

COFI 29 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2011

The 29th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) convened in plenary sessions throughout the day on Monday. COFI elected the Chair and Vice-Chairs and designated members of a Drafting Committee, and adopted the agenda, addressed progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and related instruments, and discussed the decisions and recommendations of the 12th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Outgoing Chair of COFI 28, Zbigniew Karnicki, Poland, opened the meeting. Ann Tutwiler, Deputy Director-General of FAO, welcomed delegates and said FAO looks forward to the guidance and recommendations of the Committee on important issues on the agenda.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Election of Officers: Mohammad Pourkazemi, Iran, was elected Chair of COFI 29 and Johan Williams, Norway, was elected as first Vice-Chair. The other elected vice-chairs include Canada, India, Chile, Spain and Zimbabwe.

The US was elected Chair of the Drafting Committee, and other elected members include: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, the Republic of Congo, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Syria.

Adoption of the Agenda: COFI delegates adopted the agenda (COFI/2011/1) as amended. An Asia-Pacific Fisheries Ministerial Conference to be held in Sri Lanka and fisheries in the Gulf of Guinea will be discussed under "other matters."

THE STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE 2010: Árni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, presented the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010 (SOFIA 2010) report, highlighting major changes in the last 15 years, including, a rapid increase in aquaculture production, rising demand for fish and fisheries products and a global call for responsible management.

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCRF

In the morning, the Secretariat introduced documents on: Progress in the Implementation of the CCRF and Related Instruments (COFI/2011/2); Results of the Informal 2010 Pilot Test of the Electronic Questionnaire for the CCRF (COFI/2011/2/Supp.1); and Safety at Sea in the Fisheries Sector (COFI/INF.14). Many countries highlighted their efforts to implement the CCRF, including through adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks, cooperation through regional fisheries management organizations

(RFMOs) and the development and implementation of national plans of action (NPOAs), among other means.

In the morning, BRAZIL called on COFI to ensure the economic viability of fisheries and aquaculture in developing countries by, *inter alia*, fostering technical capacity, and adopting a proportional approach to balancing environmental, social and economic priorities.

NEW ZEALAND emphasized that FAO should focus on setting global standards for fisheries management and assisting developing countries in applying those standards. She also called for: a stocktaking exercise to examine the roles of other fisheries organizations to avoid duplication of work; development of an international standard for sustainability; and capacity building for developing countries.

CHINA stressed the importance of data collection on fisheries and aquaculture. ICELAND emphasized that FAO is the most appropriate forum for addressing fisheries and negotiating technical agreements for their management. ARGENTINA highlighted progress in the implementation of the CCRF *inter alia*, the new system of individual fishing quotas and a new integrated vessel monitoring system.

MOROCCO underscored national strategies to ensure sustainability and increase competitiveness of the fishing sector. TANZANIA noted the need for FAO to support infrastructure development and technology transfer in developing countries to provide equal grounds for compliance with the CCRF by all countries. GUATEMALA mentioned the integration of fisheries and aquaculture policies and other initiatives under the framework of the Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA). MEXICO noted financial constraints to the implementation of the CCRF.

The US highlighted the 2010 Comprehensive Oceans Policy and the completion of the NPOA for sharks, as well as efforts to reduce sea bird bycatch. MAURITIUS drew attention to challenges including development of marine aquaculture, intercoastal management and fleet capacity. Commenting on the CCRF implementation report, the REPUBLIC OF CONGO pointed to shortcomings including lack of regional differentiation and the absence of reference to capacity building and training in the conclusions.

The EU called for stronger implementation of the FAO Technical Guidelines on the ecosystem approach to fisheries. INDIA highlighted the need to address inland fisheries and also underscored the value of traditional knowledge in fisheries management. NAMIBIA emphasized the creation and adoption of NPOAs for sharks, as well as monitoring of shark fishing nations, and called for addressing over-capacity to prevent the deterioration of fisheries.

THAILAND noted the importance of stakeholder

participation, particularly in the implementation of NPOAs, and requested continued technical support from FAO to developing countries. With the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, GUATEMALA, TURKEY and the GAMBIA, she emphasized the important role of RFMOs in the development and implementation of NPOAs. SRI LANKA highlighted actions to implement the CCRF, including regulations to limit gear and port state measures to prevent IUU fishing.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for wider participation of stakeholders in fisheries management, and regional and bilateral programmes to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in developing countries. CAMEROON underscored that developed countries and FAO should provide assistance to ensure implementation of the CCRF in developing countries. GAMBIA highlighted challenges to disseminating the CCRF and associated NPOAs to communities.

NORWAY expressed support for increased coordination with other UN agencies. He said COFI should endorse the guidelines on bycatch and discard, and certification, and highlighted the importance of the international instrument on small-scale fisheries.

In the afternoon, the MALDIVES highlighted shark conservation initiatives including a buy-back scheme for shark fishers and the establishment of a shark trust fund. The SEYCHELLES underscored specific threats and challenges in the Western Indian Ocean including vulnerability to climate change and, with KENYA, the impact of piracy.

The EU, with ANGOLA and GHANA, noted concern over the low level of responses to the questionnaire on CCRF implementation. INDONESIA requested FAO to strengthen data collection on inland fisheries.

VENEZUELA outlined: domestic technical norms for artisanal trolling; an updated register for high sea vessels; and rights for small-scale fisheries. SOUTH AFRICA highlighted his country's efforts including: developing an NPOA for sharks and establishing a working group to implement the ecosystem approach. UKRAINE, ALGERIA, GHANA, ECUADOR, SAUDI ARABIA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted regulatory and policy measures undertaken to implement the CCRF.

BANGLADESH underscored the need for financial and technical assistance to support public-private initiatives such as a national working group on fisheries. IRAQ noted the importance of inland fisheries and called for support to rebuild fisheries infrastructure destroyed by conflict.

On sharks, JAPAN emphasized a species-by-species approach, rather than a total ban on shark finning, and, on sea bass, said that regulations should account for the circumstances of individual fisheries in different regions, instead of taking a global approach.

CANADA prioritized the further development and implementation of guidelines for responsible fishing and global tools to combat IUU fishing, as well as deeper and broader implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture. SUDAN reiterated calls for the establishment of a regional commission for the Red Sea and assistance for developing the aquaculture industry. The FAROE ISLANDS emphasized the need for broad consensus on priority issues and guidelines on bycatch management.

The SUBREGIONAL FISHERIES COMMISSION called for sanctions for noncompliance with the CCRF. BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME - INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION, PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY and other IGOs presented their efforts related to the implementation of the CCRF. REGIONAL FISHERIES COMMITTEE FOR THE GULF OF GUINEA, called for funding to ensure developing country participation in COFI sub-committee meetings and technical consultations.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER said combating IUU fishing is a priority in their region.

The BENGUELA CURRENT COMMISSION said the Benguela Current Convention will be signed soon. The AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS stressed the importance of adopting the guidelines on bycatch and discard proposed by FAO. The WORLD BANK noted that the PROFISH partnership provides funding for sustainable fisheries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS called for prioritizing small-scale fishers in management plans. Noting with concern the increase of fisheries in decline, the IUCN called for new methods of implementing the CCRF and called for banning shark finning.

The Secretariat noted recurring themes, including: the need to increase the response rate to the CCRF implementation questionnaire, including possibly through electronic means; concern related to the IPOA on sharks; and the need for capacity building, particularly on the ecosystem approach to fisheries.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

Ramiro Sánchez, Argentina, COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade Chair, introduced this item (COFI/2011/3 and INF.8) and reported on the 12th session of the sub-committee, which took place from 26-30 April 2010, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He noted meeting outcomes including agreement on: development of an evaluation framework to assess the conformity of public and private ecolabelling schemes by FAO; the utility of traceability initiatives and the role of FAO in providing technical assistance in implementing them; and development of a trade-specific questionnaire.

The Secretariat highlighted outcomes of further work since the sub-committee meeting, including the report of the Expert Consultation on the Development of FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, held from 25-27 May 2010, in Rome, Italy (COFI/2011/INF.13) and the report of the Expert Consultation to Develop a FAO Evaluation Framework to Assess the Conformity of Public and Private Ecolabelling Schemes with the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, held from 24-26 November 2010, in Rome, Italy (FIR/R958).

Discussions on this agenda item will continue.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates streamed out of plenary at the close of the opening day of COFI 29, the perennial issue in the minds of many delegates was IUU fishing, with several desiring that significant progress be made during the week. "Hopefully we'll see concrete policy change at this meeting," said one delegate. In the wake of the approval of the Agreement on port state measures to prevent and eliminate IUU fishing, some were eager to discuss specific steps to be taken by countries to combat IUU fishing.

At the evening reception, the buzz among some concerned the duplication of efforts and governance challenges associated with the plethora of processes addressing fisheries including the UN Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Agreement, UN General Assembly resolutions and processes, the International Maritime Organization, the World Trade Organization, as well as multilateral environmental agreements and other initiatives such as the High Seas Task Force. "There are just too many fishermen trying to catch the same fish," quipped one seasoned delegate.

COFI 29 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2011

COFI 29 reconvened in plenary sessions throughout the day. Delegates discussed the decisions and recommendations of the 12th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the 5th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

In the morning, discussions focused on the agenda item on the decisions and recommendations of the 12th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, which took place from 26-30 April 2010, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Parties addressed a wide range of issues, including: FAO input into the World Trade Organization (WTO) fish subsidies negotiations and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing process; traceability; market access for small-scale producers; and ecolabelling.

A number of countries called for funding the FAO *Ad Hoc* Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I & II of CITES Concerning Commercially-Exploited Aquatic Species through the regular budget, and many called for modifying or strengthening the Expert Advisory Panel process. JAPAN, with NEW ZEALAND, ICELAND, MOROCCO and the FAROE ISLANDS, noted that the input provided to CITES by the Expert Advisory Panel should be based on sound scientific advice, taking into account livelihoods and other relevant social and economic factors. JAPAN said CITES listing criteria could result in listing species in the appendices despite abundant populations, and do not take into account existing stock recovery plans. ARGENTINA supported the role of FAO in developing criteria for CITES listing and individual assessments of proposed listings, but noted countries have responsibility to decide on listings.

