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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

Second Session

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THE FAO FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

SUMMARY

This document contains a brief overview of the efforts made by the FAO Fisheries Department towards implementing the recommendations of the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), which was held in Beijing, China, from 18 to 22 April 2002.

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture was held in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 18 to 22 April 2002, at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China and with financial support from the Governments of China and Italy. The report of the First Session is provided as an information document, COFI:AQ/II/2003/Inf.5.
2. The Sub-Committee emphasized that, globally, aquaculture is a fast growing activity, and is practised with complex interactions between natural, social, economic and policy environments. Development of this sector requires integrated efforts to harmonize public and private sector needs and to preserve inter-generational rights. It also stressed that future development plans must recognize the considerable differences that exist in geographical, cultural, social, economic and technical dimensions and pay particular emphasis to the potential contribution that aquaculture can make to food security and poverty alleviation while considering the importance of environmental sustainability and the role of women in this sector.

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MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE SUB-COMITTEE

3. On the basis of a thorough discussion, facilitated by the technical documentation provided by the Secretariat, the Sub-Committee made a number of suggestions, comments and recommendations, towards achieving the full potential of aquaculture for national, regional and global food security, poverty alleviation and human development. The details are given in the Sub-Committee report, COFI:AQ/II/2003/Inf.5. The Sub-Committee identified the following four areas as priority areas for future work by the FAO Fisheries Department:

- A. Creating an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture development and management.
- B. Establishing a framework for sustainable rural aquaculture development.
- C. Education, information sharing and capacity-building.
- D. Data collection and reporting to improve knowledge and management of the sector.

4. Under priority area A, “Creating an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture development and management”, the Sub-Committee identified the following activities as important:

- Develop guidelines for the elaboration of transparent and non-discriminatory certification procedures.
- Carry out a variety of studies on issues such as risk assessment, establishment of harmonized aquaculture quality standards, consumer health and economic viability.
- Undertake comparative analyses on the environmental cost of aquatic food production in relation to other terrestrial food production sectors.
- Increase the involvement of the private sector and producers in the decision-making process.
- Create a data bank of national Codes and other useful material produced by other organizations.

5. The Sub-Committee also identified the development of guidelines and strategies for sustainable rural aquaculture development as an important activity under priority area B, “Establishing a framework for sustainable rural aquaculture development”.

6. South-south cooperation and networking at sub-regional, regional and bilateral levels for information exchange and technology transfer were considered important activities within priority area C, “Education, information sharing and capacity-building”.

7. Education and training in aquaculture data collection, analysis, storage, management and dissemination; the establishment of unified standards and guidelines for data collection; and the formulation of clearer definitions of the terminologies used in the aquaculture sector were recommended as priority activities under priority area D, “Data collection and reporting to improve knowledge and management of the sector”.

8. The Sub-Committee urged that, in the light of the levelling off of production from capture fisheries and increasing demand for fish and fishery products, there was a need to develop aquaculture worldwide. It requested the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to make efforts to ensure that additional funds are allocated by the Organization to the Fisheries Department for aquaculture activities.

9. The Sub-Committee recognized the current inadequacy of regular programme funds to carry out successfully the activities recommended during the First Session and advised the FAO Fisheries Department to review its Medium-Term Plan (MTP). This MTP should be made compatible with the recommendations of the Sub-Committee. As appropriate new programme entities should be developed with budget requests to accommodate un-funded needs, and submitted to the Twenty-fifth Session of the COFI. The Sub-Committee requested the FAO

Fisheries Department to make a report on its efforts in this regard, and present it to the Second Session of the Sub-Committee.

EFFORTS BY THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS

10. In response to the request made by the Sub-Committee in its First Session, the Fisheries Department reviewed its Medium-Term Plans (MTP) - 2002-2007 and 2004-2009.

11. It was realized that the MTPs include several programmes which are relevant to the implementation of the recommendations of the Sub-Committee. Some recommended activities could be incorporated under these existing programmes. However, the allocated regular programme funds are insufficient, in terms of scope and depth in conducting required activities. Efforts are being made to rectify this situation to the extent possible within the regular programme. Many recommendations represent new activities, which are not part of the current MTP. The financial and human resources are already committed to the approved activities and specific outputs at all levels - Departmental, Divisional, Service and Regional. Additional funds are therefore required to carry out those activities and, optimally, to strengthen those already incorporated in the current MTP.

12. Along with the document entitled "The Decisions and Recommendations of the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture", which was presented to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries held from 24 to 28 February 2003, several suggestions for soliciting required funds and resources were made by the Fisheries Department for consideration and approval by COFI. The details are given in the information document, COFI:AQ/II/2003/Inf.6.

