

## SUMMARY OF THE 30TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES: 9-13 JULY 2012

The 30th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 30) of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) convened at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 9-13 July 2012. Over 540 participants attended the week's discussions, including those from COFI member states, UN agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups.

From Monday to Thursday, participants considered: world fisheries and aquaculture: status, issues and needs; progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments; 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; ocean governance and relevant outcomes from the UN Conference Sustainable Development (Rio+20); major developments and future work of FAO on fisheries and aquaculture since the last Committee session; FAO's programme of work in fisheries and aquaculture; the Multi-year Programme of Work; and revised Rules of Procedure of the Committee and related changes in practice.

COFI 30 adopted a final report, which addresses, *inter alia*: revised rules of procedure; world fisheries and aquaculture, including the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012; recommendations of COFI's two Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture; ocean governance and outcomes of Rio+20; progress in the development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries; progress in FAO activities on combatting Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing; and the FAO Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture.

### 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 periodic reviews of international fishery problems and examines possible solutions. COFI reviews and makes recommendations on specific matters referred to it by the FAO Council or the Director-General or at the request

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of member countries. COFI currently has 137 members and two subsidiary bodies: the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

COFI convened negotiations for three major international instruments adopted by the FAO Conference: the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement); the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF); and the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Port State Measures Agreement or PSMA).

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

The CCRF, adopted in 1995, is a voluntary code containing principles and standards on the conservation, management and development of all fisheries. Its provisions encompass: the 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): Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA-Seabirds); Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks); Management of Fishing Capacity (IPOA-Capacity); and to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU). These IPOAs and related provisions of the CCRF are implemented through National Plans of Action (NPOA) and technical guidelines.

The Port State Measures Agreement, adopted in 2009, requires port states to oversee vessels seeking landing access to and services from their ports, with the aim of denying access to foreign vessels that may be involved with or supporting IUU fishing. Parties are to designate ports that are accessible to foreign vessels, and these vessels are to request port access in advance of landing and to inform the port state of their activities and fish catches. Parties are to regularly inspect vessels accessing their ports according to a standard that focuses on, *inter alia*, the vessels' papers, fishing gear, catch quantities and species, and vessel records.

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 by-catch and discards. In recent years, COFI has focused on: management of fisheries capacity; IUU fishing; sharks; and seabirds. COFI meets every two years at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

**COFI 24:** The 24th session of the Committee on Fisheries (26 February to 2 March 2001) established the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and adopted the IPOA-IUU under the CCRF.

**COFI 25:** The 25th session (24-28 February 2003): approved the Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries and recommended its approval by the FAO Conference; reaffirmed the need to implement measures against IUU fishing; recognized the importance of the CCRF and associated IPOAs in promoting sustainable fisheries; and encouraged members to advance NPOAs to implement the IPOAs on fishing capacity, IUU fishing, sharks and seabirds.

**COFI 26:** The 26th session (7-11 March 2005) called for a decade of implementation measures to ensure responsible fisheries, including by putting into practice the CCRF and its associated instruments. COFI also encouraged FAO to develop further guidelines to support the CCRF, including for the IPOA on fishing capacity. Guidelines on seafood ecolabeling were also adopted.

**COFI 27:** The 27th session (5-9 March 2007) addressed the implementation of the IPOAs on fishing 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:** The 28th session (2-6 March 2009) recommended the development of best practice for safety at sea and that technical guidelines be published offering best practices for the IPOA on seabirds. The Committee supported further work on guidelines for ecolabeling 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) on the matter of listing proposals for commercial-aquatic fisheries and to the World Trade Organization (WTO) on fish-subsidy negotiations. 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:** The 29th session (31 January - 4 February 2011) approved Guidelines for the Ecolabeling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, and FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture. The Committee also considered: reports on the implementation of the CCRF and the IPOAs; climate change as it affects fisheries and aquaculture; improving integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management with biodiversity conservation and environmental protection; and governance of small-scale fisheries.

### COFI 30 REPORT

On Monday, 9 July 2012, Chair Mohammed Pourkazemi (Iran) opened the meeting. José Graziano da Silva, Director General, FAO, explained FAO's narrowed strategic objectives and commended the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development regarding oceans.

COFI delegates adopted the agenda (COFI/2012/1). Under "other matters," Iran requested that time be set aside for discussing the threat of piracy for fishing business vessels.

On organizational matters, Chair Pourkazemi explained that the current Bureau will oversee the session and a new Bureau

will be elected at the end of COFI 30 to oversee intersessional work and COFI 31. The Bureau comprises: Mohammad Pourkazemi (Iran) as Chair; Johan Williams (Norway) as first Vice-Chair; and other Vice-Chairs from Canada, India, Chile, Spain, and Zimbabwe. The Drafting Committee, chaired by the US, consists of Argentina, Canada, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Japan, Nauru New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Oman, Sri Lanka and Kenya.

At the request of Argentina and Peru, for the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), the Committee agreed to move discussion of revised Rules of Procedure of the Committee and related changes in practices (COFI/2012/9) to Thursday to allow further deliberation among delegates.

### **WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE: STATUS, ISSUES AND NEEDS**

On Monday, Árni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture, FAO, presented the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012 (SOFIA 2012) report, reviewing production, demand and trade trends in aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Richard Grainger, FAO Fisheries Information and Statistics, described current FAO work, including: the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Programme for sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ); and work with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on guidelines to control discarded fishing gear and marine debris.

Brazil called on FAO to concentrate on the economic viability of fisheries and aquaculture practices to ensure food security, and stressed the importance of free trade of fisheries products.

Bangladesh, supported by India and Nicaragua, called for the SOFIA report to be distributed more widely, translated into more languages, and to include the effects of other sectors on fisheries. The EU, supported by the Russian Federation, Norway, Iceland, Canada, Namibia, the US and the Philippines, asked that SOFIA be released before COFI meetings to ensure adequate time for delegates to consider the report.

Mauritius, supported by the Russian Federation, asked for clarification on where the 13% of fish stocks that are not fully exploited are located.

Thailand stated that success stories on how countries are implementing fisheries measures would be useful. Angola, supported by Mozambique, Ghana and Brazil, called for continued FAO work on illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, with Sierra Leone and Seychelles urging increased coastal and flag state responsibility.

The European Union (EU) expressed concern about: the increasing stress on global fish stocks; limited data availability on fish stocks; and the overshooting of catch targets by deep-sea fisheries.

