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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-first Session

Rome, 9-13 June 2014

ANNOTATIONS/GUIDE NOTES ON AGENDA ITEMS

Executive Summary

This paper provides background information on the Provisional Agenda for the Thirty-first Session of the Committee on Fisheries. Leaving aside purely procedural matters, items 4 through 15 permit the Committee to fulfil its two principal constitutional tasks: (a) to consider and further strengthen international cooperation in fisheries, and (b) to review the FAO Programme in fisheries and aquaculture and its implementation.

1. Opening of the Session

The Chairperson will call the session to order. He will inform delegates of the voting right of the European Union and its Member States on each agenda item (*COFI/2014/Inf.17*).

After the opening remarks and an administrative report by the Chairperson on the inter-sessional consultation conducted by the Bureau, the Director-General of FAO or his Representative will inaugurate the session (*COFI/2014/Inf.3*).

2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session

Procedural (*COFI/2014/1*, *COFI/2014/Inf.4*).

3. Designation of Drafting Committee

Procedural.

4. State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments

The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2014 (SOFIA 2014) will be presented as a scene-setting information. Document *COFI/2014/2* provides a summary of the review of the state of world fisheries and aquaculture and the role of SOFIA as well as a summary of the analyses on the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and its related instruments, by FAO Members, Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), since the last report to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2012. The detailed analysis of the outcome of the questionnaire and regional statistical analysis of responses to the questionnaire is available in *COFI/2014/Inf.15* and *COFI/2014/SBD.1* respectively. Aspects on combating IUU fishing and counter piracy measures, as well as the management of bycatch and reduction of discards (see also *COFI/2014/Inf.13*) and developments on issues related to safety at sea in the fisheries sector (see also *COFI/2014/Inf.14*) are also addressed.

The Committee is invited to:

- comment on FAO's role in reporting on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture and how COFI can best contribute to this and benefit from it;
- comment on the extent to which the SOFIA publication serves this role and how it can be improved;
- provide guidance for FAO's future work in this regard;
- note the radical improvement in response rate to the questionnaire and encourage Members to maintain/improve their commitment in responding to the questionnaire for subsequent reports;
- advise, on the review of the contents of the questionnaire on the Code and the further development of the related web-based system;
- note the progress on the implementation of the Code and address the gaps and constraints identified on various components of the Code and related instruments;
- provide guidance on how to continue to broaden and deepen the implementation of the Code;
- note the developments on the status and implementation of international instruments and efforts to combat IUU fishing;
- note the progress concerning safety at sea in the fisheries sector, including through cooperation between FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) ; and
- note the progress made and advise on how to accelerate and broaden the effective implementation of the International Guidelines for Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards.

5. Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries

Document *COFI/2014/3* recalls the consultative processes that informed the preparation of the draft Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) by the FAO Secretariat. Referring to the Chairperson's report, it recounts the progress of the two sessions of the Technical Consultation on the SSF Guidelines held on 20-24 May 2013 and on 3-7 February 2014 and the Chairperson's text discussed by the Technical Consultation is submitted to the Committee for finalisation. Moreover, in response to previous recommendations by the Committee on the need to develop implementation strategies for the SSF Guidelines at various levels as well as to establish and implement a Global Assistance Programme which would support this process, the document also proposes an outline and main features of such a Global Assistance Programme.

The Committee is invited to:

- Consider the Chairperson's report of the Technical Consultation on the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (*COFI/2014/Inf.10*)
- Consider and finalize the Chairperson's text of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication included in document *COFI/2014/Inf.10*.
- Consider the proposed outline of a Global Assistance Programme and advise on activities to support secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries, including the future implementation of the SSF Guidelines – subject to their finalization - and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources within the new strategic framework of FAO.

6. Global and regional processes and instruments

6.1 Global and regional processes

The 2012 COFI paper "Ocean Governance and the Outcomes of Rio+20" examined the existing institutional and legal frameworks for fisheries management. Document *COFI/2014/4.1* updates the 2012 document by reviewing FAO's response to the shifting, multi-disciplinary paradigms which have characterized the post Rio + 20 period. To meet the objectives of Rio + 20, FAO has formulated the Blue Growth initiative (BGI). The goal of the BGI is to address food security and poverty alleviation by producing quality capture and aquaculture fish through processes which are integrated, sustainable, and socio-economically sensitive. To achieve its integrated approach to Blue Growth, FAO is collaborating with a wide array of other UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations and other initiatives or processes where synergies exist with the work of FAO. Document *COFI/2014/4.1* also describes the FAO collaborative processes, and analyses how these activities will further the Blue Growth Initiative. Collaboration with Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) is also reported in the document and supplemented by *COFI/2014/Inf.11*, in particular with regard to RFBs established within FAO framework.

The Committee is invited to:

- Review the global and regional processes, in which FAO has been involved, to follow up on Rio+20 and FAO's Blue Growth initiative as an integration mechanism for building synergies across the UN system and with other current global and regional processes;
- Advise on the appropriate roles and functions that FAO could be taking to strengthen the Blue Growth initiative; and
- Advise on the measures that need to be taken at global, national and regional levels to ensure that the Blue Growth initiative provides a better representation of fisheries stakeholder interests, and any support that FAO can provide in this regard through further development of policy assistance and capacity development.

