

WorldFish comments on 34th Session of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI)

Agenda Item #11.1: Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across fisheries and aquaculture

WorldFish strongly agrees in saying that the irreparable loss of biodiversity can increase the vulnerability of poor people to climate and non-climate shocks, and reduce their abilities to meet their food and nutritional security needs and aspirations. We also believe ill-planned conservation measures can equally exacerbate poverty – for example, if poor peoples' access to essential natural resources is curtailed by setting up protected areas, which they are then excluded. Therefore, we recommend a people-centred and equitable approach to the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity.

WorldFish also recognizes that Aquatic Genetic Resources (AqGR) provide the basic material for the production of food from both capture fisheries and aquaculture. However, we would like to express our concern that AqGR are inextricably linked with marine scientific research and bioprospecting, which at present remains the privilege of developed countries with enough financial resources and technological capacity to explore these resources. This raises a serious intra- and inter-generational equity issue. Therefore, WorldFish strongly supports the key action under Outcome 1 which states: "Assist Members, at their request, in improving capacity for developing, adapting and implementing access and benefit-sharing (ABS) measures to take into account the importance of genetic resources for food and agriculture, their special role for food security and their distinctive features." We recommend that the work on AqGR should be informed by the CBD Convention and the Nagoya Protocol, which enshrine the fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources within and beyond national jurisdiction, in particular Article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol. This should be done in such a way that the mechanism safeguards the interests of men and women who depend on these resources to survive, and facilitate a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism in transboundary situations.



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