Mozambique, supported by Chile, noted the importance of discussions among Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and supported work by the FAO to help countries advance fishing in ABNJ.

South Africa called on FAO to propose measures to improve oceans governance aligned with the Rio+20 outcomes. Iran

suggested that FAO develop a detailed approach for mariculture, with Canada and Namibia noting the economic benefits of aquaculture.

Norway, supported by New Zealand, India, the US, and Brazil, suggested changing the categories describing stock exploitation levels to: stocks harvested at sustainable, and unsustainable levels—with additional sub-categories. New Zealand underscored the poor treatment of fishing crews.

Senegal lamented that the imbalance of fishing capacity had not been addressed in the SOFIA report. Cook Islands called for nations fishing along coasts of small island developing states (SIDS) to reduce fishing efforts. Maldives lamented worldwide mismanagement of fisheries, saying RFMOs cannot solve global management issues.

The US welcomed the focus on small-scale and artisanal fisheries. Japan lamented the expansion of purse seine fleet size in the Eastern and West and Central Pacific Oceans and its damaging impact on bigeye tuna stocks.

The Philippines expressed that, following Rio+20, COFI needs to support green growth. The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center recommended FAO continue working with partners to advance awareness of fisheries and aquaculture issues among Southeast Asian countries.

INFOPESCA noted the need for up-to-date market information. The Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean called for a COFI sub-committee on gender issues.

The Benguela Current Commission explained the fisheries management and assessment work of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem, including an analysis of fisheries over the past decades to assess impacts of climate on fisheries. The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels offered to work with FAO to include by-catch information in future SOFIA reports.

The World Forum on Fisher Peoples for the Civil Society Consortium, consisting of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty, and Mangrove Network, expressed concerns that industrial fishing fleets intend to shift operations to tropical and subtropical areas. The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission of West Africa highlighted an advisory mechanism they are developing to increase fisheries governance capacity.

Greenpeace, Pew and IUCN said the categories for fish stock exploitation should not be oversimplified, expressed concern that only 13% of fish stocks are underexploited, and called for urgent action to restore fish stocks. The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations supported the “sustainable” and “unsustainable” categories for stock assessments, noting the goal is to fully exploit fish stocks.

The Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism stressed the importance of FAO’s technical assistance, particularly to SIDS for improving governance frameworks. The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea called for more emphasis on aquaculture to increase supply of fish in Africa. The

People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty stressed the need for prioritization of information relevant for improving the lives of small-scale fishers.

In response, the FAO Secretariat said it would consider advanced circulation of SOFIA; non-fully exploited stocks were so far not considered commercially attractive; and that the fish-stock exploitation levels has already been changed to three new categories—non-fully, fully and over exploited.

### **PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS**

On Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, participants discussed the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in plenary.

On Monday morning, David Doulman, FAO, presented the report (COFI/2012/3), noting that it provides an overview of the results of self-assessment questionnaires that had a very low response rate compared with previous years. He expressed concern that where stock-specific harvest reference points were in place, the majority were either being approached or exceeded. On safety at sea and cooperation between FAO, IMO and the International Labor Organization (ILO), he said new safety standards for small-scale fishing vessels will soon be published. He noted that several countries lack legal and institutional frameworks for aquaculture, but that about 75% of responding members indicate they are promoting responsible aquaculture practices.

The EU stressed that stock-specific harvest reference points have often been exceeded and called for strengthened national policies. 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, 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.

Many delegates expressed opinions on why the questionnaire response rate is low, and made suggestions to improve the response rate. Mauritius suggested that the low response rate might be due to the questionnaire being voluntary. Canada said the questionnaire is the key tool for demonstrating commitment and identifying gaps and challenges. Cook Islands said the low response rate does not reflect a lack of adherence to the CCRF and added that having RFMOs included would also be useful. Chile and the US added that yes/no answers predetermine responses. Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, New Zealand and the US supported the development of an electronic questionnaire. Bangladesh asked FAO to provide technical assistance on electronic reporting. The Russian Federation recommended boosting feedback mechanisms to better solicit outstanding CCRF surveys. 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 CCRF to ensure its ongoing relevance. Viet Nam suggested that the CCRF be updated to better consider small-scale fisheries (SSFs). Zambia and Viet Nam noted that SSFs in developing countries lack capacity to implement the CCRF, with Colombia and Iran stressing the importance of capacity building for fisheries management. Cameroon, supported by Côte d'Ivoire, said putting the CCRF principles into practice is difficult when dealing with ethnically diverse and illiterate fishers and called for better implementation of Article 5 of the CCRF on the special requirements of developing countries. 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 SSFs. Cameroon asked FAO to continue its Fish Code Programme activities to help developing countries. Norway, supported by Canada, warned against renegotiating the CCRF.

Indonesia and Côte d'Ivoire described work done to incorporate the principles of the CCRF into legislation. Nicaragua spoke on the Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America (OSPESCA) countries' efforts to implement responsible management, including entry into force of the Code of Ethics for Responsible Fisheries and Aquaculture in the States of Central America. Ecuador noted progress on the CCRF relating to the value chain for equatorial tuna. Sri Lanka highlighted significant gains in domestic production by adhering to fisheries management advocated by the CCRF. Uruguay highlighted a proposed bill on responsible fisheries and aquaculture, which creates national fisheries and aquaculture councils and supports aquaculture-development research.

Cyprus, for the EU, described progress on implementing the International Plans of Action (IPOA) such as an IUU-fishing policy introduced in 2010 and an EU Plan of Action on the conservation and management of sharks. The US urged that RFMOs take action on sharks and noted catch-share programmes and policies. Seychelles noted their efforts to develop national plans of action (NPOAs) for sharks, IUU fishing, seabirds and capacity. Senegal and Iran detailed the implementation of their respective NPOAs on sharks. Malaysia described 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. Japan underlined ongoing efforts to report on the NPOAs on seabird and sharks, and noted that they oppose shark finning and support sustainable management of shark fisheries.

Venezuela said they have approved fisheries and aquaculture laws and established technical standards governing the activities of artisanal fishers. Chile described the use of improved gear to prevent capture of birds and destructive trawling, and a new law against shark finning. Canada requested more detailed analyses including catch limits, species-specific reporting, and shark finning prohibitions for vessels beyond national waters. Australia

highlighted their activities, including on: sharks, banning wire traces, and assessing seabird interactions with gill and purse seine nets.

