



COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

Tenth Session

Trondheim, Norway, 23–27 August 2019

REPORT FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

BASIC INFORMATION

1. The Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI-FT) was established in 1985 to serve as a global forum for consultations on technical and economic aspects of international trade in fish and fishery products, including pertinent aspects of production and consumption.
2. The last session of COFI-FT was held in Busan (Republic of Korea) in September 2017 (for the report please refer to COFI:AQ/X/2019/Inf.6), and the next session will take place in Vigo (Spain) in November 2019.
3. The following paragraphs summarize the main discussions of this last Session of particular interest to the aquaculture sector and provide related updates since September 2017.

MAIN OUTCOMES

4. The Sub-Committee suggested areas to be examined in the future. The link between the core FAO areas and the important role played by the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in global food security, as a source of food and as a contributor to economic growth and development, livelihoods and income, were emphasized. In addition, the central role of developing countries in the production and trade of fish and fishery products, as well as the special characteristics and needs of the small-scale sector were recognized. However, regarding trade barriers, the Sub-Committee expressed concern about the growing number of measures that have possible impacts on the trade of fish and fishery products, in particular, affecting the exports from developing countries. The Sub-Committee underlined the need for more harmonized standards in international trade and called upon FAO to continue its harmonization efforts.

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5. The importance of sustainable production, trade, and consumption was stressed. The Sub-Committee supported FAO's role in providing technical capacity building on trade and marketing related issues, including facilitating market access and seafood safety, and on increasing the benefits and values deriving from a country's fisheries resources, particularly for developing countries. It noted the difficulties faced by some developing countries to achieve effective coordination between different national government bodies dealing with fish trade for the implementation of export-related or international requirements.
6. The Sub-Committee underlined how an improved dialogue and continuous consultation among countries, international organizations, relevant regional organizations, and stakeholders, including the private sector, could benefit international trade in fisheries products. The importance of active participation of countries in international *fora* and negotiations, associated with better information sharing, was highlighted.
7. The Sub-Committee appreciated and supported the growing collaboration of FAO with other international organizations, particularly regarding the applicable nomenclature for fish and fishery products, the work on antimicrobial resistance and the implications of microplastics.
8. The Sub-Committee, while emphasizing both the multi-faceted and complex nature of food loss and waste in fish value chains, widely recognized the importance of reducing it in the context of food security and nutrition.
9. In the area of food quality and safety, the Sub-Committee called upon FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries for capacity building and support to small-scale fishery communities.
10. Regarding the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Sub-Committee welcomed the comprehensive analysis of responses and expressed its appreciation to the FAO Members for the continuously increasing response rate to the questionnaire related to the monitoring and the implementation of Article 11.

OTHER TOPICS

11. The Sub-Committee also discussed issues of "Marine Protected Areas" (MPAs), "trade in fisheries services", Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS), "climate change" and "social sustainability". It reaffirmed the need to keep the focus of the Sub-Committee on issues related to core elements affecting trade in fish and fishery products.

UPDATES FOLLOWING THE LAST SESSION

12. In March 2019, the last Tier III indicator under FAO custodianship, on sustainable fisheries as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – indicator 14.7.1 – was classified to Tier I after agreement on a proposed methodology. For updated information on the SDGs, please check <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>.
13. After the 2018 "Vigo Dialogue on Decent Work", FAO started to organize different multi-stakeholder meetings in order to foster an open discussion among participants on social responsibility of fish and aquaculture value chains to facilitate the development of the guidance in a robust, practical and inclusive way.

14. An Expert Consultation convened by FAO in March 2018 recommended the development of a guidance document on trade in fisheries services and highlighted the need for increased FAO work in line with its mandate and the relevant SDG targets.

15. The website on food loss and waste in fish value chains (<http://www.fao.org/flw-in-fish-value-chains/en/>) provides a single platform with an analysis on causes of food loss and waste and possible scenarios involving capture fisheries, aquaculture, processing and storage, wholesale, transport, retail, and consumption. In addition, solutions are presented as a combination of the right policy, including issues on technology, skills, knowledge, services and infrastructure, regulatory environment, social and gender equity, and knowledge of markets.

16. At the request of Members, GLOBEFISH (www.globefish.org) implemented a series of enhancements to reduce the information gap on market access. New features include analysis of border rejection at major importing markets, a new price publication of the main species in China and information on countries in connection with fish production, trade, and basic economic data. In addition, FAO carried out national and regional activities of technical assistance and capacity building focusing on food safety, including the international trade regulatory framework and market access issues.