

## FAO RESPONSE

The FAO thanks the Government of the United States of America for the comments provided on agenda item 5, and appreciates the support of the United States of America for the work of FAO in elevating the importance of sustainable aquaculture.

The FAO Secretariat appreciates the support of the United States of America for the adoption of the report of the tenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture held in Trondheim, Norway, from 23 to 27 August 2019.

FAO commends the United States of America on the national activities implemented to support sustainable aquaculture production, specifically through the development of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas, and FAO duly notes the importance of science-based spatial planning and participatory stakeholder involvement.

FAO notes the call by the United States of America on recognizing and highlighting the role of aquaculture in alleviating the supply gap for aquatic foods, contributing to food security, sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods, and the need to communicate the importance of fish and other aquatic food to the public.

FAO takes note of the support in the preparation of the Global Aquaculture Conference Millennium +20 as an opportunity to review the status of global aquaculture and identify priority areas for research, development and governance improvements over the coming decade.

FAO takes note of the United States of America's interest in the progress on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and appreciates the support of the United States of America in the development of the Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

FAO appreciates the call from the United States of America for FAO to develop a strategic plan for aquaculture, to be guided by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and its Members. In this regard, FAO draws the attention of the United States of America to the Strategic Framework and its seven priorities agreed by the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in 2015<sup>1</sup> as well as to the concept note for the Global Integrated Sustainable Aquaculture Programme (GISAP) as outlined in Annex 2 of [COFI/2020/3](#), which outlines the elements of such a programme. The recommendation to include this item for discussion during the next session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture is duly noted.

FAO takes note of the United States of America's strong commitment in the fight against the threat of antimicrobial resistance, appreciates the active exchange of information and support. FAO appreciates the United States of America's commendation for FAO's work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the many achievements carried out under the FAO Action Plan on AMR in Aquaculture (2016-2020) on awareness, knowledge, skills and new guidance on antimicrobial use and AMR surveillance.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2015: Report of the eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Brasilia, October 2015. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5191t.pdf>

FAO recognizes the importance of taking into consideration the appropriate terminology. FAO thanks the United States of America for the detailed review and suggestion of the term “medically important” into the Key Activities Tables in the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025.

The welcoming of the process towards the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA) is gratefully acknowledged, and in the following section the FAO Secretariat is pleased to provide a written update on a more detailed roadmap and methodology, as requested, and affirms that the United States of America will be invited to participate in the process.

The findings of the Expert Consultation on the Development of Sustainable Aquaculture Guidelines, Rome, Italy, 17-20 June 2019 were presented to the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.<sup>2,3</sup> This Expert Consultation identified the components of the GSA as:

- Component 1: Pathways towards successful implementation of sustainable aquaculture in different regional contexts, based on case studies of accomplishments in similar settings or regions;
- Component 2: A series of practical thematic modules describing the rationale and attributes for approaches and practices on each specific topic, the existing guidelines and the key recommendations for successful implementation and capacity development, based on the achievements and difficulties highlighted by case studies;
- Component 3: A series of case studies describing the process, the accomplishment and the constraints, to illustrate the possible pathways and thematic factsheets.

Following discussions and recommendations from Members of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in 2019, FAO launched regional consultative processes towards the development of the GSA.

The regional GSA consultations included a presential meeting over two consecutive days in Bamako, Mali in 2019 and during three hours sessions in three consecutive days in a virtual format in two subsequent meetings in Asia and in Latin America in 2020:

- The African Regional Consultation on the Development of the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture was held in Bamako, Mali from 29 to 30 November 2019. The meeting report is available online;<sup>4</sup>
- The Asian Regional Consultation on the Development of the GSA was held virtually from 30 November to 2 December 2020. The meeting report is under preparation;
- The Latin American Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA was held virtually from 9 to 11 December 2020. The meeting report is under preparation;

The objectives of the regional consultations were/are:

- Share current policies and practices related to aquaculture in the region to inform GSA, currently under development by the FAO Secretariat;

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<sup>2</sup> COFI:AQ/X/2019/8 [www.fao.org/3/na137en/na137en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/na137en/na137en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> COFI:AQ/X/2019/Inf.8 [www.fao.org/3/na410en/na410en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/na410en/na410en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> FAO. 2020. Report of Regional Consultation on the Development of Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA), Bamako, Mali, 29-30 November 2019. Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1319. Rome. [www.fao.org/3/cb0280en/CB0280EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0280en/CB0280EN.pdf)

- Review existing regional sustainable aquaculture guidance that has been developed and assess if there are gaps that the GSA could help fill;
- Develop a list of priority thematic modules, both those of regional strength and those that are regional challenges;
- Propose case studies from the countries in their regions.

Based on consultations so far, the forthcoming activities are planned:<sup>5</sup>

- Independent case studies selection panel from February to May 2021;
- The Pacific and Caribbean Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA from 23 to 25 February 2021;
- The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA from 16 to 18 March 2021;
- The Europe Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA in March 2021;
- The Central Asia Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA in March 2021;
- The North America Regional Consultation on the Development of GSA in April 2021;
- Writing a draft GSA from June to September 2021;
- The second global Expert Consultation to review the draft GSA in August 2021;
- The final GSA draft will be submitted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture for its review, guidance and adoption, as applicable, in Mexico in November 2021;
- The draft GSA will be presented to the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI for guidance and endorsement, as applicable, in July 2022.

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that dates for the virtual regional consultations are tentative and subject to agreement with the Regions.