Palau described a shark sanctuary and efforts to combat IUU fishing. Mauritania and Maldives noted measures implemented to develop sustainable fisheries, including: catch management, monitoring, and banning destructive fishing practices. 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. Tanzania reported their use of community fisheries management for managing capture fisheries, marine protected areas, and rare species. Liberia described a success story of south-south cooperation with Mozambique to tackle IUU fishing.

Iceland and New Zealand underscored the welfare of fishers, recommending continued FAO/ILO collaboration on the issue. Iran recommended that regional surveys be carried out and for FAO members to help combat IUU fishing of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea. South Africa called for COFI to continue addressing the effects of climate change on fisheries. Mozambique welcomed interest and assistance for creating a regional coordination center for monitoring, control and surveillance, fisheries management initiatives, aquaculture and by-catch reduction.

Malawi highlighted: periodic reviews of its fisheries act; co-management of fisheries; and measures to promote safety and reduce post-harvest losses. India encouraged the fast release of two publications on safety issues produced by IMO, ILO and FAO. The Faroe Islands reported on the elimination of discards and protection of spawning sites through closed areas.

ILO and the Civil Society Consortium 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 the Convention on Migratory Species expressed concern on slow improvement in shark management. The Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front reported on regional research and conservation strategies for sharks. The 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. The South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization described work on, *inter alia*: reducing by-catch of seabirds, sea turtles and sharks; and lost gear retrieval. The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) pointed to challenges climate change poses in implementing the CCRF. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas said its contracting parties all seek to implement the CCRF.

The 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.

The International Game Fish Association stressed that recreational fishing is a prominent and economically beneficial

activity that requires particular fisheries management practices. The International Coalition of Fisheries Association 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 in the fishing sector. 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. The Southern Indian Deepsea Fishers Association described their contribution to work on research and monitoring of deep-water sharks.

David Doulman, FAO, said the questionnaire's low response rate 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**

On Tuesday afternoon, 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) and 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 under development.

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-fishing requirements would hamper progress. Cook Islands requested support to developing states implementing traceability standards. Mozambique noted that small-scale fishers contribute 80% of their national catch and, with Iceland, expressed concern about traceability becoming a technical barrier to trade. Republic of Korea noted success in advancing seafood traceability, which has increased seafood value and its safety.

Namibia recommended FAO assess effects of ecolabeling schemes through forming a specialized structure. Peru, Senegal, Mexico, Mozambique and Maldives cautioned that ecolabeling requirements must not limit market access for developing countries, with Mexico stressing the difficulties they have experienced with private ecolabeling schemes.

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 OSPESCA, encouraged innovative strategies to promote trade supporting small, artisanal and medium-sized producers.

Senegal and Colombia encouraged further FAO-CITES collaboration, with Japan asking FAO to provide scientific advice to CITES on species that have sustainable management

mechanisms. Tanzania urged FAO to support detailed studies on fish and fisheries product trade in the international market. The US and Mauritius expressed support for a future gap analysis on traceability.

Bangladesh underscored the need for improved market linkages for South Asian SSFs. Iran, supported by Maldives, noted capacity needs for market access and value addition in SSFs trade.

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. INFOSAMAK described outcomes of collaboration with Infofish concerning safety of fish products and upgrading SSFs.

Pew emphasized that CITES is a regulatory and not a restrictive measure to trade in species. The World Conservation Trust reaffirmed the importance of FAO providing technical and scientific advice to CITES. The Marine Stewardship Council discussed its ecolabeling scheme, noting its complementarity to the CCRF. The Civil Society Consortium called on FAO to analyze the effects of fish trade on food security of local communities.

The FAO Secretariat remarked that problems associated with private ecolabeling 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**

This item was addressed on Tuesday afternoon and evening. 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; 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.

Malaysia described the development of plant-based feed. Tanzania, Cameroon and Côte D'Ivoire noted problems accessing quality feed and, with Congo, Iran and Oman, highlighted aquaculture potential in their countries. Algeria mentioned a pilot agriculture-aquaculture programme.

Namibia, supported by GRULAC, called for support to develop aquaculture in developing countries. Indonesia urged accelerating FAO guidelines for aquaculture technology, and Iran and the Philippines asked FAO to assist with animal health issues and fish pathogens. Ukraine mentioned a new draft law on aquaculture.

Noting that 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 Sub-Committee's work in Africa. India called for innovative methods to meet the challenge of data harvesting for aquaculture. The Faroe Islands discussed sustainable salmon aquaculture, and the Sub-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 the effects of aquaculture on capture fisheries.

In the evening, 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.

#### **OCEAN GOVERNANCE AND RELEVANT OUTCOMES FROM RIO+20**

On Wednesday morning, Gabriella Bianchi, FAO, presented a report on the outcomes from Rio+20 and ocean governance (COFI/2012/6/Rev.1), highlighting the increased prominence of oceans at Rio+20 and requesting that the Committee advise FAO on its role in advancing ocean governance.

Honduras, for the Organization for the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture sector, called on COFI and FAO to help with implementing regional fisheries management agreements. Peru, for GRULAC, supported by Venezuela, stated that multilateral governance of oceans should be based on national and regional agreements.

The EU called for science-based ocean governance and universal ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Mauritius stressed that members of RFMOs must implement their obligations on ocean governance.

Norway, supported by New Zealand, India, Angola and the Faroe Islands, said FAO should focus on implementing existing instruments. Japan and Norway urged FAO's participation in Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meetings and India further suggested similar participation at CITES meetings.

Indonesia emphasized the "blue economy" approach to ocean management, and Palau called for capacity building for regional institutions. Venezuela called for FAO to include support for sustainable development models besides the "green economy." Sierra Leone, supported by Angola and Tanzania, called for FAO to assist with governance of artisanal fisheries.

The Russian Federation supported outcomes of Rio+20 on the need for conservation and rational use of biodiversity in ABNJ. Argentina, supported by Ecuador, expressed reservations about the use of the term "governance" with regards to biodiversity in ABNJ. Brazil, supported by Ecuador, expressed concerns about the GEF's ABNJ Programme and the World Bank's Global Partnership for Oceans initiatives. The EU stressed that the outcomes of Rio+20 concerning biodiversity conservation in ABNJ was a compromise that cannot be renegotiated.

The US, supported by Canada, said ocean governance is a holistic concept that is key for COFI and should be addressed in coordination with other initiatives.

The FAO Secretariat said the GEF ABNJ Programme was within FAO's mandate, noting that they had referred to it at COFI 29.

