

COFI 30 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 10 JULY 2012

Delegates convened on Tuesday for the second day of the 30th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to continue discussing progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and related instruments. In the afternoon and an evening session, delegates then turned to considering the decisions and recommendations of the 13th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the 6th session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION AND STRATEGIES, AND OTHER MATTERS: Vice-Chair Johan Williams (Norway) re-opened discussion on progress in the implementation of the CCRF.

INDIA emphasized that the questionnaire response rate continues to decline, and urged meaningful action to encourage more responses. NEW ZEALAND, ARGENTINA, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, SAUDI ARABIA, and CANADA called for a tool to enhance the usability of the Code to ensure its ongoing relevance, with NORWAY, supported by CANADA, warning against renegotiating the Code. ICELAND and NEW ZEALAND underscored the welfare of fishers, recommending continued FAO/International Labor Organization (ILO) collaboration on the issue. The US reiterated concerns that yes/no questions cannot capture country experiences. MEXICO, ARGENTINA, NEW ZEALAND, and US supported the development of an electronic questionnaire. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION recommended boosting feedback mechanisms to better solicit outstanding CCRF surveys.

ANGOLA proposed country focal points for implementing the CCRF to improve coordination among different fisheries and aquaculture departments and institutions, and, supported by BANGLADESH, called on FAO to conduct further work on small-scale fisheries. TANZANIA reported their use of community fisheries management for managing capture fisheries, marine protected areas, and rare species. VIET NAM suggested that the Code be updated to better consider small-scale fisheries. ZAMBIA and VIET NAM noted that small-scale fisheries in developing countries lack capacity to implement the CCRF, with COLOMBIA and ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN stressing the importance of capacity building for fisheries management.

THAILAND noted that stock-specific harvest reference points are less appropriate for multi-species and multi-gear fisheries where an ecosystem approach is more appropriate, and, supported by BANGLADESH, asked FAO to provide technical assistance on electronic reporting. BANGLADESH discussed the fisheries management and conservation work of the Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP), and reviewed fish hatchery laws developed to advance sustainable aquaculture management. OMAN said setting fishing quotas would help manage fishing effort and ensure fair resource allocations. URUGUAY highlighted a proposed bill on responsible fisheries and aquaculture, which creates national fisheries and aquaculture councils and supports aquaculture-development research.

The US urged that regional fisheries management organizations take action on sharks and noted catch-share programmes and policies. SEYCHELLES noted their efforts to develop national plans of action (NPOA) for sharks, illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, seabirds and capacity. SENEGAL and ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN detailed the implementation of their respective NPOAs on sharks. MALAYSIA mentioned work to finalize their NPOA on IUU. MEXICO discussed, *inter alia*: efforts to manage sharks; the need for more action on by-catch; and the role of FAO's work on disease prevention and capacity building. MAURITIUS noted that tuna fisheries in eastern Africa are also taking sharks, so need to be managed. GUINEA said they are tackling IUU fishing, supporting artisanal fishing, improving health and sanitary measures for captured fish, and working to develop their aquaculture industry. LIBERIA described a success story of south-south cooperation with Mozambique to tackle IUU fishing.

SOUTH AFRICA called for COFI to continue addressing the effects of climate change on fisheries. MAURITANIA and MALDIVES noted measures implemented to develop sustainable fisheries, including: catch management, monitoring, and banning destructive fishing practices. NORWAY said not fully and fully exploited categories would fall within what it proposed as the "sustainable" stock category.

COLOMBIA and SAUDI ARABIA described their efforts to implement the CCRF. CAMEROON asked FAO to continue Fish Code Programme activities to help developing countries. SRI LANKA highlighted significant gains in domestic production by adhering to fisheries management advocated by the CCRF. The FAROE ISLANDS reported on reductions in post-harvest losses and discards and protection of spawning sites through closed seasons. MALAWI highlighted: periodic reviews of its fisheries act; co-management of fisheries; and measures to promote safety and reduce post-harvest losses. INDIA encouraged fast release of two publications on safety issues produced by International Maritime Organization, ILO and FAO.