INDIA suggested that instruments such as the FAO guidelines on ecolabelling, which can have an impact on trade, should be considered cautiously to avoid duplication of work in other fora. MALDIVES requested revising the FAO guidelines on ecolabelling to allow differentiation between sustainable and unsustainable methods of capture. THAILAND encouraged development of a framework for the evaluation of ecolabelling of aquaculture. ARGENTINA, CHILE, URUGUAY and ALGERIA supported a technical consultation on ecolabelling guidelines.

CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, ICELAND, NAURU and MEXICO, cautioned against a proliferation of certification schemes, and with GUINEA, noted these could create technical barriers to trade. CANADA, with NEW ZEALAND, supported the development of internationally agreed guidelines, starting with a study on existing traceability schemes, identification of gaps and analysis of best practices. CHINA called for approving guidelines on ecolabelling in inland capture fisheries.

BRAZIL emphasized that recommendations on the conformity of ecolabelling schemes should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory and not burden small-scale producers. REPUBLIC OF KOREA stressed support for capacity building for small-scale fishers to allow them to prepare for trade-related measures. NORWAY called for a process for benchmarking ecolabelling schemes and said such guidelines are the best way to ensure transparency and accountability in fish trade. NICARAGUA and ECUADOR noted the difficulties faced by developing countries when entering new markets, particularly confusion created by various ecolabelling schemes. INDONESIA expressed concern over the high cost of certification schemes.

AUSTRALIA supported a harmonized approach to traceability requirements to ensure that unilateral efforts do not create barriers to trade. She said traceability requirements should be based on the level of risk faced by a fishery and that fisheries at low risk of IUU fishing should face minimal requirements.

MALDIVES noted that lack of stock assessments limits certification of sustainable fisheries for his country. TANZANIA, with MADAGASCAR, underscored continued support for developing countries on data collection and stock assessment.

OMAN said capacity on ecolabelling and traceability should be strengthened through RFMOs. IRAN encouraged FAO to facilitate sharing of experience on aquaculture and fishing traceability between countries. NAMIBIA said any WTO agreement on subsidies should provide a balanced and fair outcome respecting the development priorities of developing countries. MAURITIUS stressed that the chief forum for fish trade issues is the WTO.

Describing FAO as an "essential partner in addressing aquatic species," CITES highlighted that the Convention's role is complementary, rather than an alternative, to regional fisheries bodies. Observing that the Convention is a suite of tools available to member states to utilize in addressing aquatic species in decline, he added that it was up to parties to decide whether to include species in CITES appendices. He also noted that there is work to be done regarding alignment of listing criteria between CITES and FAO.

Summarizing the recommendations, the Secretariat highlighted: following up the expert consultation by developing draft benchmarks for evaluating methodology for ecolabelling schemes; including trade and management aspects in the work of the Expert Advisory Panel on CITES listing proposals; collaborating with the WTO on fisheries matters and ongoing negotiations on subsidies; providing technical assistance for developing countries to address implications of WTO agreements; harmonizing market systems for traceability, ecolabelling and food safety; guidelines for ecolabelling fish products from inland fisheries; and expanding work on aquaculture certification. The Secretariat noted that the recommendations and observations would be included in the meeting report. COFI 29 endorsed the report of the 12th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 5TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

In the morning, Belemane Semoli, South Africa, introduced the item (COFI/2011/4 and INF.s 9 and 10) and the Secretariat reported on the 5th session of the sub-committee, which took place from 27 September to 1 October 2010, in Phuket, Thailand.

The Secretariat noted meeting outcomes including the agreement on: draft guidelines on aquaculture certification; the need for short- and long-term strategies for adaptation to climate change and the application of the ecosystem approach to aquaculture; and a study on the impacts of offshore aquaculture.

In the afternoon, many parties supported adoption of the draft guidelines on aquaculture certification and discussed a variety of issues, including: concerns about trade barriers; increased funding for aquaculture development and implementation of the guidelines in developing countries; and biosecurity.

HONDURAS suggested a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the aquaculture certification guidelines do not affect negatively small-scale producers, while COLOMBIA said that the circumstances of small- and medium-scale producers should be incorporated into the guidelines.

MALAWI underscored evaluating the economic impacts of certification. GHANA, INDIA, BRAZIL, MOZAMBIQUE and MOROCCO said the guidelines on certification should not create trade barriers. ARGENTINA, Brazil, for the GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES (GRULAC), and ALGERIA, stressed that implementation of certification guidelines should be progressive and consistent with international reference standards, particularly the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the WTO. The US said the guidelines on certification would not pose barriers to trade.

VIET NAM expressed concern that implementation of the certification scheme could be burdensome, noting that traceability should take countries' level of development into consideration. TONGA, with UGANDA, CAMEROON, ANGOLA, BANGLADESH, the COOK ISLANDS and SRI LANKA, drew attention to funding constraints and requested that funding for aquaculture be increased. MALDIVES supported foreign direct investments in aquaculture. GHANA, with MAURITANIA, proposed a special fund for developing countries and small island states for implementing the guidelines, and, with the EU and CANADA, endorsed four pillars of certification implementation: animal health and welfare; food safety; environmental integrity; and socio-economic aspects. NAURU, FIJI and MAURITIUS called for increased funding for aquaculture development in their regions. TURKEY said these increased funds should be allocated through RFMOs.

BRAZIL emphasized ongoing discussions on animal health and welfare issues in several fora and reiterated the need to review the certification guidelines at the next session of the

sub-committee. Kyrgyzstan, for the CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION, called for FAO assistance for adaptation of aquaculture to climate change. UKRAINE and CHILE underscored the need to improve data collection on aquaculture. CHINA emphasized strengthening unified registration and technical management, including full traceability and market access, to ensure the quality of aquaculture products. CANADA proposed clarification of technical terms on offshore aquaculture.

On biosecurity, GHANA expressed concern about the impact of alien species on biodiversity. NORWAY called for FAO to collaborate with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) on biosecurity. THAILAND highlighted risk assessment and preventive measures. CHILE called for developing technical guidelines on biosecurity measures for the introduction of species. NAMIBIA, with ANGOLA, REPUBLIC OF CONGO and ZAMBIA, commended FAO for the Special Programme on Aquaculture Development in Africa and requested assistance in fighting eruption of diseases in inland waters. INDONESIA called for assistance to control viral diseases in aquaculture.

IRAN requested support for a national aquaculture certification system and suggested a global study on the use of medicines in aquaculture. CANADA suggested considering the impact of aquaculture on wild fisheries. MEXICO stressed strengthening regional and international cooperation in aquaculture.

A number of intergovernmental organizations highlighted their work on aquaculture, supported the guidelines on aquaculture certification and highlighted concerns, *inter alia*: use of guidelines as non-tariff barriers to trade; proliferation of certification schemes for aquaculture; and use of fish meal and fish oil in aquaculture. Non-governmental organizations expressed concern about the social and environmental impacts of aquaculture development.

The Secretariat noted that the Committee approved by consensus the guidelines on aquaculture certification and endorsed the report of the 5th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. He further noted, *inter alia*: the suggestion for a phased approach and a monitoring system for the implementation of the guidelines; the request that FAO allocate more resources to aquaculture in its work programme; and consensus on the importance of biosecurity issues and related capacity building needs.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates at COFI had a busy day on Tuesday as many took part in plenary sessions, bilateral meetings and meetings with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. "We spend a lot of time in plenary discussing principles and norms, but being here at FAO is a great opportunity to walk down the hall and meet with experts to develop and initiate programmes to implement these ideas on the ground," noted one delegate after a full schedule.

As the Committee endorsed the proposed technical guidelines for the certification of inland capture fisheries and certification of aquaculture, several developing country delegates emphasized the importance of capacity building and technical support: "all of these guidelines are well and good," said one "but we need the capacity to implement them or they do no good." One seasoned observer asked "where is money for implementation going to come from, with limited resources some painful decisions about priorities will have to be made."

Looking ahead to Wednesday, one delegate was overheard saying "I can't wait for the discussion on IUU fishing, we are all against it, but we all have a different interpretation of what it means."

COFI 29 HIGHLIGHTS:

WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2011

COFI 29 reconvened in plenary sessions throughout the day. During the morning and afternoon, delegates discussed progress made on measures against IUU fishing, including port state measures, flag state performance, market-related measures and a Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (GR). In the afternoon and evening, the plenary discussed fisheries and aquaculture in our changing climate and FAO's role for improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

PROGRESS MADE ON MEASURES AGAINST IUU FISHING

On Wednesday morning, the agenda item on measures against IUU fishing (COFI/2011/5 and INF.11, and the letter dated 18 January 2011 by COFI 28 Chair concerning the technical consultation on the GR) was introduced. The Secretariat highlighted: the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA); Article 21 of the PSMA addressing requirements for developing states, including an *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms; developing international guidelines on criteria for assessing the flag state performance; market state measures; and the GR.

During discussions, many countries highlighted the importance of port state measures and urged those members who had not done so to ratify the PSMA. NEW ZEALAND said IUU fishing is a governance issue. CANADA, with CHILE and ECUADOR, called for strengthening flag state control. The EU emphasized the need to define flag state performance criteria.

NORWAY suggested closer collaboration between FAO and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on information sharing, criminal investigation techniques and prosecution assistance. COLOMBIA said qualified observers and satellite monitoring to combat IUU fishing are important. CHINA, INDIA, IUCN and PEW supported the use of unique vessel identifiers.

IRAN said RFMO measures to manage IUU fishing should be transparent and not eliminate rights of one state while advantaging others. VENEZUELA said FAO should be the coordinating body for technical consultations and provision of adequate resources. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored tackling IUU fishing carried out under flags of convenience and called for a binding document on flag state measures.

Mozambique, for the AFRICAN GROUP, drew attention to limited capacity to deter IUU fishing. He proposed that COFI recommends that the FAO Secretariat support the swift implementation of the PSMA, and the establishment of a task

force to draft terms of reference (TORs) for the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms. With TONGA and BRAZIL, the AFRICAN GROUP called for operationalizing Article 21 prior to entry into force of the PSMA, including the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms.

The US supported the compilation of existing training activities by FAO and RFMOs and, with CANADA and AUSTRALIA, preparation of TORs for the *ad hoc* working group. ARGENTINA opposed establishment of the *ad hoc* working group unless it is independent from the implementation of the PSMA. The EU said the TORs for the *ad hoc* working group should be approved at or before COFI 30.

NORWAY, with JAPAN, MEXICO, THAILAND and GHANA, stressed the need to assist developing countries to become parties to, and implement the PSMA. AUSTRALIA and NAURU supported capacity building, especially for small island developing states (SIDS). VIET NAM suggested training programmes for port inspectors.

