



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Commission (CACFish)**

**Technical Advisory Committee**

**Fifth Meeting**

**Virtual Meeting, 23-24 November 2020**

**MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF RESPECTIVE  
FAO FISHERIES GOVERNING BODIES AND CACFISH**

**Executive Summary:**

This document provides information on the topics discussed at the (i) 33rd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-33), held in Rome, Italy from 9 to 13 July 2018; (ii) FAO's 31st Regional Conference for Europe (ERC-31), held in Voronezh, Russian Federation, from 16 to 18 May 2018; and (iii) 6th Session of CACFish (CACFish-6), held in Izmir, Turkey from 15 to 18 October 2018.

**Suggested action by the Committee:**

- Note the discussions, recommendations and decisions of the respective FAO fisheries governing bodies and CACFish, and
- Provide further guidance, as appropriate, regarding implementation of these recommendations and decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

1. This document contains highlights of the topics discussed at the (i) 33rd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-33), held in Rome, Italy from 9 to 13 July 2018; (ii) FAO's 31st Regional Conference for Europe (ERC-31), held in Voronezh, Russian Federation, from 16 to 18 May 2018; and (iii) 6th Session of CACFish (CACFish-6), held in Izmir, Turkey from 15 to 18 October 2018.

### *Main decisions and recommendations from 33rd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-33)*

2. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was established in 1965. It is a Governing Body of FAO currently serving as the only global inter-governmental forum where major fisheries and aquaculture issues are discussed and recommendations are made addressing among others Member States, Regional Fisheries Bodies and NGOs. COFI also provides a forum where international agreements, technical guidelines and action plans are negotiated. The primary agenda items of COFI 33 were as follows:

- State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries,
- Decisions and recommendations of the sub-committees of COFI,
- Fisheries and ocean governance,
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- Climate change and other environment related matters,
- Global and regional processes, including Regional Fisheries Bodies related matters, and
- FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework.

3. Listed below are the main decisions and recommendations of COFI 33. The Committee:

- highlighted the role of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and other regional processes for the sustainable management of common fisheries resources, and called for increased support to Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and national mechanisms for sustainable fishery management; expressed the need for greater cooperation and information sharing between Members, including through mechanisms established by RFMOs and other IGOs,
- noted the key role which trade and aquaculture will continue to play in the provision of livelihoods and satisfying the demand of an ever-growing population; noted the contribution of small-scale fisheries (SSF) and aquaculture in rural development,
- agreed that data and information submitted through the Code questionnaire could be used for reporting on SDG indicators and Aichi Biodiversity Targets,
- stressed the need for capacity development to boost implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines),
- highlighted the importance of reducing food waste and losses, especially in the post-harvest value chain,

- recognized the growing need for implementation of best practices in aquaculture, and recommended that FAO develop sustainable aquaculture guidelines to provide guidance to the sector,
- recommended that FAO develop a global information system, including a registry of species, to monitor and assess the status of aquatic genetic resources relevant to aquaculture,
- recommended that the public version of the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels Information System be further developed, in particular to allow for automatic uploading from other monitoring, control and surveillance systems,
- expressed strong interest in discussing the establishment of a sub-committee on fisheries management in order to assist the international community, especially developing States,
- requested FAO to develop a planning roadmap for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022,
- endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear,
- requested FAO to develop guidelines on climate change adaptation and mitigation in fisheries and aquaculture, and
- requested FAO to prepare and operationalize a fisheries and aquaculture biodiversity plan as part of its Biodiversity Strategy and contribution to the CBD Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, building on its Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform.

#### ***Thirty-first session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC- 31)***

4. Being a Governing Body, FAO Regional Conferences serve as an official forum where Ministers of Agriculture and other high officials from all FAO Member States in a given region meet to discuss challenges. The Conferences also provide a forum for the formulations of regional positions on the global policy and regulatory issues within the mandate of FAO. The Conferences also review and advise on the region related plans, programme or projects of FAO. Outcomes of the regular sessions of CACFish are reported to FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).

5. The primary technical agenda items of ERC-31 were as follows:

- Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate,
- E-agriculture: The Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration, and
- Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region.

6. The ERC:

- highlighted the potential of agro-ecological approaches and called on governments to promote them;
- emphasized the need for research and quality data on agroecology;
- noted the increased interest of consumers and producers in sustainable agricultural products;
- highlighted the importance of reducing food loss and waste and stressed the need for the agricultural sector to address climate change.

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- stressed the need for the agricultural sector to address climate change, both in terms of adaptation and mitigation, by taking appropriate measures at national, regional and global levels and encouraged FAO to continue supporting governments and multi-stakeholder dialogues in these efforts;
  - requested that FAO i) support a food systems approach in rural and urban policies and planning; ii) incorporate agroecological approaches and diversification into the three Regional Initiatives; and iii) further develop its work on agroecology, for example in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028) and the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative, discussing this in FAO’s technical and governing bodies;
  - requested FAO to take the lead to facilitate, in collaboration with other relevant actors the development of methodologies to measure sustainability performance of all agriculture and food systems; and emphasized the need for special attention to be given to women and youth, especially with regard to access to resources and innovation.
  - underlined the importance of developing e-agriculture as a tool for implementing Agenda 2030, recommended enhanced participation in e-agriculture of the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises,
  - noted that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can support farmers, in particular smallholders, by providing them with tools for real-time monitoring, early warning systems, and disease control,
  - agreed on the alignment of the FAO Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment,
  - requested FAO to continue the implementation of the two Regional Initiatives: (i) RI1: Empowering smallholders and family farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction; and (ii) RI2: Improving agrifood trade and market integration” and their use as a programmatic approach to ensure coherence and integrated support of the country programme implementation in support of achieving the SDGs,
  - implement the third Regional Initiative “Sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate” (RI3) and ensure the linkage between RI1 and RI3 regarding sustainable agriculture and food systems,
  - requested FAO to support Members in applying Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food (RTF) and Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and ensure that the cross-cutting issues of gender, governance, climate change and nutrition are addressed; and
  - agreed that (i) the CACFish reports become an integral part of the ERC in an independent agenda item; (ii) requested that the ERC identify and discuss priorities of work for fisheries and aquaculture development in the CACFish subregion in line with achieving the universal goals of the United Nations SDGs and the FAO Regional Initiatives for consideration by the 6th Session of CACFish, October 2018, Turkey; c) encouraged relevant Members of the ERC and CACFish observer countries to announce their intention to join the Commission; and d) noted the importance of increasing the level of fish consumption in diets of Central Asia and the Caucasus and the role of the Commission in aquaculture development and promoting sustainable resource use.

***Sixth Session of CACFish (CACFish-6)***

7. The five Member countries attended CACFish-6: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey. Ten countries were present as invited Countries, namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Intergovernmental organizations with observer status that participated were EUROFISH International Organization and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The Commission:

- discussed, among others the main decisions and recommendations of relevant FAO Conferences and Committees; and reviewed and approved the recommendations of the Fourth Meeting of TAC (2017), including intersessional period priority activities.
- encouraged all countries located in the wider Central Asia and Caucasus region that are not yet members to become members or, alternatively, to collaborate formally with the Commission as observers.

**SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE**

8. The Committee is invited to:

- Note the discussions, recommendations and decisions of the respective FAO fisheries governing bodies and CACFish, and
- Provide further guidance, as appropriate, regarding implementation of these recommendations and decisions.