ILO and WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP) urged greater focus on social issues in future revisions of the CCRF. The CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF ENDANGERED WILD SPECIES OF FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) and UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME/CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES expressed concern on slow improvement in shark management. JOINT TECHNICAL COMMISSION OF THE MARITIME FRONT reported on regional research and conservation strategies for sharks. LATIN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT, ALSPEC, FISHERIES COMMITTEE FOR THE WEST CENTRAL GULF OF GUINEA, and CARIBBEAN REGIONAL FISHERIES MECHANISM expressed the desire for continued and strengthened alliance with FAO in regional management. SOUTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION described work on *inter alia*: reducing by-catch of seabirds, sea turtles and sharks; and lost gear retrieval. SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SEAFDEC) pointed to challenges climate change poses in implementing CCRF. The INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS said its contracting parties all seek to implement the CCRF.

BOBP described an annual training course for mid and junior level fisheries officers of the region. COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES said they have assisted members to combat IUU fishing, improve vessel safety and review catch limits and gear restrictions.

INTERNATIONAL GAME FISH ASSOCIATION stressed that recreational fishing is a prominent and economically beneficial activity that requires different management from other fisheries. INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF FISHERIES ASSOCIATIONS noted that by-catch levels for tuna purse seine fishing is comparatively low, and said practices should be assessed to see which ones affect the sustainability of fisheries.

GREENPEACE, supported by NORWAY, called on COFI to address overcapacity. IUCN lamented the limited adoption of NPOAs on sharks, and called for attention to sawfish survival and the implementation of shark finning bans. PEW called for stronger shark management measures and assessment of ecosystem effects of fishing gear, and highlighted the role of forage fish for fisheries and food security. SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN DEEPSEA FISHERS ASSOCIATION described their contribution to work on research and monitoring of deep-water sharks.

David Doullman, FAO, said the low response rates might be due to a shorter time between COFI 29 and COFI 30 and from confusion caused by concurrent circulation of another FAO questionnaire. On making the CCRF easier to use, he noted a simple language version released and disseminated in 2001, which is available in about 100 languages.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE: William Emerson, Secretary, Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, presented the decisions and recommendations of the 13th session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI/2012/4). He reported that only some members endorsed the results of the expert consultation to develop an FAO evaluation framework. Lahsen Ababouch, FAO, highlighted the traceability best practice guidelines.

NORWAY, NEW ZEALAND, and CANADA said FAO should focus more on the traceability tool to combat IUU fishing, with CANADA adding that without global standards, the costs of addressing importer IUU requirements would hamper progress. JAPAN asked FAO to provide scientific advice to CITES for species that have sustainable management mechanisms.

NAMIBIA recommended FAO assess effects of eco-labeling schemes through forming a specialized structure. PERU, SENEGAL, MEXICO, MOZAMBIQUE, and MALDIVES cautioned that eco-labeling requirements must not limit market access for developing countries. ICELAND added that traceability might also become a technical barrier to trade. REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted success in advancing seafood traceability, which has increased seafood value and safety.

TANZANIA urged FAO to support detailed studies on fish and fisheries product trade in the international market. ARGENTINA supported FAO's work with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on fisheries subsidies, with INDIA noting some discrepancies between the information provided by the WTO and FAO on subsidies.

El Salvador, for the ORGANIZATION OF FISHING AND AQUACULTURE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, encouraged innovative strategies to promote trade supporting small, artisanal and medium-sized producers. ANGOLA noted reference to the trade contribution of small-scale fisheries, with BANGLADESH underscoring the need for improved market linkages for South Asian small-scale fisheries. COOK ISLANDS requested special accommodations for developing states implementing traceability standards. MOZAMBIQUE, noting that small-scale fishers contribute 80% of their national catch, expressed concern that traceability requirements will exclude them from international markets. ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, supported by MALDIVES, noted capacity needs for market access and value addition in small-scale fisheries trade.

The US and MAURITIUS expressed support for a future gap analysis for traceability, with SENEGAL and COLOMBIA encouraging further FAO-CITES collaboration.