MALAYSIA noted that his country had not yet signed the PSMA due to lack of implementation capacity. BANGLADESH said the effect of stringent measures on poor and marginal communities should be accounted for prior to making IUU fishing measures mandatory for developing countries.

On market state measures, Brazil, for GRULAC, MAURITIUS, OMAN and INDIA noted that they should not constitute a non-tariff barrier to trade. REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the need to harmonize them.

ANGOLA, ALGERIA, CHILE and MAURITIUS said that FAO should manage and administer the GR. CHINA noted that the GR should be voluntary and, with INDIA, said that the GR should be confined to vessels operating in the high seas. ECUADOR, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, said that it should be gradually implemented. JAPAN expressed concerns over the cost implications of maintaining the GR and proposed that RFMOs maintain it until FAO is able to procure funding to do so. ICELAND, AUSTRALIA and the US said the GR should be cost effective.

BRAZIL, TANZANIA and URUGUAY said developing countries may require assistance and capacity building to implement the GR. TURKEY called for limiting the GR to vessels over 24 feet and VIET NAM said it should not apply to artisanal fisheries. COSTA RICA, with PANAMA, noted regional agreements on fisheries records and vessel control in Central America.

The UN highlighted recommendations of the Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement held in May 2010, which, *inter alia*, encourage countries to ratify the PSMA and develop guidelines on flag state performance and

records. A number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations highlighted their efforts to address IUU fishing and called for ratification and entry into force of the PSMA.

The Secretariat highlighted issues raised, including: port state measures as a potent and cost effective tool for combating IUU fishing; capacity development and support required for ratifying and implementing the PSMA; support to commence work on the implementation of Article 21; support for convening the technical consultation on flag state performance; and ensuring that market state measures do not become barriers to trade and the need for capacity development in this area.

On the GR, the Secretariat highlighted: the recognition of the GR as an essential tool and wide endorsement of the recommendations of the technical consultation; that the GR should be voluntary and implemented with a phased approach; the need for capacity building; securing funding through the FAO regular programme and supplemented by extra-budgetary funds.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

In the afternoon, this agenda item (COFI/2011/6) was introduced and the Secretariat presented activities on fisheries and climate change in 2009-2010 work programme, *inter alia*, creation of the Global Partnership on Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PaCFA) and a proposed five-year strategy for fisheries, aquaculture and climate change. The Secretariat also presented recommendations to COFI, including: increasing resilience of aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture production systems and communities; understanding emission and mitigation potentials of fisheries; and mainstreaming of fisheries into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

Azerbaijan, for the REGIONAL COMMISSION ON FISHERIES FOR CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS, and BELIZE requested support for regional fisheries programmes. ALGERIA encouraged the development of partnerships focusing on the implementation of regional action plans. INDONESIA emphasized capacity building for adaptive management strategies for fisheries and aquaculture. CANADA proposed that FAO attempt to facilitate fisheries sector access to funds pledged under the outcome on long-term finance at the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun.

OMAN suggested a digital programme for information exchange on climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture. MOROCCO, with ALGERIA, stressed increasing national capacities to understand climate change related impacts on fisheries. The EU noted the need to study environmental and anthropogenic factors affecting aquatic species. ZAMBIA underscored global and regional early warning systems. The US said states and RFMOs should reduce other stressors on fisheries including IUU fishing and bycatch.

GAMBIA lamented the marginal role of fisheries in climate change negotiations. AFGHANISTAN called for ensuring coherence and cohesion of FAO work on climate change with other organizations.

FAO'S ROLE FOR IMPROVED INTEGRATION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In the evening, the Secretariat introduced this item (COFI/2011/7 and INF.12). The Secretariat highlighted that while fisheries and aquaculture have negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems, many other sectors contribute more heavily to degradation.

COFI was invited to endorse the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards as adopted by the Technical Consultation to Develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards, held from 6-10 December 2010 in Rome, Italy.

Many parties welcomed efforts on integration and called for adoption of the guidelines on bycatch and discards. NORWAY said FAO should be the primary source of fisheries relevant information and establish closer cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and relevant UN agencies. He said listing of species under CITES should only occur when management plans have failed.

COLOMBIA said artisanal and small-scale fisheries should be conserved. ANGOLA highlighted the management of statistical data, particularly for developing countries. INDONESIA requested FAO to develop national capacities to control invasive alien species, eutrophication, protect critical habitats and establish marine protected areas.

COLOMBIA, with the FAROE ISLANDS, underscored the need to counter negative perceptions about the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on conservation. COSTA RICA, for a number of Central American countries, highlighted transparent and participatory approaches to achieving innovative management mechanisms. The US supported strengthening the use of marine protected areas and highlighted the impact of marine debris.

JAPAN highlighted fisheries co-management systems. Regarding implementation of the Deep-sea Guidelines, CANADA stressed improvement of criteria for vulnerable species identification and technical guidelines for conducting assessments.

MEXICO suggested coordinating efforts of multilateral organizations on aquatic resources conservation and use. He said that bycatch guidelines should not impose trade barriers. REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for support to countries for phased implementation of the bycatch guidelines. The EU requested a study to establish the impact of fishing on marine species occupying low trophic levels.

UNEP noted its collaboration with FAO on reconciling conflicting uses of aquatic resources. The CBD highlighted work being undertaken on ecologically or biologically significant areas, and, with the NORTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION, called for greater collaboration with FAO.

Numerous NGOs welcomed the guidelines on bycatch and discards, and further collaboration between FAO and other concerned bodies, with some calling for greater involvement in ocean noise reduction and eliminating harmful fishing practices.

The Secretariat summarized the discussions and noted that they will be recorded in the Committee report.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates continued their deliberations well into the evening on Wednesday, with issues like the IUU fishing and the global record receiving a lot of attention in the morning. Welcoming the international guidelines on by-catch management and reduction of discards, one delegate said "of course everything is relevant but you have to realize that COFI 29 is the first opportunity since the technical consultations late last year to really exchange our views on some of these hot issues." "How far parties adhere to these guidelines will be their ultimate test," said another. Noting the scant attention given to the implications of these measures for small-scale fishers, one observer said "let's hear what the discussions on artisanal fisheries will bring tomorrow."

COFI 29 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2011

COFI 29 reconvened in plenary throughout the morning and afternoon. The Committee addressed four issues including: good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries; priorities and results under the medium-term plan and programme of work and budget 2012-13; other matters; and the date and location of the next session.

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

The Secretariat introduced the item on small-scale fisheries (COFI/2011/8) and noted the importance of this sector for food security and poverty reduction. He highlighted challenges faced by small-scale fisheries including lack of infrastructure and vulnerability to natural disasters.

During discussions, many delegates called for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries and development of a global assistance programme. NORWAY suggested developing guidelines for small-scale fisheries, taking into account the voluntary guidelines on the right to food and the specific needs of women. BRAZIL supported an international plan of action. INDIA, with INDONESIA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, BANGLADESH, the MALDIVES and MOZAMBIQUE, suggested the creation of a specific COFI sub-committee on small-scale fisheries.

The US, with NEW ZEALAND and MAURITIUS, noted the need to clarify the meaning of small-scale fisheries before developing an international instrument. The EU expressed preference for the effective implementation of existing instruments, rather than a new instrument. NEW ZEALAND suggested, with THAILAND, that the international instrument be a chapter in the CCRF.

SOUTH AFRICA called for an instrument parallel to the CCRF, while the US suggested that the instrument be an associated document to the CCRF, with a clear focus on small-scale fisheries in developing countries. OMAN said the international instrument should not be binding.

MALAWI called for a study of the development aspects of small-scale fisheries. NAMIBIA, with SOUTH AFRICA, highlighted the importance of assistance and capacity building for small-scale fisheries. Calling for FAO support for West African regional and sub-regional organizations, GUINEA noted the need for infrastructure development, access to credit and

modernization of inputs. MEXICO noted that RFMOs should contribute to small-scale fisheries initiatives and be involved in the global assistance programme.

INDIA cautioned against creating trade barriers for small-scale fishers in the international instrument and said that safety at sea for small-scale fisheries needs more attention. INDONESIA said FAO should devise buffer systems for small-scale fishers and models for market development. NEW ZEALAND and JAPAN noted the diversity of small-scale fisheries and JAPAN preferred a local approach for their development. OMAN highlighted the need for integrating subsistence fisheries in national economic development plans and for further consultation on guidelines or instruments on small-scale fisheries. AFGHANISTAN supported empowering small-scale fishers in local economic decision-making processes and called for technology transfer to this sub-sector.

AFGHANISTAN, ALGERIA and ARGENTINA highlighted the importance of market access. THAILAND underscored the importance of community-based management, micro-finance and credit for small-scale fisheries. Delegates also highlighted, *inter alia*: transparency; participatory approaches; linking fisheries and food security; recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples; coordinated policies; capacity building particularly for fish biomass determination, fisheries management, control, and surveillance and data collection; improving institutions; educating fishers, especially women; improving vessels; providing better conditions for landing of fish; and an ecosystem based approach to fisheries management.

MAURITIUS called for striking an appropriate balance between artisanal and small-scale fishing boats, and, with TANZANIA, emphasized that sustainability should be the core issue. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION also cautioned against “blurring the borders between small-scale and industrial fisheries.” SOUTH AFRICA emphasized the cultural importance of small-scale fisheries to communities.

COLOMBIA stressed that the global assistance programme should focus on good governance, application of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management, and disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. GAMBIA said the global assistance programme should consider: migration of small-capacity fishers; HIV in fishing communities; and sustainable credit schemes.

Highlighting the impacts of small fisheries, particularly on internationally shared stocks, JAPAN said they should be integrated into national and international management systems and policies.

BRAZIL observed that small-scale fishing often has a much lower environmental impact than other types of fishing. Highlighting the possibility for overexploitation of resources, ECUADOR said technical support should be provided to prevent this and to examine and create economic alternatives to ensure sustainability.

A number of intergovernmental organizations highlighted their activities relating to small-scale fisheries, with some supporting the creation of a sub-committee and inclusion of governance and labor issues in an international instrument on small-scale fishers. Several non-governmental organizations urged COFI to decide on a negotiated international instrument to complement the CCRF.

