



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
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Agriculture
Organization
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des
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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-ninth Session

Rome, Italy, 31 January – 4 February 2011

**DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH SESSION
OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE,
PHUKET, THAILAND, 27 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER 2010**

SUMMARY

This document contains an overview of the topics discussed at the fifth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2011/Inf.9.

1. The fifth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Phuket, Thailand, from 27 September to 1 October 2010 at the kind invitation of the Royal Thai Government. It was attended by 59 Members of FAO, and by observers from three intergovernmental and three international non-governmental organizations. The full report of the Session is provided as document COFI/2011/Inf.9.

2. Ms Supranee Chinabut (Thailand) was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Mr Motseki Hlatshwayo (South Africa) was elected first Vice-Chairperson. Chile and France were elected second and third Vice-Chairpersons respectively. The Sub-Committee elected Mr Yngve Torgersen (Norway) Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the membership of Canada, Germany, India, Norway, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Thailand and the United States of America.

THE FAO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PAST SESSIONS OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

3. A number of countries congratulated the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on the efforts undertaken so far towards implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee reaffirmed its support for FAO activities and expressed its satisfaction on the progress achieved, especially considering limited financial resources.

4. The Sub-Committee reiterated that further support and priority be continuously provided to Africa. Participating countries from the Pacific region requested the Sub-Committee to focus support also on the least developed aquaculture countries in the Pacific.

5. Many countries appreciated the role played by FAO in promoting and establishing different web-based information systems, networks and other programmes among countries. Special reference was made to the Special Programme on Aquaculture Development in Africa (SPADA), the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) and the Aquaculture Network of the Americas (RAA) and FAO was urged to take up further efforts to strengthen these networks among countries. The important role and status of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA) as a successful regional network was appreciated.

6. Members from the Central Asia and Caucasus region reported on the dramatic decline in aquaculture production in the region and emphasized the need to revitalize the sector.

7. It was reiterated that the creation of a strategic framework for the Sub-Committee (as per recommendations of the fourth Session) would permit FAO to better identify and evaluate completed and ongoing activities as well as priorities that could not be completed due to resource constraints. The importance of working closely with the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade was also stressed.

IMPROVING THE PROGRESS REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES (CCRF), PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO AQUACULTURE AND CULTURE-BASED FISHERIES AND THE PROPOSAL FOR A REVISED REPORTING MECHANISM ON CCRF WITH AN INTERACTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

8. Many Members expressed their appreciation to the FAO Secretariat for the significant improvement of the questionnaire as a part of the reporting mechanism. A number of countries emphasized the importance of the questionnaire as a tool for self-assessment and initiating a

dialogue between the FAO Secretariat and FAO Members. The questionnaire could assist countries to improve governance in aquaculture.

9. A number of Members stressed the need to further improve the questionnaire, and several suggestions were made, including the option of providing details and clarifications beyond numerical scoring. It was suggested that the instruction manual provide clear explanations on the ranking system.

10. Although it was suggested that the questionnaire be sent on a trial basis to a limited number of countries, the Sub-Committee recommended that the questionnaire be completed on a biennial basis by all Members and that the two consecutive reporting periods be used to test the new questionnaire for trends and consistency, with interim reporting on the two reporting cycles to the Sub-Committee.

11. In relation to the recent inclusion of aquatic genetic resources in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), it was requested that FAO continue to be proactive in the work with the Commission towards the preparation of the State of the World on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, subject to the availability of financial resources.

GUIDELINES ON AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION

12. The Sub-Committee thanked FAO and the Members of the Technical Consultation on the Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification (Rome, 15-19 February 2010) for their hard work in preparing the draft guidelines. It stressed that the draft guidelines are necessary to foster harmonization and to minimize confusion in light of the proliferation of certification schemes.

13. Several Members stressed that it is important to include all four principal areas of certification in the draft guidelines: (a) animal health and welfare; (b) food safety; (c) environmental integrity, and (d) socio-economic aspects, in light of the fact that these issues are addressed in the context of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the draft guidelines must reflect and be consistent with the relevant articles of the Code. Some Members pointed out that inclusion of all the principal areas in the draft guidelines at the onset would be a burden for small-scale farmers and for countries with limited capacity to implement the guidelines. They recommended including only some of the principal areas and to incorporate the others in an incremental manner.

14. Since a consensus could not be reached even after extensive discussion in the Plenary, the Chair created a "Friends of the Chair" (FOC) group comprising Brazil, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Germany, India, Kenya, Namibia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America in order to assist the Chair in reaching consensus. The Chair advised the group to focus on paragraphs 7 and 17 (m) as a priority and report back to the Plenary. India was elected as the Chair of FOC. Following resumption of the agenda item, the elected Chair of the FOC reported that a consensus had been reached resulting in amendments to paragraphs 7, 17 (m) and 18.

