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COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES OF AFRICA

Eleventh Session

Abuja, Nigeria, 24-27 October 2000

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE TENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES OF AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa (CIFA), at its Tenth Session (Akosombo, Ghana, November 1997) made a number of recommendations on which several actions have been taken by the Secretariat. This document briefly reports only on actions which are not discussed under other agenda items. The relevant paragraph numbers of the Report of the Tenth Session are given in brackets.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Enhance programmes for the control of water hyacinth throughout Africa (para. 24)

2. During the last five years FAO has assisted several countries in Africa in controlling aquatic weed infestation in inland waters, through both regional and national projects. These projects essentially use biological control methods, involving the rearing and release of Neohydronomous insects, notably weevils (*Neochetina* genus) and moth (*Samedos_albiguttalis*) to control and prevent further spread of aquatic weeds, such as water hyacinth, water fern (*Salvinia*) and water lettuce (*Pistia*), to hitherto-not-affected areas, and the coordination of aquatic weed management activities in general in the affected eco-systems. Training on insect rearing and release is always associated with these projects. Countries that have benefitted from the impact of these projects include Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. Besides these projects, other projects are also in the pipeline to develop biocontrol of water weeds in affected areas of River Niger (Niger, Nigeria, Benin and Mali) and River Senegal (*Salvinia* control).

3. It is important to mention that even though water weed infestation can be controlled through physical (mechanical and manual), chemical and biological means, in Africa biological control has proved to be the only sustainable way to control floating water weeds. There are results to show that infestation of *Salvinia* (water fern) and *Pistia* (water lettuce) can be significantly reduced in less than three years. For water hyacinth, significant biocontrol is observed five to six years after release of *Neochetina* insects. In Lake Victoria, for example, the level of water hyacinth infestation has been reduced by 60% or more during the last five years with the release of *Neochetina* insects.

4. The main FAO unit responsible for matters of weed control, including weed control in aquatic systems, is the Plant Protection Service (AGPP). However, it is pertinent to add that because of the interactions between macrophytes and fish, the Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Service (FIRI) of the FAO Fisheries Department is closely following the issue on a global scale and has prepared a review on the subject entitled “*Interactions between fish and aquatic macrophytes: review*”.

Strengthen support for aquaculture production in Africa (para. 24)

5. The Fisheries Department Group (RAFI) of the FAO Regional Office for Africa, in collaboration with FIRI organized an Africa Regional Aquaculture Review and a Regional Workshop on Integration of Irrigation and Aquaculture (IIA) in Africa (Accra, Ghana, September 1999) which, *inter alia*, identified the common constraints affecting aquaculture development in Africa and recommended a “way forward”. Agenda items 7 and 8 will throw more light on the subject.

6. It is, however, pertinent to mention that the Fish Utilisation Service (FIU) of the FAO Fisheries Department is also involved in aquaculture activities in Africa in order to improve marketing and trade. Besides, the Service contributes to the development of CODEX guidelines for the safety of aquaculture products.

Encourage the establishment of an Aquatic Farming System Information Network for Africa (para. 24)

7. After several unsuccessful attempts to secure funding for an Aquatic Farming Systems Network (CIFA Occasional Paper No. 22), the project has been indefinitely shelved. Nonetheless, the facilitation and strengthening of intra- and inter-regional information exchange continues to be a priority of RAFI and FIRI. This priority is exemplified by the Workshop held in Accra in 1999. Both activities served as fora for practitioners from across the region to discuss common problems and propose similar solutions.

8. Moreover, FAO staff serve as intermediaries, putting different national and sub-regional information centres (e.g. Bunda College (Malawi) National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research (NIFFR, Nigeria), Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), etc.) in contact with each other to form informal but functional networks.

9. Promotion of information exchange through sub-regional programmes focusing on improved aquatic resource development has also been a prominent component of proposals of projects in the

Sahel and Central Africa. Finally, the Regional Fisheries Group, assisted by the Regional Fisheries Documentation Centre, has distributed documentation, facilitated study tours and undertaken other endeavours to develop a truly regional approach to fisheries development, founded on the premise that it is not information itself that is fundamentally lacking but easy access to existing current information. Fostering this accessibility is one of the major foci of the regional unit.