13. The Twenty-fifth Session of COFI recognized the importance of aquaculture as a means to increase fishery production, to generate income and foreign exchange, to help restore and relieve pressure on wild populations, to alleviate poverty, to increase food security and to provide for diversification of employment. Promotion of aquaculture and inland fisheries to increase their contribution to food security was identified as one of the priority areas for the FAO Fisheries Department.

14. The Committee acknowledged that the expertise of FAO will be critical in developing science-based standards for the responsible development of aquaculture from culture to the consumer products. Many Members expressed concern regarding the insufficient level of funding for aquaculture activities within FAO and the Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Sub-Committee that additional resources should be allocated to aquaculture in order to implement the recommendations of the Sub-Committee.

15. The Committee on Fisheries suggested that increased funds would come from either: a) additional funds to the Fisheries Department overall which would then be allocated to aquaculture, or b) through increased allocation of funds within the Fisheries Department from other subjects towards aquaculture. Several Members proposed that the Sub-Committee should review the updated workplan and set priorities now that the proposed activities have been costed. Many Members stated that funding should come mainly from regular programme sources, although external donor support will be important.

16. The FAO Fisheries Department has requested an increase of financial resources for funding of additional activities related to aquaculture that could not be implemented within the proposed budget of the current Medium-Term Plan. It is envisaged that with possible expanded funding, part but not all of the funding required for the proposed activities requested by the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture would be available.

17. During the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI, the Government of Japan offered to create a Trust Fund for Aquaculture Development. This Trust Fund of US\$ 500 000 would be provided over a period of five years, and would facilitate normative work on, a) safety and quality of

aquaculture products, b) environmental sustainability in aquaculture development, c) use of wild fish/fishery resources for aquaculture production, and d) use of fish (aquatic products) to feed cultured fish and its implications to food security and poverty alleviation. The FAO Fisheries Department is currently preparing a detailed project document for this project which is expected to start its activities in the autumn of 2003.

SOME ON-GOING AND PROPOSED MAJOR REGULAR- AND FIELD-PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES WHICH SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION THE SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Besides the envisaged work under the Japanese Trust Fund, the Fisheries Department's regular programme contains several on-going and planned activities, which are in line with the recommendations of the First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture:

19. Under the theme "Promotion of Sustainable Commercial Aquaculture" economic and market analyses of selected species with potential for commercial aquaculture development in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia are being carried out. Moreover, a compilation and dissemination of lessons learnt in the development of commercial aquaculture and its contribution to food security and poverty alleviation in selected countries has recently started and will provide valuable findings before the end of 2004. In addition, under the regular programme entity "Promotion of Appropriate National/Regional Policies for Sustainable Aquaculture Development" assistance is provided to national governments in sub-Saharan Africa in the participative formulation of policies and strategies for responsible aquaculture expansion and consolidation. These ongoing activities add to the process of creating an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture development and management (priority area A) and particularly the issue of increasing private sector involvement in the decision-making process.

20. In support of sustainable aquaculture development planning a website entitled "The Global Gateway to GIS, Remote Sensing and Mapping for Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries" is being developed. This Web site is aimed at illustrating how these tools have been brought to bear on a wide range of complex issues that have to be resolved in order to ensure the sustainability of aquaculture and inland fisheries. The African Water Resource Database, a GIS-based analytical framework supporting natural resource planning with a specific focus on inland fisheries, aquaculture and integrated water resource management in Africa is also being developed by the Fisheries Department.

21. A study and an international workshop to ascertain the possibility of establishing inter-governmental mechanisms for aquaculture development in the Americas is being planned for the year 2004. This will contribute to priority areas B and C, addressing respectively aquaculture framework development issues and the support for regional cooperation and networks.

22. An expert consultation on improving status and trends reporting on aquaculture is planned for late this year, seeking advice and guidance for improving global status and trends reporting on aquaculture. The overall objective of the consultation is to prepare a sustainable strategy and plan for the improvement of status and trends reporting on aquaculture at the international level. This consultation will contribute significantly to the work recommended by the Sub-Committee as priority area D, data collection and reporting to improve knowledge and management of the sector. (See COFI:AQ/II/2003/5).

23. A working group composed of national statistical officers will also be convened at the conclusion of the consultation. FAO is organizing this consultation with the purpose of seeking expert advice and guidance concerning the FAO questionnaire (*FISHSTAT AQ*) and its instruction sheet, in order to identify and prioritize modifications that are deemed most necessary to improve the FAO data base on aquaculture.