6.2 Instruments combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Document *COFI/2014/4.2* reports on the outcome of the Technical Consultation on Flag State Performance, concluded in February 2013, which adopted Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, and which are being presented herewith for endorsement by COFI. The report of the Technical Consultation is provided as Document *COFI/2014/Inf.16*. It also gives an overview of the progress and status of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures together with FAO's advocacy and capacity development efforts in relation to the Agreement. Progress on the development of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels, and proposals for its long-term development, implementation and maintenance, are also included in this document as well as supplemented by *COFI/2014/Inf.12* and *COFI/2014/SBD.2*.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance;
- note the progress and status of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures;
- note the progress concerning the development of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels and provide guidance, for future development and implementation of the Global Record,
- note the developments in satisfying the prerequisite for the use of the IMO Number as the Global Record's Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) and encourage Member States with a fleet which classifies for phase 1 to ensure that eligible vessels have obtained an IMO number and to make the relevant data available to the Global Record; and
- recognize the need to establish a financial mechanism to support the long-term development, implementation and maintenance of the Global Record and encourage the support of this financial mechanism.

7. Inland fisheries

Inland capture fisheries provide nutrition, commerce, employment and recreation for people throughout the world, and particularly in the developing world. However, the sector is impacted by numerous other uses of water, as well as by irresponsible fishing practices. In spite of the importance of, and threats to inland capture fisheries, the sector is not often well considered in national or international development agendas. Document *COFI/2014/5* describes the sector, recent developments and suggested actions that FAO and Members may consider to ensure that inland fisheries are not neglected in national and international efforts to increase food security and poverty alleviation.

The Committee is invited to:

- review the current situation in regard to inland capture fisheries;
- advise on measures that need to be taken to ensure inland capture fisheries and the people that depend on them for food and nutritional security are appropriately considered in national, regional and global policy discussions; and
- consider the need for a high-level policy meeting on inland capture fisheries, possibly in conjunction with the Global Conference on Inland Capture Fisheries: Freshwater, Fish and the Future.

8. Fish trade

Document *COFI/2014/6* highlights the topics discussed at the Fourteenth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and summarizes its main recommendations. The full report is available as document *COFI/2014/Inf.7*.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade;
- provide further guidance on the issues raised in the report.

9. Aquaculture

Document *COFI/2014/7* contains an overview of the topics discussed at the Seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document *COFI/2014/Inf.8*.

The Committee is invited to:

- endorse the report of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- endorse the revised terms related to culture-based fisheries; and
- provide further guidance, as appropriate, with regard to the work of FAO in the field of Aquaculture.

10. FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture under the reviewed Strategic Framework

The Committee is invited to:

- review FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture under the reviewed Strategic Framework as provided in Document *COFI/2014/8*;
- advise on how FAO should further prioritize its work in coherence with the reviewed Strategic Framework; and

Follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee (*COFI/2014/Inf.5* and *COFI/2014/Inf.6*) and achievement of fisheries and aquaculture Programme 2012-2013 (*COFI/2014/Inf.9*) are also available for consideration of the Committee.

11. Multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) of the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- examine the Progress Report in *COFI/2014/9*, in accordance with its overall objectives and mandate and proposed results, work planning and methods, outline in the approved MYPOW 2012-15, and make recommendation for further improvement; and
- review and approve the proposed MYPOW 2014-2017, set out in the Appendix of the document. This rolling plan follows the pattern established at the 30th Session of COFI (July 2012) and is presented for comment, suggestion and approval.

12. Rules of Procedure of the Committee and Sub-Committees

At its Thirtieth Session in July 2012, COFI amended its Rules of Procedure, with regard inter alia to the role of the Chairperson and other officers during and between COFI sessions, the composition of its Bureau, and its reporting lines¹.

During COFI 30, Thailand, on behalf of some Members of the Asia Regional Group, proposed two amendments to the Rules of Procedure of COFI, with a view to modify the criterion for the composition of the COFI Bureau and for the selection of its Chairperson. On that occasion, "the Committee agreed that the COFI Bureau of the Thirty-first Session would examine the proposal made by Thailand, on behalf of some Members of the Asia Regional Group, for its potential endorsement by the thirty-first session of COFI"².

Based on the recommendations of the Bureau, the Committee may wish to review and adopt the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure, as set out in Appendix I of *COFI/2014/10*.

¹ FIPI/R1012, paragraph 9.

² FIPI/R1012, paragraph 12.

The Committee is invited to:

- review and adopt the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee; and
- advise on improvement in the work of the Committee and its Sub-Committees.

13. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Thirty-second Session of COFI

The Committee is required to elect the office bearers for the thirty-second session of COFI in accordance with Rule I (1) of its Rules of Procedure.

14. Any other matters

The Committee is invited to address any other matters proposed by Member States under Item 2.

15. Date and place of the next Session

The Committee is invited to decide the date and place of the thirty-second session of COFI.

16. Adoption of the Report

Procedural.