The Secretariat summarized the discussions noting, *inter alia*: the recognition of the importance of small-scale fisheries and the need for integrating them in national policies; the heterogeneity of the small-scale fisheries sector; the role of south-south cooperation; and the need for FAO to cooperate with other organizations on these issues. On the international instrument he noted consensus on the voluntary nature and the need to focus on developing countries, and the guidelines as the preferred option for such an instrument.

COFI endorsed the document and COFI Chair Pourkazemi noted that comments would be included in the draft report of COFI 29.

PRIORITIES AND RESULTS UNDER THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET 2012-13

The Secretariat introduced this item (COFI/2011/9) and highlighted that this novel approach for technical committees, such as COFI, to recommend priorities was requested by FAO governing bodies, and that priorities under consideration by COFI 29 only refer to the biennium 2012-13. He then invited COFI to endorse the priorities and areas of de-emphasis contained in the document.

ANGOLA said the priorities identified by the 2010 FAO Regional Conference for Africa could be adapted to fisheries. ARGENTINA underscored that each region should define priorities. AFGHANISTAN noted inconsistencies between the proposed areas of de-emphasis and current discussions at this session, for example regarding safety at sea.

The EU prioritized developing recommendations to restore and reverse the trend of declining global fishery stocks and addressing the weaknesses in the FAO global monitoring of these stocks. He also supported looking into aquaculture practices to ensure sustainability. JAPAN, with CANADA, underscored the implementation of the CCRF. REPUBLIC OF KOREA prioritized capacity building for the implementation of existing normative frameworks such as the PSMA, financial and technical support for RFMOs to apply an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture. THAILAND emphasized the need to focus on co-management, micro-credit and insurance schemes for small-scale fisheries. NEW ZEALAND supported an advocacy role for FAO to combat negative perceptions of fisheries. BRAZIL, with URUGUAY, welcomed the inclusion of cooperation on development as a priority under many areas of the work programme. MEXICO prioritized aquaculture and artisanal fisheries and called for strengthening RFMOs. NORWAY called for cooperating with other standard setting agencies to avoid duplication of work. INDIA and ICELAND highlighted safety at sea.

NAURU, with the COOK ISLANDS and NEW ZEALAND, called for the consideration of Pacific Island states needs. TURKEY said support for the Caucasus region on aquaculture and fishing should continue. INDONESIA highlighted: the need

for viral diseases control and development of alternatives to fish meal; including responses to emergencies in the budget for the biennium; and capacity building and south-south cooperation.

CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, ICELAND and INDIA noted that the proposed global conference on fleet capacity was not a priority. ARGENTINA, JAPAN and BRAZIL said there was not consensus to prioritize the GR. AUSTRALIA and the US expressed concern over the de-emphasis of deep-sea fisheries management. CHINA said deep-sea fisheries are not a priority.

The US said they would like to see dedicated funding for the GR and called on FAO to seek funding partners for this initiative, as well as highlighting capacity building for implementation of port state measures by developing countries. On small-scale fisheries, NORWAY questioned whether funds are best spent on a permanent body or action on the ground, and highlighted the possibility of including this issue permanently on the agendas of COFI and its sub-committees.

In summarizing the discussions, the Secretariat noted, *inter alia*: constructive interventions and support for the ongoing reform of FAO in general and the approach taken by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in particular; large support for the priorities; and concern on de-emphasizing aquaculture in Asia and safety at sea, especially regarding small-scale fisheries.

Chair Pourkazemi noted that the discussions would be reflected in the COFI 29 report.

OTHER MATTERS: SRI LANKA supported by INDIA highlighted their intention to host an Asia Pacific Ministerial conference on aquaculture development for food security and economic development and requested FAO collaboration on this, which was endorsed by COFI.

The REPUBLIC OF CONGO conveyed a message from the regional fisheries committee of the Gulf of Guinea. KYRGYZSTAN, on behalf of Azerbaijan and Turkey, with OSPESCA, highlighted recreational fisheries.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT SESSION: Delegates agreed to hold COFI 30 from 9-13 July 2012, in Rome, Italy.

IN THE CORRIDORS

“Low key” were words used to describe the day by one observer. Highlighting small-scale fisheries as “another conundrum,” another developing country delegate mused over its definition, and whether it applied across the board or was more specific to developing countries. He worried that the “discussions on these fisheries might detract from the issues of equitable access to and conservation of high seas fisheries, as these are more lucrative for some states purportedly supporting artisanal fisheries.”

Meanwhile, some observers were excited about reference to indigenous fishers and the cultural value of small-scale fisheries. Others however, qualified this with one noting that “human rights should be left to those with the mandate to address them.”

Afternoon proceedings concluded with a sobering discussion on priorities, in light of the numerous activities required and their funding implications.

Emerging from plenary, some delegates were already beginning to reflect on the outcomes of COFI 29 and how the draft report, due out on Friday lunchtime, would be received. “Hopefully, after all this work, everyone will agree that their views have been adequately reflected so that we can enjoy an evening in this beautiful city before flying home.”

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of COFI 29 will be available on Monday, 7 February 2011 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/FAO/cofi/cofi2011/>

SUMMARY OF THE 29TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES: 31 JANUARY - 4 FEBRUARY 2011

The 29th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), took place at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 31 January to 4 February 2011. Over 640 participants attended from COFI member states, UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Committee convened in plenary throughout the week to address progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the decisions and recommendations of the 12th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the 5th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, progress made with regard to measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, fisheries and aquaculture in our changing climate, the improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection, good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries, and priorities and results under the medium-term plan and programme of work and budget for 2012-13.

COFI 29 adopted a final report, in which it, *inter alia*: endorsed the reports the 12th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the 5th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture; adopted Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries; approved Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification; endorsed Guidelines on Bycatch Management and the Reduction of Discards; and approved the development of new guidelines on small-scale fisheries.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI), a subsidiary body of the FAO Council, was founded at the 13th FAO Conference in 1965. Currently COFI is the only global intergovernmental forum where major international fisheries and aquaculture problems are addressed. Responsible for review of the FAO work programme on

fisheries, COFI also undertakes period reviews of international fishery problems and examines possible solutions. COFI also reviews and makes recommendations on specific matters referred to it by the FAO Council or Director-General or at the request of member countries. COFI currently has 137 members and has two subsidiary bodies: the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

Negotiations in COFI have resulted in two major international instruments adopted by the FAO Conference: the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the Agreement

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to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement).

The CCRF, adopted in 1995, is a voluntary code containing principles and standards on the conservation, management and development of all fisheries, and including: capture, processing and trade of fish and fishery products; fishing operations; aquaculture; and fisheries research and integration of fisheries into coastal area management. Implementation of the CCRF has been facilitated through the adoption of four International Plans of Action (IPOAs): the IPOA for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds); the IPOA for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks); the IPOA for the Management of Fishing Capacity (IPOA-Capacity); and the IPOA to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU). These IPOAs, as well as other issues covered by the CCRF, are implemented through National Plans of Action (NPOAs) on these issues and elaboration of technical guidelines.

The Compliance Agreement, adopted in 1993, requires flag state parties to ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags do not engage in activities that undermine international conservation and management measures. The Agreement establishes a record of fishing vessels authorized for fishing on the high seas.

COFI also contributed to the adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 and the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UN Fish Stocks Agreement) in 1995. Issues covered by COFI have included vessel and gear marking, food security, aquaculture, international trade, fleet capacity, and bycatch and discards. In recent years, COFI has focused on: management of fisheries capacity; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; sharks; and seabirds. COFI meets every two years at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

COFI 24: The 24th meeting of COFI took place from 26 February to 2 March 2001. During this meeting COFI established the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and adopted the IPOA-IUU under the CCRF.

COFI 25: During the 25th meeting of COFI, which took place from 24-28 February 2003, COFI approved the Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries and recommended approval of the strategy by the FAO Conference. COFI also reaffirmed the need to implement measures against IUU fishing and recognized the importance of the CCRF and associated IPOAs in promoting sustainable fisheries and encouraged members to establish and implement national plans of action (NPOAs) to implement the IPOAs on capacity, IUU fishing, sharks and seabirds.

COFI 26: At its 26th meeting, which took place from 7-11 March 2005, COFI called for a decade of implementation of measures to ensure responsible fisheries, including the CCRF and its associated instruments. COFI also encouraged FAO to elaborate additional guidelines to support the CCRF, including one for an IPOA for the management of fisheries capacity. A set of guidelines on the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products were also adopted.

COFI 27: The 27th meeting of COFI took place from 5-9 March 2007. COFI addressed the implementation of CCRF IPOAs on capacity, IUU fishing, sharks and seabirds. COFI also encouraged members to join or cooperate with the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network and to develop a legally binding instrument based on the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU fishing and the IPOA-IUU.

COFI 28: During the 28th meeting of COFI, held from 2-6 March 2009, as part of its work to facilitate and ensure the implementation of the CCRF and its IPOAs, COFI encouraged the publication of best practices technical guidelines for the IPOA on seabirds and the development of best practices for safety at sea. COFI agreed to further work on guidelines for ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from inland capture fisheries and recommended that FAO provide technical advice to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in relation to listing proposals for commercially-exploited aquatic fisheries as well as input into the fish subsidies negotiations undertaken by the World Trade Organization. Reaffirming the threat to sustainable fisheries posed by IUU fishing, COFI noted the importance of negotiating a legally-binding agreement on port state measures.

COFI 29 REPORT

On Monday, 31 January 2010, outgoing Chair of COFI 28, Zbigniew Karnicki (Poland) opened the meeting and FAO Deputy Director-General Ann Tutwiler welcomed delegates and said FAO looked forward to the guidance and recommendations of the Committee on important issues on the agenda.

Mohammad Pourkazemi (Iran) was elected Chair of COFI 29 and Johan Williams (Norway) was elected as first Vice-Chair. The other elected Vice-Chairs included Canada, India, Chile, Spain and Zimbabwe. The US was elected Chair of the Drafting Committee, and other elected members included: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, the Republic of Congo, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Syria.

COFI delegates adopted the agenda (COFI/2011/1) as amended to reflect inclusion of an Asia-Pacific Fisheries Ministerial Conference to be held in Sri Lanka and Fisheries in the Gulf of Guinea under "other matters."

COFI conducted work throughout the week in plenary, with delegates presenting statements on the various agenda items. During the evenings, a drafting committee worked on the report of the session, reflecting the comments of delegates from plenary. On Friday, COFI considered the draft report of the session paragraph-by-paragraph to ensure it reflected issues highlighted, endorsed or adopted by the Committee.