24. The overall objective is to improve the information base for global reporting within the practical limits of national capacities and resources while responding to the extent possible to changing management perspectives and widespread concerns about sustainable development and

management of the environment and natural resources. Specifically, the Working Group is invited to review the AQUASTAT AQ questionnaire to provide recommendations on what modifications are necessary and feasible (e.g. in terms of scope, harmonization of terms and classifications, definitions, periodicity of data collection, adequacy and clarity of the instruction sheet, user friendliness), to prioritize the suggested modifications and to identify specific approaches and actions to achieve them to meet global information requirements.

25. To aid the improvement of national aquaculture data collections, FAO-FIDI is planning to develop a computer-based aquaculture data collection module that would include elements of statistical sample selection procedures, data collection elements and forms, and data entry and processing capabilities. In particular, the system would provide methods for collecting small-scale, rural aquaculture data – a sector often missed in official statistics. This project is currently in the investigative and research phase.

26. With the assistance of the Government of Japan, a global study on wild-caught farming is being conducted. This study, which deals with farming of several major species where seed are derived from the wild, such as tuna, yellowtail, etc., forms part of the FAO Fisheries Department work in the field of priority area C, and will be concluded by the end of 2003.

27. Funds have been allocated to conduct a study and an analysis on environmental costs of aquaculture production in comparison with other food production sectors. This study is expected to begin in late 2003 and it is envisaged to present the project's findings by the end of 2004, contributing to the activities recommended under priority area A.

28. Also in support of priority area A "Creating an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture development and management" the FAO Fisheries Department, through GESAMP, is endeavouring to initiate a study on environmental risk assessment for coastal aquaculture. Some regular programme funds are available but additional extra-budgetary assistance is required to undertake this study.

29. Work on food safety and quality assurance, application of HACCP and development of various technical standards and guidelines towards improving food safety and quality is continuing. COFI:AQ/II/2003/6 describes the proposed way forward.

30. The activities of the FAO Fisheries Department in addressing issues relating to alien species introductions and impacts of trans-boundary movement of aquatic animals are continuing and considerable progress is being made in developing appropriate information sources and technical guidelines. With assistance from the Government of the Netherlands, the University of California Sea Grant, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), and others, a regional workshop is planned on how to implement international codes and other mechanisms dealing with alien species.

31. Recognizing that small-scale rural aquaculture and small-scale inland fisheries share many common problems in regard to accurate information, the Governments of Thailand and of the Netherlands helped convene a regional workshop in the Mekong Basin on improved approaches to data collection and reporting. This workshop will be repeated in other regions.

32. In Africa, further work on integrated irrigation aquaculture (IIA) is planned, including a regional workshop, which will be held in Mali in late 2003. Studies on, and analyses of aquatic biodiversity and nutrition in rice-based ecosystems are continuing and preparation of a major review document on "Integrated Livestock-fish Farming Systems – The Asian Experience and its Relevance for other Regions" is now completed.

33. Under the field programme, several national and regional TCP projects have been initiated. In particular the Latin America regional project on shrimp aquaculture health management has just been terminated with the successful development of technical guidelines and standards for the hatchery production of healthy *Penaeus vannamei* postlarvae. These technical guidelines and standards will be published early next year and will certainly add to priority area B.

34. Solicited by NACA, responding to requests from its member governments, a regional TCP project aiming to provide assistance in capacity-building in participatory livelihood approaches and analyses was started in May 2003. The project will assist the STREAM (Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management) Initiative by adding value to this regional multi-donor initiative allowing early participation from national governments in this important poverty focused initiative. The project will identify aquatic resource management issues impacting on the livelihoods of the poor, monitor and evaluate different management approaches, extend information, network within and between sectors and countries; and help with learning and communications to support agencies and institutions to (a) utilize existing and emerging information more effectively, (b) better understand poor people's livelihoods, and (c) enable poor people to exert greater influence over policies and processes that impact on their lives. This project, as well as the regional project mentioned below, are expected to provide a major contribution to the work of the FAO Fisheries Department in response to the Sub-Committee recognized priority area B "Establishing a framework for sustainable rural aquaculture development".

35. Responding to a request by the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, towards improving fisheries legislation in support of their efforts in community based fisheries management (CBFM), a regional TCP project has been initiated to strengthen the capacity of national legislation drafters and fisheries experts in issues, trends and concerns of community-based fisheries and co-management of inshore/coastal fisheries and aquaculture, as well as fish health management, with a view to develop further their own country's legislative framework.

36. Finally, various regional TCP projects are being developed at the request of FAO member countries. Among these TCP projects that are likely to add to the work under priority areas A, B, and C, are a regional TCP project for southern Africa on "Capacity-building in sustainable commercial aquaculture" and a regional TCP project for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries that aims to provide support to responsible aquaculture development in the OECS member countries.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

37. The Sub-Committee is invited to discuss the working document and the relevant information documents and make appropriate suggestions and recommendations.