CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION

THIRD SESSION
2-4 June 2014 **Baku, Azerbaijan**
REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (21-23 April 2014, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic)

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Second Session of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), met in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic from 21 to 23 April 2014 under the Chairmanship of Ms Svetlana Balkhova (Tajikistan).

2. The Session was attended by representatives of five CACFish Members, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey. Representatives of the following invited non CACFish Member States also attended the Session: Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The list of delegates and representatives of invited States is attached as Appendix 2.

3. Officially opening the Session, Ms Balkhova welcomed the delegates and observers, following some introductory remarks. She thanked the Secretariat of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) for the timely preparation of the working documents prepared for the Session and for the other organizational preparations. She thanked the representatives of the host country, the Kyrgyz Republic, for its generous support and hospitability. She welcomed Mr Thomas Moth-Poulsen, who was appointed by FAO as the CACFish Secretary in April 2014. She extended her thanks to Mr Haydar Fersoy, who acted as CACFish Secretary from July 2011 until the assignment of Mr Moth-Poulsen to the FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia in March 2014.

4. Mr Smarbek Kuchukov, Director-General for Fisheries of the Kyrgyz Republic welcomed all participants and expressed his appreciation to FAO and CACFish for the close and fruitful cooperation that has strengthened over the last years. He regarded CACFish as a regional umbrella cooperation organization that aims at promoting the sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and the development of aquaculture in its area. He acknowledged the initiatives that were launched by FAO projects and CACFish with an aim at developing and implementing better management practices, management and conservation frameworks covering a wide range of areas, including fish introductions, climate change impacts and conservation of genetic aquatic genetic resources.

5. Mr Dorjee Kinlay, FAO Representative in the Kyrgyz Republic, welcomed the delegates and observers and thanked the host country. He highlighted the importance of the technical agenda issues of the Session as well as the prioritized working areas of the Committee in terms of wellbeing of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. He also underscored the importance of the issues covered by the Session to the host country, the Kyrgyz Republic. He referred to the synergies established among the national project "Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Kyrgyz Republic", the Fishdev-Central Asia Programme, and CACFish, and identified the national project as an effective cooperation instrument that set a good example of how a single country-based project can collaborate with regional partners to contribute to the region.

6. Mr Thomas Moth-Poulsen, the CACFish Secretary, welcomed the audience on CACFish. He extended a warm welcome to the delegatıons and cordıally thanked Government of Kyrgyzstan for hosting the Session. As the new Secretary of the Commission, he expressed the accomplishments that it has had in a relatively a short time and addressed the growing areas of works for which he wished to contribute through close cooperation of the member and non-member countrıes.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

7. A change to the provisional agenda was requested: the agenda item "the status of fisheries and aquaculture in the Central Asian and Caucasus Region" was combined with the agenda item of national reports. TAC adopted the provisional agenda with that change. The adopted agenda is presented in Appendix 1 of this report.

8. The list of documents placed before the Session is presented in Appendix 3.

UPDATES ON DECISIONS, INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

Main decisions and recommendations of the Second Session of CACFish

9. The Session was briefed on the main decisions and recommendations taken by CACFish at its Second Session, which was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from 16 to 17 April 2013. It was explained that the Second Session had adopted technical and scientific advice on the following technical areas which were submitted to the Commission for its consideration by TAC: (i) environmental impact assessment in aquaculture (EIA), (ii) regional principles for responsible aquaculture in Central Asia, (iii) responsible introductions and transfers of fish in Central Asia and the Caucasus and (iv) improvement of collection, analysis, and dissemination of fisheries data and information.

Seventh Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

10. TAC was informed that the Seventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture was attended by 51 Members of FAO and by observers from six intergovernmental organizations and four international non-governmental organizations. The CACFish secretariat reported from the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, and emphasized the importance of future attendance from CACFish member- and non-member countries in this important meeting. TAC was further briefed Session on the following key decisions and outcomes of the Seventh Session:

- Approval of draft terms of reference for an Advisory Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources and Technologies;
- Support for the establishment of a web-based platform for reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) for provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries;
- Strong support of the Global Aquaculture Advancement Partnership;

- Approval of draft Evaluation Framework assessing conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture; and
- Reiteration of the importance of regional networks and South-South Cooperation in fostering support.

Thirty-first Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

11. TAC was informed that the Thirty-first Session of the FAO's Committee on Fisheries, COFI, would be held in Rome, from 9 to 13 June 2014. It was underlined that COFI was the primary international platform for generating management and conservation recommendations for fisheries matters. The agenda items of the Session were detailed. The Secretariat encouraged members and non-members to attend the upcoming COFI Session.