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCRF

This item was introduced on Monday in plenary and consisted of: Progress in the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and Related Instruments (COFI/2011/2); Results of the Informal 2010 Pilot Test of the Electronic Questionnaire for the CCRF (COFI/2011/2/Supp.1); and Safety at Sea in the Fisheries Sector (COFI/INF.14). Many countries highlighted their efforts to implement the CCRF,

including through adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks, cooperation through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and the development and implementation of national plans of action (NPOAs), among other means.

On implementation, Brazil called on COFI to ensure the economic viability of fisheries and aquaculture in developing countries by, *inter alia*, fostering technical capacity, and adopting a proportional approach to balancing environmental, social and economic priorities. Many delegates called for support for implementation of the CCRF in developing countries, including through infrastructure development, technology transfer and technical assistance. Mexico noted financial constraints that affect the implementation of the CCRF.

The Republic of Korea and Thailand among others, noted the importance of stakeholder participation, and the Gambia pointed to the challenge of disseminating the CCRF and associated NPOAs to communities. Bangladesh underscored the need for financial and technical assistance to support public-private initiatives such as a national working group on fisheries. Iraq called for support to rebuild fisheries infrastructure destroyed by conflict. A number of countries, including Thailand, Turkey and Guatemala, highlighted the important role of RFMOs in the development and implementation of NPOAs.

New Zealand emphasized focusing on setting global standards for fisheries management and assisting developing countries in applying those standards. China stressed the importance of data collection on fisheries and aquaculture. Indonesia requested FAO to strengthen data collection on inland fisheries. The European Union (EU) called for stronger implementation of the FAO Technical Guidelines on the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Canada prioritized the further development and implementation of guidelines for responsible fishing and global tools to combat IUU fishing, as well as deeper and broader implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture. Regarding the electronic questionnaire, the EU, with Angola and Ghana, voiced concern over the low level of responses to CCRF implementation.

India highlighted the need to address inland fisheries and also underscored the value of traditional knowledge in fisheries management. Norway expressed support for increased coordination with other UN agencies. The Seychelles and Kenya underscored the impact of piracy. Sudan reiterated calls for the establishment of a regional commission for the Red Sea.

On sharks, Japan emphasized a species-by-species approach, rather than a total ban on shark finning, and, on sea birds, said that regulations should account for the circumstances of individual fisheries in different regions, instead of taking a global approach. Namibia emphasized the creation and adoption of NPOAs for sharks, as well as monitoring of shark fishing nations, and called for addressing over-capacity to prevent the deterioration of fisheries.

A number of intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, including the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, the World Bank, IUCN and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, highlighted the importance of adopting the guidelines on

bycatch and discard and variously underscored funding opportunities for sustainable fisheries, prioritizing small-scale fishers in management plans and banning shark finning.

The Secretariat noted recurring themes, including: the need to increase the response rate to the CCRF implementation questionnaire, including possibly through electronic means; concern related to the IPOAs on sharks; and the need for capacity building, particularly on the ecosystem approach to fisheries.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

This item (COFI/2011/3 and INF.8) was discussed on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning in plenary. Ramiro Sánchez (Argentina), Chair of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, reported on the 12th session of the Sub-Committee, which took place from 26-30 April 2010, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He noted meeting outcomes including agreement on: development of an evaluation framework to assess the conformity of public and private ecolabelling schemes by FAO; the utility of traceability initiatives and the role of FAO in providing technical assistance in implementing them; and development of a trade-specific questionnaire.

The Secretariat highlighted outcomes of further work since the Sub-Committee meeting, including the report of the Expert Consultation on the Development of FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, held from 25-27 May 2010, in Rome, Italy (COFI/2011/INF.13) and the report of the Expert Consultation to Develop an FAO Evaluation Framework to Assess the Conformity of Public and Private Ecolabelling Schemes with the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, held from 24-26 November 2010, in Rome, Italy (FIRF/R958).

Delegates addressed a wide range of issues, including: FAO input into the World Trade Organization (WTO) fish subsidies negotiations and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing process; traceability; market access for small-scale producers; and ecolabelling.

A number of countries, including Brazil, Norway and the US, called for funding the FAO *Ad Hoc* Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of CITES Concerning Commercially-Exploited Aquatic Species through the regular budget, and many, including the Republic of Korea and New Zealand, called for modifying or strengthening the Expert Advisory Panel process. Japan, with Iceland, Morocco and the Faroe Islands, noted that the input provided to the CITES process should be based on sound scientific advice, taking into account livelihoods and other relevant social and economic factors. Japan expressed concern that CITES listing criteria does not account for existing stock recovery plans. Argentina supported FAO's role in developing CITES listing criteria and assessment of proposed listings, but noted that countries have responsibility to decide on listing species.

On the ecolabelling guidelines, a number of developed and developing countries cautioned against the proliferation of certification schemes and observed that they could create barriers to trade. Nicaragua and Ecuador highlighted difficulties faced by developing countries when entering new markets, particularly the confusion created by a multitude of schemes. Tanzania, with Madagascar, underscored continued support for developing countries on data collection and stock assessment. Oman said capacity on ecolabelling and traceability should be strengthened through RFMOs. Iran encouraged FAO to facilitate sharing of experiences on aquaculture and fishing traceability between countries. Indonesia expressed concern over the high cost of certification schemes.

Recommendations by delegates included: that mechanisms ensuring the conformity of ecolabelling schemes should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory and not burden small-scale producers; a process for benchmarking ecolabelling schemes; support for capacity building for small-scale fishers to allow them to prepare for trade-related measures; revising the guidelines to allow differentiation between sustainable and unsustainable methods of capture; conducting a study on existing traceability schemes, identification of gaps and analysis of best practices; and a harmonized approach to traceability requirements to ensure that unilateral efforts do not create trade barriers. Several countries, including Chile, Uruguay and Algeria, supported a technical consultation on ecolabelling guidelines.

Describing FAO as an “essential partner in addressing aquatic species,” John Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES, highlighted that the Convention’s role is complementary, rather than an alternative, to regional fisheries bodies. Observing that the Convention is a suite of tools available to member states to utilize in addressing aquatic species in decline, he added that it was up to parties to decide whether to include species in CITES appendices. He also noted that there is work to be done regarding alignment of listing criteria between CITES and FAO.

Summarizing the recommendations, the Secretariat highlighted: following up the expert consultation by developing draft benchmarks for evaluating methodology for ecolabelling schemes; including trade and management aspects in the work of the Expert Advisory Panel on CITES listing proposals; collaborating with the WTO on fisheries matters and ongoing negotiations on subsidies; providing technical assistance for developing countries to address implications of WTO agreements; harmonizing market systems for traceability, ecolabelling and food safety; guidelines for ecolabelling fish products from inland fisheries; and expanding work on aquaculture certification. The Secretariat noted that the recommendations and observations would be included in the meeting report. COFI 29 endorsed the report of the 12th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 5TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

On Tuesday, this item (COFI/2011/4 and INFs 9 and 10) was introduced and the Secretariat reported on the 5th session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, which took place from

27 September to 1 October 2010, in Phuket, Thailand. The Secretariat noted meeting outcomes, including the agreement on: draft guidelines on aquaculture certification; the need for short- and long-term strategies for adaptation to climate change and the application of the ecosystem approach to aquaculture; and a study on the impacts of offshore aquaculture.

Many parties supported adoption of the draft guidelines on aquaculture certification and discussed a variety of issues, including: concerns about trade barriers; increased funding for aquaculture development and implementation of the guidelines in developing countries; and biosecurity.

A number of developing countries, including Ghana, India, Brazil, Mozambique and Morocco, stressed that the guidelines on aquaculture certification should not create trade barriers, with Malawi underscoring the need to evaluate the economic impacts of certification. Honduras suggested a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the aquaculture certification guidelines do not negatively affect small-scale producers, and Colombia said that the circumstances of small- and medium-scale producers should be incorporated into the guidelines.

Other countries, among them Argentina, Brazil, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and Algeria, emphasized that implementation of the certification guidelines should be progressive and consistent with international reference standards, particularly the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the WTO. The US said the guidelines would not pose barriers to trade. Viet Nam expressed concern that implementation of the certification scheme could be burdensome, noting that traceability should take countries’ level of development into consideration. Ukraine and Chile underscored the need to improve data collection on aquaculture. China emphasized strengthening unified registration and technical management, including full traceability and market access, to ensure the quality of aquaculture products.

Some developing countries, including Tonga, Uganda, Angola, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, drew attention to funding constraints and requested that funding for aquaculture be increased. Maldives supported foreign direct investment in aquaculture. Ghana, with Mauritania, proposed a special fund for developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS) for implementing the guidelines.

On biosecurity, Ghana expressed concern about the impact of alien species on biodiversity. Norway called for FAO to collaborate with the World Organization for Animal Health on biosecurity. Thailand highlighted risk assessment and preventive measures and Chile called for developing technical guidelines on biosecurity measures for the introduction of species. A number of African countries commended FAO for the Special Programme on Aquaculture Development in Africa and requested assistance in fighting eruption of diseases in inland waters. Indonesia called for assistance to control viral diseases in aquaculture. Iran suggested a global study on the use of medicines in aquaculture.

A number of intergovernmental organizations, including the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific and the World Bank, highlighted their work on aquaculture, supported the guidelines on aquaculture certification and highlighted

concerns, *inter alia*: use of guidelines as non-tariff barriers to trade; proliferation of certification schemes for aquaculture; and use of fish meal and fish oil in aquaculture. Non-governmental organizations, including the World Forum of Fisher Peoples and the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreement, expressed concern about the social and environmental impacts of aquaculture development.

Concluding, the Secretariat noted that the Committee approved by consensus the guidelines on aquaculture certification and endorsed the report of the 5th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. He further noted, *inter alia*: the suggestion for a phased approach and a monitoring system for the implementation of the guidelines; the request that FAO allocate more resources to aquaculture in its work programme; and consensus on the importance of biosecurity issues and related capacity-building needs.

PROGRESS MADE ON MEASURES AGAINST IUU FISHING

This item (COFI/2011/5 and INF.11) and the letter dated 18 January 2011 by the COFI 28 Chair concerning the technical consultation on the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (GR) was introduced on Wednesday morning in plenary. The Secretariat highlighted: the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA); Article 21 of the PSMA addressing developing country requirements, including an *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms; developing international guidelines on criteria for assessing flag state performance; market state measures; and the GR.

