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CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION

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**THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND
AQUACULTURE 2022**

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper seeks to inform the Commission about the forthcoming 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022). The 32nd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, held in 2016, endorsed a proposal for the Declaration of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Committee noted the role that artisanal fisheries and aquaculture can play in the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, poverty, and in promoting the sustainable use of fisheries resources, thereby contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 14 (SDGs). The declaration aimed to sensitize public opinion and governments to these sub-sectors, and the importance of adopting specific public policies and programmes to enable them to operate in a sustainable manner.

2. In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the IYAFA 2022, and in this regard, FAO will collaborate with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The International Year complements several other key initiatives including the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and the Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028).

3. No common definition of artisanal fisheries exists, and while small-scale and artisanal fisheries clearly differ from industrial and recreational fisheries, the subtle distinctions between them are often hard to define. The FAO Glossary tends to equate "artisanal" with "small-scale", and from a technological perspective, these terms are connected with respect to the size of the fishing unit (the scale) and the relative level of technology (or "artisanality") expressed as capital investment/management. Small-scale fisheries are generally characterized by low levels of technology and capital investment, and seasonal operation, but there are other characteristics that should be considered, such as the ownership structure.

4. Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (AFA) provides food, employment and income to a great number of people. AFA also contributes to poverty alleviation and food security, and are particularly important for rural coastal areas of developing countries. Globally, more than 200 million people are estimated to be directly dependent on artisanal/small-scale fisheries for their livelihoods. In 2018, an estimated 59.51 million people were engaged in the primary fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Fourteen percent of these people were women. In total, approximately 20.53 million people were employed in aquaculture and 38.98 million in fisheries, and an estimated 90 percent of the 38 million people recorded by FAO as fishers and fish-farmers were classified as small-scale.

5. There are a number of challenges to secure sustainable AFA, e.g. in relation to environmental, social, economic and governance issues. These challenges vary at both regional and country levels. For example, in relation to economic performance, in many countries small-scale/artisanal fisheries are developing rapidly through market expansion (e.g. export markets), and the adoption of new fishing technologies (e.g. multifilament nets, echo sounders, satellite positioning systems). However, in other countries these fisheries are experiencing difficulties. Small-scale/artisanal fisheries are generally supported in those countries where they contribute substantially to exports (e.g. Northwest Africa), have strong ethnic links with political leadership, or involve most of the population (e.g. island states). In those countries that lack these attributes, the sector is generally not given priority consideration in modernization and development processes.

6. It is generally accepted that AFA issues have long been ignored by fisheries managers, and much of the attention to date has focused on resolving resource conflicts between commercial and small-scale fisheries. A historical lack of data and understanding of the socio-economic impacts of AFA activities, has often led to an underestimation of the value of these production sectors to society. Over the past decades there has been a growing acknowledgement of the value of AFA that has, amongst others, led to the development of new global fisheries governance frameworks (i.e. Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication - SSF Guidelines), and the initiation of sectoral dialogues. The SSF Guidelines, adopted by FAO Member Countries in 2014, provide a global consensus on the principles, good practices and guidance to ensure small-scale fisheries are sustainable and benefit small-scale fishers, fish workers, their communities, and society at large.

IYAFA 2022 ACTIVITIES

7. The overall vision of IYAFA 2022 is a world in which small-scale artisanal fishers, fishfarmers and fishworkers of both genders are fully recognized and empowered to continue their contributions to poverty alleviation, human well-being and resilient and sustainable food systems through the responsible use of fisheries and aquaculture resources and socio-economic development. The main objectives are: to enhance global awareness, understanding and actions to support the contribution and sustainable development of small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and use of natural resources., and to promote dialogue and collaboration among small-scale artisanal fishers, fishfarmers, fishworkers, governments and other partners to further strengthen their capacity to enhance fisheries and aquaculture sustainability, social development and well-being.

8. An International Steering Committee (ISC) for IYAFA 2022 has been established to support the planning and celebration of the IYAFA 2022. It is composed of representatives of each FAO region as well as of relevant UN Organizations and non-state organizations. Together with the FAO IYAFA Secretariat, the IYAFA ISC developed a IYAFA Global Action Plan¹ (GAP), which is available in the 6 official languages. The Global Action Plan (GAP) is the guiding document for IYAFA 2022 containing a series of indicative activities spread over 7 Key Pillars that have been formulated based on the most pressing challenges and related opportunities in the context of sustainable development. An indicative list of outputs and activities is provided under each pillar to stimulate stakeholders to

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/cb4875en/cb4875en.pdf>

develop activities around each pillar. The official IYAFa webpage² is available in the six official languages. It includes guidance for the use of the visual identity of IYAFa and an events section, where relevant initiatives can be featured. A dedicated email to contact the IYAFa secretariat is available – IYAFa@fao.org.

9. A series of virtual events to draw attention to the IYAFa 2022 took already place, including for example an affiliated session during the UN Food Systems Pre-summit in July 2021.³ A call for Human Interest Stories is being prepared, as well as a video for the launch event.

10. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the official launch of IYAFa 2022 is tentatively scheduled for 18 November 2021, and will likely take place in a hybrid format in Rome, Italy. More detailed information will be circulated through the IYAFa ISC Members representing the FAO regions. In 2021 the FAO COFI emphasized the need for IYAFa 2022 to increase awareness and an understanding of the contribution that the sector provides to the social and economic development of coastal communities, the provision of food of high nutritional value, the sustainable use of natural resources, and COVID-19 response and recovery. It was noted that IYAFa 2022 will also create a positive narrative through promoting partnerships, effective participation of small-scale and artisanal producers and exchange of best practices, technical assistance and capacity building. FAO's strategy is to engage with a large number of partners, including policy makers, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture organizations, development partners, academia, the private sector, regional organizations, and the general public at large. In this regard, the Member States are expected to:

- Celebrate and facilitate the development of national and regional level IYAFa activities to raise awareness; promote cooperation, networking, and sectoral partnerships; empower stakeholders; encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences; promote an enabling environment at all levels as well as tackling the challenges facing the small-scale artisanal in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Reduction (SSF Guidelines), along with the various technical aquaculture guidelines prepared in support of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), while referring to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). fisheries and aquaculture sectors while identifying the opportunities that offer prospects to address these challenges. (e.g. through media coverage, development of educational materials, public events and outreach campaigns), taking into account the IYAFa Global Action Plan.
- Contribute to and promote global level IYAFa activities.
- Consider the establishment of a regional IYAFa 2022 committee, following examples for this in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) area, Central America and South America.
- The national, regional and global IYAFa 2022 activities are expected to contribute to the implementation of relevant existing normative fishery instruments, in particular the CCRF, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries

SUGGESTED ACTION FOR THE COMMISSION

11. In the light of the above considerations, the Commission is invited to

- Note the vision, objective and Global Action Plan of the IYAFa 2022;
- Propose regional and national AFA-oriented policies and strategies to optimize the role of AFA;
- Consider the establishment of a regional IYAFa committee,
- Identify and support national and regional activities and events to celebrate IYAFa 2022.

² <http://www.fao.org/artisanal-fisheries-aquaculture-2022/home/en/>

³ <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/pre-summit>