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

**COMBATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING:** On Wednesday afternoon, Michele Kuruc, FAO, stressed the wide interest in IUU fishing from the private sector, NGOs, and the UN Security Council. David Doullman, FAO, described FAO activities encouraging the entry into force of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and its subsequent implementation.

Norway, Chile, Ghana and Seychelles urged all states to ratify the PSMA to facilitate its entry into force, with Sierra Leone lamenting: "inaction is tantamount to tacit support." Japan called on states not ready to ratify the PSMA to implement practical and feasible measures against IUU fishing. Norway, Oman, Kenya, Guinea and Liberia urged FAO to continue capacity-building workshops until the PSMA enters into force.

Thailand noted the workshop co-hosted by FAO and the Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission on implementing the PSMA that was held in Thailand in April 2012. Venezuela opined that port state measures need to be applied in a gradual manner allowing countries to build up competencies and capacities. Turkey said they have increased inspection boats and trained port inspectors to implement port state measures. South Africa cautioned that the effectiveness of port state measures depends on appropriate enforcement. Canada stressed that tackling IUU fishing requires action by port, flag, and market states. Supported by Norway, he said work with INTERPOL and the IMO is critical. Bangladesh remarked that IUU fishing is driven by market demand. India and Mexico called for compilation and provision of information on the extent of IUU fishing.

Mauritius said IUU fishing in SSFs should be considered. The US noted tuna RFMOs' commitment to harmonize vessel records noting the lack of a global record. Canada, Japan, Norway, Indonesia, Ghana and Argentina supported the Global Record of fishing vessels, noting its importance. Colombia said it requires proper circulation of information between flag states and national authorities. Palau requested clarification on the mechanism of submitting information for the Global Record.

Iran proposed a regional plan of action preventing IUU sturgeon fishing. Senegal stressed focusing on regional or subregional approaches. Tonga emphasized sharing of information and cooperation to combat IUU fishing and the need to strengthen existing measures.

Namibia described being a victim of IUU fishing, stressing their engagement with FAO flag state controls. Peru, for GRULAC, recognized flag states' responsibility for guaranteeing vessels are not involved in IUU fishing. Mozambique proposed sanctions for non-compliance with IUU fishing control measures, and Canada called for flexible and innovative work on flag state performance criteria. The Russian Federation urged FAO to produce a binding document on flag state control. Cook Islands stressed needing flag state consent when involving them

in performance evaluations. Faroe Islands, with Mexico and Iceland, supported the convening of a third expert consultation on flag state performance criteria.

Indonesia and Bahrain described policy measures, partnerships and capacity building implemented to combat IUU fishing. Tanzania, supported by Seychelles, asked for FAO support to curb piracy, which is a major challenge in the fight against IUU fishing. Maldives said piracy in the Indian Ocean impedes efficient surveillance, and Uruguay underscored national commitment to eliminate IUU fishing. Argentina highlighted the legal framework within which FAO would need to implement measures to combat IUU fishing.

Pew called for COFI to act decisively on IUU fishing and underlined the importance of capacity development. Greenpeace called for rapid action to follow once PSMA enters into force.

### **UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES:**

On Thursday morning, Rolf Willmann, FAO, reported on work to develop international guidelines for securing sustainable 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. 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 that any international programme on SSFs should advance their social and economic development. Guatemala stressed that 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 the role of social welfare systems and co-management. Cameroon and Indonesia urged SSFs be given special attention for improving working conditions and livelihoods of fishers. Guinea raised the importance of women in SSFs.

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 allow for 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. Argentina and New Zealand emphasized that the guidelines should be used to promote poverty alleviation and development through SSFs, not create barriers to trade.

Sierra Leone, for the African Group, highlighted a subregional 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.

The Republic of Korea called for a clear definition of what constitutes SSFs. Mozambique highlighted the importance of scientific data and information for sustainable SSFs. Egypt called for assistance to improve data collection capacity in developing countries.

Canada, supported by Afghanistan, stressed that human rights are a sensitive topic and thus an adequate budget is required to support more than one negotiation session. Brazil, Norway, Tanzania and South Africa supported FAO's inclusion of civil society and stakeholder inputs and a further technical consultation on SSFs. Afghanistan noted that consultation on the guidelines has been participatory and extensive, and called for the process to be completed by COFI 31. He also called for a COFI sub-committee on SSFs, which was supported by Guinea, Palau, Cameroon, Malawi, India, Senegal and Angola.

The Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development mentioned a regional model for holistic management of SSFs emphasizing social responsibility. BOBP said they have initiated extensive regional discussions on SSFs. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism said fisheries of small-island states in the Caribbean are predominantly SSFs. OSPESCA and the Fisheries Committee of West Central Gulf of Guinea called on FAO to ensure adequate resources for the implementation of SSF guidelines.

The Civil Society Consortium said civil society should continue to represent local communities in drafting groups and interventions in plenary. The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty emphasized the need for democratic ownership of fisheries.

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

**VISION OF THE FUTURE AND PRIORITIES IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN:** On Thursday morning, Árni 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 the objectives identified in the Programme of Work should be considered for proposals for concrete action. Bangladesh said the vision of 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 high 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 it 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 increasing the responsibilities of flag states and to not allow certification to become a barrier to trade.

Guatemala, for Central American Countries, suggested conducting the questionnaires for the CCRF through regional fisheries bodies. The 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 GEF's ABNJ Programme, citing concerns about rights-based management and compliance with the UNCLOS, respectively.

The Southern Indian 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 in broad FAO fora; gender mainstreaming will be emphasized; and COFI will never circumvent the authority of sovereign states or RFMOs.

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

On Thursday afternoon, Chair Pourkazemi noted that the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) is a "living document" reflecting members' priorities. Cyprus, for the EU, called for an ambitious programme of work in the intersessional period and for clear descriptions thereof. Canada called for inclusion of measurable targets and indicators in the MYPOW, and Norway said the MYPOW should include some provision for FAO's work regarding statistics.

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

On Thursday afternoon, Chair Pourkazemi introduced the revised Rules of Procedure with proposed additional text from the Bureau regarding intersessional meetings. Thailand, for the Asian Group, supported by Sri Lanka, requested an additional change to the Bureau 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 requested time to assess the proposal.

Delegates approved the Rules of Procedure, with the Bureau amendment, and referred the Asian Group's proposal to the Bureau for intersessional consideration.