During discussions, many countries highlighted the importance of port state measures and urged those members who had not done so to ratify the PSMA. Malaysia noted that his country had not yet signed the PSMA due to lack of implementation capacity. Norway, with Japan, Cameroon, Mexico, Thailand and Ghana, stressed the need to assist developing countries to become parties to, and to implement, the PSMA. Australia and Nauru supported capacity building, especially for SIDS.

Norway suggested closer collaboration between FAO and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on information sharing, criminal investigation techniques and prosecution assistance. Colombia said qualified observers and satellite monitoring to combat IUU fishing are important. Viet Nam suggested training programmes for port inspectors. China, India, IUCN and the Pew Environment Group supported the use of unique vessel identifiers.

Iran said RFMO measures to manage IUU fishing should be transparent and not eliminate rights of one state while advantaging others. Canada, with Chile and Ecuador, called for strengthening flag state control. The EU emphasized the need to define flag state performance criteria. The Russian Federation underscored tackling IUU fishing carried out under flags of convenience and called for a binding document on flag state measures. Bangladesh said the effect of stringent measures on

poor and marginal communities should be accounted for prior to making IUU fishing measures mandatory for developing countries.

Mozambique, for the African Group, drew attention to limited capacity to deter IUU fishing. He proposed that COFI recommend that the FAO Secretariat support the swift implementation of the PSMA, and the establishment of a task force to draft terms of reference (TORs) for the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms. With Tonga and Brazil, the African Group called for the operationalization of Article 21 prior to entry into force of the PSMA, including the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms.

The US supported the compilation of existing training activities by FAO and RFMOs and, with Canada and Australia, preparation of TORs for the *ad hoc* working group. Argentina opposed establishment of the *ad hoc* working group unless it is independent from the implementation of the PSMA. The EU said the TORs for the *ad hoc* working group should be approved at or before COFI 30.

On market state measures, Brazil, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, Mauritius, Oman and India noted that they should not constitute a non-tariff barrier to trade. The Republic of Korea highlighted the need to harmonize them.

On the GR, Angola, Algeria, Chile and Mauritius said that FAO should manage and administer it. China noted the GR should be voluntary and, with India, said that the GR should be confined to vessels operating in the high seas. Ecuador, with the Republic of Korea, said that it should be gradually implemented. Japan expressed concerns over the cost implications of maintaining the GR and proposed that RFMOs maintain it until FAO is able to procure funding to do so. Iceland, Australia and the US said the GR should be cost effective.

Brazil, Tanzania and Uruguay said developing countries may require assistance and capacity building to implement the GR. Turkey called for limiting the GR to vessels over 24 feet and Viet Nam said it should not apply to artisanal fisheries. Costa Rica, with Panama, noted regional agreements on fisheries' records and vessel control in Central America.

The UN highlighted recommendations of the Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement held in May 2010, which, *inter alia*, encouraged countries to ratify the PSMA and develop guidelines on flag state performance and records. A number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and the UN, highlighted their efforts to address IUU fishing and called for ratification and entry into force of the PSMA.

The Secretariat highlighted important issues raised, including: port state measures as a potent and cost-effective tool for combating IUU fishing; capacity development and support required for ratifying and implementing the PSMA; support to commence work on the implementation of Article 21 (developing country requirements); support for convening the technical consultation on flag state performance; and ensuring that market state measures do not become barriers to trade and the need for capacity development in this area.

On the GR, the Secretariat highlighted: the recognition of the GR as an essential tool and wide endorsement of the recommendations of the technical consultation; that the GR should be voluntary and implemented with a phased approach; the need for capacity building; securing funding through the FAO regular programme and supplemented by extra-budgetary funds.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

This agenda item (COFI/2011/6) was introduced on Wednesday. The Secretariat presented activities on fisheries and climate change in the 2009-2010 work programme, *inter alia*, the creation of the Global Partnership on Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture and a proposed five-year strategy for fisheries, aquaculture and climate change. The Secretariat also presented recommendations to COFI, including: increasing resilience of aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture production systems and communities; understanding emission and mitigation potentials of fisheries; and mainstreaming of fisheries into National Adaptation Programmes of Action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Azerbaijan, for the Regional Commission on Fisheries for Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Belize requested support for regional fisheries programmes. Algeria encouraged the development of partnerships focusing on the implementation of regional action plans. Indonesia emphasized capacity building for adaptive management strategies for fisheries and aquaculture. Canada proposed that FAO attempt to facilitate fisheries sector access to funds pledged under the outcome on long-term finance at the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun.

Oman proposed a digital programme for information exchange on climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture. Morocco, with Algeria, stressed increasing national capacities to understand climate change related impacts on fisheries. The EU noted the need to study environmental and anthropogenic factors affecting aquatic species. Zambia underscored global and regional early warning systems. The US said states and RFMOs should reduce other stressors on fisheries including IUU fishing and bycatch. The Gambia lamented the marginal role of fisheries in climate change negotiations. Afghanistan called for ensuring coherence and cohesion of FAO work on climate change with other organizations.

IMPROVED INTEGRATION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

On Wednesday evening, the Secretariat introduced this agenda item (COFI/2011/7 and INF.12). The Secretariat highlighted that while fisheries and aquaculture have negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems, many other sectors contribute more heavily to degradation. COFI was invited to endorse the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards as adopted by the Technical Consultation to Develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards, held from 6-10 December 2010 in Rome, Italy.

Delegates widely welcomed efforts on integration and called for adoption of the guidelines on bycatch and discards. Norway said FAO should be the primary source of fisheries relevant information and establish closer cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and relevant UN agencies. He said listing of species under CITES should only occur when management plans have failed. Mexico suggested coordinating efforts of multilateral organizations on aquatic resources conservation and use.

Colombia said artisanal and small-scale fisheries should be conserved. Angola highlighted the management of statistical data, particularly for developing countries. Indonesia requested FAO to develop national capacities to control invasive species, eutrophication, protect critical habitats and establish marine protected areas. The Republic of Korea called for support to countries for phased implementation of the bycatch guidelines. Colombia and the Faroe Islands underscored the need to counter negative perceptions about the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on conservation.

Costa Rica, for a number of Central American countries, supported transparent and participatory approaches to achieving innovative management mechanisms. The US supported strengthening the use of marine protected areas and underscored the impact of marine debris. Japan highlighted fisheries co-management systems. The EU requested a study to establish the impact of fishing on marine species occupying low trophic levels. Regarding implementation of the Deep-Sea Guidelines, Canada suggested FAO improve and expand application of the criteria of vulnerable marine ecosystems. Mexico said that bycatch guidelines should not impose trade barriers.

UNEP noted its collaboration with FAO on reconciling conflicting uses of aquatic resources. The CBD highlighted work being undertaken on ecologically or biologically significant areas, and, with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, called for greater collaboration with the FAO. Numerous non-governmental organizations, as well as the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, welcomed the guidelines on bycatch and discards, and further collaboration between FAO and other concerned bodies, with the International Ocean Noise Coalition calling for greater involvement in ocean noise reduction and eliminating harmful fishing practices.

The Secretariat noted endorsement of the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards and summarized the discussions, saying that comments will be recorded in the Committee's report.

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the item on small-scale fisheries (COFI/2011/8) and noted the importance of this sector for food security and poverty reduction. He highlighted challenges faced by small-scale fisheries including lack of infrastructure and vulnerability to natural disasters.

Delegates discussed the form of an international instrument on small-scale fisheries, and a related global assistance programme. Norway supported the negotiation of voluntary international guidelines, while New Zealand and Thailand preferred a new

chapter in the CCRF. The US, with Mauritius, noted the need to clarify the meaning of small-scale fisheries before developing an international instrument. South Africa called for an instrument parallel to the CCRF, while the US suggested that the instrument be an associated document to the CCRF, with a clear focus on small-scale fisheries in developing countries. Oman said the international instrument should not be binding. Brazil called for an IPOA on small-scale fisheries. The EU called for effective implementation of existing instruments, rather than a new instrument. Other countries, including Norway, Mexico and Namibia, variously suggested the instrument take into account the voluntary guidelines on the right to food, the specific needs of women, focus on developing countries and local approaches for the development of small-scale fisheries. India, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Mozambique and others suggested the creation of a specific COFI sub-committee on small-scale fisheries.

The US, with New Zealand and Mauritius, noted the need to clarify the meaning of small-scale fisheries before developing an international instrument. Malawi called for a study of the development aspects of small-scale fisheries. Namibia, with South Africa, highlighted the importance of assistance and capacity building for small-scale fisheries. Calling for FAO support for West African regional and subregional organizations, Guinea noted the need for infrastructure development, access to credit and modernization of inputs. Mexico noted that RFMOs should contribute to small-scale fisheries initiatives and be involved in the global assistance programme.

India cautioned against creating trade barriers for small-scale fishers in the international instrument and said that safety at sea needs more attention. Indonesia said FAO should devise buffer systems for small-scale fishers and models for market development. Oman highlighted the need for integrating subsistence fisheries in national economic development plans. A number of developing countries highlighted the importance of market access. Many countries, including Afghanistan, Oman, Guinea, and Thailand, also highlighted local-scale action, including on: empowering small-scale fishers in local economic decision-making processes; community-based management; micro-finance and credit for small-scale fisheries; and technology transfer to this sub-sector. South Africa emphasized the cultural importance of small-scale fisheries to communities.

Mauritius called for striking an appropriate balance between artisanal and small-scale fishing boats. The Russian Federation also cautioned against “blurring the borders between small-scale and industrial fisheries.”

On the global assistance programme, Colombia stressed that it should focus on good governance, application of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management, and disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. The Gambia said it should consider: migration of small-capacity fishers; HIV in fishing communities; and sustainable credit schemes.

Highlighting the impacts of small fisheries, particularly on internationally shared stocks, Japan said they should be integrated into national and international management systems and policies. Brazil observed that small-scale fishing often has a much lower environmental impact than other types of

fishing. Noting the possibility for overexploitation of resources, Ecuador said technical support should be provided to prevent this and to examine and create economic alternatives to ensure sustainability. Delegates also emphasized, *inter alia*: the diversity of small-scale fisheries; transparency; participatory approaches; linking fisheries and food security; recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples; coordinated policies; capacity building particularly for fish biomass determination, fisheries management, control, and surveillance and data collection; improving institutions; educating fishers, especially women; improving vessels; and providing better conditions for landing of fish.

