

U.S. Statement on Agenda Item 5: Decisions and recommendations of the Tenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Trondheim, Norway, 23–27 August 2019

- The United States supports the efforts of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and supports adoption of the report of its 10th session.
- We support the work of FAO in the field of aquaculture, and appreciate the Organization's responsiveness to its Member States' aquaculture-related needs.
- We also strongly support FAO's effort to elevate the importance of sustainable aquaculture within its activities to help nations prepare for and develop this part of our seafood future.
- The United States has made increasing sustainable aquaculture production a priority – to ensure the health of people, the planet, and the economy. One of our most recent efforts is to begin the development of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas, defined geographic areas in the marine environment suitable for aquaculture development. Two critically important parts of this effort are science-based spatial planning, and stakeholder involvement.
- We would like to see the role of fish and seafood, including aquaculture, in food security, sustainable economic development, and sustainable livelihoods conveyed to the public even more clearly, along with a recognition of our ongoing – and successful – regional and global work.
- The United States supports the preparation of the Global Conference on Aquaculture, Millennium +20. This decadal conference is a critical opportunity for a global review of the status of aquaculture and to develop priority areas for research, development, and governance improvements to support sustainable aquaculture over the coming decade.
- We also welcome the publication of the report on the “State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” and the United States will continue to engage in the development of the Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GPA AqGR) to follow-up on the report.
- Aquaculture produces over half of all seafood for human consumption, is the fastest growing food sector globally, and the only way to meet the seafood supply gap predicted by FAO.
- We want to take a more comprehensive look at what FAO should and could be doing to support Members' sustainable aquaculture development, including future technical work and capacity building programs.
- To support Member States, we would like to see FAO develop a strategic plan for aquaculture, to be guided by the Sub-committee and include input of Member States.

- This plan should look holistically at the challenges with sustainable aquaculture development and the role that FAO could and should play in helping support the environmentally sound growth of this critically important food sector.
- We encourage FAO to look at this and include it for discussion on the agenda of the next Sub-committee on Aquaculture
- Once again, we were pleased to see such strong interest in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and commend FAO for the many achievements carried out under the FAO Action Plan on AMR in Aquaculture (2016-2020). We are impressed to see the growth of awareness, knowledge, and skills, and new guidance on antimicrobial use and AMR surveillance.
- Work under the Plan has provided for intensive exchange of information between countries and venues for better understanding countries' aquaculture biosecurity status, AMR-related activities, and ongoing action. We are also pleased to see many of the concerns and recommendations we raised at the 2017 and 2019 Subcommittee meetings have been addressed in this report.
- As the scientific understanding and global dialogue around AMR are constantly evolving, it is imperative that FAO consult Member States and take into consideration the various global terminologies and needs.
- For example, the World Health Organization and many countries have coalesced around the term “medically important” to denote those antimicrobial drugs with implications for public health. Phasing out the use of antimicrobials that are “medically important” for growth promotion, rather than all antimicrobials, assists countries in targeting their limited resources at areas of public health concern, while also balancing food security and agriculture sustainability needs.
- We suggest including the term “medically important” be incorporated in Key Activities Tables in the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025.
- We have included our recommendations for specific edits to this effect in an annex to our comments.
- Finally, the United States supports the continued work to develop sustainable aquaculture guidance. We note that regional consultations are planned for Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, in addition to the consultation that has already taken place for Africa.
- The United States would like to reiterate our desire to participate in this process.
- The United States encourages FAO to take advantage of the new capacity to use virtual platforms to take a more inclusive approach at developing guidance, without adding significant cost.

- Additionally, as noted in the sub-committee decisions and recommendations document (COFI/2020/3), the sub-committee requested a more detailed roadmap and methodology for the Sustainable Aquaculture Guidance. The United States would like to receive a recent update on this status.

Annex. Below are our recommendation for incorporating the term “medically important” into the Key Activities Tables in the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025:

1. Page. 20; Output 4.1, Activities:

- ☒ Develop voluntary guidelines for responsible AMU in targeted sectors (i.e. animal, aquaculture, crops) supporting appropriate therapeutic and preventive use, and phasing out unnecessary non-therapeutic uses such as the use of **medically important** antimicrobials for growth promotion in animals, starting with critically important antibiotics.

- ☒ Develop a repository of tools and guidance materials promoting responsible AMU, including phasing out **medically important antimicrobials for** growth promotion.

2. Page. 21, Output 5.1, Activities:

- ☒ Support Members and regional/subregional organizations in phasing out of **medically important** antimicrobials for growth promotion by providing the necessary guidance and options with accompanying legal underpinning. FAO will also support the phasing out of **medically important** antimicrobials for growth promotion as part of the legal review and reform processes of countries and regional/subregional organizations.

3. Page 21, Output 5.2, Activities:

- ☒ Support the development of the economic case for protecting food systems from the impacts of AMR including but not only, assessments or pilot studies on phasing out of **medically important** antimicrobials for growth promotion and AMU targets.

4. Page. 25, Output 5.1.i.3, Activities:

Number of i) countries; and ii) regional/sub-regional organizations supported to initiate a discussion on the phasing out, regulation or restriction of **medically important** antimicrobials for growth promotion.