

## **New Zealand Written Comments to COFI 34**

### ***Agenda item 6. (SCFT) - Decisions and recommendations of the Seventeenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Vigo, Spain, 25–29 November 2019***

- New Zealand endorses the report of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade. The importance of the Sub-Committee as the only global forum dedicated to discussions on trade issues in fisheries and aquaculture was emphasized during the meeting (para 9). The importance of the Sub-Committee is been further highlighted by the impacts of COVID-19 on trade and supply chains.
- In continuing the positive collaboration of FAO with other international organizations (para 12), this should include:
  - supporting the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations, which are due to conclude this year, by providing technical input to the work of the Members and WTO Secretariat (para 17 sub-committee report); and
  - continuing to cooperate with CITES to inform scientifically based decisions relating to proposed listings for commercially exploited aquatic species in CITES Appendices (para 56 sub-committee report).
- The issue of social responsibility in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors is important and growing. The FAO therefore needs to progress its work in this area consistent with the sub-committee recommendations.
- In supporting Members' development and implementation of National Plans of Action to Combat IUU Fishing (NPOA-IUU) (para 15) this should include consideration of the role of subsidy programmes in directly or indirectly supporting IUU fishing to deliver on related SDT Target 14.6 commitments to eliminate such subsidies (para 18 sub-committee report).
- In responding to the particularly strong support for the work of FAO in providing scientific advice to support the standard-setting process of Codex and the need to continue with the provision of FAO funds to facilitate this work (para 19), this work should continue as it has been delivered in recent years.

### ***Agenda item 13.1 - FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework***

#### *Achievements*

- New Zealand welcomes the paper outlining FAO achievements and outputs related to fisheries and aquaculture and notes a few topics of interest below.
- New Zealand strongly supports the FAO's work on implementing the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) through the Umbrella Programme, and congratulates the FAO in signing up 14 new members to the PSMA. We support and look forward to reviewing the capacity development materials and guidelines that have been developed once released.
- In addition to the PSMA, New Zealand is very supportive of the International Study on Transshipment, and we support the beginning of a process to develop a set of internationally negotiated guidelines. Transshipment is a key IUU risk when not

managed appropriately, and the study provides a very useful reference point to the current situation, with risks and key knowledge gaps, that can feed into the process to develop guidelines.

- Given the importance of the fisheries subsidies negotiations in the WTO, New Zealand welcomes the FAO's technical fisheries inputs to the negotiations in the areas of overfishing, IUU fishing and overcapacity and this should continue.
- The FAO's analysis on the impacts of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture food systems was highly useful, and complemented well the work the OECD COFI delivered on impacts and policy actions in light of the pandemic.

#### *Priorities and recommendations*

- Given that the new Strategic Framework will more clearly link to the SDGs, and the FAO is custodian of a number of SDGs, New Zealand is pleased that attention is on improving FAO's statistical analysis and data collection in the context of FAO's data modernisation strategy.
- In addition we would point to the outcomes of the Sustainable Fisheries Symposium, which concluded that best practice fisheries management and science has not been scaled up to sufficient levels in many developing countries, leading to overall negative global sustainability trends. Along with building data and statistical capacity, efforts to improve the capacity of developing countries to accurately monitor and manage fish stocks, in contexts of limited data availability, needs to be a focus area going forward.
- The FAO is rightly focusing more on country level assistance to build national level capacity through initiatives like the Hand in Hand initiative, and this effort needs to be integrated with regional fisheries agencies, such as the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and also with regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Data hub.
- As outlined above, the FAO has played a crucial role in addressing IUU through the PSMA, and New Zealand fully supports the proposed process to develop international negotiated transshipment guidelines in order to address the gaps outlined in the latest report.
- The increased focus on food systems approaches in the updated Strategic Plan also needs to ensure full integration of fisheries and aquaculture sectors alongside land based primary industries. This includes better recognising the nutritional role of seafood in healthy diets, and the opportunities that sustainably managed fisheries and fish trade can play as part of wider sustainable food systems. The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division needs to be fully involved in the preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit, and in the implementation of any outcomes.

#### ***13.1 Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture***

- As noted in the paper, FAO technical committees have discussed the Digital Platform at length in 2020 and New Zealand commented in those committees. This further input is focused solely on the lens of fisheries and aquaculture in line with COFI's expertise and mandate.
- Digital solutions are already widespread in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in many contexts, including in supporting fisheries monitoring, assessment and

compliance but are not readily accessible to everyone. We note in particular the finding of the Fisheries Symposium, discussed at this meeting that “Capacity building, in particular aimed at data collection and analysis and improving countries ability to better assess and monitor their fisheries, continue to be needed. These programs should increase transparency, reduce the digital divide and include new technologies”

- While generally comfortable that our questions and concerns have been addressed through the consultation process to date, we would appreciate further detail on the following:
  - What aspects of digital tools in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are anticipated to be covered by the platform? Will this cover already ongoing work on e-monitoring and reporting; traceability through digital means?
  - How will these aspects relate to the work of existing bodies at different levels – national level, regional (RFMO’s), and multilateral (FAO and OECD COFI)?
  - How will FAO ensure that all of the right fisheries experts are involved and the platform avoids overlap, duplication and inefficiencies with work on digitization in other fora?

#### **Agenda item 14. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPow) of the Committee**

- New Zealand supports the proposed MYPow 2020-2023.