12. TAC stressed the importance of the attendance of the Central Asian and Caucasus States at the regular COFI sessions as well as at the session and technical meetings of its sub-committees, namely the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee on Trade, while recognizing the important role and mandate of COFI.

Ongoing or scheduled regional activities (research projects, programmes, conferences, workshops, events, etc.) of relevance to TAC (Verbal reporting by the representatives of the participant countries)

13. The Member States and observers briefed the Session on the key initiatives, programmes or project of relevance to the issues that fall under the working areas of TAC. The briefings indicate that a line of efforts has been allocated to updating of fisheries law with provisions on aquaculture or drafting a new individual law on aquaculture. Revision of Technical Fisheries Regulations was reported to be undertaken by few countries. Development of policies and/or strategies for fisheries and aquaculture; promotion of aquaculture and fisheries; state aid for fisheries and aquaculture; strengthening of fishers or farmers organization; introduction of certification systems; establishment or development of registry and licencing system are the other initiatives that were reported by these counties in this context. Examples of varying types of ongoing or draft national projects of fisheries and aquaculture were also given by the countries.

14. The Secretariat briefed the Session about the Regional Fisheries/Aquaculture Projects of FAO, namely the Black Sea Project, the Project on Climate Change, and the Central Asia Regional Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (FishDev – Central Asia), a regional programme which was launched at the end of 2009 under the FAO – Turkey Partnership Programme (FTPP), with the aim of promoting development of inland fisheries and aquaculture in the Central Asian and Caucasus region. It was added that the Programme was to be operationally closed in June 2014. It was noted with satisfaction that the programme had so far successfully delivered many outcomes for the region with the involvement of key stakeholders. It was mentioned that the programme had provided valuable contributions to the establishment of CACFish. TAC was informed that, since its inception, the FishDev-Central Asia Programme had proven to be a regional flagship cooperation instrument which delivered numerous intergovernmental meetings, regional workshops, and trainings, expert workshop, national workshops, and study tours. It was also pointed out that the FishDev-Central Asia has contributed greatly to regional cooperation and strategic partnerships aligning varying types of needs of its partners. Enforcement of the second phase of the Programme was therefore seen beneficial for ensuring maximum efficiency and sustainability of the achieved outcomes in the region over longer periods of time.

15. The Session also briefed on the progress with the preparation of a Regional Education and Training Programme, one of the key expected results set for the FishDev-Central Asia. In this context, the Session was informed that works are underway to develop such a programme through external donor cooperation. It was added that specific practical ad hoc trainings for ministerial staff and stakeholders (i.e. fishers, aquaculture farmers, associations of fishers' and farmers') and expert

exchange are the key components of the proposed regional Training Education and Programme. The Session in this regard acknowledged the efforts allocated to further enhancement of capacity building in the CACFish competence area with a shift more towards delivering specific trainings and education under a package targeting all key stakeholders.

TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE CACFish

Inland fisheries stock assessment

16. The Chairperson introduced this agenda on the basis of the framework drawn up by the background paper CACFish:TACII/2014/2.

17. TAC noted that the region currently lacks accurate and reliable information on the status of inland fish stocks in the CACFish area and this, to a certain extent, negatively effects the region's effectiveness in the sustainable management of inland fisheries resources. TAC underlined the importance of undertaking systematic stock assessment as an essential fisheries management instrument while at the same time recognizing the institutional, technical and infrastructural limitations that hinder undertaking routine surveys and assessment with regard to fisheries resources, including fish stocks.

18. It was brought to the attention of the Session that stock assessment was one of the essential areas in which TAC should take a role in compliance with the objectives of CACFish and as stipulated the Terms of Reference that were assigned to it by the Commission. At this point, discussions were focused on how TAC would achieve such a challenging short-term role. The following roles were suggested, while duly recognizing that a number of associated outstanding imperatives had to be undertaken in order to achieve these roles, i.e. (i) promotion of enabling frameworks for generation of scientific advice for decision-makers, and (ii) technical supervision in the development of region-wide protocols, guidelines, methods for stock assessment.

