

April 2012



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة للأمم
المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and
Agriculture
Organization
of the
United Nations

Organisation des
Nations Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones Unidas
para la
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirtieth Session

Rome, Italy, 9 – 13 July 2012

**Decisions and Recommendations of the Sixth Session of the
COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture,
Cape Town, South Africa, 26-30 March 2012**

Executive Summary

This document contains an overview of the topics discussed at the Sixth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2012/Inf.8.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture; and
- provide further guidance, as appropriate, with regard to the work of the Department in the field of Aquaculture

1. The Sixth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA) of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 26 to 30 March 2012 at the kind invitation and with the generous support of the Government of South Africa. It was attended by 47 Members of FAO and by representatives from 7 intergovernmental and 3 international non-governmental organizations. The full report of the session is provided as document COFI/2012/Inf.8.
2. Ms. Susan Clare Middleton of South Africa was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Mr. Alexander Okhanov of Russian Federation was elected first Vice-Chairperson. Oman and the United States of America were elected second and third Vice-Chairs respectively.
3. The Sub-Committee elected Mr. Yngve Torgersen (Norway) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the membership of Argentina, Canada, Chile, France, India, Namibia, South Africa, Thailand and the United States of America.

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's Efforts in Implementing the Recommendations of the Past Session of the COFI SCA

4. Member countries congratulated the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's efforts towards implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. The Sub-Committee reaffirmed its support for FAO activities and expressed its satisfaction on the progress achieved, especially considering limited financial resources.
5. The Sub-Committee recognized the importance of aquaculture to human nutrition, food security, poverty alleviation and socio-economic growth and reiterated that sufficient resources need to be allocated to the work of the Secretariat. The Sub-Committee also reiterated that further support and priority be continuously provided to Africa, with additional support to the Pacific and the Central Asia and Caucasus regions.
6. Members appreciated the convening of the Asian Regional Fisheries Ministerial Meeting in Colombo and encouraged the Secretariat to follow-up the implementation of the recommendations in order to achieve the desired results.
7. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of providing more capacity building support through, inter alia, the Technical Cooperation Programme, in areas such as policy planning and strategy development, aquaculture certification, feeds, marketing, aquatic animal health, aquatic biosecurity, aquaculture statistics, institutional strengthening, environmental issues, genetics and breeding programmes and especially addressing the needs of small-scale producers and developing countries. Several members also recognized the increasing impacts of climate change and encouraged FAO to continue expanding the knowledge base.
8. Some members expressed concern that no further work on the epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS) was provided due to financial constraints and encouraged FAO to identify other mechanism of support so that work on aquatic animal health can be continued particularly with respect to addressing the issue of monitoring and control of EUS in the African region.

Progress Reporting on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), Provisions Relevant to Aquaculture and Culture-Based Fisheries and Update on the New Reporting Systems

9. Many Members expressed their appreciation to the FAO Secretariat for the significant improvement of the questionnaire. A number of countries emphasized the importance of the questionnaire as a tool for self-assessment and to strengthen and improve aquaculture governance. Members noted the need to keep confidentiality of individual country responses and to avoid overlap and duplication with the current questionnaire. Some members stressed that the questionnaire cannot be mandatory and should not generate country or regional comparisons.
10. Members considered the formation of a national multidisciplinary response team covering all aspects of aquaculture as valuable in order to provide a more comprehensive and objective assessment

of the implementation of the CCRF. The Sub-Committee further agreed to recommend the creation of national response teams, focal points, and/or other mechanisms to improve the reporting.

11. The Sub-Committee agreed for two two-year periods of evaluation of the performance of the questionnaire whilst emphasizing the need for capacity building in the implementation of the new reporting system.

Implementation of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification

12. The Sub-Committee commended the efforts of FAO, recognized the importance and increasing usefulness of the guidelines, the hard work invested in its development, and appreciated the ongoing initiatives by several members in implementing the guidelines involving national schemes and institutions, as well as other regional platforms.

13. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the financial support provided by the European Union (EU) for the development of an assessment framework to evaluate the conformity of aquaculture certification schemes with the FAO Guidelines.

14. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO build on the experience gained during development of the conformity assessment framework for the guidelines on ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from capture fisheries, during its efforts in developing the same for aquaculture certification. However, one member expressed reservation on FAO developing the conformity assessment framework for aquaculture certification schemes, citing the difficulties encountered in the same exercise for the capture fisheries ecolabelling guidelines.

Assessing and Monitoring the Aquaculture Sector Performance: Importance, Issues and Challenges

15. Many members agreed that assessment and monitoring of sector performance is important and emphasized the need for an assessment framework for sectoral performance. However, this will require good quality data which may be a challenge in several countries due to the lack of a data collection mechanism. The Sub-Committee therefore recommended that FAO enhance its partnership and coordination with various institutions in countries working on this subject to improve the assessment and monitoring system, and to explore South-South cooperation mechanisms. Some members suggested that FAO should attempt a more active engagement with research institutions in developing countries rather than relying solely on individual experts.

16. Concerns were expressed by many countries regarding the proposed mathematical model/tools to assess and monitor the sector performance. A broad procedure considering ongoing initiatives, for example, the National Aquaculture Sector Overview (NASO) mapping exercise and CCRF questionnaire, may be developed and pilot-tested in developing countries particularly in Asia where 90 percent of aquaculture takes place.

17. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Secretariat coordinate with other countries and institutions which are working on techniques to assess and monitor the performance of aquaculture. Some members pointed out that certain statements and expressions in the agenda document could be open to misinterpretation.

