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**COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

**Rome, 5–9 September 2022**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, held from 5 to 9 September 2022.

### ABSTRACT

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its 35th Session in hybrid modality from 5 to 9 September 2022. Significant outcomes of the Committee included:
  - a) endorsement of a new COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management;
  - b) endorsement of the new FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment;
  - c) support for Blue transformation and for making it the focus of a very well received State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2022 report;
  - d) appreciation for FAO's work and strong support for FAO's Biodiversity, Climate Change and Science and Innovation Strategies and associated action plans;
  - e) recognition of the importance of fisheries and aquaculture to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and numerous requests to boost FAO's role in international fora;
  - f) continued emphasis on Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) throughout the meeting and report, including the activities related to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) and recommendation for an SSF summit to be conducted biennially before COFI;
  - g) strong support for global aquaculture development alongside the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture, recommended to be finalized before the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
  - h) noted the importance of the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and FAO's key role in providing technical assistance to the WTO secretariat and to Members for its implementation; and
  - i) strong commitment to Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs)/regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), particularly on their critical role of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, and on their importance to the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies.
2. The Committee on Fisheries brings to the attention of the Council and the Conference its findings and recommendation.

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## OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Thirty-fifth Session from 5 to 9 September 2022. The session was convened in hybrid modality on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent in light of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns, following consultation with the COFI Bureau.
2. Prior to beginning its deliberations, the Committee confirmed that the hybrid meeting constituted a formal regular session of the Committee. The Committee agreed to apply its Rules of Procedure and practices to the conduct of this session and to suspend any rules that may be incompatible with the hybrid meeting for the purposes of this session. The Committee further agreed to the application of any special procedures or amended working modalities as may be required for the efficient conduct of the session. The Committee also agreed that the session would be webcasted and the recording would be made available in the Webcast archive on the FAO internet site.
3. The session was attended by 99 Members of the Committee, observers from 21 other FAO Member Nations, the Holy See and Palestine, by representatives from eight specialized agencies of the United Nations and by observers from 44 intergovernmental organizations, and 51 international non-governmental organizations. A list of delegates and observers is available as *COFI/2022/INF/3* on the Committee's webpage<sup>1</sup> and in Appendix B.
4. Mr Shingo Ota, Chairperson, Thirty-fifth Session of COFI, opened the session and welcomed the participants.
5. Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General of FAO inaugurated the meeting and delivered a statement. The text of the statement is available as *COFI/2022/INF/4* on the Committee's webpage and in Appendix D.
6. Mr Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean made his statement. (Appendix E).
7. Mr Rafael Grossi, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delivered his pre-recorded statement. (Appendix F).
8. Ministers of four Members and Vice-Ministers of five Members made their statements.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

9. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the session. The adopted Agenda is attached as Appendix A to this Report. The list of documents which were placed before the Committee is shown in Appendix C.

## DESIGNATION OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE

10. The following Members were elected to the Drafting Committee: Algeria, Argentina, Cabo Verde, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup> and United States of America. Ms Lamia Ben Redouane (Algeria) chaired the Drafting Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofi/documents-cofi35/en/>

<sup>2</sup> Czechia replaced the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the basis of non-objection of the Drafting Committee.

## STATE OF THE WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AND PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS

### 11. The Committee:

- a) highlighted and emphasized the vital role of FAO regarding sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and encouraged FAO to continue enhancing the emphasis and visibility of fisheries and aquaculture within and outside the Organization, including through proper resourcing of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division;
- b) commended FAO for the 2022 edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication including its emphasis on Blue transformation to efficiently support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; reiterated that SOFIA serves as the only high quality benchmark publication for global status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture and congratulated the Organization on the wide visibility achieved through the public launch of SOFIA at a high-level event during the 2nd United Nations Ocean Conference;
- c) expressed appreciation that FAO included information on ongoing methodological improvements to better reflect the regional and subregional status of fish stocks, recognizing efforts to rebuild stocks and increasing the number of stocks with assessments, while ensuring the integrity of the time series;
- d) welcomed the progress made in some regions, while expressing concern for the current status of marine fish stocks at global level, and emphasized the need to improve fisheries management based on the precautionary and an ecosystem approach and including through strengthened collaboration with and within regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), and other relevant Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and civil society as appropriate, including through building capacity and strengthening the link between decision making on fisheries management and the best available science;
- e) noted FAO's increased engagement in international processes, providing its fisheries management and aquaculture expertise, to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine and inland water conservation, and sustainable and inclusive use of aquatic resources;
- f) while acknowledging the challenges faced by countries in dealing with data categories and sampling, stressed the importance of operational and compatible national data collection systems to support decision-making processes, encouraged strengthened collaboration and close consultations between FAO and countries in this regard, in particular regarding small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and climate change impacts, and highlighted the potential benefits of implementing innovative solutions, initiatives and collaborations;
- g) stressed the need to strengthen efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, welcomed the recently-adopted World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as a major step forward for ocean sustainability, and commended FAO for its continued support in achieving this outcome;
- h) underscored the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in meeting future food needs, and in achieving sustainable and resilient food systems and welcomed global initiatives to strengthen partnerships and the promotion of food from the ocean and inland waters. In that regard further stressed the crucial contribution of small-scale and artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers, and the need to address gender equity and inequalities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
- i) highlighted the importance of supporting sustainable aquaculture development to meet future food demands, in particular developing countries and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and asked FAO to quickly finalize ambitious FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA);



- j) reiterated the value of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) for achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and recognized the progress made in its implementation since its adoption, while noting that further improvements are needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- k) noted with concern the reduced number of submissions to the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the Code and related instruments, and that this may in part be due to challenges faced by FAO Members in using the questionnaire web application and welcomed efforts by FAO to upgrade the web application;
- l) called on FAO to provide technical assistance, such as through virtual platforms, in an effort to increase the response rate to the Code questionnaire;
- m) called on FAO to continue supporting Members in the implementation of the Code and the related instruments and identification of strategic directions, including through the development of additional technical guidelines;
- n) suggested a few areas which SOFIA could cover in future editions;
- o) encouraged FAO to work, as appropriate, with other international organizations in its SOFIA reporting, and promote its findings to a wider audience; and
- p) requested FAO to continue assessing the global impacts on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the context of global food security, of the COVID-19 pandemic and of conflicts.