19. Recognizing the importance of the emerging need of conducting routine stock assessments, TAC found it imperative to develop gradual actions towards self-sustaining development towards having a regional strategic framework for stock assessment under its regular work programme. In addressing the existing stock assessment practices, TAC agreed that fisheries-dependent data and information have been the primary assessment source for fish stocks in the CACFish area. The interventions made both by the delegates and observers led to the conclusion that the countries had varying type of stock assessment practices while few countries had no ongoing stock assessment studies or programmes. The countries that conducted partial or regular assessments generally used combined studied on hydrological, biological, ecological and food web and predator-prey interactions but mostly relied on historical trends and/or direct assessment methods like egg and larval surveys. On the other hand, one observer reported a more developed state of the art national stock assessment programmes comprising international, transboundary and national water bodies, addressing in this context a need for establishment of biological reference points.

20. It was added that these data and information had been generally limited in terms of the spatial range of fish species over large bodies of water. TAC therefore agreed on a need for promotion of fisheries fishery-independent research surveys in the CACFish coverage area. On the other hand, there was a consensus that the standardized stock assessment methods/techniques have not been fully established and put into practice.

21. The Session acknowledged that, besides the financial challenges, most Central Asian countries faced challenges of resourcing, capacity, fisheries data and information, which affect robust fisheries management and decision-making management at both at local and national level. It was however underlined that in addition to traditional standardized survey methods (i.e. gillnet catches; electric fishing; capture and re-capture), varying types of new technology are globally being used in especially in large lakes and reservoirs, the most common being hydroacoustic survey techniques for the estimation of species composition, abundance, biomass and size distribution in large water bodies (i.e.

lakes and reservoirs) for which CAC regional has richness. It was stated that new technology/methods have not been duly implemented in the large water bodies of CACFish area. When compared the traditional methods, the use of hydroacoustic techniques would require more qualified human resources, planning, budget, and more complicated analysis and evaluation techniques. As far as CAC countries are concerned, in cases where sophisticated assessment techniques are not applicable to the key commercial fish stocks and/or fisheries type or to the conditions that in most cases varies greatly, national fisheries management regimes would, in the first instance, rely on the traditional methods and techniques that date back to Soviet Union era. Stock assessments of many fish species are now routinely carried out using acoustic technology. It was noted that hydroacoustic stock estimation methods were increasingly being used in both shadow and deep waters in other regions of the world.

22. Another aspect to discussion was a general need for reviewing the current status of fisheries stock assessment and associated data management practise at regional level. In this context, collection of information on the existing methods and techniques were found useful in terms of their scientific review and subsequent improvement for which TAC would play a mediator role. Furthermore, review of existing status of stock assessment the review and likely harmonization of the methods and techniques for stock assessment in addition to associated sampling and data analysis, were identified by TAC as the priority themes for its short-term actions.

23. Lack of accurate, reliable and timely basic fisheries data was noted. In relation to the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, a precautionary approach should therefore be applied in fisheries stock management. The Session agreed that the existing data-poor situation would pose an undesired risk of unsustainable use of the inland fish stocks, including both those of commercially important ones and the indigenous stocks. Meanwhile references were also made to FAO's ecosystem approach to fisheries which was regarded as a key framework reference instrument that TAC should follow during its works devoted to stock assessment. It was also highlighted that when designed well and conducted on regular basis using recognized methods and techniques, the assessments in the area would reveal also comparative information on the pressure on the fishing on fish stocks if historical data sets are available both for the scientist and fisheries managers, leading to implementation of more robust fisheries decisions and development and implementation of harvest-based management strategies (i.e. quota) taking into the changing resource conditions.

24. The scientific uncertainty in current status of key commercial fish stocks (i.e. underexploited; moderately exploited; fully exploited; overexploited; depleted; and recovering from depletion) was regarded as an outstanding hurdle for fisheries sustainable management of region's fisheries resources. In this regard, a shift from a data-poor management regime to scientific estimation on the status of inland fish stock, which TAC needs to regularly review, was seen as key to sustainable management of fisheries resources in CACFish area. In this regard, a need for strengthening of national fisheries decision-making mechanisms with the involvement of academic and scientific institutions and fishers was pointed out.

25. TAC recommended that an overall regional capacity building on the stock assessment for fisheries management be strengthened, taking into consideration the social and economic characteristic of fisheries and the challenges in the development of stock assessment in a multi-level context, e.g. local, national and regional levels.

26. The following prioritised research needs were highlighted by TAC:

- prioritization of standardized stock assessment methods for classified water bodies
- identification of rapid, direct and cost-effective assessment methods
- development of national and regional cooperation mechanisms for stock assessment;
- regular fishery-dependent and independent data collection,
- population dynamics and stock assessment, and

- research on ecosystems/habitats.

