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Our Ref.: FI-701-29

Your Ref.:

17 January 2011

Communication from the Chairperson of the Committee on Fisheries

Dear Sir/Madame,

I have the honour to convey the second communication from Mr Zbigniew Karnicki, Chairperson of the Committee on fisheries (COFI), dated 17 January 2011. The third communication will follow shortly.

As per the Chairperson's request, his communication is being sent to all the Heads of Delegations which attended the Twenty-eighth session of COFI from 2 to 6 March 2009 as well as the Permanent Representations in Rome. Should you no longer be the person dealing with COFI-related matters, I would be grateful, if you could kindly forward this missive to your successor.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the assurance of my highest consideration.

Hiromoto Watanabe
Secretary of COFI
Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division
Fisheries and Aquaculture Department

Zbigniew Karnicki
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17 January 2011

Dear Distinguished Members of the FAO Committee on Fisheries,

This is the second letter which I address to you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI).

I wish to draw your attention to matters for your decision at the upcoming session of COFI regarding the outcome of the Technical Consultation to Develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards which was held in Rome from 6 to 10 December 2010.

Due to its timing, the outcome of the Technical Consultation could not be fully reported in the primary working documents for COFI. Therefore, I felt the need to send you this letter to highlight its importance and the need for COFI to take decisions on the outcome, as well as to provide you with further clarification on key issues and suggested action by the Committee in relation to it.

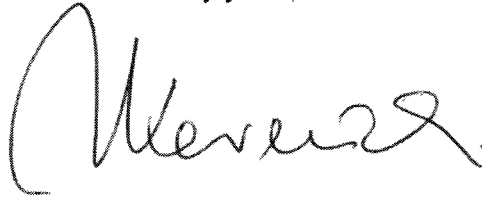
To summarize, I wish to recall that, during its Twenty-eighth Session COFI agreed that FAO should develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards through the process of an Expert Consultation followed by a Technical Consultation. The Technical Consultation was held in Rome from 6 to 10 December 2010. I wish to draw your attention to the Annex of this letter which provides guidance and suggests action by the Committee in regard to the development and implementation of the Guidelines.

In addition, please note that report of the Technical Consultation is available as an information document (COFI/2011/Inf.12) on the COFI meeting website: <http://www.fao.org/cofi/cofi2011/64143/en/>.

I would appreciate that you consider positively and proactively these matters subject to decisions to be made during the upcoming session of COFI, and make the

necessary preparations to allow us to reach successfully a constructive conclusion by the end of the Twenty-ninth Session.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zbigniew Karnicki', written in a cursive style.

Zbigniew Karnicki
Chairperson of the Committee on Fisheries

Copy for information:

Mr. Árni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
Mr Hiromoto Watanabe, Secretary of COFI

Guidance notes for COFI/2011/Inf.12

International Guidelines for bycatch management and reduction of discards

1. At its Twenty-eighth session in 2009, the FAO Committee on Fisheries agreed that FAO should develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards through the process of an Expert Consultation followed by a Technical Consultation.
2. The text of the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards, as agreed and adopted by the Technical Consultation, is included in the Report of the Consultation COFI/2011/Inf.12.¹
3. The Guidelines are global in scope; they cover all fishing activities in all seas, oceans and inland waters and are designed to assist States and RFMO/As in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Code) by incorporating effective management of bycatch and reduction of discards into fishery management planning and to promote responsible fisheries by:
 - (i) minimizing the capture and mortality of species and sizes which are not going to be used in a manner that is consistent with the Code;
 - (ii) providing guidance on measures that contribute towards more effective management of bycatch and reduction discards; and
 - (iii) improving reporting and the accounting of all components of the catch of which bycatch and discards are subsets.
4. During the Technical Consultation, Members were invited by the Chair to consider actions that would be required for effective implementation of the Guidelines. Several Members noted the importance of incorporating the provisions of these Guidelines in national legislation, as well as the need to develop field programmes and for coordination and cooperation in data collection, assessments of bycatch/discards and capacity building.
5. The Chair of the Expert Consultation that had developed draft text on international guidelines for bycatch management and reduction of discards, drew the attention of the participants of the Technical Consultation to recommendations contained in the report of the Expert Consultation² and noted that priority actions included updating global estimates of bycatch and discards, and implementation of the Guidelines through national and sub-regional projects.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

6. The Committee is invited to endorse the International Guidelines as adopted by the Technical Consultation on 10 December 2010.
7. Furthermore, the Committee is requested to:
 - (i) provide direction on the next steps that should be taken by FAO to assist with the effective implementation of these Guidelines; and
 - (ii) consider, in particular, how best to address the concerns raised in the Technical Consultation by developing countries regarding constraints associated with human capacity building and funding that would be essential for them to effectively implement the management and technical measures set out in the Guidelines.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/cofi/cofi2011/64143/en/>

² FAO. 2010. Report of the Expert Consultation on International Guidelines for Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards. Rome, 30 November-3 December 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 934. Rome, FAO. 28p.