A number of intergovernmental organizations, including the Bay of Bengal Programme and the Center for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region, highlighted their work relating to small-scale fisheries, with some supporting the creation of a sub-committee and inclusion of governance and labor issues in an international instrument. The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers urged COFI to agree on a negotiated international instrument to complement the CCRF.

The Secretariat summarized the discussions noting, *inter alia*: the recognition of the importance of small-scale fisheries and the need for integrating them in national policies; the heterogeneity of the small-scale fisheries sector; the role of South-South cooperation; and the need for FAO to cooperate with other organizations on these issues. On the international instrument, he noted consensus on the voluntary nature and the need to focus on developing countries, and guidelines as the preferred option for such an instrument.

The Chair said that comments would be included in the draft report of COFI 29.

PRIORITIES AND RESULTS UNDER THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET 2012-13

On Thursday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced this item (COFI/2011/9) highlighting that the novel approach for technical committees, such as COFI, to recommend priorities was requested by FAO governing bodies, and that priorities under consideration by COFI 29 only refer to the biennium 2012-13. He then invited COFI to endorse the priorities and areas of de-emphasis contained in the document.

Angola said the priorities identified by the 2010 FAO Regional Conference for Africa could be adapted to fisheries. Argentina underscored that each region should define priorities. The EU prioritized developing recommendations to restore and reverse the trend of declining global fish stocks and addressing the weaknesses in the FAO global monitoring of these stocks. He also supported looking into aquaculture practices to ensure sustainability. Japan, with Canada, underscored the implementation of the CCRF.

The Republic of Korea prioritized capacity building for the implementation of existing normative frameworks such as the PSMA and financial and technical support for RFMOs to apply an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture. Thailand emphasized the need to focus on co-management, micro-credit

and insurance schemes for small-scale fisheries. New Zealand supported an advocacy role for FAO to combat negative perceptions of fisheries. Norway called for cooperating with other standard setting agencies to avoid duplication of work.

Brazil, with Uruguay, welcomed the inclusion of cooperation on development as a priority under many areas of the work programme. Mexico prioritized aquaculture and artisanal fisheries and called for strengthening RFMOs. Norway questioned whether, regarding small-scale fisheries, funds are best spent on a permanent body or actions on the ground, and highlighted the possibility of including this issue permanently on the agendas of COFI and its sub-committees.

Several countries, including Argentina, Japan and Brazil, said there was not consensus to prioritize the GR. The US said it would like to see dedicated funding for the GR as well as highlighting capacity building for implementation of port state measures by developing countries.

Australia and the US expressed concern over de-emphasis of safety at sea and deep-sea fisheries management. A number of countries, including Canada, New Zealand, Iceland and India, noted that the proposed global conference on fleet capacity should not be prioritized.

In summarizing the discussions, the Secretariat noted, *inter alia*: constructive interventions and support for the ongoing reform of FAO and the approach taken by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department; large support for the priorities; and concern on de-emphasizing aquaculture in Asia and safety at sea, especially regarding small-scale fisheries. Chair Pourkazemi noted that the discussions will be recorded in the Committee report.

OTHER MATTERS

Sri Lanka, with India, highlighted their intention to host an Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on aquaculture development for food security and economic development and requested FAO collaboration on this, which was endorsed by COFI. The Republic of Congo conveyed a message from the regional fisheries committee of the Gulf of Guinea. Kyrgyzstan, on behalf of Azerbaijan and Turkey, with the Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America, highlighted recreational fisheries.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT SESSION

The Secretariat proposed, and delegates agreed to hold COFI 30 from 9-13 July 2012, in Rome, Italy.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SESSION

On Friday afternoon, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (US), Chair of the Drafting Committee, introduced the draft report (COFI/2011/REP/Draft) for adoption. Delegates went through the report paragraph-by-paragraph.

Algeria, Mauritius, Morocco, and India, opposed by the US and the EU, said port state-measures should not be defined as “more cost-effective” highlighting the cost implications of their implementation. Delegates agreed that these measures are “potent and cost-effective.” Mexico reiterated that it has not agreed to sign the PSMA and is still examining whether to adopt it. India, Indonesia, China and Bangladesh said carp

should be highlighted in the promotion of use of indigenous aquatic species. Ecuador, Angola and Algeria noted carp are not indigenous species to their countries, and parties agreed to leave carp out of the report.

Delegates adopted the report, as amended. COFI Chair Mohammed Pourkazemi closed the meeting at 6:57 pm.

COFI 29 REPORT: In the report of COFI 29, as adopted during the closing plenary, the Committee approved recommendations on a number of issues.

- On progress in the implementation of the CCRF, COFI:
- agrees that additional efforts are required to broaden and deepen implementation and urges all members to respond to the questionnaire on implementation to demonstrate their commitment to the Code;
 - encourages members to improve and extend data collection and analysis to enhance conservation and management;
 - urges the use of best scientific advice available while recognizing that traditional knowledge could play an important role, encourages wide application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture; and
 - acknowledges that not all countries have equivalent capacity to implement the CCRF and capacity building should be targeted at technical assistance to support implementation of IPOAs and the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture.

On the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, the Committee:

- endorses the report of the 12th session of the Sub-Committee;
- adopts the Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries; and
- agrees that FAO should develop international best practices guidelines for traceability of fish and fishery products.

On the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, the Committee:

- approves the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification and notes their implementation shall be gradual and that appropriate standards should be developed in coordination with relevant intergovernmental organizations to ensure that certification systems do not become barriers to trade and remain consistent with reference international standards; and
- adopts the report of the fifth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

On progress made on measures to combat IUU fishing, COFI:

- welcomes finalization of negotiations on the PSMA;
- recognizes the critical role of capacity development in assisting developing countries and notes strong support for FAO to commence preparatory work aimed at the future implementation of Article 21 (developing country requirements) of the PSMA;
- requests FAO to form an open-ended working group to draft TORs for the *ad hoc* working group envisioned in Article 21 and to assess and explore funding mechanisms;
- urges members to ensure market-related measures are clear and do not become barriers to trade; and
- reiterates its support for the GR and recognizes it should be voluntary, under FAO supervision, and implemented using a flexible and phased approach.

On fisheries, aquaculture and climate change, COFI recommends:

- members intensify efforts to assess environmental and anthropogenic factors affecting aquatic ecosystems;
- downscale responses to climate change impacts at the national and regional levels;
- FAO raise the profile of fisheries regarding food security under climate change; and
- better coordination between UN agencies.

On improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection, the Committee:

- reaffirms that FAO is the primary source of scientific expertise and advice on global issues on fisheries and aquaculture;
- recommends collaboration with CITES, CBD and UNEP;
- endorses ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture as the appropriate framework to facilitate integration; and
- endorses the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards.

On governance of small-scale fisheries, the Committee:

- agrees on the important role of the small-scale fisheries sector, particularly for developing countries, in the context of food security and poverty reduction;
- approves development of a new international instrument on small-scale fisheries, in the form of guidelines;
- agrees on the need to strengthen conditions of safety at sea, particularly for small-scale fisheries; and
- agrees on the establishment and implementation of a global assistance programme.

On the programme of work and budget, COFI agrees with priorities, agrees to de-emphasize the convening of a Global Conference on Fleet Capacity, but does not support de-emphasis of safety at sea.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COFI 29

Fish provide more than 1.5 billion people with almost 20% of their average per capita intake of animal protein, and 3 billion people with at least 15% of their protein.—State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010

COFI 29 opened with the release of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010 report in which stark figures indicate that 32% of marine fish stocks are now overexploited or depleted, threatening the communities and ecosystems that depend on them. The report also highlights that the importance of aquaculture is expected to increase rapidly. The objective of achieving sustainable fisheries lies behind the formulation of various guidelines endorsed during the meeting. Implementation, the greatest challenge, will ultimately depend on forging more effective synergies with other regional and international processes, regimes and organizations and prioritizing actions in order to achieve a coherent international system that maintains livelihoods and protects aquatic resources. In this context, the 29th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) met to discuss international fisheries and aquaculture policy and to adopt guidelines to promote responsible fishing.

With a focus on implementation, this brief analysis will highlight the challenges and opportunities of moving from international policy generation to action on the ground through national and regional efforts, managing synergies between international organizations and the setting of priorities within the FAO work programme.

FROM PAPER TO PRACTICE?

Guidelines are all well and good, but in order to make a difference they have to be applied at various levels, making implementation a central aspect to their utility. COFI 29 endorsed three sets of new technical guidelines: aquaculture certification; ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from inland capture fisheries; and on reducing bycatch and preventing discards. They also supported the development of guidelines on small-scale fisheries. Delegates appeared to be realistic about the full value of the guidelines, noting that they are very useful in guiding policy change at both the national and at the regional level, through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

At the national level, the challenges of implementing international policies are well documented. Many countries lack human and financial capacity to translate policy into effective action on the ground, and capacity building remains complex. Many delegates highlighted the complexity and diversity of circumstances in their countries and the need for funding for a broad range of activities, including training, information exchange, infrastructure development and education of fisher communities, as well as assistance to implement the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) when it enters into force. The diversity of needs presents a challenge for those attempting to target the limited funds available to priority activities. With this in mind, some highlighted the potentially important role of the guidelines since they establish a framework within which development partners can target their assistance.

FAO has an important role in formulating policies based on the guidelines and in providing technical assistance and capacity building to support their implementation. However, support by FAO cannot exist in a vacuum. Delegates appeared to recognize that intensive efforts at the national and regional levels to educate policy makers, prioritize the fishing sector, and to formulate or reform legal frameworks are required, among other efforts. However, many countries expressed concern that the low rate of response, only 36%, to the questionnaire on progress on implementation of the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fishing (CCRF), reflected a lack of commitment and/or capacity for implementation.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

COFI delegates agreed that the management of fisheries cannot be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion since sustainable utilization has to take into consideration trade, subsidies, protected areas, safety at sea and other issues. Given that the mandates of several international organizations, including UNEP and various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), address these issues, the need to create effective synergies becomes paramount in order to achieve the objective of sustainable fisheries and effective implementation of the

guidelines. In light of its comparative advantage on fisheries and aquaculture management issues, COFI has called on FAO to enhance collaboration with relevant MEAs and other organizations, which includes collaborating with the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and others to build a coherent system to sustainably manage fisheries and conserve aquatic resources.

