



# COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

### Sixteenth Session

**Busan, Republic of Korea, 4 – 8 September 2017**

## REPORT FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

### Executive Summary

This agenda item seeks regularly to appraise the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) of the activities and status of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ).

This paper presents selected key issues and recommendations emanating from the eighth session of COFI:AQ (COFI:AQ/VIII) as well as some selected key developments of relevance to the COFI:FT that occurred in between the eighth and ninth sessions of COFI:AQ (COFI:AQ/IX).

### Suggested action by the Sub-Committee

- Comment and make suggestions on improving collaboration and identifying future areas of work for COFI:AQ and COFI:FT.



1. As of the fifteenth session of the COFI:FT (Agadir, Morocco, 22–26 February 2016), a standing item entitled “Report from the Secretariat of the COFI:AQ” was inserted on the agenda of all upcoming COFI:FT sessions. Reciprocally, a converse item was inserted as a standing agenda item to future COFI:AQ sessions.
2. The agreement to establish a COFI:AQ was made at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (Rome, 26 February–2 March 2001) and its first session was held in Beijing, People’s Republic of China, in April 2002. The most recent session (COFI:AQ/VIII) was held in October 2015, and was hosted by the Government of Brazil in the city of Brasilia.
3. The COFI:AQ provides guidance to FAO on creating an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture development and management, on the development and promotion of a framework for sustainable rural aquaculture development, on education, information sharing and capacity building and on data collection and reporting to improve knowledge and management of the sector. The COFI:AQ serves as a forum for Members and other stakeholders to discuss technical and policy-related aquaculture issues at a global scale. The COFI:AQ raises awareness of the aquaculture sector’s vital contribution to economic growth, employment and on the role of fish in food security and nutrition and in meeting the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The COFI:AQ also highlights the activities and areas for collaboration with other international bodies, such as the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Codex Alimentarius, the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and many other United Nations agencies including on seafood trade related issues.
4. COFI:AQ/VIII acknowledged the work carried out by FAO and its partners during the intersessional period and recognized the important role of aquaculture for food security and nutrition. It commended FAO on its efforts in developing and coordinating the new questionnaire on the implementation by Members of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) on aquaculture and culture-based fisheries, underscoring the role and relevance of regional fisheries bodies and aquaculture networks in increasing awareness about the CCRF and in the monitoring and reporting of its implementation.
5. COFI:AQ/VIII supported the draft strategic framework for strengthening the role of the COFI:AQ in advancing aquaculture development. The COFI:AQ also supported the efforts of FAO in developing the Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification<sup>1</sup> (the Technical Guidelines), the evaluation framework and the partnership with Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI). Several Members requested FAO’s assistance in capacity building, in implementing these Technical Guidelines and in developing national certification schemes. COFI:AQ also requested additional information on the interaction between the Technical Guidelines, the evaluation framework and the global benchmark tool. In the intersessional period, FAO embarked on developing a series of compliance manuals for small-scale aquaculture certification, with the objective of providing targeted technical assistance and knowledge to small-scale aquaculture farmers on how to comply with certification standards based on the four minimum substantive criteria of the Technical Guidelines. Whilst production related aspects will continue to be dealt with by COFI:AQ, work on this item in the future will be reported under COFI:FT.
6. COFI:AQ acknowledged the role of FAO’s Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) in promoting sustainable and responsible aquaculture development worldwide, and also the important role that aquaculture education and research can contribute to the development of sustainable aquaculture.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2296t/i2296t00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2296t/i2296t00.htm)

7. COFI:AQ recognized the importance of promoting decent work in fisheries and aquaculture and commended on-going efforts by FAO in this regard. This work has been continued in the intersessional period. COFI:AQ also stressed the importance of reliable and timely information from relevant sources on aquaculture, and expressed strong support to improve aquaculture data, information and statistics compiled by FAO. COFI:AQ noted the need to integrate the data collected in the first report on the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SoW AqGR) into FAO's fisheries and aquaculture information systems.

8. A working document (COFI:AQ/IX/2017/2) has been prepared for presentation at the COFI:AQ/IX, summarizing the efforts made by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) towards implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI:AQ. It also details progress made on reporting on the implementation of CCRF provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries using the new reporting system.

9. COFI:AQ intersessional work also focussed on establishing a strategic framework for strengthening its role in advancing aquaculture development. Further work was also done on the implementation of the technical guidelines on aquaculture certification and the evaluation framework to assess conformity of aquaculture certification schemes with the guidelines.

10. Progress was made on developing FAO's Blue Growth Initiative with respect to aquaculture, with a paper given at a Conference-Dialogue "Blue Growth and Economy - Sharing perspectives and experiences for Africa", Mindelo, Island of São Vicente, Republic of Cabo Verde, 3–5 May 2017. A Seminar on Blue Growth and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is expected to be held prior to COFI:AQ/IX and a Special Event on aquaculture in SIDS and BGI opportunities in a changing climate will be part of the regular agenda of COFI:AQ/IX.

11. Besides the regular standing items on the agenda, the forthcoming COFI:AQ will include, *inter alia* items on aquaculture, the SDGs and FAO's common vision for sustainable food and agriculture; status of and priorities for FAO's work on aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture; and extension for aquaculture development. The collection and reporting of data on farmed aquatic species continues to be an important item both for discussion at COFI:AQ and implementation during the intersessional period. Recommendations on mechanisms and strategies for data collection have been taken into account in the planning, design and implementation of regional and national projects by FAO. In data-poor countries, a statistics collection component needs to be included in national aquaculture development strategies and/or plans, as appropriate. FAO's global aquaculture statistics are consulted when reviewing and consolidating country reports submitted by National Focal Points on Aquatic Genetic Resources to prepare the first SoW AqGR. The Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System (ASFIS) list of "species items" will continue to be updated annually by FAO. Upon receiving reports from Members, FAO will expand the ASFIS list to include existing and potential cultured species, including hybrids.