## **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF COFI**

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

### **OTHER MATTERS**

On Thursday afternoon, Iran, supported by Seychelles, Mauritius, Cameroon, Oman and Tanzania, stressed the disruptive effect of piracy on the fishing industry, and urged FAO to establish an *ad hoc* working group to address piracy and prepare anti-piracy guidelines by the end of 2012. Norway questioned if this is within FAO's remit, while India, the EU and Japan supported action.

Chair Pourkazemi suggested an UN International Year of Aquaculture to promote the sector's profile. Canada asked for further time to consider the idea.

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

Delegates agreed to hold COFI 31 in June 2014, at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy.

### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SESSION**

On Friday afternoon, Chair Pourkazemi introduced the draft final report for COFI 30 for consideration by the members, asking the US to present the report.

Dean Swanson (US), Chair of the Drafting Committee, said that all but one paragraph represented the consensus opinion of the drafting committee. The outstanding paragraph, he explained, would have implications for several parts of the text, which merits its consideration by COFI given its substance, as some delegates felt it was not stated during plenary. Argentina further explained that, supported by GRULAC, the addition was requested to respect different members' positions on UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

With support of Venezuela, Mexico, Seychelles, Congo and Brazil, Chair Pourkazemi proceeded to review the document paragraph-by-paragraph.

**Opening of the Session:** Faroe Islands requested a change to the order of participants to ensure that its status as an associate member is noted.

**World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Status, Issues and Needs:** Brazil requested a modification to clarify the role of shifting fishing capacity as a potential contributor to IUU fishing. In reference to improving fisheries management, Iceland asked if the document proposed reforms to RFMOs, with Mauritius indicating this was the case. Iceland requested the addition of "as appropriate" in recognition that some RFMOs may not require reform.

On the impacts of industrial fishing activities, Chile requested the term "capture fishing" be substituted for "industrial" as this term better reflects the Chilean situation. EU, supported by India, said "industrial fishing" had been the focus of discussion and requested the text remain unchanged. Australia requested a change to clarify that the Committee wanted the FAO to consider "sustainably managing wild fish-stock utilization for fish feed," when providing technical support on aquaculture.

**Progress in the Implementation of the CCRF and Related Instruments:** Mexico requested mention of the impact of fish-aggregating devices in a point on by-catch and discards. Senegal asked that a reference to assistance be noted as specific to developing countries.

On assembling information on the mitigation of marine mammal by-catch by commercial marine fisheries, Mexico asked to add "and taking measures" and "in all oceans." Japan, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the US supported the original text. Canada proposed that the sentence end with "as well as the need to undertake mitigation measures in all seas," which was accepted. The Faroe Islands asked the sentence note "processes of assembling information" to reflect that it had also provided information on relevant activities.

**Decisions and Recommendations of the 13th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade:** On the discussion of private standards and ecolabeling, Mexico requested an addition reflecting that "several delegations called for as swift progress as possible on an assessment of ecolabeling in light of the FAO guidelines." In response to Canada noting that the debate focused on FAO having no authority to perform such an evaluation, he explained that this is an important priority for GRULAC. The amendment was accepted.

On the effects of ecolabeling schemes for fisheries management and economic returns, India asked for clarified text, with Mexico, supported by Senegal, suggesting that it note "some ecolabeling schemes" and that the effects include the sustainability of fisheries management. Canada recalled that the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade proposed an assessment, and proposed adopting the language of its report, with the Maldives asking that the assessment be specified to cover all ecolabeling schemes. A number of delegations intervened to clarify the distinction between the proposal to assess the effects of certification on fisheries management and economic returns, and the conformance of these schemes with FAO guidelines and other instruments, such as WTO provisions. It was agreed that the new language would be: "the Committee agreed that it would be useful to assess the effect of ecolabeling schemes on fisheries management and economic returns."

On a reference to collaboration between the FAO and WTO on issues related to fish and fish product trade, Mexico requested clarified text on the rights of members in the CCRF. The Committee agreed to an addition noting the caveat: "bearing in mind the rights and obligations of WTO members."

**Decisions and Recommendations of the 6th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture:** On further work required, India asked for the addition of "develop aquaculture in cold water and reservoirs," which was accepted.

**Ocean Governance and Relevant Outcomes from Rio+20:** Iceland offered text regarding conservation and sustainable use of high seas saying that the statement "no progress could be made" on this was too harsh.

**Recent Major Developments and Future Work in Selected Fisheries and Aquaculture Activities of FAO:** On recent work on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable SSFs, India asked for change in text to reflect that "many" rather

than “some” members supported the establishment of a sub-committee on SSFs. Maldives, with Chad and Bangladesh, said this should read: “all members noted the need for establishment of the sub-committee on SSFs.” Canada, Australia, Japan and EU suggested and delegates agreed to use India’s text.

On recent FAO work on combating IUU fishing, the Russian Federation called for inclusion of its proposal to compile a global list of known IUU fishing vessels to help port authorities recognize them. Due to objections from some, no amendment was made. With the support of the Committee, India requested the inclusion of text noting that the agenda document and the SOFIA 2012 report contained some conclusive statements on IUU fishing that were not backed by supporting data needed for meaningful discussion.

**FAO’s Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture:**

On language about the Committee’s decision to strengthen the dialogue between the members and the Secretariat via the COFI Bureau, Brazil proposed the addition of “ongoing” to ensure that this dialogue applies to existing and future work.

**Other Matters:** On a proposed intersessional *ad hoc* working group on piracy and the development of anti-piracy guidelines by the end of 2012, the FAO Secretariat indicated this might be difficult to accomplish. Canada proposed removing the specific time deadline. Seychelles, India and others supported retaining the text as this conveyed the urgency of the matter. The original text was retained.

**Adoption of the Report:** Argentina requested the removal of the footnote concerning the final paragraph of the text on respecting members’ positions on UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement as the procedural matter of the paragraph having been considered by the Committee had been handled. The EU asked that the paragraph in question be deleted, with Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, Cuba and others indicating that they considered the matter closed, as the paragraph was adopted as the first matter of business of the Committee. After some discussion on the procedural and substantive questions at hand with the paragraph, the EU agreed to the text.

Chair Pourkazemi announced the adoption of the COFI 30 report. He offered wide thanks for the fruitful session and for the opportunity to serve as Chair, and gaveled the session to a close at 6:19 pm.

**COFI 30 REPORT:** In the report of COFI 30, as adopted during the closing plenary, the Committee approved recommendations on a number of issues.

