, an increasing share of fish and fishery products in international trade also originates from aquaculture, although the exact percentage is not known due to data deficiencies in international statistics. However, it is a fact that the aquaculture sector not only has become a major player in international markets and for many products totally dominate supply, but aquaculture has become a principal driver in market development, product innovation and price formation. We can therefore expect references to aquaculture to be quite prominent in the debate in Bremen, not the least in relation to specific challenges in market access faced by aquaculture producers in many developing countries.