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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
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Alimentación

COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF AFRICA

Fifteenth Session

Lusaka, Zambia 09 – 11 December 2008

REVISITING THE CIFAA TERMS OF REFERENCE

SUMMARY

The 15th Session of the Committee marks 37 years since its establishment. During these three plus decades, the inland fisheries and aquaculture environments in the Africa Region have changed significantly. Priorities have evolved as national and regional programmes have matured and are facing new, and sometime even more daunting challenges. It is now appropriate for the Member Countries of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa to review the Committee's long-standing Terms of Reference and decide if and how these should be up-dated to meet these new challenges; strengthening the Committee, ensuring it adds value and provides the necessary returns on investment such that members see the Committee as a wise use for their scarce resources.

INTRODUCTION

1. CIFA, the Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa, has recently evolved into CIFAA, the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa. This evolution is not only a change in name. It is a response to changing priorities in the Africa Region where aquaculture is gaining prominence. As priorities and opportunities change, it is appropriate to review and up-date the functions of CIFAA to ensure it can optimally add value to on-going and future processes aimed at enhancing the productivity of the Region's aquatic resources.

BACKGROUND

2. CIFA was established based on the conclusions reached by African Member Nations at the ad hoc Consultation on the Proposed Establishment of an Inland Fishery Body for Africa, held in Rome on 13 and 14 April 1971. This action was taken in recognition of the importance of inland fisheries to Africa and the urgent need for consolidation of efforts in the further development of these fisheries.

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3. The Terms of Reference for CIFA, from its establishment to present, are:
 - a. to promote, coordinate and assist national and regional fishery and limnological surveys and programmes of research and development leading to the rational utilization of inland fishery resources
 - b. to assist Member Governments in establishing the scientific basis for regulatory and other measures for the conservation and improvement of inland fishery resources, to formulate such measures through subsidiary bodies as required, and to make appropriate recommendations for the adoption and implementation of these measures
 - c. to promote and coordinate efforts on a national and regional basis to prevent damage to the aquatic environment, including the prevention and control of water pollution
 - d. to assist in the development of fish culture and stock improvement, including the control of fish diseases and the importation of exotic species
 - e. to promote and assist in the utilization of the most effective fishing craft, gear and techniques
 - f. to promote and assist activities concerned with the processing, preservation and marketing of fish and fish products
 - g. to encourage education and training through the establishment or improvement of national and regional institutions and by the promotion and the organization of symposia, seminars, study tours and training centres
 - h. to assist in the collection, interchange, dissemination and analysis of statistical, biological and environmental data and other inland fishery information
 - i. to assist Member Governments in formulating national and regional programmes to be implemented through sources of international aid to help achieve the objectives referred to in the preceding paragraphs.

CHANGING PRIORITIES AND NEEDS

4. The activities ascribed to the Committee over three decades ago had more of a research and development orientation, with a noticeable scientific tone. Although there is no specific mention of aquaculture, such areas as statistics, information exchange, environmental conservation, capacity building and national and regional strategising and planning are as essential today as they were 37 years ago.
5. However, these core and perennial issues may well benefit from being recast in the context of the present millennium where over-arching concerns for the preservation of biodiversity, climate change, pressure on resources and long-term sustainability impart new socio-cultural and economic environments within which to operate.
6. There is a widely-held perception that many, if not most, fisheries are over-exploited; with planners looking to aquaculture to fill the growing supply gap. However, there is also equally wide recognition that the state of the Region's inland fisheries is poorly understood.
7. Concurrently, there is growing awareness of the need to look more closely at the human ecology of inland fisheries and aquaculture. This has translated into the welcome emphasis on an ecosystem approach to inland fisheries and aquaculture.
8. Overarching these developments are the evolutions in geo-political structures and communications technology that make the Africa Region an area that can now be much more realistically and effectively linked to engender co-ordination, collaboration and cost-effective joint efforts. This sets the stage for a new and potentially more significant role for CIFAA.