On World Fisheries and Aquaculture, including presentation of SOFIA 2012, COFI:

- supports including SOFIA as an agenda item at future sessions;
- stresses the high value of SOFIA for documenting global trends and for setting directions for the future;
- suggests future SOFIA editions address, *inter alia*, monitoring CCRF implementation, impacts of climate change, and working conditions;
- encourages further studies on the impacts of industrial fishing activities;

- underlines the importance of FAO’s work on deep sea fisheries;
- emphasizes the potential role of aquaculture as a source of food and economic benefits, and as a way to reduce pressure on wild fish stocks;
- highlights the health benefits of fish products; and
- encourages FAO to continue cooperation with Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and IMO;

On progress in the implementation of the CCRF and related instruments, COFI:

- agrees that the Secretariat should assess ways to index and streamline the CCRF by COFI 31;
- supports web-based reporting on the questionnaire;
- agrees the questionnaire should allow assessment on the degree of progress;
- recognizes that developing countries and SSFs need FAO assistance to implement the CCRF;
- appreciates the implementation review of the IPOA-Sharks;
- welcomes FAO/ILO/IMO collaboration on safety at sea and completion of new safety standards for small fishing vessels; and
- notes data assembly work on bycatch and discards and mitigation of marine mammal bycatch in commercial marine fisheries.

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

- endorses the report of the 13th session;
- underlines and welcomes the importance of FAO’s work on market access, value-addition and value chains;
- agrees with the plan for work on best practice guidelines for traceability to combat IUU fishing;
- expresses concern about the false use of the FAO logo by ecolabeling schemes and the potential for schemes to create barriers to trade;
- agrees to assess the effects of ecolabeling schemes on fisheries management and economic returns;
- requests the FAO expert advisory panel to strengthen its technical advice to CITES on fisheries management and international trade;
- agrees to continue FAO collaboration with the WTO on issues related to fish and fish product trade, bearing in mind the rights of its members; and
- agrees to include an agenda item on SSFs at next Sub-Committee session.

On the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, COFI:

- endorses the report of the 6th session of the Sub-Committee;
- emphasizes the importance of sustainable development of aquaculture and need to empower small-scale aquaculture;
- reiterates the request for additional assistance for aquaculture development in Africa and SIDS;
- reiterates the need for more funds allocated to FAO aquaculture activities;
- requests FAO to develop a conformity assessment framework for aquaculture certification guidelines;
- recalls that guidelines on aquaculture certification should be implemented gradually and not become barriers to trade;

- requests the Secretariat to prepare a draft strategy paper for the Sub-Committee for distribution to the members before the next session; and
- emphasizes the need for further work to, *inter alia*: improve quality and availability of fish feed; improve data collection for policy development; enhance regional and interregional networking on aquaculture; assist with biosecurity governance concerns of specific regions; and promote public-private partnerships in aquaculture.

On ocean governance and relevant outcomes from Rio+20, COFI:

- recommends more regular introduction of ocean governance issues on the COFI agenda;
- recognizes the increased importance given to oceans and fisheries in the final Rio+20 Declaration;
- notes the need to focus on the implementation of existing legal and institutional frameworks for global ocean conservation;
- urges FAO to reinforce the work of the UN Committee on World Food Security;
- stresses the opinion that FAO should be the central UN body for fisheries and aquaculture matters;
- emphasizes the importance of flag state control and jurisdiction over fishing and fishing-related vessels operating in ABNJ;
- reminds the Secretariat to ensure appropriate consultations with COFI members before engaging in significant activities; and
- encourages the Secretariat to attend international meetings to reinforce leadership on global fisheries matters.

On the progress made since COFI 29 in development of international guidelines for securing sustainable SSFs, COFI:

- expresses support for the conduct of further national and regional consultations and the convening of an intergovernmental technical consultation in May 2012;
- advises that SSF Guidelines should address all stakeholders and be practical and easily understood;
- stresses that the SSF Guidelines need to address requirement for SSFs to operate sustainably;
- emphasizes that SSF Guidelines should focus on measures to empower vulnerable fisheries people, including women, children, migrants and indigenous peoples;
- notes the importance of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation for small-scale fishing communities;
- underlines the important commercial dimensions of SSFs in many countries and their need for continued and improved market access;
- agrees on the need to develop strategies for implementing the SSF Guidelines at various levels, including related policy reforms;
- notes the procedures adopted by the UN Committee on World Food Security to allow for enhanced multi-stakeholder participation in its deliberations; and
- notes that many members support the need for a Sub-Committee on SSFs.

On progress on combating IUU fishing since COFI 29, COFI:

- encourages members to combat IUU fishing as it continues to adversely impact sustainable fisheries and food security;
- notes, appreciates and recognizes ongoing work preparing for the entry into force of the PSMA;
- requests the Secretariat to convene the second resumed session of the technical consultations to complete negotiations of the draft Criteria for Flag State Performance;
- concerning the Global Record, recognizes the need for a global unique vessel identity and need to coordinate with RFMOs;
- urges the provision of financial and technical support to build capacity to combat IUU fishing; and
- welcomes Costa Rica's announcement to host the Fourth Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop.

On FAO's Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture on Vision of the Future, COFI:

- supports the ensuring food security and poverty alleviation through sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
- recommends the ecosystem approach and participatory management as frameworks for translating high-level goals into action;
- agrees that FAO focus on challenges relevant to its core mandate and joint efforts with partners; and
- notes a large number of proposed additional topics that could be addressed in the future.

On Priorities of FAO's Programme of Work and Medium-Term Plan, the Committee:

- supports the Strategic Thinking Process to guide FAO's future work;
- supports the outcomes of FAO regional conferences;
- supports FAO to take the lead in implementing Rio+20 outcomes associated with its mandate;
- underscores the importance of aquaculture development and requests more emphasis on it;
- underlines the need for further work to effectively implement the CCRF;
- notes UN General Assembly resolutions addressing deep-seas high seas fisheries;
- underlines the importance of work in relation to safety-at-sea;
- notes the importance of avoiding certification and ecolabeling schemes from becoming technical barriers to international trade;
- notes that production from capture fisheries could be increased through improved implementation of fisheries management measures; and
- supports strengthening dialogue between members and the Secretariat on on-going and future activities.