Assist in strengthen regional collaboration and cooperation in fisheries (para. 24)

10. This is a topical issue of high priority to CIFA and several actions have been taken to assist and improve the performance of several regional and sub-regional groupings notably, Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC), Organization of African Unity/Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (OAU/STRC), etc. For example, FIIU provides support to LVFO in post-harvest technology, especially in matters concerning fish product safety and trade. Participants from the three member countries, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, were funded to a regional fish safety workshop organized by LVFO (Jinja, Uganda, April 2000) and FIIU participated in the meeting "LV 2000 - A new beginning" organized by LVFO (Jinja, Uganda). Furthermore, a project proposal is being developed on regional collaboration on fish safety and quality in Lake Victoria.

11. FIIU is also providing support to COMESA on upgrading the safety and quality of fish products through TCP/RAF/8927 and is also executing a project for the Common Fund for Commodities to promote production of value-added products in Lake Victoria.

PROBLEMS IN INLAND FISHERIES STATISTICS

Study problems associated with fisheries statistical data monitoring in rivers and small water bodies (para. 45)

12. The Fishery Information, Data and Statistics Units (FIDI) of the FAO Fisheries Department has successfully implemented fishery statistical programmes for large inland water systems which could also be applicable to small water bodies. Regarding river fisheries, FIDI has concluded that standardisation of statistical approaches on a regional basis would not be an appropriate approach and that country-specific studies should instead be conducted. In this regard, FIDI will be involved in Mali fishery statistics towards the end of this year and a number of country-specific studies will be conducted under the FAO/World Bank Collaborative Initiative for improving agricultural statistical systems including fisheries and forestry. FIDI is also initiating a review of inland fishery and aquaculture statistics of FAO with a view to improving their quality for several African countries by making use of the ALCOM Water Resources Database.

Ensure implementation of intersessional work programme (para. 45)

13. Several activities were undertaken by the Secretariat during the intersessional period. Key among these were:

- the Regional Aquaculture Review and the Regional Workshop on Integration of Irrigation and Aquaculture (IIA) referred to in paragraph 3 above ;
- the Regional Workshop on Integrated Resource Management (Accra, Ghana, March 2000) which reviewed the status of integrated resource management and discussed what inland fisheries could contribute to sustainable livelihoods in fishing communities in 25 West African countries. During the workshop, four working groups were set up to discuss issues related to resource enhancement and management, institutional aspects, research and extension as well as traditional management systems;
- two regional workshops on Verification and Audit of HACCP systems conducted in collaboration with the FAO/DANIDA project GCP/INT/609/DEN during 1999, one in Namibia (for English-Speaking countries) and the other in Gabon (for French-speaking countries). These workshops were the first of this type conducted in Africa;
- TCP projects in Uganda and Nigeria to strengthen the safety and quality control system of fishery products; and a large TCP project on the same subject covering all COMESA countries, provides training to staff of private and public sectors; and
- a pilot training course to be organized by FIRI in Mali in January 2001 on the application of radio telemetry in developing countries. This training course will enable the participants to use radio telemetry as a valuable tool for data generation under specific tropical/sub-tropical conditions in their countries.

Use of electronic mail to facilitate communication and information-sharing among members (para. 45)

14. FAO has assisted several CIFA countries to acquire computers and thus facilitated communication and information-sharing among them.

REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE FUTURE ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMITTEE

Retain the Sub-Committee for Lake Tanganyika and the Sub-Committee for the Protection and Development of the Fisheries in the Sahelian Zone (para. 38)

15. Both Sub-Committees were retained. The Sub-Committee for Lake Tanganyika held its Eighth Session in Lusaka, Zambia in May 1999 and the Sub-Committee for the Sahel held its Seventh Session in Ouagadougou last July, during which it recommended its abolition as indicated in CIFA/2000/4 and Inf.5.

PROPOSAL FOR THE MAJOR TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AT THE ELEVENTH SESSION

Organization of a symposium on «Inland Aquatic Resources Management and Structural Adjustment Policies» (para. 54)

16. The Seminar held in conjunction with this Session was as recommended.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION

Interest of Nigeria and Zambia to host the Eleventh Session (para. 57)

17. The current Session is being held in Abuja, Nigeria.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

18. The Committee is requested to note the progress reported and make recommendations as deemed appropriate.

19. The Committee may also wish to discuss actions taken at the national level on those recommendations addressed to Member Governments.