## **THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### 12. The Committee:

- a) highlighted the importance of aquatic foods from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to global food security, nutrition and livelihoods, and their contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, and the need for resources and partnerships to support this contribution;
- b) noted the serious implications that the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing conflicts, the climate crisis, increasing population, and biodiversity loss have on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and called upon Members to redouble their efforts to support an equitable and sustainable recovery;<sup>3</sup>
- c) emphasized the need to promote sustainable aquaculture and manage all fisheries sustainably as a positive contribution to sustainable and inclusive economies,<sup>4</sup> including through the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), combating IUU fishing, implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and building inclusive and equitable value chains to ensure the full contribution of the sector to achieving the SDGs;
- d) acknowledged FAO's role in monitoring and reporting on the SDG 14 indicators under its custodianship and highlighted FAO's role in supporting Members' work to track their progress on SDG 14 indicators;
- e) noted that improvement of statistical capacity, data delivery and robust reporting and monitoring capacity are still a critical challenge to many Members, but are a key to understanding the progress and shortfalls of SDG implementation;

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<sup>3</sup> Recalling the ministerial declaration of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) "building back better from the coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (E/2022/L.14, E/HLPF/2022/L.1)

<sup>4</sup> With regards to the Blue Economy, see paragraph 94 of the Report of the 33rd Session of COFI.

- f) recommended FAO to continue assisting Members in strengthening their capacity to collect and communicate data and encouraged countries to take ownership in monitoring and reporting processes of the relevant 2030 Agenda indicators for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
- g) reiterated its support for FAO's resource mobilization efforts to fill capacity gaps in national statistical systems and in enabling countries to report on and use the SDG indicators effectively, such as through the Multi-donor Umbrella Programme on Measuring the SDGs;
- h) called upon Members to increase their funding towards SDG 14 given the low levels of funding currently available;
- i) celebrated the adoption at the WTO of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as a critical step to achieve SDG target 14.6, and called upon Members to accept the agreement, and complete further negotiations to achieve a comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies, and further called on FAO to support Members in its implementation, as appropriate; and
- j) recognized the need for improving indicator 14.6.1 and its methodology, in particular to address situations that are not currently entailed in the questionnaire, including those in which Members are not Parties to some international instruments, and take measures as coastal States, port State and/or flag State to address the fight against IUU fishing.

### **SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES, INCLUDING IN THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE (IYAFA)**

#### 13. The Committee:

- a) acknowledged the importance of inland and marine small-scale fisheries for global sustainable development, food security and nutrition and their contribution to employment, livelihoods and resource stewardship;
- b) appreciated the continued progress of FAO and its partners with regard to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and their increased policy uptake as a contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and healthy food systems, and called for continued support by FAO in this regard;
- c) stressed the importance of enabling policy and legislative environments, participatory processes and inclusive governance mechanisms involving small-scale fisheries organizations, also for women, youth and indigenous peoples as well as local communities; and called for further guidance and capacity development through FAO;
- d) encouraged increased work on small-scale fisheries sustainable resource use and management, in particular co-management and reiterated the fundamental role that a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management could play in relation to sustainable small-scale fisheries;
- e) emphasized the need for increased access to resources and support to small-scale fisheries livelihoods and incomes through appropriate technologies, market access and value chain development, and encouraged FAO to provide related tools, guidance and capacity development;
- f) reconfirmed the importance of improving data collection and analysis of marine and inland small-scale fisheries, and building on the results and methods of the Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) study to better inform governance and management;
- g) commended FAO on the celebrations and achievements of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 thus far, including the COFI High-Level Special Event on IYAFA and emphasized the unique opportunity to gather commitments and recommendations at a summit on small-scale fisheries, which is encouraged to be held every two years prior to COFI, subject to resourcing, to sustain and inform continued support to the sub-sectors; and

h) called upon all countries to enable fishers and fish workers in small-scale fisheries to participate in the process of decision-making concerning fisheries management.

## **COMBATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING**

### 14. The Committee:

- a) noted the continued efforts by Members to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, including through the implementation of relevant international agreements and voluntary guidelines, and regional mechanisms, but expressed its concern that IUU fishing is a serious issue in most areas, and called for increased cooperative action and sharing of information at national, regional and global levels;
- b) recognized the fight against IUU fishing as one of the main priorities for Members;
- c) welcomed the preparation by the Secretariat of additional guidance documents on methodologies to estimate the magnitude of IUU fishing and on the use of indicators to evaluate and track performance in combating IUU fishing, and looked forward to the new guidance document on estimating impacts of IUU fishing;
- d) appreciated the continued increase in number of Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and noted the conclusions of the Third Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA, including the decision to develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of the PSMA; encouraged further adherence to the Agreement and welcomed the convening of the fourth meeting of the Parties to be hosted by Indonesia in May 2023;
- e) welcomed the launch of the pilot phase of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES), stressed the need to develop and deploy GIES fully so that Parties can use it in a manner compatible with their national systems, recognized the importance of sharing information for effective implementation of the Agreement and emphasized the importance of continuing the integration with existing RFMO systems;
- f) valued the role of FAO in the fight against IUU fishing and commended FAO for its continued technical assistance through its global capacity development programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments, and for launching the Global Capacity Development Portal;
- g) urged FAO to continue and strengthen its vital technical and capacity building work related to IUU fishing and to continue to properly resource this work;
- h) called upon FAO to initiate a technical workshop for Members to discuss issues related to vessel tracking, subject to external funding, the results of which should be followed up by the new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management;
- i) welcomed the launch of the second version of the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record), and reiterated a call to strengthen engagement for broader participation in the Global Record, reiterating the importance for Members to upload and update information on their fleets;
- j) encouraged the uptake of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (VGCDS) and thanked FAO for producing technical guides for national authorities to better understand and implement catch documentation schemes, and further highlighted the importance of information sharing, transparency and traceability;
- k) welcomed the adoption of an agreement on fisheries subsidies at the WTO on 17 June 2022 that, inter alia, aims at eliminating all forms of subsidies for IUU fishing and fishing related activities in support of such fishing, and noted the greater responsibilities on the FAO Members to bring in effective measures for addressing this issue;
- l) reiterated its encouragement that FAO provide technical assistance to Members to analyse and account for fisheries-related subsidies to support the identification and elimination of subsidies related to IUU fishing activities;

- m) endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment as a new instrument within the framework of the Code and called for its implementation, including through RFMOs and arrangements;
- n) endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO ad hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters (JWG) and noted the need for the FAO Secretariat to develop procedures to ensure that the JWG outcomes are transmitted to Members for their consideration;
- o) noted the possibility to update the 1989 FAO Standards Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels in view of global developments and current limited harmonization in fishing vessel marking, and requested FAO to start a process to achieve this and called on FAO to analyse the cost, benefits and implications of such an update;
- p) called upon Members to comply with their duties as flag, port, coastal, and market States in order to fight IUU fishing in the high seas and areas under national jurisdiction;
- q) welcomed the release of the study on the implementation of the FAO Compliance Agreement and called for considering options to strengthen effective implementation and enforcement; and
- r) called upon Members and relevant regional organizations to raise awareness through means that target various categories of society at the regional and local levels regarding the importance of combating IUU fishing and the negative impact on societies of such fishing.

#### **ENHANCING COFI DISCUSSION, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE PROPOSAL OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

##### 15. The Committee:

- a) examined the proposal of the Working Group on the Proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (WG);
- b) endorsed the proposal for establishing a COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (SCFM) and implementing it as proposed by the WG;
- c) underscored the importance of addressing the potential financial and administrative burden, especially for developing States Members, and welcomed the financial contribution expressed by a Member;
- d) welcomed the rotation in the modality among SCFM and the existing Sub-Committees as proposed by the WG;
- e) welcomed also the review process by the Thirty-eighth Session of the Committee, and expressed concern that the time available for the review process might be too short;
- f) underscored the importance of prioritized and balanced agenda items to avoid duplication with the existing Sub-Committees and to allow an in-depth dialogue on essential matters in fisheries management; and
- g) agreed to the Terms of Reference as attached in Appendix G.

#### **ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE: REPORTING ON PROGRESS AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO STRATEGY ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2022–2031**

##### 16. The Committee:

- a) acknowledged the support provided by FAO in addressing climate change impacts on aquatic food systems and the communities they sustain, highlighting the vulnerability of and need for increased support to SIDS and least developed countries (LDCs);

- b) requested FAO to increase its efforts, including by leveraging additional funding through the Green Climate Fund to support developing country Members to build readiness capacity to address climate change and to implement climate change initiatives particularly for those most vulnerable to climate change such as SIDS and LDCs;
- c) commended the development of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031 (the Strategy) as the new corporate framework for enhancing climate action at global, regional, country and local levels and ensuring alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 in support of the achievement of SDGs;
- d) welcomed the development of an Action Plan, taking note of the proposed outputs for the implementation of the Strategy, and recommended the development of a set of FAO actions focused on climate resilient fisheries and aquaculture;
- e) recognized the importance of mobilizing additional resources to support the implementation of the Action Plan, promoting inclusive collaboration to adopt low-emission, good practices and innovative solutions, leaving no one behind;
- f) requested FAO to continue to organize open, inclusive, transparent and timely consultation processes, and to take into account the guidance provided by Members in refining and further developing the Action Plan;
- g) appreciated FAO's engagement with and the progress made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and encouraged FAO to further foster the inclusion of aquatic foods in global climate fora, including through UNFCCC Ocean dialogue; and
- h) encouraged FAO to increase the knowledge and awareness on climate change impacts in fisheries and aquaculture and to provide guidance on adaptation and mitigation, highlighting the need for guidance on climate resilient fisheries management, including by convening a workshop with RFMOs and RFABs, and further encouraged the inclusion of climate change in the GSA.

## **MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

### 17. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, and encouraged FAO to finalize the related 2024–2027 Action Plan, in particular the fisheries and aquaculture actions;
- b) appreciated FAO's support to the process of developing a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (2021–2030), and invited FAO to promote elaboration of fisheries and aquaculture elements across relevant targets and indicators under negotiation;
- c) acknowledged the importance of area-based management tools in fisheries and aquaculture for biodiversity conservation, and encouraged FAO to continue the consultative process to develop and disseminate practical FAO-led guidance on “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs);
- d) recognized the important role that RFMOs and other regional initiatives play in mainstreaming biodiversity in the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, and called on FAO to further strengthen its support to them in this area;
- e) urged effective cooperation between fisheries and environment bodies at national, regional and global levels, stressing that collaboration is needed to ensure coherence in policy-making for the ocean and inland waters, contributing to the protection of biodiversity;
- f) expressed concern that a number of seabirds are at imminent risk of extinction, including the antipodean Albatross, and called on Members to develop Regional and National Plans of Action for the protection of seabirds from the impact of fishing, recognizing the support available from FAO and the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP);

- g) welcomed the report of the Seventh FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Concerning Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species. Towards CITES 19th Conference of the Parties (COP 19) in November 2022, Members underlined the important role of FAO in helping to ensure that relevant decisions and their implementation are based on the CITES criteria, best available scientific data and technical information;
- h) requested FAO to strengthen its involvement in the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) process to provide the necessary and relevant technical advice;
- i) appreciated FAO's work on the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for aquatic genetic resources (AqGR) and supported the implementation of the associated global information system to ensure the effective and sustainable use of aquatic species; and
- j) noted that marine debris and litter are a threat to biodiversity, supported FAO's work to implement the voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear and encouraged Members' fisheries experts to engage in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) processes including binding measures for fishing gear, as appropriate.

## **DEVELOPMENTS IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES RELATED TO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

### 18. The Committee:

- a) commended FAO's work in achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches and engagement in United Nations fora and processes, including the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Ocean Conference, and looked forward to the continued collaboration with relevant global and regional organizations, bodies and initiatives to strengthen this work;
- b) called upon Members to participate in the Informal Consultations on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and in the Review Conference on the UNFSA pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 76/71 dated 9 December 2021, and encouraged all Parties to support replenishment of the Part VII Assistance Fund of the UNFSA;
- c) encouraged FAO, within its mandate and area of competence, to continue to provide technical advice and relevant information to support the negotiation process on BBNJ;
- d) requested FAO, within its mandate and area of competence, to provide technical advice and relevant information about the effects on fishing activities, in the context of the mining Code in the framework of the International Seabed Authority (ISA);
- e) stressed the importance to continue FAO's actions on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), giving priority attention to processes affecting VMEs;
- f) highlighted the key role of RFMOs, RFABs and other regional initiatives for fisheries and aquaculture sustainability and encouraged FAO to continue providing support for RFMOs/RFABs including through Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) and to develop cross-sectoral cooperation between RFMOs/RFABs and regional seas conventions and programmes, as well as urging Members to engage effectively in all RFMOs to which they are parties;
- g) called upon FAO to further increase its support to Marine and Inland Regional and Subregional Organizations including Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), and to continue supporting the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fishery Organization

(RAAFO), and noted the regional consultation on the establishment of RAAFO that will be held in Saudi Arabia in December 2022;

- h) requested FAO to provide support in the ongoing review of the mandates, performance and relevance and future existence of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), an Article XIV Body under the FAO Constitution;
- i) appreciated FAO's joint work with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the IMO on safety and decent work in fisheries, called on Members, regional fishery bodies (RFBs) and other relevant international organizations to share information and experiences on these issues, and encouraged all Members to ratify and implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 and the 2012 Cape Town Agreement of IMO;
- j) welcomed FAO's capacity building work on decent working conditions and safety at sea, with an emphasis on reducing accidents and fatalities amongst small-scale fishers, fishing vessel safety standards and promotion of insurance and social protection in fisheries, and requested FAO to increase its support to developing countries on fishing safety matters and to take a lead on the establishment of a repository for fisher safety data and accident and mortality information;
- k) welcomed the success of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and the Lisbon Declaration "Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility" towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14; and
- l) recognized FAO's efforts made to address multilingualism in the translation of several technical documents and encouraged FAO to continue this work.

## **DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, 24–27 MAY 2022**

### 19. The Committee:

- a) endorsed the report of the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ);
- b) highlighted the importance of aquaculture, and especially small-scale aquaculture, for food security and nutrition, livelihoods, economic development and public health;
- c) highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices to develop aquaculture in a sustainable manner, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation;
- d) welcomed the adoption of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and recognized the relevance of the programme priority area of Blue transformation to transform global aquaculture into a more productive, efficient, resilient, climate smart and socially and environmentally responsible food system;
- e) noted the need to elaborate a long-term approach for the development of sustainable aquaculture, and in this regard recommended the finalization of the voluntary draft GSA before the Twelfth Session of the COFI:AQ through the establishment of a Task Force to be conducted in an open and inclusive manner;
- f) re-emphasized the need for the Global Integrated Sustainable Aquaculture Programme (GISAP), as endorsed by COFI 34, and to consider the draft GSA as a foundation for FAO's programmatic work;
- g) noted the potential of seaweed farming, processing and marketing and the importance of sustainable feed sources;
- h) thanked FAO, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) and the host, the Government of the People's Republic of China on the successful convening of the Global Conference on Aquaculture Millennium+20 (GCA) with valuable outputs, noted the importance

of the GCA as a significant global platform to engage a broad range of stakeholders in aquaculture, and encouraged FAO to continue organizing such conferences;

- i) requested FAO to provide support to Members, upon request, to increase awareness, strengthen monitoring, promote the responsible use of antimicrobials in aquatic animals in the framework of FAO's Plan of Action on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 2021–2025 as well as the progressive management pathway for improving aquaculture biosecurity (PMP/AB), and encouraged the continued collaboration with the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and
- j) welcomed the kind invitation of the Government of Mexico to host the Twelfth Session of the COFI: AQ in Ciudad Obregón, Mexico (7–10 March 2023).

## **DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, 8 APRIL–8 MAY, 7–9 AND 20 JUNE 2022**

20. The Committee:

- a) commended the work of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) and endorsed the Report of the Eighteenth Session of COFI:FT;
- b) noted the Secretariat's efficient preparatory work, including session information and document distribution in a timely and effective manner, despite the challenges of a virtual environment, and welcomed the evaluation of the modalities of the meeting so that lessons can be applied to future meetings of COFI and its Sub-Committees;
- c) emphasized the importance of COFI:FT as a global forum for post-harvest and trade issues related to fisheries and aquaculture;
- d) commended FAO for its work on food safety and Codex Alimentarius, catch documentation schemes (CDS) and traceability, and other post-harvest activities;
- e) reaffirmed the importance of disseminating market information for fisheries and aquaculture products, primarily to small-scale operators, in order to facilitate their integration into global markets, including by enhancing market access with more opportunities;
- f) highlighted the importance of a transparent, robust, and harmonized trading system, with measures that are applied consistently and without discrimination, avoiding the creation of unnecessary barriers to trade;
- g) urged FAO to continue the work in minimizing food loss and waste as aquatic foods have a key role in providing nutrition and food security;
- h) suggested that FAO continue providing technical assistance, capacity building and information dissemination on market information;
- i) welcomed the forthcoming database on regional trade agreements for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors which will be factual and non-prejudicial in nature; and
- j) welcomed the kind invitation of the Government of Norway to host the Nineteenth Session of the COFI:FT in the autumn of 2023.

## **FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE UNDER THE FAO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

21. The Committee:

- a) considered FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the previous FAO Strategic Framework and appreciated the results achieved;



- b) welcomed the comprehensive presence of fisheries and aquaculture across the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031, and its contribution to SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- c) welcomed the core objectives of Blue transformation and their alignment with the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031;
- d) endorsed the identified fisheries and aquaculture priority areas of work for the biennium 2022–2023, noting the importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for food security, nutrition and livelihoods;
- e) recommended FAO to consider support to fisheries and aquaculture post COVID-19 response and recovery as a priority area;
- f) reaffirmed the importance of FAO’s role in collecting, analysing and disseminating statistics on fisheries and aquaculture, including gender disaggregated data when possible, and recommended that FAO informs Members of additional needs to improve data collection systems, in particular for small-scale fisheries and aquaculture;
- g) urged FAO, in collaboration with its partners, to continue to promote the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in relevant fora and initiatives such as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 27); and
- h) stressed the important technical role of FAO in addressing the impacts of the ongoing conflicts<sup>5</sup> on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, including on the livelihoods of small-scale and artisanal marine and inland fishers.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE FAO SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STRATEGY (2022–2025)**

### 22. The Committee:

- a) commended the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (2022–2025) through an inclusive process and its endorsement by the 170th Session of the Council;
- b) reviewed and welcomed the high-level framework that will be used for the development of regional action plans for the effective implementation of the Science and Innovation Strategy, taking into account the outcomes and recommendations of the regional consultations and the FAO Regional Conferences 2022; and
- c) invited management to continue to take into account the guidance provided by Members and brief Members on the development of the regional action plans and reporting the progress to the relevant Governing Bodies as appropriate, ensuring their alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031, other FAO strategies and consistent with agreed texts in international fora.

## **MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK (MYPOW) OF THE COMMITTEE**

### 23. The Committee:

- a) approved the progress report of the MYPOW 2020–2023;
- b) reiterated the importance of the timely preparation of the documents, including translation, and agreed to keep the indicator in Paragraph 18 (b) of the MYPOW 2022–2025 (Appendix H);
- c) agreed to add the references to the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, as appropriate; and

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<sup>5</sup> Recalling the reports of the 169th Session of the Council on the impacts of the Ukrainian–Russian conflict on global food security and related matters under the mandate of FAO, as well as the 170th Session of the Council.

d) recognized the need to discuss the budgetary and personnel implications for the fulfilment of the proposed workplan at the Finance Committee and the Council.

#### **DEVELOPMENTS IN FORA OF IMPORTANCE FOR THE MANDATE OF COFI**

24. The Committee noted the information provided on developments in fora of importance for the mandate of COFI.

#### **RESULTS OF THE WORLD FISHERIES UNIVERSITY PILOT PROGRAMME**

25. The Committee noted the information provided by the Republic of Korea on results of the World Fisheries University Pilot Programme.<sup>6</sup>

#### **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF COFI**

26. The Committee elected Mr Mohamed Ahmed Alghamdi (Saudi Arabia) as Chairperson and Mr James Brown (New Zealand) as First Vice-Chairperson. Chile, Malaysia, Norway, Senegal and United States of America were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF COFI**

27. The Committee agreed that the Thirty-sixth Session of COFI will be held in Rome in the third quarter of 2024. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the COFI Bureau, for presentation to the next FAO Council in December 2022 and Forty-third Session of the FAO Conference in 2023.

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

28. The report of the Thirty-fifth Session of COFI was adopted, after incorporating all changes agreed upon by consensus on 9 September 2022.

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<sup>6</sup> The Republic of Korea issued a statement of minority views which may be found in the verbatim record reflected in the recording that may be accessed at <https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5949/icode/>.

## Agenda

1. Opening of the Session<sup>7</sup>
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session
3. Designation of Drafting Committee
4. State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments (*for information and discussion*)
5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (*for information and discussion*)
6. Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including in the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) (*for information and discussion*)
7. Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (*for information, discussion and endorsement*)
8. Enhancing COFI discussions, including Recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (*for decision*)
9. Addressing climate change in fisheries and aquaculture: reporting on progress and Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031 (*for information and discussion*)
10. Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture (*for information and discussion*)
11. Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture (WCP)<sup>8</sup> (*for information and discussion*)
12. Decisions and recommendations of the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, 24–27 May 2022 (WCP) (*for information and endorsement*)
13. Decisions and recommendations of the Eighteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, 8 April–8 May, 7–9 & 20 June 2022 (WCP) (*for information and endorsement*)
14. FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework (WCP) (*for information and discussion*)
  - 14.1 Development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (2022–2025) (*for information and discussion*)

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<sup>7</sup> General Statements by Ministers and Vice-Ministers will be made under this Agenda item.

<sup>8</sup> “WCP” means that the items are proposed to be subject to Written Correspondence Procedure.

15. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee (WCP) (*for information and discussion*)
16. Any other matters (*for information*)
  - 16.1 Developments in *fora* of importance for the mandate of COFI
  - 16.2 Results of the World Fisheries University Pilot Programme
17. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the 36th Session of COFI
18. Date and place of the 36th Session of COFI
19. Adoption of the Report

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The Committee elected Ms Lamia Ben Redouane (Algeria) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, with the following membership: Algeria, Argentina, Cabo Verde, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland <sup>9</sup> and United States of America.

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Drafting Committee: Matthew Camilleri

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<sup>9</sup> Czechia replaced the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the basis of non-objection of the Drafting Committee.

### List of documents

COFI/2022/1/Rev.2	Provisional Agenda
COFI/2022/2	State of the world fisheries and aquaculture: Influencing action for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2022/2.1	Highlights of the progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
COFI/2022/3	FAO's contribution of fisheries and aquaculture towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
COFI/2022/4	Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries
COFI/2022/4.1/Rev.1	The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)
COFI/2022/5	Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
COFI/2022/6	Enhancing COFI discussion including recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
COFI/2022/7	Addressing climate change in fisheries and aquaculture: reporting on progress and Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031
COFI/2022/8	Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2022/9	Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2022/10	Decisions and recommendations of the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, 24–27 May 2022
COFI/2022/11	Decisions and recommendations of the Eighteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, 8 April–8 May, 7–9 & 20 June 2022
COFI/2022/12	FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031
COFI/2022/12.1	Development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (2022–2025)
COFI/2022/13	Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee on Fisheries: a progress report of MYPOW 2020–2023 and a draft MYPOW 2022–2025
COFI/2022/INF/1/Rev.1	Provisional timetable
COFI/2022/INF/2/Rev.1	Provisional list of documents

COFI/2022/INF/3	Provisional list of participants
COFI/2022/INF/4	Statement by the Director-General
COFI/2022/INF/5/Rev.1	Annotations to the Provisional Agenda
COFI/2022/INF/6	Report of the Thirty-fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, 1–5 February 2021
COFI/2022/INF/7	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments
COFI/2022/INF/8	Safety at sea, social protection and decent work in fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2022/INF/9	Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries
COFI/2022/INF/10	Report of the Technical Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment, 30 May–3 June 2022
COFI/2022/INF/11/Rev.1	Update on the FAO Strategy on Climate Change
COFI/2022/INF/12	Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture: Identifying and implementing Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)
COFI/2022/INF/13	Additional information on developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture
COFI/2022/INF/14	Report of the Eleventh Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, 24–27 May 2022
COFI/2022/INF/15	Report of the Eighteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, 8 April–8 May, 7–9 and 20 June 2022
COFI/2022/INF/16	Update on the FAO Strategy on Science and Innovation
COFI/2022/INF/17	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States

### Opening statement by Dr Qu Dongyu FAO Director-General

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you at the opening of this hybrid session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Reflecting a new and more flexible FAO, with adjusted working procedures to fit a dynamic and rapidly evolving world.

This COFI session takes place during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, led by FAO, which sets out a vision for a world where small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers are fully recognized and empowered to contribute to the sector and industry, and to our global agrifood system.

This is also the UN Decade of Family Farming, which will help us carry the message beyond 2022, To recognize the important contribution of small-scale artisanal fisheries to human well-being, healthy food systems and poverty eradication.

Today's High-level Special Event taking place later this morning will provide an important platform for our collective dialogue and action in going forward with the objectives of this International Year.

In particular, I wish to welcome Peter Thomson, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Oceans.

As a long-time friend and supporter of FAO, and of COFI, I look forward to his contribution and leadership in our common agenda.

We last met in Lisbon at the 2nd UN Oceans Conference that focused on accelerating and scaling-up implementation of SDG 14 "Life Below Water", for which FAO is the custodian of 4 indicators.

At the UN Oceans Conference, the discussions focused on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and the need to transform our aquatic food systems.

FAO played a key role at the conference and contributed to the technical discussions and support through a strong engagement with governments and partners.

I am also pleased that my esteemed colleague Rafael Grossi, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will provide a video message.

FAO and the IAEA have a strong and historic partnership, as reflected through our work and labs in the Joint Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture more than five decades.

The IAEA also has a number of Marine Environment Laboratories, to assess coastal and marine pollution and improve seafood safety.

Agrifood systems transformation requires innovation and science-based solutions, to ensure they are more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable.

Partnerships, such as the one with the IAEA, are key to ensuring we achieve our goals together,

Today, more than ever, as we face many global challenges, fisheries and aquaculture play an increasingly important role in providing food, nutrition and jobs across the world.

The latest edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture report informs that production hit a record high at 214 million tonnes in 2020 - with 122.6 million from aquaculture - generating about 151 million US dollars in international trade.

We are eating more aquatic foods than ever – doubling consumption in the last 60 years from 9.9 kilos per person in 1960 to over 20 kilos in 2020.

But our valuable aquatic resources must be managed and used responsibly and sustainably, guided by the best science available,

To recover stocks, restore degraded ecosystems and distribute benefits equitably.

Sustainably expanding the aquaculture industry, ensuring that all fisheries are effectively managed and that aquatic food value chains are efficiently and equitably developed, are at the core of FAO's vision of Blue transformation.

And they reflect the FAO Strategic Framework in support of the 2030 Agenda for better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.

Dear Colleagues,

The FAO Committee on Fisheries is the only global inter-governmental forum on fisheries and aquaculture,

And I look forward to your discussions this week and suggestions arising from the session on matters related to global fisheries and aquaculture.

You will discuss developments in relevant global and regional processes, including the recently approved WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies, among others.

At the last session of COFI, I launched the “My fish food experience”, inviting FAO employees and Members to share how they experience fish as food in their lives.

I am pleased to announce that as a result of this initiative, we are now launching the first-ever FAO fish recipe book.

The book features fish and seafood recipes from nearly 50 countries with various species, offering a wide selection of nutritious and healthy cookery from five continents.

The book is also enriched with FAO data and information on species production, consumption and trade, as well as sustainability and nutritional content.

Dear Colleagues,

We have little over 7 years to achieve SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda.

Now is the time for concrete action and bold decisions.

I wish you a fruitful session.

Thank you.

## Statement by Ambassador Peter Thomson UNSG's Special Envoy for the Ocean

Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All courtesies observed and thank you for this opportunity to once again address the Committee on Fisheries. I do so in full recognition of the fact that in 2015 all of our governments agreed to Sustainable Development Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean's resources, and that FAO was subsequently ascribed direct responsibility as custodian and coordinator of four of SDG14's ten targets. You will be further examining progress towards these targets during this meeting, suffice for me to say here that FAO's Committee on Fisheries has immense bearing on the faithful implementation of SDG14.

The overarching international gatherings for supporting the implementation of SDG 14 are the UN Ocean Conferences, the first of which was held in New York in 2017, the second being held in Lisbon this year. In due course, I fully expect that UN Member States will accept and mandate the generous offer of France and Costa Rica to co-host the third UN Ocean Conference in 2025.

The Lisbon Conference was held in June, co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya. Like its 2017 predecessor, the conference was the jewel in the crown of a super year for the Ocean. It convened over 6000 people from around the world, all determined to support the implementation of SDG14, to build the Sustainable Blue Economy, and to stop the decline in the Ocean's health. It was attended by 24 Heads of State and Government, 120 ministers, and over 2,000 representatives of Civil Society. Close to 300 voluntary commitments were registered, representing billions of dollars of investment. Finally, the conference adopted by consensus an ambitious, action-oriented political declaration that was negotiated by UN Member States, setting out a roadmap for improving our relationship with the Ocean in the years ahead.

I wish to acknowledge today that a large part of the UN Ocean Conference's success was due to the diligent input of FAO, both in the preparations and delivery of the conference. With the launch of the 2022 SOFIA report and the Interactive Dialogue on Fisheries both taking place on the third day of the conference, this became the conference's fisheries day. FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu attended in person and played a leading role in the events of this special day, and I wish to unreservedly thank him for his strong support.

I was not straying into overenthusiasm when I referred to the Lisbon conference as being the jewel in the crown of an Ocean super year. When you look at UNEA5's decision in February in Nairobi to commence work on an internationally binding treaty to bring plastic pollution under control, you have good reason to hope the scourge of plastic pollution of the Ocean may soon be over.

When you consider that the WTO Ministerial Council in June in Geneva, after decades of negotiation, reached consensus on banning harmful fisheries subsidies, you are looking at a huge milestone in favour of SDG14's implementation. This was indeed a major victory for the marine environment, but the subsidies agreement doesn't come into force until sufficient Parties have completed their national acceptance processes. Thus, I call on all present today to do the right thing and urge your national authorities to complete their acceptance processes with all possible speed, with a view to being amongst the first to deposit instruments of acceptance with the WTO.

Continuing this surge of Ocean action, as already touched upon, I believe every expectation of the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon was achieved in June, with the launching of a great fleet of innovative solutions to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean's resources.

But in New York last month there was a pause in momentum when the 5th Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction concluded without achieving agreement. Huge efforts and substantial progress were made at the conference, with the adoption of a High Seas Treaty coming tantalisingly close. It's fair to report that expectations are high

for a continuation of the BBNJ conference in the first half of 2023, in order for the much-desired consensus to be achieved.

The remainder of 2022 holds three more seminal moments for transformative Ocean action at a global scale: UNFCCC's COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, the G20 Leaders' Summit in Bali, and the Convention on Biological Diversity's COP15 in Montreal. In recognition of the Ocean's major role in Climate Change mitigation and adaptation, there will be a concerted push at these conferences to move the needle of climate finance decisively in the direction of the sustainable blue economy.

I am pleased to say at COFI that in all of these 2022 conferences, FAO has played a positive role for progress, and long may that be so.

If it proves to be the case that this year's remaining environmental conferences conclude in favour of the Ocean's well-being, 2022 may well go down as the super year for the Ocean we have hoped it would be, and the drive for SDG14's implementation will go up a gear in 2023.

Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I said in the opening of these remarks, FAO's Committee on Fisheries has immense bearing on the faithful implementation of SDG14. The SOFIA report makes it clear that much progress has been made in that direction and in the sector as a whole, but it is also clear that much work remains to be done. This imperative was at the heart of COFI's 2021 Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, which in turn resulted in FAO's Blue transformation agenda and pressing on with SDG14's progress by harnessing political will and technical solutions.

I do not want to conclude on too buoyant a note. These are not ordinary times. The world is still heading towards global warming of three degrees and the UN Secretary-General has declared a red alert for humanity. We are all aware of the challenges to the Ocean's well-being, and the marine ecosystem changes observably underway. These do not auger well for our own well-being and in particular for the security of the generations that will follow on from us. In fidelity to the demands of intergenerational justice, I put it to you all, that whatever good works we have done to date are not enough. We have many more steps to take towards sustainability and equity and little time to climb them, so let us get to work.

I thank you for your attention.

**APPENDIX F****Statement by Rafael Mariano Grossi  
Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

Chairperson Shingo Ota, Director-General Qu Dongyu, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by saying that the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries is very important to me. I will be following its outcome closely. As you know, I had planned to travel to Rome to be with you, but a time-critical emergency mission has prevented me from fulfilling those plans.

Dear colleagues,

We are meeting at an important time.

Conflicts, pandemics, and the climate crisis seriously impact our agri-food systems. Disruptions in international supply chains are challenging food security across the globe.

Nevertheless, there are reasons for hope, including the immense richness of the world's marine environments.

FAO's latest State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture report tells us that fisheries and aquaculture production is at a record high. Through it, we have the means to address food security now and in the future. But of course, that's only true if this growth is sustainable.

Exploitation, pollution, microplastics, eutrophication, hypoxia, ocean acidification, and algal blooms all take their toll on aquatic ecosystems and blue food production. Such challenges make the work of everyone here today so important.

As Director General of the IAEA, I lead an international organization that is scientific and technical to its core. We use nuclear science and technology - and 12 cutting-edge laboratories - to achieve our mission of Atoms for Peace and Development. Sustainability underpins everything we do.

As I highlighted at the UN Ocean Conference early this summer, our scientists at the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratories lead research and development efforts to better understand the impacts of natural and human-made stressors on the ocean.

For example, our labs in Monaco are assisting 16 countries in a long-term study that relies on nuclear tracing techniques to highlight the impacts of ocean acidification on shells. Such changes can hamper seafood production and have a socio-economic impact on the communities that rely on it.

The ever-increasing number of new chemical pollutants entering the marine environment is another concern. The IAEA develops new isotopic methods to detect and accurately measure emerging threats in seafood from regions that are often understudied.

Generating reliable scientific data, helps policy makers make wise decisions and leads to faster implementation of aquatic pollution management action.

Under NUTEC Plastics, our scientists are helping Member States use nuclear and isotopic techniques to assess the effects of microplastics on important commercial fish species.

Knowledge-sharing is an important part of our mission. Our experts recently sailed together with FAO colleagues to train young researchers on novel methods to characterize ocean changes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Complex problems need holistic, integrated and sustainable solutions. For six decades, our Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture has been instrumental in widening the scientific and technical capacities of our Member States by transferring to them accurate and innovative technologies in agrifood systems.

By combining the mandates of FAO and the IAEA, the Joint Centre supports more than 200 national and regional technical cooperation projects.



These projects help deliver technologies and capacities developed in more than 30 Coordinated Research Projects, bringing together more than 400 research institutions and experimental stations.

One such project has recently produced 37 new laboratory analytical methods to control residues of veterinary drugs and chemicals in aquaculture products. When we consider half of global fish production comes from fish farming, we can take pride in this support we provide to national labs on food safety.

In closing, let me thank you for the valuable contributions you are making and tell you that I will closely following the outcome of this meeting. I wish you every success.

## Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management

1. The Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (SCFM) shall serve as a forum for consultation and discussion on fisheries management, associated technical and policy issues, and the related work performed by FAO, taking into account the work of relevant regional and international organizations, countries, stakeholders' groups and NGOs, and in cooperation with them, as appropriate.
2. In this context, the Sub-Committee shall:
  - (1) provide a technical and policy advisory forum to discuss fisheries governance and management issues and explore solutions for the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources and advance the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries based on the best available science as well as ecosystem and precautionary approaches;
  - (2) identify and discuss major issues and trends in global fisheries management and sustainable development, which require action, such as those related to development and management of small-scale fisheries, effects of climate change on fishery management, and eradication of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
  - (3) make recommendations to address such issues and trends as well as fisheries development needs and, in this regard:
    - (i) to advise on preparing, facilitating, and implementing such recommendations, as appropriate;
    - (ii) to advise on the promotion of information sharing on regional policies and technical measures on fisheries management, as appropriate;
    - (iii) to advise on the strengthening of regional and international collaboration to assist FAO Members, in particular developing Members including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Members, in the implementation of such actions and instruments in the domain of fisheries governance and management; and
    - (iv) to advise on possible cooperation between FAO and, as appropriate, relevant regional and international organizations, including RFMOs, countries, stakeholder groups, and NGOs, to promote and support good practices and avoid discrepancy in policies and actions.
  - (4) address any specific (technical or policy) matters relating to fisheries governance and management referred to this Sub-Committee by its Members, the Committee on Fisheries, or the Director-General of FAO;
  - (5) collaborate with and provide inputs to the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade on fishery management issues related to trade in fish and fisheries products; and
  - (6) collaborate with and provide inputs to the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture on fishery management issues related to aquaculture.

## **Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee on Fisheries 2022–2025**

### **I. OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) shall.<sup>10</sup>
  - a) review the programme of work of the Organization in the field of fisheries and aquaculture and their implementation;
  - b) conduct periodic general reviews of the world situation in fisheries and aquaculture and fishery problems of an international character and appraise such problems and their possible solution with a view to concerted action by nations, FAO and other intergovernmental bodies;
  - c) review specific matters relating to fisheries and aquaculture referred to the Committee by the FAO Conference, Council or the Director-General, or placed by the Committee on its agenda at the request of a Member in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, and make recommendations as may be appropriate;
  - d) consider the desirability of preparing and submitting to Members an international convention under Article XIV of the Constitution to ensure effective international cooperation and consultation in fisheries and aquaculture on a world scale; and
  - e) report to the Council or tender advice to the Director-General, as appropriate, on matters considered by the Committee.