THE NEXT STEPS

9. As with the recent name change, the change in the Committee's Terms of Reference will require endorsement by the FAO Conference. If the Committee decides that such a change is warranted, it must identify the mechanisms for undertaking this task within its own resources and in a timely fashion such that the change, if approved, could be presented at the next session.

10. In the event an up-dating of the Terms of Reference is approved by the current Session, it is suggested the Committee immediately designate a drafting group to prepare a revised document for consideration at the end of the Session following the presentation of Agenda Item 13 (Strengthening CIFAA within the framework of regional cooperation initiatives). A series of issues for consideration in revised Terms of Reference is appended.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

11. The Committee is requested to assess the current Terms of Reference and determine if these should be updated and revised.

12. In the event that an updating and revision is determined to be appropriate, the Committee is asked designate the drafting group as discussed in paragraph 10, or to propose other mechanisms for adjusting the current Terms of Reference.

*Appendix***Possible Elements for Revised Terms of Reference for the Committee for
Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa**

The goal of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa is to promote the sustainable and productive use of the Region's critical aquatic resources by promoting responsible inland fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee serves as a panAfrican forum for stakeholders in the two sub-sectors, including, among others, high-level decision- and policy-makers, public and private sector technicians, investors and development partners. The intent of the Committee is to make recommendations and provide guidance to Member Counties in order to achieve the goal specified above. Specifically, the Committee will have responsibilities and undertake activities in a variety of thematic areas as indicated below:

(a) **Co-ordination:** the Committee will serve as a platform for intra-regional discussion, planning and information exchange to promote wide application of best practices leading to sustainable use.

(b) **Collaboration:** the Committee will actively promote collaboration amongst all stakeholders with special attention given to regional and sub-regional structures such as NEPAD, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and sub-regional Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs such as the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation), but not to the exclusion of all engaged in the sub-sectors including farmers and fishers.

(c) **Communications & Information:** the Committee will promote and support enhanced communications and information exchange among Member States and their stakeholders, including actively collaborating with specific regional networks (e.g., the Aquaculture Network of Africa – ANAF), information services (e.g., libraries and databases) and related institutions and organisations.

(d) **Sustainable management:** the Committee will promote sustainable management and the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) as well as relevant best practices to uphold the adoption and use of socially, economically and ecologically sound and responsible management practices.

(e) **Resource use & access:** the Committee will promote equitable access to the Region's land and water resources whilst supporting responsible and sustainable use.

(f) **Environmental & Bio-diversity Conservation:** the Committee will sponsor environmental and bio-diversity conservation including the adoption of appropriate technologies, advise on transboundary movement of aquatic organisms including the use of genetically modified organisms, (GMOs) the establishment of conservation areas as appropriate, accurate and timely monitoring as well as proactive engagement to protect endangered resources.

(g) **Quality Control & Consumer Protection:** the Committee will advance quality control and consumer protection by, among others, identifying and disseminating guidelines for necessary measures to assess quality of all products entering and leaving the sub-sectors including foodstuffs as well as production inputs (e.g., bait, feed, seed, etc.).

(h) **Statistics:** the Committee will promote the collection and use of valid and up-to-date statistics in the management of the Region's resources by providing guidance to Member States as to optimal mechanisms for statistical collection and analyses as well as by linking those collecting the statistics with others needing these data in their endeavours to further sustainable resource use.

(i) **Policy & Planning:** the Committee will promote the adoption of appropriate policies, strategies and plans for the management of the sub-sectors at national, sub-regional and regional levels by, among others, making models of these tools available to Member States, including advise as to how these could be implemented.

(j) **Education & Research:** the Committee will serve as a focal point for co-ordination of education and research on inland fisheries and aquaculture undertaken in the Region, including offering advise as to how to harmonise structures, benefit from economies of scale and avoid duplication of effort whilst ensuring optimal quality and value for investment.

(k) **Evaluation & Monitoring:** the Committee will endorse proactive monitoring and evaluation programmes at national, sub-regional and regional levels including providing guidance as to how such activities could be optimally undertaken.