Improving Aquaculture Data and Information: a Progress Review

18. The Sub-Committee recognized FAO's work on improving aquaculture statistics and supported the work proposed by the Secretariat regarding the Strategy-STA implementation and finalizing the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) Aquaculture Statistics Handbook.

19. Some concerns were raised regarding the proposed procedure for acquiring data through agricultural census, rural household survey and population census. It was proposed that efforts should be made to link aquaculture data collection with other national agriculture data collection processes, especially in countries where national aquaculture data collection is inadequate.

20. Importance of FAO's assistance for improving national data and information collection systems in developing countries was recognized.

Feeding the Growing Aquaculture Sector: An Analysis

21. Several members appreciated the analysis provided in the document and emphasized that meeting the future demand for food from aquaculture will largely depend on the availability of quality feeds in required quantities. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO continue its work on feeds and feeding future aquaculture.

22. The Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of increasing efforts needed to find alternative feed ingredients, inter alia, plant and animal based feed ingredients to supplement fishmeal and fish oil, and discussed opportunities and issues related to the use of agriculture products and byproducts in aquaculture feed.

23. The Sub-Committee recognized the increasing cost of feed and feed ingredients and recommended that, where appropriate, culture of species low in the food chain such as carps and other cyprinids should be promoted, particularly when focusing on food security.

24. The Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of regulatory and legislative framework, to ensure information is provided on formulated feeds (nutritional quality) in the market which should provide the basis for informed choices.

25. Some members requested capacity building assistance to improve the quality of the feed, on-farm feed management practices, production of floating feeds, and development of guidelines on quality standard of feed ingredients and additives including the organization of a regional workshop in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Towards a Plan of Action for the COFI-Sub-Committee on Aquaculture

26. In light of FAO's limited human and financial resources, the Sub-Committee agreed to the utmost importance of this agenda item and re-emphasized the need for a strategic prioritization of its work.

27. The Sub-Committee recognized that, while focusing on key global issues, the strategic prioritization should take into account regional differences in terms of assistance needed and inputs expected, food security and nutrition aspects as well as development options in light of such differences. The Sub-Committee also emphasized the need to be responsive to the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development to ensure greater recognition of aquaculture's vast contribution to food security.

28. The Sub-Committee encouraged the secretariat to prepare a draft strategy paper including a long-term strategic plan for the Sub-Committee, which should also take account of regional needs, for further discussion at the Seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. The draft strategy paper should be distributed to all members of the SCA for comments and inputs before final preparation of a working document for the next Sub-Committee meeting.

Furthermore, the Sub-Committee reiterated the importance of making use of the opportunity to discuss the prioritization of the Aquaculture work programme at the 30th Session of COFI and requested the secretariat to assist in the process of allowing such discussions to take place during that session.

Special Event on Genetic Resources and Technologies in Aquaculture Development

29. The Sub-Committee affirmed that emphasis needs to be placed on the assessment and responsible use of aquatic genetic resources for aquaculture and recognized that, without proper information, management and policies, serious threats to indigenous biodiversity could result, especially in areas where capacity and knowledge are limited.

30. Importance of the genetic improvement strategies which can offer opportunities for increased aquaculture production, such as long-term selective breeding programmes, was highlighted. Some

members noted that a regulatory framework is needed on issues of access, use and exchange of aquatic genetic resources and requested FAO to assist with development of guidelines on responsible use and exchange of aquatic genetic resources, application of genetic technologies, research and technology transfer.

31. The Sub-Committee suggested the creation of a framework or network for data and information exchange on aquatic genetic resources among relevant state and civil society organizations, agencies, instruments and institutions. Collaboration between and within regions in this effort was considered important.

32. The Sub-Committee supported the establishment of an Advisory Working Group on Genetic Resources and Technologies, to be coordinated by FAO, that would bring together knowledge and expertise, establish linkages with other networks and agencies and develop a plan of action as part of its activities. The Sub-Committee suggested that this Advisory Working Group analyse means for developing countries to gain access to genetic technologies and improved breeds of aquaculture species.

33. Several members recommended that activities related to aquatic genetic resources and technology be supported from extra-budgetary funding sources.

Any Other Matters

34. Mozambique, on behalf of members of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture for Africa (CIFAA), reported to the Sub-Committee the outcome of the consultative seminar on CIFAA review entitled "Improving the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)" held back-to-back with the Sixth session of the Sub-Committee. The seminar provided guidance for improving the efficiency of CIFAA and stressed the importance of obtaining political commitment from the Member Governments of CIFAA to ensure the viability of the Committee.

35. Namibia highlighted the necessity for the development of desert and arid aquaculture in Africa. In this respect, Namibia thanked FAO for providing technical assistance, which could also be extended to other relevant countries in Southern Africa.

36. Bahrain acknowledged the efforts recently carried out by FAO on aquaculture development in desert lands of the Near East and requested continuing technical assistance to member countries of the Regional Commission on Fisheries (RECOFI).

37. Ecuador thanked FAO for providing assistance to members on aquatic animal health management, particularly in addressing the issue of the white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) outbreaks of shrimp in Latin America and requested continued assistance in aquaculture health management in the region.

38. Members of the Central Asian and Caucasus Region requested FAO to provide support for the development and implementation of the regional aquaculture programme for the Central Asian and Caucasus Region. Some members acknowledged the FAO-Turkey partnership programme and the session was informed that the second phase of this programme is expected to be effective in 2013.

Acknowledgments

39. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the government and people of South Africa for their warm hospitality and excellent organization in hosting the event.

Date and Place of the Seventh Session

40. The Sub-Committee welcomed the offer by the Russian Federation to host the Seventh session of the Sub-Committee. The exact date will be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the chairperson and in light of the international calendar of meetings.