



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
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des
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l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, Italy, 2 – 6 March 2009

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, 6 – 10 OCTOBER 2008, PUERTO VARAS, CHILE

SUMMARY

This document contains an overview of the topics discussed at the Fourth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and makes reference to its main recommendations. The full report is available as document COFI/2009/Inf.9.

1. The fourth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Puerto Varas, Chile, from 6 to 10 October 2008 at the kind invitation of the Government of Chile. It was attended by 38 Members of FAO, by representatives from one specialized agency of the United Nations and by observers from six intergovernmental and three international non-governmental organizations. The full report of the session is provided as the document COFI/2009/Inf.9.
2. Ms Marisol Alvarez (Chile) was elected Chairperson of the Sub-Committee. Ms Supranee Chinabut (Thailand) was elected first Vice-Chairperson. Russia and Australia were elected second and third Vice-Chairs respectively. The Sub-Committee elected Ms Linda Chaves (United States of America) Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the membership of Belgium, Canada, China, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Norway, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America.

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

3. The Secretary of the Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics (CWP) reported the progress towards establishing a CWP Aquaculture Group and highlighted the conclusions and recommendations of the recent meeting held in Puerto Varas. The meeting concurred that harmonization of terminology, concepts, methodologies and standards should be the priorities. In this regard, the Secretary requested assistance from members for participation and funding support.
4. The Sub-Committee commended the Secretariat on the quality, integrity and comprehensiveness of the documents and reaffirmed its support for FAO activities. The Sub-Committee expressed its strong satisfaction on the progress made, especially considering limited financial resources. In this regard, it was recommended that the creation of a strategic framework for the Sub-Committee would permit FAO to better identify completed and ongoing activities as well as priorities not completed due to resource constraints. For the latter, FAO should inform the Sub-Committee of plans and options for completing remaining activities.
5. Members acknowledged FAO's efforts for development of African aquaculture, in particular the establishment of the Special Programme for Aquaculture Development in Africa (SPADA) and the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF). A number of members recognized the relevance of creating aquaculture networks for the development of sustainable aquaculture and also stressed the importance of the establishment of the Aquaculture Network of the Americas (ANA).
6. Some members emphasized the importance of FAO's continued support to countries in the development of policies and plans for aquaculture development with an ecosystem perspective so as to include other resource users. The need to consider the incorporation of economic and social aspects was stressed, as well as the necessity to give higher priority to the participation of women in aquaculture development. Interaction between fisheries and aquaculture was also considered a relevant subject for future work and FAO was further encouraged to facilitate collaboration between the two COFI Sub-Committees and to report such efforts. FAO was asked to increase efforts towards improving the knowledge and management of aquatic animal health while building capacity at the regional levels.

SPECIAL EVENT ON THE FAO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT'S SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (SPADA)

7. The Secretariat introduced this special event through PowerPoint presentations with the aim of sharing the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's Special Programme for Aquaculture Development in Africa (SPADA) with Member countries. Other presentations were made by representatives from two African Members and NEPAD. Many Members recognised the importance of the programme. The Sub-Committee, in particular all the African members and NEPAD, expressed its appreciation to FAO for the SPADA initiative, urged FAO to further promote and use SPADA as the coherent framework for aquaculture development in Africa, and called for participation of and funding support by development agencies.

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES ON AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION

8. Members commended the work and efforts of the Secretariat to advance the preparation of the technical guidelines on certification in aquaculture and preparing a draft document which constitutes a good basis for continuing with the processes to finalise the guidelines. Members highlighted the importance of these guidelines for facilitating international trade in aquaculture products and the priority they attach to their finalisation so that guidelines can serve as a basis for the development of transparent and globally acceptable certification schemes in aquaculture. While some members were willing to approve the draft guidelines, some other members indicated their inability to adopt them in their present form.

9. The Sub-Committee mandated a working group to recommend a process that will allow FAO to finalise the guidelines in a timely manner. The working group was composed of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, India, Mexico, Norway, Thailand and the United States of America. The proposal of the working group, endorsed by the Sub-Committee, requests FAO to invite members to submit their comments on the present draft guidelines by 31 January 2009, and that these comments be consolidated by FAO into a new version of the draft guidelines to be sent to FAO members by 31 March 2009. It is further recommended that the revised version will be discussed at a technical consultation to be held as soon as possible in 2009. During its 28th session in March 2009, COFI will be requested to consider delegating to the technical consultation authority to finalise and adopt the guidelines.

10. The Sub-Committee recommended that finalisation of the guidelines is given highest priority by FAO which should strive to secure financial resources to finalise the process and to support broad participation of members in particular from developing countries, including also to seek extra budgetary funding, as necessary, to ensure finalization of the guidelines.