27. TAC recommended the following next step of actions for building a regional capacity for stock assessment in support for fisheries management:

- Promotion of the systematic implementation and monitoring of fishery independent surveys, including those of biological and market,
- Promotion of implementation and monitoring of systematic fishery-independent research surveys and associated ecosystem/habitats assessments
- Promotion of data analysis,
- Inventory of the status of stock assessments, including techniques, methods, protocols and reference points used,
- Development of standard protocols and technical guidelines for classified water bodies,
- Demonstration or conducting of pilot studies on the techniques for the classified water bodies,
- Establishment of database for selected large water systems,
- Submission of findings of stock assessment research to TAC for their evaluation and generation of scientific advice,
- Consideration of scientist advice as a basis for determination of annual total and total allowable catches for given species,
- Implementation of assessment studies for at-risk species and aquatic ecosystems, including development of risk classification protocols for aquatic non-native species,
- Promotion of socio-economic research in fisheries,
- Promotion of development and implementation of a strategic management regime based on scientific advice and precautionary approach,
- Regional capacity building for research and data collection and analysis,
- Promotion of stakeholder involvement in fisheries decision-making,
- Establishment of a regional information system on the status of fish stocks,
- Optimization of research efforts
- Establishment and development of networking between research institutions and experts involved in stock assessment and ecosystem/habitat assessment activities.

Regional strategic principles for climate change

28. Discussions were based on the working document CACFish:TACII/2014/3. TAC noted that that extreme weather and climate events were increasingly being observed also in the CACFish area. It was noted that there were clear evidence indicating that the geographical distribution of fish stocks, life cycles of fish, and dynamics of aquatic ecosystems at the global level were being affected by climate change, most of which could be attributed to human activities. It was stated that growing evidence points at such changes in the CACFish area. It was a general understanding that climate change would pose remarkable risks to fisheries and aquaculture in the CACFish area, as indicated by growing numbers of reported climate projections and scenarios. It is known that a significant numbers of lakes in Asia had considerably shrunk, like the Aral Sea, while some were in danger or had fully disappeared. Evidence indicates unusual water level fluctuations in large water bodies (i.e. Issyk-Kul Lake) and the Caspian Sea.

29. The Session noted that the current knowledge on the likely climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture in the CACFish area seemed inadequate while uncertainty remained regarding the projected impacts of climate change, particularly on local inland aquatic ecosystems in the CACFish area. The challenges were seen as difficult to manage and monitor, and TAC in this regard noted the lack of specialised institutional research capacity for interaction between climate change and fisheries. It was anticipated that the climate change could have economic impacts on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the region, including the support industry, customers and other stakeholders. However, it was stated that mitigation options and strategies to the direct and indirect climate impacts on inland fisheries and aquaculture, including culture-based fisheries, existed. These included: increased water usage efficiency; usage of recirculation systems in the production systems of aquaculture; innovative technologies; integrated water resource management and planning. In this regard, development of adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change preparedness both at national and regional levels were suggested. Taking up the challenges of changes in climate and applying the appropriate strategies could also mean an opportunity for aquaculture in the CACFish Area.

30. Policy and planning instruments were described as the main areas of focus in terms of preparedness for climate change in fisheries and aquaculture. In this connection, preparation of wide-level policy and planning documents based on the reliable and best available data were suggested. Despite some ongoing studies, TAC concluded that there was a need for the preparation of a regional, contemporary and comprehensive review document exploring the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture in the Central Asian and Caucasus region. A reference was made to the ongoing Regional FAO Project titled Strengthening Adaptation of Aquaculture and Culture-based Fisheries to Climate Change, which aimed, among other things, at delivering governance guidelines for preparation of action plans, and to strengthen capacity building in the context of climate change adaptation.

31. The discussions showed that the Central Asian and Caucasus region had some valuable historical meteorological, hydrological and limnological data, which could be used as input for improved impact evaluation for fisheries and aquaculture. These data were also found useful in the development of possible adoption and mitigation options and associated measures. Discussions were focused on establishment of databases. However, further methodological harmonization was seen as a need due to the complexity of data required. Use of an integrated data management system was also suggested while a need for capacity building was expressed in this respect.