Guidelines, such as those on bycatch and discards and aquaculture certification, could provide a framework for UNEP, relevant MEAs and other international and regional organizations to integrate these issues into their work programmes and other activities. For instance, several observers hoped that the development of guidelines on small-scale fisheries would provide UNEP and others working on marine protected areas with a framework to protect these areas while working with and conserving the livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities.

Although these linkages may appear self-evident, this does not presuppose that they are free from complexity or inherent contradictions. CITES has been in the limelight recently in fisheries conservation circles, following the refusal of the 15th Conference of the Parties, held in March 2010 in Doha, to include Atlantic blue fin tuna in Appendix I. Many observers pointed to the well-documented fact that stocks of blue fin tuna are declining. While a majority of the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for Assessment of CITES Listing agreed that the available evidence supported the listing of blue fin tuna under CITES, many observers were disappointed that this was not accepted in Doha. During COFI 29 the terms of reference (TORs) for the Expert Panel came up for discussion and ultimately countries agreed that the Panel should continue its work in accordance with its existing TORs. The objective of the Panel is to assess each listing proposal from a scientific perspective in accordance with the CITES biological listing criteria. The Expert Advisory Panel also considers and comments, as appropriate, on technical aspects of the proposal in relation to biology, ecology, trade and management issues, as well as, to the extent possible, the likely effectiveness of listing for conservation. John Scanlon, the first CITES Secretary-General to address COFI, drew attention to the “need for alignment” between these two bodies. Alignment, or closer collaboration between the two bodies, would help provide more coherent advice to member states and improve conservation and management outcomes.

Also addressing COFI for the first time was the CBD Secretariat, which took the opportunity to highlight work being undertaken in ecological and biological sensitive areas (EBSAs). Amongst other things, CBD COP 10 agreed to the application of CBD scientific criteria on EBSAs. FAO has international guidelines for the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, which include standards and criteria for identifying vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Many would say that this begs the question: when is an EBSA not a VME or *vice versa* and how are EBSAs identified? Some practitioners respond by clarifying that the elements of both are essentially similar although the concept of EBSAs may be more developed. To add more fuel to the fire, the UN General Assembly and its Working Group on

Marine Biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction are also considering marine protected areas. UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105, among other things, calls on regional fisheries management organizations to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from bottom fishing activities. Semantics aside, the issue of designation is significant with many fishery managers expressing concern that EBSA designation is likely to herald the end of fishing in these areas, while some conservationists advocate closing VMEs to fishing. The issue of EBSAs and VMEs demonstrates that overlapping mandates risk creating parallel frameworks at the regional and national levels, which pose challenges to implementing consistent policies. However, the presence of the CBD and CITES at COFI takes the first step towards showing that the commitment to creating synergies is starting to bear fruit.

Part of the challenge for FAO is to provide relevant input and cooperate with other international organizations to create a coherent governance framework for fisheries and aquaculture, while refining the focus of its own work. Following FAO-wide reform recommended by the External Independent Evaluation in 2007, COFI 29 was asked to recommend priorities and areas for de-emphasis for the next budget biennium (2012-2013). The results-based approach marks a shift from the delivery of outputs, as was the focus in the past, to the achievement of impacts of FAO activities.

In its recommendations, COFI gave higher priorities to FAO’s primary responsibilities and core functions, including global information and statistics, support for implementation of normative codes, such as the CCRF, and collaboration with other UN agencies. In doing so, COFI endorsed the principle of concentrating on what FAO does best, including supporting implementation of key international policy frameworks, while cooperating with other international bodies to effectively promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

In light of declining fish stocks and the continuing importance of fish products for ensuring food security and the livelihoods of fishing communities, the effective management of fisheries and aquaculture is more vital than ever. With the guidelines and agreements negotiated by COFI in place, the challenges that remain relate to effective implementation, including through regional and national policy processes and associated capacity building, synergies with other processes, particularly related to conservation and environmental protection, and prioritization of activities to effectively manage resources. These challenges present an opportunity for COFI to continue finding solutions to support sustainable fisheries management through implementation of international policy guidelines. At the end of the day, it is only effective implementation of policies that can achieve food security and supporting sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

3rd Meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body (RFB) Secretariats Network (RSN): This meeting hosted by FAO will allow RFBs to report on activities and challenges, discuss sharing of information, the future of the RSN and the outcomes

of COFI 29 on RFBs and RFMOs, among other topics. **dates:** 7-9 February 2011 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Hiromoto Watanabe, FAO **email:** hiromoto.watanabe@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/39496/en>

7th Secretariat of the Pacific Communities (SPC) Heads of Fisheries Meeting: Convened by the SPC, the Heads of Fisheries meeting is intended to discuss the work of national and territorial fisheries administrations. It also may discuss issues outside the current range of the SPC work-programme, including a “big-picture” view of fisheries, to aid longer-term planning. **dates:** 28 February - 4 March 2011 **location:** Noumea, New Caledonia **contact:** SPC Secretariat **phone:** +687-26-20-00 **fax:** +687-26-38-18 **email:** spc@spc.int **www:** <http://www.spc.int/FAME/en/meetings/82-seventh-spc-heads-of-fisheries-meeting>

7th Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Committee on Aquaculture: This session will address the intersessional activities of the committee, as well as research priorities, trends and issues of marine and brackish aquaculture and the proposed work programme 2011-2012. **dates:** 8-10 March 2011 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Fabio Massa, FAO **email:** fabio.massa@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/39509/en>

5th International Marine Debris Conference: This conference is co-organized by UNEP and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The event will highlight research advances, allowing sharing of strategies and best practices to assess, reduce and prevent the impacts of marine debris. **dates:** 20-25 March 2011 **location:** Honolulu, US **contact:** David Osborn, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-5721 **email:** david.osborn@unep.org **www:** <http://www.5imdc.org/>

FAO COFI Technical Consultation on Flag State Performance: The Technical Consultation on Flag State Performance addresses the development of guidelines on criteria for assessing the performance of flag states and possible actions against vessels flying the flags of states not meeting such criteria. **dates:** 2-6 May 2011 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** David Douman, FAO **email:** david.doulman@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/39660/en>

2nd International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC2): The Marine Section of the Society for Conservation Biology will host IMCC2 under the theme “Making Marine Science Matter.” **dates:** 14-18 May 2011 **location:** Victoria, Canada **contact:** Society for Conservation Biology **phone:** +1-202-234-4133 **fax:** +1-703-995-4633 **email:** IMCC2011@conbio.org **www:** <http://www.conbio.org/imcc2011/>

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction: This meeting of the *Ad hoc* open-ended informal working group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction is convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/37, paragraph 163. **dates:** 31 May - 3 June 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:**

+1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

12th Meeting of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea: This meeting is convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/37, paragraph 228. **dates:** 20-24 June 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm

3rd Intergovernmental Review of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution (GPA): The 3rd Intergovernmental Review meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution (GPA) is expected to take place during late 2011.

dates: November 2011 **location:** to be announced **contact:** David Osborn, UNEP/GPA Coordinator **phone:** +254-20-762-1206 **fax:** +254-20-762-4249 **email:** david.osborn@unep.org **www:** <http://www.gpa.unep.org>

30th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries: The 30th session of COFI will review activities of the COFI Sub-Committees on Aquaculture and Fish Trade, progress on the implementation of the CCRF and associated IPOAs, as well as the priorities for the FAO work programme on these issues. **dates:** 9-13 July 2012 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Hiromoto Watanabe, FAO **email:** hiromoto.watanabe@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/fishery/about/cofi/meetings/en>

GLOSSARY

CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GR	Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels
IPOA	International Plan of Action
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
NPOA	National Plan of Action
PSMA	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization



Sustainable Development Policy & Practice

A Knowledgebase of International Activities Preparing for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development



Announcement from Friday, 14 January 2011

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is pleased to announce the launch of

Sustainable Development Policy & Practice:

A Knowledgebase of International Activities Preparing for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

[UNCSD.iisd.org](http://uncsd.iisd.org)

Sustainable Development Policy & Practice is a knowledge management project tracking intergovernmental and other international activities on sustainable development. It is managed by the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](http://www.iisd.org/) (<http://www.iisd.org/>) (IISD) [Reporting Services](http://www.iisd.ca/) (<http://www.iisd.ca/>).

The launch of **Sustainable Development Policy & Practice** comes as the UN, governments, academics, NGOs, businesses, and the media undertake preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also known as Rio+20), set to take place in Brazil in 2012. The UNCSD will convene 20 years after the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Rio Earth Summit), and will seek to assess implementation of previous commitments while addressing new and emerging challenges to sustainable development.

Information on United Nations activities is provided in cooperation with the UN system agencies, funds and programmes through the [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination](http://www.unsystemceb.org/) (<http://www.unsystemceb.org/>) (CEB) Secretariat.

All news articles on **Sustainable Development Policy & Practice** are researched and produced by our [team of thematic experts](http://uncsd.iisd.org/about-sustainable-development-policy-and-practice-team/), (<http://uncsd.iisd.org/about-sustainable-development-policy-and-practice-team/>) resulting in all original content.

Features of the website include:

- A knowledgebase of summaries of activities (publications, meetings, statements or projects) by a range of actors, with the option to search by several categories (region, actor, action and issue);
- An archive of all posts on the site, organized by date posted;
- A clickable world map, enabling you to view the latest sustainable development policy news by region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, Near East, Northern America, and South West Pacific);
- A link to subscribe to UNCSD-L, a moderated community announcement list for policy-makers and practitioners involved with UNCSD preparations;
- A link to the most recent "UNCSD Update," a periodic feed of recent posts to the Sustainable Development Policy & Practice knowledgebase;
- A Calendar of upcoming international events related to the UNCSD;
- A link to our Sustainable Development iCalendar, which automatically updates your own calendar program with upcoming UNCSD-related events; and
- A link to our RSS feed.

We invite you to visit Sustainable Development Policy & Practice, at <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>.

Funding for Sustainable Development Policy & Practice has been provided by [Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety](#) (BMU) and [France's Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing](#) (Directorate for European and International Affairs Department of Climate Change and Sustainable Development).

For further information on this initiative or to provide us with information about your sustainable development-related activity, please contact Faye Leone, Content Editor, at faye@iisd.org.

The Sustainable Development Policy & Practice Team
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