EUROFISH highlighted information and knowledge sharing in technical research, consumer patterns and seafood trends as important in globalized fish trade. SEAFDEC highlighted data needs for decision making on trade, applying farm regulations, and aquaculture certification. CENTRE FOR CONSULTATIVE SERVICES IN ARAB REGIONS described outcomes of collaboration with INFOFISH concerning safety of fish products and upgrading of small-scale fisheries.

PEW emphasized that CITES is a regulatory and not restrictive measure to trade in species. WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST reaffirmed the importance of FAO to provide technical and scientific advice to CITES. MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL discussed its eco-labeling scheme, noting its complementarity to the CCRF. WFPF called on FAO to analyze the effects of fish trade on food security of local communities.

The FAO Secretariat remarked that problems associated to private eco-labeling initiatives falsely claiming to be FAO based would be reduced if members endorse the FAO guidelines.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 6TH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE: Jia Jiansan, FAO, presented the decisions and recommendations of the 6th session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI/2012/5), focusing on, *inter alia*: capacity building in developing countries; regional networking; FAO guidelines on aquaculture certification; a regulatory and legislative framework on feed; and assessments of genetic resources in aquaculture.

THAILAND requested a consultation on public and private accreditation schemes. COLOMBIA said standards for small-scale aquaculture producers are stringent and prevent access to certain markets.

BANGLADESH noted availability of inexpensive and quality fish feed. MALAYSIA described the development and testing of plant-based fish feed. TANZANIA, CAMEROON and CÔTE D'IVOIRE noted, *inter alia*, problems accessing quality feed, with CAMEROON, CONGO, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, and OMAN highlighting the potential for aquaculture in their countries. ALGERIA said their pilot agriculture-aquaculture programme has doubled fish and crop yield. GUATEMALA said aquaculture contributes to food security in the OSPESCA region, with MAURITIUS and MALDIVES stressing the importance of mariculture for the economies of small-island developing states.

NAMIBIA, supported by the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARRIBEAN GROUP, called for support to develop aquaculture in developing countries, with ARGENTINA indicating that FAO should work to improve technology transfer. INDONESIA urged accelerating FAO guidelines for aquaculture technology, and ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN and the PHILIPPINES asked FAO to assist with animal health issues and fish pathogens. UKRAINE mentioned a new draft law on aquaculture, thanking FAO for technical assistance in drafting.

Noting ocean acidification negatively affects shellfish, CANADA said FAO's aquaculture work must consider climate change. EU noted analyses of aquaculture's use of genetically modified organisms.

SRI LANKA highlighted the first Asian Ministerial meeting on Aquaculture, which it hosted in July 2011. SOUTH AFRICA and ANGOLA urged strengthening of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa.

INDIA called for: innovative methods to meet the challenge of data harvesting for aquaculture; and guidelines for cold-water aquaculture and reservoir fisheries. The FAROE ISLANDS discussed sustainable salmon aquaculture, and the REGIONAL COMMISSION ON FISHERIES OF WEST AFRICA called for FAO to hold an aquaculture workshop in sub-Saharan Africa. BOBP called on FAO to consider interactions between capture and aquaculture fisheries particularly where brood stocks and juveniles are sourced from the wild.

The FAO Secretariat summarized the discussion and noted that a technical workshop in November 2012 will discuss an assessment framework to evaluate aquaculture schemes in line with FAO instruments.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With discussions of the CCRF continuing, the low response rate to the FAO questionnaire on the Code's implementation garnered some attention. Delegates recognized that a higher response rate would, among other things, allow FAO to better address capacity-building needs by knowing where implementation is most challenging to most countries. One delegation felt this could help remedy the ostensible "ad hoc" distribution of funds among FAO activities. Yet, while the CCRF received general support from participants, indicating that better implementation may be possible, reasons exist to think further challenges exist. As one delegate remarked, "the less you want to do about it, the more you talk about it." Indeed, those having completed the questionnaire noted that the information required might be hard for some countries to produce. Other delegates opined that countries do not want to disclose potentially "irresponsible" fishing practices. Whatever the reasons, the limited response does affect the FAO's ability to communicate progress on fisheries management, which appears a salient concern as markets increasingly call for sustainable and legal seafood. Discussions of eco-labeling during the day made this salience abundantly clear.