IMPROVING THE PROGRESS REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1995 FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES (CCRF) PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO AQUACULTURE AND CULTURE-BASED FISHERIES

11. Many Members expressed their appreciation for the analysis provided and noted that some progress had been made in the last reporting period but at the same time recognized that further improvement was needed. The proposal for a revised reporting mechanism with an interactive questionnaire format was received positively by the Sub-Committee, although some members sought clarification regarding the operational features of this questionnaire.

12. With regard to the questionnaire for evaluating the progress being made in the implementation of the Code, most Members advised that further work on the proposed reporting template is required. The Sub-Committee recommended that a revised pilot version of the questionnaire format be tested in different regions reflecting different environmental conditions in order to ensure global applicability.

13. Different opinions were expressed on the proposed reporting time frame. The Secretariat informed the Sub-committee that the reporting frequency, i.e. a comprehensive quadrennial report supplemented by a minor report in between, would be deferred to the next session of COFI for decision.

TOWARDS BETTER GOVERNANCE IN AQUACULTURE

14. Some members described their national activities towards strengthening governance in aquaculture. These include risk management frameworks, aquatic animal health management programmes, aquaculture certification and assistance to small-scale aquaculture. Some members described their collaborative efforts with farmers and farmers' associations particularly using a participatory approach in providing extension and support services. Self governance was considered to be an additional desirable approach, and the need for capacity building at farmers and farm organization levels was underscored. A few members indicated that their countries do not have specific aquaculture policies or legislation since it is a relatively recent activity for them.

15. Some countries stressed the need for capacity building in areas such as strengthening governance schemes, aquaculture regulation and legislation, certification and traceability, food safety, the use of aquaculture insurance and appropriate governance for offshore farming. Technical assistance must take into consideration the different characteristics of each country or region. FAO has been requested to strengthen both south-south and north-south cooperation towards the improved exchange of expertise and experiences.

16. Building awareness on success stories and highlighting the positive impacts of aquaculture were considered important. Some members suggested that practical country case studies of successful governance models could be discussed by the Sub-Committee and disseminated in order to improve the sectoral management by other members.

17. Upon the suggestion of several members, the Secretariat organized a Side Event to share good governance initiatives and experiences. Chile, China, India, Mozambique, Norway as well as NACA and OSPESCA presented their experiences in Aquaculture Governance.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES IN MEETING THE RISING GLOBAL DEMAND FOR FOOD FISH FROM AQUACULTURE

18. The Sub-Committee appreciated the good review of the current situation, issues and challenges for the sector including the demand for aquaculture products, continued growth of aquaculture, trends in species, consumption and trade, small-scale producers and market access, social responsibility, marine resources and aquafeed, environmental and social aspects, diversification and expansion, communication and networks, and aquaculture insurance.

19. African participants stressed that the challenges highlighted relate to governance especially supporting structured and responsible growth of the smallholder private sector and the need for supportive and appropriate policies and legislation. This requires access to high quality inputs such as improved fish seed and feed, credit, information and education. Members requested technical assistance for implementing their national aquaculture development plans and for dealing with the challenges at hand.

20. Many countries, supported by NEPAD, emphasized the need for a regional approach concerning disease outbreaks and the need to establish an aquatic biosecurity framework and requested FAO to provide technical assistance through a regional technical cooperation project under the umbrella of SPADA.

21. Several countries stressed that well planned and well managed aquaculture leads to social benefits, improving food security and helping towards progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The need to educate the public on achievements and positive developments of aquaculture were mentioned. Critical issues identified were i) improving the governance, and

organization of farmers, ii) environmental issues including effluents, iii) continued availability of fish feeds, and iv) the integration of aquaculture into water resource management and agricultural sector management plans. Other challenges mentioned included capacity building and farmer training to become more competitive and meet trade requirements, benefits and risks of seafood, sharing of best practices and the need to publicize positive impacts of certain aquaculture practices. Aquaculture in offshore areas was mentioned as promising but still requiring efforts in research as well as improvements in technology and regulatory framework. Climate change and possibilities for mitigation were mentioned by several members as issues of increasing importance that could be dealt with in collaboration with other specialized agencies.

22. Some countries mentioned the importance of food safety and the need for cost-effective certification and requested FAO to continue its work towards better market access including through the linkage particularly of small-scale farmers with fair trade organizations. A request was made for FAO technical assistance towards establishing and implementing an ASEAN regional aquaculture development strategy including certification implementation, traceability and cluster farm management. It was suggested that the Sub-Committee examine and report on the use of aquaculture technologies to enhance and rebuild depleted fisheries.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE FIFTH SESSION

23. The fifth session of the Sub-Committee will be held in Thailand in 2010. The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to the government of Thailand for its offer to host the session. The exact date and place of the Fifth Session will be decided in consultation with the Royal Thai Government and will be communicated to the Members accordingly.

24. South Africa conveyed their interest in hosting the 6th Session of the Sub-Committee.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

25. The Committee is requested to endorse the Report of the Sub-Committee and give further guidances as appropriate with regard to the work of the Department in the field of aquaculture.