

## COFI 30 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2012

The fourth day of the 30th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) convened on Thursday. In the morning, delegates received an update from the FAO on its recent activities on the development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, and discussed the necessary future work on this matter. In the afternoon, the Committee considered: FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture; the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee; the revised Rules of Procedure of the Committee and related changes in practice; election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs for COFI 31; other matters; and the date and location of the next session.

### RECENT AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE WORK IN SELECTED FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES OF FAO

**UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES:** Rolf Willmann, FAO, reported on work to develop international guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries (SSFs) (COFI/2012/7). He reviewed the extensive stakeholder consultations and asked for guidance on necessary next steps.

Peru, for GRULAC, said the work should be consistent with the decisions made at COFI 29, stressing that the guidelines should be voluntary, and that national authorities, legally constituted SSFs, and technical experts must be part of the negotiations. MAURITANIA questioned the use of "indigenous" in the zero-draft, calling it "pejorative". PANAMA and OMAN reviewed regional work in the consultative processes on sustainable SSFs.

VENEZUELA, supported by the EU, MAURITIUS and ECUADOR, noted any international programme on SSFs should advance social and economic development. INDONESIA asked FAO to promote approaches to SSFs that ensure fishers meet their own needs, with NORWAY stressing the link between the guidelines and the role fisheries play in securing a right to food. GUATEMALA stressed artisanal fisheries are not only limited to local markets but also impact external markets. ZAMBIA and MALAWI reported that inland SSFs contribute significantly to fisheries production and requested support for implementing guidelines. VENEZUELA and the EU supported implementation strategies at multiple levels.

SEYCHELLES underlined the challenge of piracy, and role of social welfare systems and co-management. CAMEROON urged SSFs be given special attention for improving working conditions and livelihoods of fishers and their families. GUINEA raised the importance of women in SSFs. COOK ISLANDS urged taking a holistic approach to the issue of sustainable SSFs, given competing fishing practices, conservation approaches and economic interests.

NORWAY, supported by AFGHANISTAN, noted that banning non-discriminatory fishing gear may pose a problem for the most marginalized SSFs and, supported by BANGLADESH, called for technology and management tools to alleviate this problem. JAPAN said the guidelines should take a case-by-case approach, noting that a universal approach may not be appropriate. The US and NEW ZEALAND said SSFs should also be accountable for sustainable management.

CHILE said the guidelines should promote progressive steps towards sustainability. INDIA said that the guidelines should address the activities of states and SSFs. ARGENTINA and NEW ZEALAND emphasized that the guidelines should be used to promote poverty alleviation and development through SSFs and not create barriers to trade.

Sierra Leone, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted a sub-regional protocol being drafted to address SSFs, and together with THAILAND called for measures to increase implementation of the guidelines. INDIA, IRAN, MALAYSIA and SENEGAL supported making the guidelines simple and practically relevant for implementation.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for clear definition of SSFs noting the lack of demarcated boundaries with other fisheries. MOZAMBIQUE highlighted the importance of scientific information for sustainable SSFs. EGYPT called for assistance to improve data collection capacity in developing countries.

CANADA, supported by AFGHANISTAN, stressed that, as human rights are a sensitive topic, there should be adequate budget to cover more than one negotiation session. Supported by AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND, she urged FAO to ensure opportunities for participation are consistently available to all stakeholders. BRAZIL, NORWAY, TANZANIA, and SOUTH AFRICA supported FAO's inclusion of civil society and stakeholder inputs and a further technical consultation on SSFs. AFGHANISTAN said consultation on the guidelines has been participatory and extensive, called for the process to be completed by COFI 31, and called for a FAO-wide focal area on small-scale holders. He also called for a COFI sub-committee on SSFs, which was supported by GUINEA, PALAU, CAMEROON, MALAWI, INDIA, SENEGAL, and ANGOLA.

LATIN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT mentioned a regional model for holistic management of SSFs emphasizing social responsibility. BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAM said they have initiated extensive regional discussions on SSFs. CARIBBEAN REGIONAL FISHERIES MECHANISM said fisheries of small-island states in the Caribbean are predominantly SSFs. ORGANIZATION FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR and FISHERIES COMMITTEE OF WEST CENTRAL GULF OF GUINEA called on FAO to ensure adequate resources for the implementation of SSFs guidelines.

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS, for the CIVIL SOCIETY CONSORTIUM (WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES, WORLD FORUM OF FISH HARVESTERS AND FISH WORKERS, INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE ON FOOD

SOVEREIGNTY), said civil society should continue to represent local communities in drafting groups and interventions in plenary. PEOPLE'S COALITION ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY emphasized need for democratic ownership of fisheries.

The FAO Secretariat presented their summary of the session's discussion, noting points made by the members. Calls to increase civil society and NGO involvement in COFI were noted, and the Secretariat said this is under review.

### **FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

#### **A VISION OF THE FUTURE AND PRIORITIES IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN:**

Arni Mathiesen, FAO, noted that the vision of the future is a dynamic document, divided into sections on aquaculture and fisheries that will continue to evolve as information becomes available and trends change. He explained the FAO's strategic thinking process, and called for clear COFI recommendations to feed into the FAO's Programme of Work.

Cyprus, for the EU, said that the objectives identified in the Programme of Work should be considered for proposals for concrete action. BANGLADESH said the vision for the future should emphasize eco-friendly fisheries, modalities to overcome climate change and restoration of depleted fish stocks. MAURITIUS called for continued support for the ecosystem approach to fisheries.

JAPAN, supported by CANADA and IRAN, expressed concern about the over-emphasis placed on the Global Record of fishing vessels. Peru, for GRULAC, highlighted agreements made at the 32nd Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean relevant to future work on fisheries. INDIA said that transfer of technology to developing countries should be prioritized in the work plan. ICELAND emphasized capacity building and gender mainstreaming.

CONGO called for special assistance and support to African countries. AUSTRALIA, NORWAY, CANADA, and IRAN recommended FAO focus support on areas where FAO has comparative advantage, including aquaculture. The US said clarification is required where "agriculture" is used as a general term that includes fisheries and aquaculture, and, supported by NORWAY, said FAO should ensure fish are high on the food security agenda.

ARGENTINA raised concerns around the use of certain terms in the report, such as "governance" and the "green economy," and called for strengthening of the responsibilities of flag states and to not allow certification from becoming a barrier to trade.

Guatemala, for CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, suggested conducting the questionnaires for the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries through regional bodies. RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested including reference to improving safety of fishers at sea. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC urged integration of value chains and commercialization of SSFs. BRAZIL, supported by MEXICO, reiterated concerns about the Global Environmental Facility's project on areas beyond national jurisdiction, citing concerns about rights-based management and compliance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, respectively.

SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN DEEPSEA FISHING ASSOCIATION urged placing emphasis on development of rights-based fisheries management on the high seas.

In summarizing the discussions, the FAO Secretariat noted, *inter alia*: that they are looking at stock structure and interactions for climate change adaptation; it is sometimes necessary for fisheries and aquaculture activities to be covered through broad FAO fora; gender mainstreaming will be emphasized; and COFI will not circumvent authority of sovereign states or regional fisheries management organizations.

### **MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

The chair noted that the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) is a "living document" reflecting Members' priorities. Cyprus, for the EU, called for elaboration in terms of intersessional work of the bureau to be more ambitious, and

clearer on the work carried out. CANADA called for inclusion of measurable targets and indicators in the MYPOW. NORWAY said the generation of statistics is a key part of FAO's work and that the MYPOW should include requirements for data submission.

The Secretariat said they would consider comments from COFI to improve content of the MYPOW.

### **REVISED RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE AND RELATED CHANGES IN PRACTICE**

Chair Mohammed Pourkazemi invited delegates to consider the revised Rules of Procedure with a text insertion proposed by Argentina regarding intersessional meetings. Thailand, for the ASIAN GROUP, presented new text regarding the composition of the bureau to ensure regional representation of its members and a change whereby the first Vice-Chair would not automatically take the Chair position at the next COFI session. ARGENTINA, CANADA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, BRAZIL and others, said delegates need more time to consider this addition and requested that the ASIAN GROUP reintroduce the proposal at COFI 31. Sri Lanka, for the ASIAN GROUP, said they would compromise if the bureau agrees to consider the text and conduct negotiations with COFI members within six months and that their concerns are included in the report of the meeting. Delegates approved the Rules of Procedure, with Argentina's text, and referred the Asian group's additions to the bureau for consideration during the intersessional period.

### **ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS OF COFI 31**

Johan Williams (Norway) and Fabio Hassin (Brazil) were elected Chair and Vice-Chair for COFI 31 respectively, with Morocco, Sri Lanka, Iran, New Zealand, and US elected as regional Vice-Chairs.

### **OTHER MATTERS**

IRAN, supported by SEYCHELLES, MAURITIUS, CAMEROON, OMAN and TANZANIA, underscored the negative impact of piracy on the fishing industry and that, while the International Maritime Organization's measures exist, guidelines are needed to combat piracy. He called on FAO to establish an *ad hoc* working group to address piracy and prepare an anti-piracy guideline by the end of 2012. NORWAY questioned if this is within FAO's remit. INDIA, the EU, and JAPAN also supported FAO taking action.

Chair Pourkazemi recommended the Committee consider raising the profile of aquaculture by proposing a UN International Year of Aquaculture. CANADA asked the Secretariat to follow up on the proposal to facilitate due consideration by members.

### **DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT SESSION**

Delegates agreed to hold COFI 31 late in the second quarter of June 2014, in Rome, Italy.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Despite the late night session on Tuesday, delegates began Thursday an agenda item behind. Though Vice-Chair Williams opined that delegates "might call him a cushion rather than a chair" owing to his "soft" approach to time control, several participants recognized that too much might have been packed into the week's schedule. At COFI 30, the increased number of opportunities for delegates to make statements meant some delegates felt it was hard to identify common positions and key points, with others noting the full days have made the drafting committee's work "more pressurized." But, as one delegate noted, "there are controversial issues, and these just take time."

### **ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of COFI 30 will be available on Monday, 16 July 2012 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/FAO/cofi/cofi2012/>