### **II. RESULTS FOR 2022–2025**

#### **A. Review of the World Situation in Fisheries and Aquaculture**

##### 2. Result:

The FAO Conference, Council, and the international community, as appropriate are provided with updated information and specific advice on the world situation in fisheries and aquaculture and in relation to the specific issues of significance addressed during the scheduled sessions.

##### 3. Indicators and targets:

Clear, precise, and consensual recommendations that are based on updated information on the world situation in fisheries and aquaculture are presented to the Conference and Council as a solid basis for its guidance and decision.

##### 4. Output:

Clear, precise and consensual recommendations are favourably considered by the Conference and the Council for its recommendations and decisions.

##### 5. Activities:

The Committee is informed of the current world situation in fisheries and aquaculture, including the report on the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), and undertakes general discussions.

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<sup>10</sup> Rule XXX.6, General Rules of the Organization.

Specific issues of topical significance are addressed during the scheduled sessions.

6. Working methods:

SOFIA and the relevant documents are prepared in advance of the Session of the Committee, as a solid basis for discussion at the Committee.

**B. Strategy and Priority Setting, and Budget Planning**

7. Result:

The Committee's decisions and recommendations provide a solid basis for the Conference and Council's recommendations and decisions on strategy, priorities, programmes and budget for the Organization.

8. Indicators and targets:

- a) The Committee further promotes the FAO's Questionnaire on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) to solicit responses and reduce obstacles impeding responses.
- b) Members respond to the FAO Questionnaire on the implementation of the Code and provide relevant information on fisheries and aquaculture for FAO via the Committee and its Sub-Committees.
- c) Clear and specific recommendations are made by the Committee to the Council regarding the strategies, priorities, programmes and budget for fisheries and aquaculture.
- d) The Committee's recommendations made on the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget are reflected in the Council Report.

9. Outputs:

The report of the Committee that provides clear, precise and consensual recommendations for the Council on sectoral strategies, priorities, programmes and budgets.

10. Activities:

- a) Review decisions and recommendations from the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, statutory bodies and other relevant organs or institutions.
- b) Review advice from the Regional Conferences in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.
- c) Review the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget in fisheries and aquaculture.
- d) Formulate recommendations on the strategies, priorities, programmes and budget in fisheries and aquaculture.

11. Working methods:

- a) Close consultation with the Chairperson and other Bureau Members.
- b) Close collaboration with relevant FAO Divisions, Centres and Offices.
- c) Liaise with the Sub-Committees on Fish Trade, Aquaculture and Fisheries Management and other statutory bodies.
- d) Liaise with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters.
- e) Liaise with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters.

f) Report the outcome of the Committee on programme and budgetary matters to the Council appropriately.

### **C. Advice on Global Policy and Regulatory Matters**

#### 12. Results:

The Committee's decisions and recommendations provide a solid basis for the Conference's recommendations and decisions on global policy and regulatory matters.

#### 13. Indicators and targets:

- a) Members obtain value from the deliberations of the Committee, using the advice and recommendations to guide domestic actions and policies as reported by FAO.
- b) Clear and specific recommendations are made by the Committee to the Conference regarding global policy and regulatory matters in its areas of mandate.
- c) The Committee's recommendations made on global policy and regulatory matters are reflected in the Conference Report.

#### 14. Output:

The report of the Committee provides clear, precise and consensual recommendations for the Conference on policy and regulatory frameworks or instruments.

#### 15. Activities:

- a) Review the status of relevant international instruments in areas of competence for the Committee.
- b) Consider possible solutions with a view to support concerted action by Members themselves or collectively through FAO and other relevant bodies in areas of competence for the Committee.

#### 16. Working methods:

Report the outcome of the Committee on global policy and regulatory matters to the Conference appropriately.

### **III. EFFECTIVE WORK PLANNING OF COFI**

#### 17. Result:

The Committee works effectively and efficiently in an action-oriented, inclusive way.

#### 18. Indicators and targets:

- a) The focused agendas are appropriately elaborated.
- b) All COFI documents, including SOFIA, are to be made available in all FAO languages at least four weeks before the session commences.
- c) The sessions are conducted in an efficient and effective manner.
- d) MYPOW is appropriately implemented.
- e) Reports are concise and contain specific action-oriented recommendations to both the Council and the Conference.

#### 19. Outputs:

- a) Focused agendas and concise reports containing specific action-oriented recommendations to both the Council and the Conference.

- b) Report published only electronically.
  - c) COFI documents, including SOFIA, made available according to agreed schedules.
  - d) Progress reports on MYPOW and draft MYPOWs prepared and made available for the following four years.
20. Activities:
- a) Formulate focused agendas in close consultation with the Bureau in a timely manner.
  - b) Prepare results-oriented COFI documents, including SOFIA, and make them available in a timely manner.
  - c) Consider ways to improve the conduct of sessions more efficiently and effectively, including more efficient use of the time available, and the elaboration of new intersessional working methods, as agreed for the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management.
  - d) Recognizing the importance and usefulness of side events facilitate more focused and coordinated side events in line with key issues addressed in the main sessions.
  - e) Facilitate further coordination and collaboration with the Sub-Committees and other Technical Committees.
  - f) Pay continued attention to effective arrangements for drafting the final reports.

#### **IV. WORKING METHODS**

- 21. The Committee collaborates with statutory and other bodies under FAO auspices, liaises with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters, and with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters, as well as other relevant FAO Governing Bodies.
- 22. The Committee liaises with other international organizations active in the areas of fisheries and aquaculture.
- 23. The Committee undertakes regular intersessional activities facilitated by the Chairperson and the Bureau with support from the Secretariat. Liaison among the Bureaus of the Committee and the Sub-Committees is also further strengthened.
- 24. It encourages and facilitates the participation of observers, including civil society organizations.
- 25. The Chairperson liaises with FAO through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division.



**The Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Rome, Italy, from 5 to 9 September 2022. This is a report of the Session reflecting the discussions which took place and containing all recommendations and decisions taken by the Committee. A synopsis of the outcome of the Session is presented in the abstract and all supplementary information is included in the appendixes.**

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