15. Several Members, while supporting adoption of the draft guidelines, expressed their concern that the guidelines could result in barriers to trade. The Secretariat and other Members recognized these concerns, but emphasized that every effort had been made in the text of the guidelines to avoid this. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed that it is standard practice for FAO to work towards avoiding the creation of barriers to trade.

16. Argentina expressed reservations on the inclusion of environmental integrity and socio-economic aspects associated with aquaculture as principal areas in the scope of the draft guidelines.

17. Brazil expressed a reservation in regard to the approval of the draft guidelines on aquaculture certification. The main areas of concern, reflected in their paper distributed at the meeting, were related to animal welfare, environmental integrity, traceability, precautionary approach and non-tariff trade barriers, among others. Therefore, Brazil considered that further work is required on the text and that the text should not be adopted at this stage. Brazil stressed that the Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification are an effective tool to guide the development of private certification schemes and that they should not lead to non-tariff trade barriers.

18. Many Members referred to the need to review the guidelines in the future. The Sub-Committee agreed that the performance and implementation of the guidelines along with a mechanism for review should be discussed at the next Session of the Sub-Committee.

19. With the above explanations and revisions, the Sub-Committee adopted the draft guidelines and requested the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to approve them at its twenty-ninth Session (available as Annex in COFI/2011/Inf.9).

AQUATIC BIOSECURITY: A KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

20. The Sub-Committee congratulated FAO for the comprehensive document (COFI:AQ/V/2010/5) covering many important issues within the broad concept of biosecurity and expressed appreciation to FAO for highlighting the subject of biosecurity as an essential element of sustainable aquaculture.

21. Many Members supported the biosecurity actions presented in the working document, insisting that action should be taken as soon as possible on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

22. Several Members requested assistance to develop regional and national biosecurity strategies and plans. Many Members echoed the importance of continuing assistance to southern Africa towards addressing the issue of the rapidly spreading epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS) in the Zambezi basin and other water bodies and requested technical support to develop a regional policy framework and an implementation strategy on aquatic biosecurity. Members from Central Asia and the Caucasus region noted the importance of ongoing work towards developing a regional strategy for responsible fish introductions and transfers.

23. Members recognized the need to address the possible impacts of biosecurity measures on livelihoods, especially of the rural poor. Many members requested FAO to develop technical guidelines on species introductions and to incorporate biosecurity in the preparation of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Responsible Fisheries: Recreational Fisheries.

24. Members shared the view that significant biosecurity risks can arise from irresponsible use of veterinary medicines. The Sub-Committee recognized that biosecurity is a key matter not only for sustainable aquaculture development but also for human health and rural livelihoods. The Sub-Committee encouraged Members to use risk assessment and analysis as important decision-making tools to decide how to achieve the overlapping and sometimes conflicting goals of food security, economic growth and protection of biodiversity.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND AQUACULTURE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

25. The Sub-Committee complimented the Secretariat for including the topic of climate change in the agenda and on the quality of the document (COFI:AQ/V/2010/6). The Sub-Committee identified several groups that would be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, notably small-scale farmers who may have limited resources to adapt. Some Members noted that the impact of sea level rise is already affecting small island developing States and countries with low-lying coastal areas.

26. Members stated that both short and long-term adaptation and mitigation strategies are needed and a multi-disciplinary approach should be pursued.

27. Climate change may affect availability of key resources used in aquaculture. Therefore an integrated ecosystem approach will need to be pursued with the aquaculture sector as a key stakeholder.

28. Many Members identified innovations that could help in reducing and mitigating the effects of climate change. Members recommended to expand the knowledge-base on climate change and its impacts. Particular areas of emphasis were temperature rise, ocean acidification, use of predictive models, and alternative energy sources. A database for monitoring the impacts of climate change on aquaculture and for cataloguing projects dealing with climate change were also recommended.

29. The need for harmonized methods of analysis of the impacts of climate change was suggested so that information generated by different fora will be comparable. Members noted the importance and urgency of good governance to enable appropriate responses to address the uncertainty and unforeseen impacts of climate change.

MOVING AQUACULTURE FURTHER OFFSHORE: GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

30. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat for the document (COFI:AQ/V/2010/7), with some Members calling the document thought provoking or visionary whilst suggesting new points for discussion in future papers and clarification of terminology on the subject.