On the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee, COFI:

- approves the MYPOW 2012-2015, stresses it will improve COFI's efficiency and accountability and suggests adding gender aspects; and
- requests FAO to initiate performance reviews of the regional fisheries bodies under its auspices that had not already been assessed.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COFI 30

Less than a month ago, the outcome document of UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The Future We Want,” outlined a number of new global ambitions for sustainable development. One of these elevates oceans and fisheries issues to primary matters of concern. As the only intergovernmental forum where global fisheries and aquaculture issues are addressed, the timing of the 30th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI or the Committee) was advantageous.

In this light, participants arrived in Rome, Italy, cognizant that Rio+20’s momentum could be used to address such pressing concerns as the pernicious challenge of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, the management of shark fisheries and shark by-catch, the impacts of proliferating ecolabels, and securing the sustainability of small-scale fisheries. The release of the State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2012 report at the start of COFI 30 pointed to a decline in global marine catch, an increased percentage of overexploited fish stocks and an increased dependence on aquaculture for food, further underscoring the important work at hand.

At the same time, the operations of the Committee, as the FAO body on fisheries and aquaculture, were under scrutiny. Many delegations perceived the need for COFI to facilitate an improved dialogue between the FAO Secretariat and the 144 countries that are FAO and COFI members. This would ensure that clear priorities are set and acted upon during the two-year period between COFI sessions.

In light of these developments, this brief analysis examines how COFI 30 helped address the concerns of its members as well as the broader issues facing fisheries and ocean governance.

### ***RUNNING THE FLAGSHIP FOR FISHERIES GOVERNANCE***

In 2010, capture fisheries and aquaculture supplied the world with approximately 148 million metric tons of fish, which in turn provided about 3 billion people with almost 20% of their intake of animal protein. However, marine capture fisheries are in a state of decline. So too are fish stocks. This, combined with rapid growth of aquaculture, underscores one of the key messages from the SOFIA Report—international cooperation to improve the state of aquaculture and fisheries worldwide is an on-going and timely challenge.

Since COFI is also the only intergovernmental body that focuses explicitly on global capture fisheries and aquaculture, it bears much of the weight of this responsibility. It has, therefore, been instrumental in convening negotiations on agreements such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) for preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing. COFI has also overseen the introduction and operation of a number of regional fisheries management organizations, and coordinated and published the biennial SOFIA report since 1994, which is viewed by the Committee as a “flagship publication” for understanding the current and future status and trends of fisheries and aquaculture.

COFI, the Committee on Forestry, and the Committee on Agriculture are FAO’s sectoral governing bodies. One of COFI’s main responsibilities is to set and call for sufficient funds to accomplish its priorities, such as minimizing or eliminating by-catch, combating IUU fishing, and addressing aquaculture demands for fish feed to reduce impacts on wild fish stocks. Yet, how FAO’s larger governing processes allocate funds for these priorities has not been clear to all, causing concern among members who think the process needs to be reformed to enhance their control over FAO activities. As one delegate reflected, the FAO has a sizable amount of executive capacity and authority and yet COFI only meets biennially, leaving FAO with a great deal of autonomy.

COFI 30 made inroads in addressing some of these concerns. At the last session, COFI 29, delegates were informed of the initial effects of a FAO-wide restructuring plan set in place in 2008—the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA). The Plan reorganized the timing of various committee sessions to address concerns about the flow of information from FAO regional conferences. As a consequence, COFI 30 met in July and not February. During the 30th session, more of the reforms were at play.

Firstly, the Bureau’s composition was changed from reflecting nominations from the Group of 77 and China and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to now comprising representatives from each of the FAO regional groupings of Europe, Asia, Africa, Near East, Latin America and the Caribbean, Southwest Pacific, and North America. The aim was to move away from the developed versus developing country distinction and to encourage intra-regional interaction.

Secondly, election of the Bureau now comes at the end of each COFI session, with the Bureau holding office for the intersessional period and the subsequent COFI session. Previously, the Bureau ran from the start of one session to the start of the next. The hope is that the Bureau will now have a greater sense of “ownership” over the COFI meeting process, the intersessional period between meetings, and the outcomes and work during this time period.

From the members’ perspective, the new system will give the FAO a more democratic and representative picture of members’ needs. Through greater regional representation and engagement intersessionally, this new system should also facilitate greater interaction between members through the Bureau and with the Secretariat, which could feed back to the regional and national levels.

### ***ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES WITHIN AN OCEAN OF ISSUES***

COFI 30 provided an early opportunity to assess the effects of the new Bureau format, with delegates and participants alike generally agreeing that the reforms seemed to be helping. This was seen through greater engagement of the regional groups, and more interventions being made on their behalf. Moreover, there were cases of multiple nominations coming from the regions, a preliminary indication that the reforms to the Bureau nomination process were building buy-in among members.

For substantive issues, the push and pull of different priorities within FAO surfaced. The main example of this was the issue of governance in ABNJ. Some members wanted a more engaged consultation with the Secretariat before it decided to collaborate with the GEF's Programme on ABNJ, which aims to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ in accordance with the global targets agreed in international forums. The reason for concern is that it seemingly serves the interests of some member states, since it favors parties to UNCLOS, helping them fulfill their high seas conservation and management obligations. Even so, since the issue of ABNJ governance is growing in prominence, several members viewed FAO engagement on the issue as vital.

Other priorities received a lot of support from all sides, including FAO's various technical consultations, workshops, and activities, particularly on the development of guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. Overall support also surfaced on the need for further work on, for instance, anti-piracy or refining communication of the CCRF to enhance its use in practice. Still, there was recognition of limited resources to undertake the work, raising the fear that high expectations would go unmet. This speaks to the larger challenge of translating the FAO's many initiatives into implementable actions. While FAO provides a valuable forum for motivating member countries, they must incorporate the information into country-specific directives, and undertake the work. In the end, this takes time and buy-in.

#### **CHARTING A SUSTAINABLE PATH, OR LOST AT SEA?**

Amidst comments during the week that COFI 30 had been too ambitious with its agenda, when the meeting drew to a close, general consensus was that the substantive issues had broadly been covered with positive comments on the inclusion of sharks and small-scale fisheries, and progress on ecolabeling and traceability of fish.