32. A member country gave a few examples of adverse effects of aquatic invasive marine species in the Mediterranean Sea. On the other hand, positive impact of climate change on one species of sturgeon from Caspian Sea was also given. Some countries explained their readiness for providing the existing data, particularly those of biological nature. Determination of status of fish stocks, monitoring of the resources, determination of plankton distribution, regular studies on ecological systems and dynamics were also suggested. Increased vulnerability of fish to climate change in its early development stages was underlined, supported by biological research results. It was also added that vulnerability may differ considerably for fish from natural habitats and those coming from artificial production systems. Legislative regulations on fish introductions and fish supply were seen as important issues by some delegations. It was also pointed out that as the climate change was a global problem, and the use of available global approaches to climate change adaptation could also be used at national and regional levels.

33. These global approaches included the development of methods and tools for risk and vulnerability assessment (biophysical and socioeconomic impacts, vulnerability of communities, economic activity and infrastructure) and for the assessment and prioritisation of adaptation options. There was a common agreement that projections and modelling studies would provide useful insights for assessment of climate change impacts in fisheries and aquaculture however the associated uncertainty was seen a matter of concern.

34. TAC identified the following prioritized research needs while recognizing that considerable uncertainties and research gaps remained in the CACFish area as regards possible long-term effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture:

- an inventory of status of research on climate change in fisheries in CACFish area;
- use of state-of-the-art statistical methods and modelling;
- research on water level changes, fish migration patterns and dynamics of inland ecosystems;
- collection of time series data, and
- development/application of practical models for estimation of climate change impacts on fisheries.

35. Following discussions, TAC recommended the following actions:

- development of national and regional mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- analysis of available information on climate change in CACFish area;
- optimization of research efforts by regional networking;
- establishment of regional data collection systems and databases of relevance to climate chance in fisheries;
- developments of guidelines and dissemination of lessons learned from other regions;
- analysis and projections for vulnerability of communities and key ecosystems, and
- applications of geographic information systems.

Framework for a regional strategy and associated principles for aquatic animal health management in CACFish area

36. The Secretariat introduced the working document CACFish:TACII/2014/5, which was the essential basis for the discussions. TAC acknowledged that the CACFish Area, to a great extent, lacked operational risk-based health management strategies for fish and other aquatic animals. In this context, a need for capacity building for planning and management was seen necessary in order to prevent, control and eradicate serious aquatic animal diseases through internationally recognized principles and approaches. In this regard, the introduction of proactive and risk-based measures instead of the previously applied reactive strategy for aquatic animal health management was suggested to be applied in future strategies. Formulation and development or updating of more technical and management regulations on the prevention of aquatic animal disease outbreaks and control and monitoring of trade of live fish and shellfish and their products was also seen a challenging need.

37. The proposed framework for a regional strategy and associated principles for aquatic animal health management in CACFish area was adopted by consensus. The Secretariat explained that the proposed framework was risk-based and comprised elements that were based on the lessons learned. The approved framework is provided in the Appendix 4.

38. Further works on the development of the adopted framework was seen necessary as suggested by the working document: capacity building; and completion of an assessment of regional capacity (e.g. a Regional Aquatic Animal Health Capacity and Performance Survey), as this provides a baseline for strategy development. TAC noted that efficient aquatic health management in CACFish area requires close cooperation, networking, resourcing, data collection systems, alert systems, and reporting.

39. Rapid diagnosis of fish diseases was identified as the most prioritized research need.

40. Following discussions, TAC recommended the following actions:

- Enforcement of the framework for a regional strategy and associated principles for aquatic animal health management in CACFish area.
- Development and implementation of technical measures and applications (i.e. certification systems for fish introductions; certification in the exportation and importation of live fish, seed and eggs) and technical guidelines for these trade-based measures.
- Networking among research institutions and researchers.

Fish breeding and broodstock management

41. The Secretariat introduced this agenda referring to the background paper CACFish:TACII/2014/5 addressing the Expert Consultation Meeting on Fish Breeding and Broodstock Management, which was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 10 to 12 December 2013. It was further explained that the meeting reviewed the status of fish breeding and broodstock management in the Central Asia and produced technical advice for bridging the gaps identified.

42. TAC noted that the region currently lacks accurate systematic national selective breeding programmes and that brood stock management seemly is one of the most common driving factors for appropriate management of aquaculture in the CACFish area. In this respect, TAC underlined the importance of application of genetic selective improvement techniques in aquaculture and culture-based fisheries. However there were concerns regarding potential improper application of such improvement techniques and associated problems (i.e. inbreeding; hybridisation, domestication, escapes). Establishment of a regional cryogenic gene bank or maintenance of genes of fish from the Central Asian and Caucasus Region in an existing bank was suggested. A need for implementation of strict regulatory rules for hatcheries was underlined. Supply of qualıty seed by Government-owned hatcheries was suggested with possible implications of certification schemes.

43. TAC identified the following prioritized research needs:

- implementation of biotechnological applications,
- fish breeding,
- genetic characterisation of fish stocks.

44. The recommendations produced by the Expert Meeting were adopted by TAC as it stands:

- Broodstock management should be an integrated part of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy;
- Promotion of production and trade of high quality and disease free seeds and healthy fry in the CACFish-area;
- Development of a “model hatchery” for the production, conservation and research of cultured species;
- Establishment of a regional database on genetic resources of important cultured species in the CACFish area;
- Establishing and supporting the maintenance of a regional cryobank of sperm for endangered and farmed fish (infrastructure, guidelines and proprietary issues);
- Maintaining of genetic identities of fish lines/strains/species and preventing inbreeding;
- Risk-based regulation for the use of exotic species;
- Productıon/dissemination of technical manuals for broodstock management;
- Practical training for the stakeholders (policy makers, lead fish farmers, etc.) about

broodstock management and selective breeding;

- Specialised training for hatchery managers, researchers in cooperation with EU initiatives;
- Technical guidelines for transfer of farmed aquatic genetic resources;
- Promotion/encouragement of renewal of depleted genetic stocks on the basis of scientific evaluation.

Fisheries data and information advice

45. The Chairperson re-addressed this agenda item, refereeing to the issues discussed at the First Session of TAC (CACFish:TACII/2014/Inf.2). It was brought to the attention of TAC that collection and evaluation of existing fisheries data and information for fisheries management purposes is one of the key roles of TAC. The Secretariat reiterated the need for regular submission of national fisheries statistics and questionnaires to FAO. In this context, some developing countries expressed difficulties in having systems for fisheries information due to certain types of the limitations. Some pointed out that the FAO questionnaires are still too complex to be filled out. It was also argued that there still exists conflicting figures of national fisheries statistics. Attention was drawn to a need for development or use of registry systems for fishers, fish farmers, aquaculture farms, fishing vessels, licences, logbooks, catch documents, sale notes, and vessel detection system in the CACFish area.

Review of national reports and status of fisheries and aquaculture in the Central Asian and Caucasus region

46. Each delegation summarized the key information presented in its annual national report submitted to the Secretariat. Observers also summarized the information on fisheries and aquaculture of their countries. TAC agreed that the summited national reports are not in full compliance with the adopted national report template.

Review of the Five-year Regional Work Programme (2011–2015) of CACFish

47. The Secretariat briefed the Session on the progress of the Five-year Regional Work Programme (2011–2015) and also on the Regional Work Programme by components. It was noted that many outputs had been delivered under the components of governance and aquaculture through the contributions made by regional FAO projects and other cooperation mechanisms.

48. TAC revised the Regional Work Programme and proposed some amendments. Revision and subsequent enforcement the five-year regional work programme was regarded as an essential operational instrument of CACFish in terms of regional improvements in inland fisheries and aquaculture. Addition of the following items to Regional Work Programme was suggested by TAC: (i) capacity building for modern methodologies for stock assessment; and (ii) preservation of genetic resources.

Preliminary workplan for 2014–2015

49. TAC agreed on the following intersessional period activities:

- Organization of a regional workshop on hatchery management (October 2014);
- preparation and dissemination of a practical manual on broodstock management;
- Preparation and dissemination of a practical manual on water use and fish disease management, and
- Development of methodologies for fisheries passport for small water bodies of Kyrgyzstan as a pilot study.

Election of chairperson and vice-chairperson

50. Ms Chinara Imankulova (Kyrgyzstan) and Ms Susana Khachatryan (Armenia) were elected to serve as Chairperson the First Vice-chairperson, respectively. TAC thanked Ms Svetlana Balkhova for her guidance and great contribution to the Committee as the first-elected chairperson.

OTHER MATTERS

51. A general discussion took place on the duration of Session (annual or biennial) addressing also the associated issues. Organization of biennial sessions with biennial work programme was found worthy to consider in terms of cost-effectiveness however no conclusion was reached on that matter.

52. TAC extended its appreciation to the representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting the Session and for the hospitality. TAC also expressed the hope to see the observer States present at the Session as new members of CACFish in the near future and thanked them for the great contributions they had made to the Session.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

53. The observer representative of Kazakhstan offered to host, in February 2014, the third session of TAC, subject to final official confirmation.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

54. The report, including its appendixes, was adopted on 23 April 2014.