31. Most Members thought it inevitable that aquaculture will move further offshore if the world is to meet its growing demand for seafood. Some Members noted that aquaculture may also develop offshore in large inland water bodies and discussion should extend to inland waters as well.

32. A number of Members requested FAO for targeted assistance in capacity building, identification of suitable potential commodities and assessing the socio-economic impacts on communities when developing offshore aquaculture. Some Members suggested caution regarding the potential negative impacts of offshore aquaculture. A number of Members did not find working on a governance framework for aquaculture in the high seas an immediate priority.

33. The Sub-Committee recommended that FAO should work towards clarifying the technical and legal terminology related to offshore aquaculture in order to avoid confusion. Further work on assessing impacts of offshore aquaculture; analyses of geographical distribution of marine aquaculture; and documenting strategies to develop offshore aquaculture technologies have been recommended.

COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERIES STATISTICS: AQUACULTURE

34. The increased needs for reliable and timely aquaculture statistics and the need to expand the scope of aquaculture statistics to better monitor and manage aquaculture development worldwide were recognized by the Sub-Committee. FAO's efforts in updating the aquaculture statistics framework, including the development of a Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics (CWP) Handbook for Aquaculture Statistics¹ to streamline the definitions, standards and methodologies required for data collection and reporting were regarded by the Sub-Committee as relevant.

35. Several Members requested FAO to provide technical assistance in capacity building in data collection and welcomed the move towards the development of statistical standards to accommodate certain aquaculture production practices measured in numbers instead of weight.

36. There was widespread agreement that the socio-economic aspects of aquaculture should be included as an integral part of the aquaculture statistical data collection and reporting, wherever possible. Some Members suggested that the expansion in the scope of the existing statistics framework should be practical and reasonable, so that all members can participate and benefit from the improvements.

37. The Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) as a member of the CWP Aquaculture Work Group reemphasized the need for aquaculture statistics to cover the production of ornamental fishes which is an important livelihood of small-scale producers in many countries and that relevant statistical standards should be developed. The FAO Secretariat replied by reminding the meeting that the primary focus of FAO was on food production but that incorporation of statistics on ornamental fish could be considered if reliable data were available.

SPECIAL EVENT ON THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON AQUACULTURE: FARMING THE WATERS FOR PEOPLE AND FOOD

38. The Secretariat indicated that the main objectives of the Global Conference on Aquaculture 2010 (GCA) (Phuket, Thailand, 22-25 September 2010) were to evaluate the global aquaculture development during the past decade since the Conference on Aquaculture in the Third Millennium and to examine the sector development and performance along the lines of the Bangkok Declaration and Strategy. The Secretariat explained the planning process of the Conference. It was attended by over 650 participants from 71 countries. The GCA technical programme included two keynote addresses, three invited guest lectures, six regional reviews, a global aquaculture synthesis, 41 scholarly presentations, six thematic sessions, 20 expert panels and over 140 poster presentations.

39. The Sub-Committee was informed that the Global Conference on Aquaculture 2010 adopted a document entitled "Phuket Consensus". It was further informed that this document aimed at re-affirming the commitment to the Bangkok Declaration and Strategy as the key guidance for aquaculture development during the first quarter of the millennium. The document addresses elements that require further strengthening to increase effectiveness, achieve development goals, and address emerging threats and opportunities in the sector.

40. The Sub-Committee commended the organizers of the Conference and thanked FAO for the presentation. The Sub-Committee took note of the Bangkok Declaration and Strategy, the Conference and the Phuket Consensus in seeking to enhance the aquaculture sector's contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

¹ First meeting of the CWP-Aquaculture held immediately after the session developed a work plan for the coming years and approved the Handbook. The Handbook will be made available in English at this COFI session.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

41. The Cook Islands on behalf of the Pacific Island Members present at the Session asked for an FAO interregional technical cooperation project to strengthen cooperation among aquaculture networks. The delegate of the Cook Islands also requested FAO to develop technical guidelines for the use of alien species in aquaculture.

42. The delegate from Senegal mentioned that Senegal and other African countries need to increase the use of native aquatic species by making them more productive through genetic improvement programmes and requested FAO's assistance for this purpose.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

43. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Thai people and the Royal Thai Government for their warm hospitality and excellent organization in hosting this event.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE SIXTH SESSION

44. The sixth Session of the Sub-Committee will be held in South Africa in 2012. The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of South Africa for its offer to host the Session. The exact date and place of the sixth Session will be decided in consultation with the South African government and will be communicated to Members during the twenty-ninth Session of COFI. South Africa invited all Members and, in particular, the other African countries to participate in making the event a success.