Going forward, the members called for raising the profile of the work of COFI in broader intergovernmental fora. Given the prominence of oceans issues at Rio+20 and the momentum gained at COFI 30, it seems the time is right. However, while supporting efforts at the supra-national level, COFI members continue to urge that COFI's involvement at the regional and country-levels remains a priority, given widespread concern about the current state of the world's fisheries and aquaculture. Therefore, COFI's ability to give sufficient play to both the challenges facing fisheries and aquaculture, while maintaining its prominence on the global stage, will be a key component of its work in this upcoming biennium.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs):** This workshop aims to facilitate the description of EBSAs through the application of scientific criteria adopted at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and

intergovernmentally-agreed scientific criteria; and scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. **dates:** 30 July - 3 August 2012 **location:** Flic en Flac, Mauritius **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-SIO-01>

**CBD Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs:** This workshop for the eastern tropical and temperate Pacific region aims to facilitate the description of EBSAs. **dates:** 27-31 August 2012 **location:** Galapagos Islands, Ecuador **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-ETTP-01>

**IUCN World Conservation Congress 2012:** The Congress theme will be Nature+, a slogan that captures the fundamental importance of nature and its inherent link to every aspect of people's lives. The Congress will explore pressing environmental and development challenges and how strong and resilient nature is intricately linked to solving these issues, including nature+climate, nature+livelihoods, nature+energy and nature+economics. **dates:** 6-15 September 2012 **location:** Jeju, Republic of Korea **contact:** IUCN Congress Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-0336 **fax:** +41-22-999-0002 **email:** congress@iucn.org **www:** <http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/>

**Oceans of Potential Conference:** The "Oceans of Potential" conference is an initiative of Plymouth's marine science organizations and coordinated by Plymouth Marine Laboratory. It will bring together stakeholders from a broad range of disciplines to discuss the opportunities offered by oceans, including renewable energy, carbon sequestration, human health, bioengineering and new approaches to food production. **dates:** 11-12 September 2012 **location:** Plymouth, United Kingdom **contact:** Conference Secretariat **email:** [pde@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pde@plymouth.ac.uk) **www:** [www.oceansofpotential.org](http://www.oceansofpotential.org)

**CTI-CFF Regional Exchange: Climate Change Adaptation Experiences in the Coral Triangle:** The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) is a multilateral partnership of six countries working together to sustain extraordinary marine and coastal resources by addressing crucial issues such as food security, climate change and marine biodiversity. This regional exchange aims to review and share the recent activities in the Coral Triangle countries related to vulnerability assessments and early actions towards resiliency and climate change adaptation learning networks. **date:** 12 September 2012 **location:** TBC **contact:** CTI-CFF Secretariat **phone:** +62-21-386-0623 **fax:** +62-21-386-0623 **email:** [secretariat@cti-secretariat.net](mailto:secretariat@cti-secretariat.net) **www:** <http://www.coraltriangleinitiative.org/events/cti-cff-regional-exchange-cca-experiences-coral-triangle>

**67th Session of the UN General Assembly:** The 67th session of the UN General Assembly will convene at UN Headquarters in New York, on Tuesday, 18 September 2012. The general debate will open on Tuesday, 25 September. This session will include a review of the effectiveness and utility of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Resolution 65/37A). The preliminary list of items to

be included in the provisional agenda is contained in document A/67/50. A draft programme of work of the plenary is expected to be issued in July 2012. **date:** 18 September 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <http://www.un.org/ga/>

**Third Symposium on the Ocean in a High-CO2 World:**

This symposium is sponsored by the Scientific Committee on Oceanographic Research (SCOR), the IOC of UNESCO, and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme. The symposium aims to attract over 300 of the world's leading scientists to discuss the impacts of ocean acidification on marine organisms, ecosystems, and biogeochemical cycles. It will also cover socioeconomic consequences of ocean acidification, including policy and management implications. **dates:** 24-27 September 2012 **location:** Monterey, California, USA **email:** [secretariat@scor-int.org](mailto:secretariat@scor-int.org) **www:** <http://www.highco2-iii.org>

**6th Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water**

**Convention:** The sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes will mark the 20th anniversary since its adoption. The MOP will adopt a work programme for 2013-2015 and will address the future evolution of the Convention becoming a global instrument with a forthcoming entry into force of the amendments opening it to countries outside the UNECE region. **dates:** 28-30 November 2012 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Cammile Marcelo, Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1606 **fax:** +41-22-917-0621 **email:** [cammile.marcelo@unece.org](mailto:cammile.marcelo@unece.org) **www:** <http://www.unece.org/env/water/mop6.html>

**7th Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention:**

The Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP 7) to the Nairobi Convention is convening under the theme "Partnering for a Healthy Western Indian Ocean." This meeting will feature a "Science for Policy" workshop, a policy makers and expert meeting to review decisions, followed by the COP. The Nairobi Convention area includes Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and South Africa. **dates:** 10-14 December 2012 **location:** Maputo, Mozambique **contact:** Dixon Waruinge **phone:** +254-20-762-1250 **email:** [Dixon.Waruinge@unep.org](mailto:Dixon.Waruinge@unep.org) **www:** <http://unep.org/NairobiConvention/Meetings/COP7/>

**14th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal**

**Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea:** The meeting is expected to take place in May or June 2013, at UN Headquarters in New York. The decision to hold this meeting will be taken by the UN General Assembly in December 2012. **dates:** May or June 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN-DOALOS **phone:** +1-212-963-3969 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** [doalos@un.org](mailto:doalos@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/>

**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:**

The sixth 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 expected to

be convened by the General Assembly. It will be preceded by two intersessional workshops at dates to be determined. **dates:** second half of 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN-DOALOS **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** [doalos@un.org](mailto:doalos@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

**4th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop:**

The workshop will be hosted by OSPESCA and aims to provide participants training in various measures designed to tackle IUU fishing. **dates:** 2013 **location:** Costa Rica **contact:** International MCS Network **email:** [mcs.network@imcsnet.org](mailto:mcs.network@imcsnet.org) **www:** [www.imcsnet.org](http://www.imcsnet.org)

**31st Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries:** The 31st session of COFI will review, *inter alia*: the activities of the COFI Sub-Committees on Aquaculture and Fish Trade; progress in implementation of the CCRF and associated IPOAs; and selected activities of the FAO on fisheries and aquaculture that have occurred since COFI 30. **dates:** June 2014 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Hiromoto Watanabe, FAO **email:** [hiromoto.watanabe@fao.org](mailto:hiromoto.watanabe@fao.org) **www:** <http://www.fao.org/cofi>

**GLOSSARY**

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
BOBP	Bay of Bengal Programme
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 Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IPOA	International Plan of Action
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
MYPOW	Multi-Year Programme of Work
NPOA	National plan of action
OSPESCA	Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America
PSMA	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
SIDS	Small island developing states
SOFIA	State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture
SSF	Small-scale fisheries
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization