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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

Fourteenth Session

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REPORT ON FISH TRADE RELATED ACTIVITIES IN FAO

Executive Summary

This paper presents a short overview of selected activities carried out by FAO of relevance to international fish trade. The majority of activities are carried out by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) on its own, or in cooperation with other FAO units, such as the Legal and Ethics Office (LEG), the Economic and Social Development Department (ES) and with other relevant institutions.

Suggested action by the Sub-Committee:

- Comment on FAO's trade-related activities;
- Provide information on relevant national, regional and inter-regional experience;
- Provide guidance for FAO's further work on trade-related activities, in particular on capacity-building for developing countries and for the small-scale sector; and
- Note the progress achieved in the revision process of the *Harmonized System (*HS*)* classification and the collaboration with the World Customs Organization *(*WCO*)*, and *p*rovide guidance for further work of FAO in areas of relevance for fishery statistics.

INTRODUCTION

1. The fisheries sector's contribution to local and regional food security through direct human consumption is well recognized as is its role in providing nutritional benefits essential to human health and development[1].

2. However, less attention has traditionally been given to the important role that fish trade plays as a driver of economic activity, in generating employment and as a source of foreign exchange. In this respect, the globalization of the sector, the growth of modern aquaculture and the development of sophisticated global supply chains have created more awareness of the sector and contributed to a new understanding of the crucial function that trade plays in allowing access to product and in creating value. FAO recognizes trade's fundamental role by aiming to foster international trade in food commodities, including fish.

3. Fish and fishery products are widely traded with close to 40 percent entering international markets, a much higher share than for other food commodities. Access to international markets plays a fundamental role for producers and exporters, not the least for developing countries, which represent 50 percent in value of all exports. International trade includes regional trade, which in many parts of the world is constrained by a number of obstacles and barriers, often of a regulatory nature. In these regions, regional trade remains far below its potential.

4. International value-chains for fish and fishery products act as conduits for physical product but also as transmission vehicles for price and cost changes, for evolving consumer needs and values, and for new equilibrium in supply and demand. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that international markets have a strong impact on domestic and regional markets, including for non-traded products.

FAO'S ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL FISH TRADE

5. FAO's trade-related activities of relevance to fisheries are primarily carried out in FI. The LEG undertakes work on international instruments and on national legislation. Food safety issues are coordinated by the Food Safety and Quality Unit within the Agriculture and Consumer protection Department with FI being responsible for specific fisheries issues. The Codex Alimentarius Commission Secretariat is located within FAO with FI responsible for all matters pertaining to fish and fishery products and serving as the secretariat for the Codex Fish and Fishery Products Committee (CCFFP). ES provides analysis and capacity building activities on food commodity trade, with the provision of specific inputs on fisheries issues by FI. An example of the cooperation between the FI and ES Departments is the publication of the twice yearly FAO Food Outlook: Global Market Analysis.

6. With the implementation of the new FAO Strategic Framework[2] from 2014 onwards, FAO aims to implement more integrated approaches in dealing with food security, resource management and food commodity problems. For fisheries issues this provides challenges as well as opportunities. Specifically for fish trade, a desirable outcome would be increased visibility within FAO's work and greater impact through more integrated and inclusive approaches in areas such as nutrition, food security, water management, coastal management, livelihoods and international food systems.

7. The rapid growth of aquaculture in supply and trade has led to an increased focus of FAO's work in this area. During the 2012–2013 biennium, FAO's activities in aquaculture and trade became more integrated. Trade and marketing aspects were given a more visible role in aquaculture development and policy considerations. Likewise, the cooperation between the two sub-committees of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) – the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) and the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ) – and their Secretariats has been strengthened.

[1] Please see COFI:FT/XIV/2014/4 for information on the work of FAO in human nutrition.
[2] Please see COFI:FT/XIV/2014/3 for information on the Strategy Objectives.

8. During the biennium 2014–2015, FAO will undertake a tilapia project within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - FAO Fish Programme (NFFP) with case studies assessing the socio-economic performance of major tilapia farming countries in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Uganda, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria) and in benchmark countries in other regions (e.g. China, Egypt and Brazil). The project will assess the current status and future prospect of tilapia trade in Africa. It will also investigate the competitive pressure caused by imports from Asia to African local markets with an analysis of respective cost factors.

9. For some time FAO has assessed the species composition of countries' aquaculture production and its relation to countries' specialization patterns in international trade. Specialization indicators have been developed (market shares, concentration ratios, revealed comparative advantage indices, etc.) to be used as standardized tools to help assess and monitor the patterns of trade and to provide guidance to aquaculture development from global, regional as well as country perspectives.

10. FAO's work on the development of fish price indices continued throughout 2012–2013 in cooperation with several partners, including the Norwegian Seafood Council, the University of Stavanger and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. The index is based on traded import values in key markets. Its coverage and representativeness is being expanded to include several developing country markets and additional commodities. The European Commission, the Imperial College, Universidad de Cantabria and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences also provided valuable inputs to this work. The FAO Fish Price Index is regularly published in the quarterly GLOBEFISH Highlights and the biannual FAO Food Outlook. During 2013, the Fish Price Index received coverage by some of the world's leading economic and financial media (Financial Times, BBC World News, the Economist, etc.).The FAO Fish Price Index has proven to be a valuable communication tool in reaching broader audiences on fish trade developments.

11. During the 2012–2013 biennium, FAO continued its activities of capacity-building on international fish trade and food safety issues for developing and transition countries, in particular as they relate to the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework of global trade rules and the WTO negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda. For example, in October 2013, the jointly organized FAO and Eurofish regional workshop on *"the WTO and fisheries"* was held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, hosted by the State Institute on Lake and River Fisheries. This regional workshop was the fifth FAO regional workshop for the Eastern and Central European region. It provided training and capacity building for FAO Members on the WTO agreements, accession, and current negotiations in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, as well as on their relevance for international fish trade. This type of workshop is in response to requests for capacity building on WTO issues and workshops have been successfully organized in Africa, Latin America, Near East, Asia and East and Central Europe since 2002, in close collaboration with the FISH INFONetwork (FIN) and other regional and local stakeholders.

12. The increased utilization of certification and labels for ecological or environmental purposes has resulted in a growing number of requests for assistance. This is in addition to the work mandated by the COFI:FT and COFI on the topic. In particular, the rising interest in national schemes has resulted in a number of requests for information on the FAO certification guidelines and on how national schemes can be designed to encompass the principles and requirements within these guidelines. FAO has also been invited to contribute to the work of the Global Seafood Sustainability Initiative on standards in order to ensure that developing country concerns and interests are respected[3].

13. Traceability has become an issue of major concern for producers, exporters and importing countries alike. This includes traceability both for the purpose of fulfilling quality and safety requirements as well as those related to the sustainability of production and of origin. FI has received a number of requests for assistance related to the development of catch documentation schemes.

[3] Please see COFI:FT/XIV/2014/6 for information on the work of FAO on ecolabels.

14. The growing role of market-based standards has led to requests from industry stakeholders for FAO advice on harmonization and equivalency. This resulted in the organization of a workshop in late 2013 in Rome with participation from industry, standard owners and certifiers as well as retailers.

15. During the biennium, Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) have been signed with industry associations such as the Global Sustainable Salmon Initiative, Cámara Ecuatoriana de Industriales y Procesadores Atuneros (CEIPA) and Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes de Conservas de Pescados y Mariscos (ANFACO). MoUs are non-committal, but provide frameworks for cooperation on relevant issues with a focus on capacity-building initiatives. For FI, engagement with the private sector is of growing importance in order to safeguard the interests of developing country producers when voluntary standards are being developed. Such cooperation is part of the new FAO Strategy for Partnerships with the private sector, approved in 2013.

16. In 2012 and 2013, FAO participated in several industry focused conferences. These included CONXEMAR in Vigo, Spain and the North Atlantic Seafood Forum (NASF) in Oslo and Bergen, Norway. In these events, the Assistant Director-General of FI delivered the opening address with FI staff providing a number of presentations on relevant issues. In addition, FAO took the technical responsibility for special sessions. Thanks to extra-budgetary funding, FAO was able to facilitate participation from a number of developing countries.

17. During the biennium FAO hosted informal meetings of a number of industry associations at its headquarters in Rome. Such meetings provide excellent opportunities to highlight the various issues FAO is working on with direct relevance to the sector and to receive feedback from industry stakeholders.

18. FAO continued to foster alliances with other organizations working on issues of relevance to international fish trade, in particular in its capacity-building activities. This includes closer cooperation with academia on trade and marketing related issues, and through international networks of technologists, fish inspectors, fisheries and trade economists, as well as with fisheries industry associations. In July 2012, FAO participated in the conference of the International Institute for Fisheries Economics and Trade (IIFET) in Dar es Salaam, organizing a special session on small-scale fisheries value chains with facilitated participation from developing country stakeholders. A similar participation is planned for IIFET 2014 with the organization of a special FAO session on market access.

19. The 2013 World Seafood Congress was held in Saint John's, Canada with FAO as co-organizer together with a number of other relevant organizations and agencies, including United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). As during previous sessions, FAO was responsible for the technical programme, the identification and facilitation of developing country participation. The World Seafood Congress focused on food safety and quality issues and is extremely useful in sharing regional and international experience.

20. Several advanced level courses were organized with the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) through the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza (IAMZ) and with support from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAAMA). In 2013, FAO was the joint organizer of a course on fisheries marketing and trade at the Universidad Internacional de Menendez Pelayo (UIMP) in Santander, Spain, in cooperation with MAAMA and the Fundación Alfonso Martín Escudero. In these conferences and courses, FAO provided technical inputs and facilitated the participation of developing countries, while the major support was received from national, regional and local institutions. This type of cooperation is beneficial for all parties, but subject to availability of external funding.

21. In the international debate on fisheries issues and trade, there is increasing emphasis on the impact on nutrition. In this respect, the publication and wide dissemination of the report of the FAO-World Health Organization (WHO) expert consultation in 2010 on the risks and benefits from fish consumption[4] has provided important inputs to this debate.

[4] FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 978.

22. During the last few years, FI has enhanced its work on fisheries outlook models, also through improved collaboration with other international organizations. In June 2013, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2013–2022 was published, covering medium term perspectives on supply and demand for selected agricultural commodities, including capture fisheries, aquaculture and aquafeeds. This was the third consecutive year in which the modelling of future demand and supply for fish and fishery products has been included in the overall OECD-FAO agricultural projections and is a result of the excellent cooperation between OECD and FAO, and between FAO's FI and ES departments. FI was present at the launch of the 2013 publication in Beijing with the participation of the FAO Director-General and the OECD Secretary-General.

23. The overall OECD-FAO model still treats fish and fishery products as a separate sector, but the results are integrated in the global projections. The aim is to arrive at a fully integrated and dynamic model. The results are important, not only for the fisheries sector overall, but also for the linkages and interdependencies with the other food sectors, in particular for feed and terrestrial animal production.

24. Since 2011, FAO has been collaborating with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the World Bank (WB) and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff for the revision of the IFPRI/World Fish Center (WFC) publication "*Fish to 2020*" (Delgado, *et al*.; 2003) [5] and of its modelling system. The aim was to obtain an updated global, forward-looking perspective until 2030, with a major focus on aquaculture. Work has been finalized in late 2013, with the release of the publication "*Fish to 2030: prospects for fisheries and aquaculture*".

25. The publication "*Fish to 2030*" represents both an update of the earlier "*Fish to 2020*" study as well as an important move forward in the integration of fisheries into quantitatively-based projections for the rest of the agricultural sector. The publication provides projections of global fish supply and demand into 2030 through the newly improved IFPRI's IMPACT model, which simulates outcomes of interactions across countries and regions. Projections are produced under different assumptions about factors considered as drivers of the global fish markets.

26. FAO has also started a project on the economic analysis and projection of future supply and demand for food with analyses up to 2030. This study will include new scenarios, providing more economic perspectives to the future development of food production. The project is divided into two parts; the main drivers of future demand and the main drivers of future supply.

27. In the field of statistics, the activity "Value of African Fisheries" is carried out by FI in collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea (*COREP*), the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea *(FCWC)* and the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) in the framework of the NEPAD-FAO Fisheries Programme (NFFP) funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The study focused on estimating, through data provided by national experts and extrapolations, the contribution of fisheries to national and agriculture gross domestic products (GDP), and the employment generated by the fishery sector. Results have been validated by Africa's main regional fisheries bodies (RFB) and Regional Economic Communities (REC) in mid-October 2013 and presentation of the results is planned to take place at the 2nd Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA II) at end of February 2014.

28. FAO is also collaborating with OECD, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and WB in organizing a joint session on Policy Coherence for Development to take place on 10–11 April 2014 in Paris. The session will cover, *inter alia*, issues with regard to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, aquaculture, governance and rebuilding efforts for depleted fisheries.

[5] Delgado, C.L., Wada, N., Rosegrant, M.W., Meijer, S. & Mahfuzuddin, A. 2003. *Fish to 2020. Supply and Demand in Changing Global Market*. 226 p. (available at http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pubs/books/fish2020/oc44.pdf

29. In early 2014, a joint workshop with the China Society of Fisheries and INFOYU has been scheduled in China to focus on the determination of relevant parameters for China to be included in the fish model for the OECD-FAO projections 2014–2023. Key Chinese government representatives, academics and industry representatives have been invited to take part in the workshop. Given China's prominent role in fishery production and trade, this cooperation will continue.

WORK BY FI IN POST-HARVEST LOSS REDUCTION

30. FI provides support to ongoing programmes and projects to mainstream fish loss reduction. This includes systematic assessments to arrive at a thorough understanding of the context of losses and identification of feasible and sustainable strategies. Some issues featured from these activities, such as the magnitude of quality and market related losses, the relationship between weak law enforcement and post-harvest losses, the gender dimensions in post-harvest fish losses dynamics, etc., are highlighted in *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (SOFIA) and the COFI:FT paper on small-scale fisheries[6].

31. To overcome a key trade barrier for small and medium scale fisheries units that supply smoked and dried fish products to domestic and export markets, an improved dual function fish processing technique, the FTT or Thiaroye Technique, has been designed. It builds on the strengths of the well-known Chorkor kiln and other existing ovens while addressing their weaknesses regarding the products' compliance to regulations on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The dissemination of this technique should be supported in the coming biennium.

32. Building on the output of the regional post-harvest fish loss assessment programme in sub-Saharan Africa (2006–2008), FI contributes to the FAO Global Initiative on Food Losses and Waste Reduction, especially on the current process of establishing a consensual definition of "loss" and "waste" and the development of a sound methodology for measuring losses and benchmarking the reduction interventions. Initiatives encompassing several food commodities are under way, starting in Africa and to be expanded to Asia (India, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam) and beyond, depending on funds to be mobilized through Save Food partnerships http://www.fao.org/save-food/en/.

FAO AND PROJECTS

33. With the decentralization of FAO, national and regional projects are now funded by the decentralized offices, whereas global and multi-regional projects are handled by FAO Headquarters. For regional and national projects, FAO Headquarters continues to be involved in the design as appropriate. However, funding and implementation depend on the priorities set by member countries in the region.

34. The majority of FAO projects are carried out through the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), wherein FAO provides technical assistance to its Members. Between seven and ten percent of FAO projects are funded by the Regular Programme budget. The remainder are funded by extra budgetary resources (Donor Funded Technical Cooperation), including, among others, Government Cooperative Programme (GCP), Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF), UN Joint Programme (UNJP), Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and other Trust Funds (TF).

35. Gender issues are receiving increased attention in FAO projects, both in dedicated activities and as an integrated part of a project. Gender has been included as a cross-cutting Strategic Objective in the new FAO Strategic Framework from 2014.

36. With the emphasis on decentralization within FAO, the network of regional and sub-regional fisheries officers has been strengthened considerably. This increases the potential impact of FAO's programmes and activities in the field and brings FAO physically closer to member country administrations and priorities. It also raises the need for improved communication between FAO Headquarters and FAO staff in regional, sub-regional and FAO country offices. This is particularly important for fisheries, considering the limited availability of FAO fisheries staff in any regional or

[6] Please see COFI:FT/XIV/2014/9 for information on small-scale fisheries.

sub-regional office and with post-harvest fisheries being only one of many important and relevant fisheries responsibilities. The growing emphasis on fish trade in the international arena and in national policies, has facilitated the work of FI on highlighting the importance of trade and markets and the many benefits derived therefrom.

37. In the FAO planning and priority setting process, the FAO regional conferences now have taken on an important role. As most conferences will concentrate on issues related to agriculture, it is important to recall that the setting of regional priorities, including for fisheries, could prove important for regional cooperation and project implementation, facilitating the effective use of scarce resources. The attempt to ensure inclusion of fisheries issues within regional priorities has met with some success but needs to be further strengthened in the future.

THE FISH INFONETWORK (FIN) AND GLOBEFISH[7]

38. The FIN is a regional service provider focusing on the fisheries and aquaculture post-harvest sector. In addition to dissemination of relevant information, the FIN undertakes project work, trade-related capacity-building, improving industry competitiveness in international markets and the organization of national, regional and international workshops and conferences. FAO is mandated to coordinate and strengthen the FIN members' capacity to deliver market information and technical services, with FAO providing technical assistance and support to joint activities.

39. These regional services originally started out as FAO projects, but have all developed into intergovernmental organizations with their own member countries, governing structures and financial arrangements. Although formally independent from FAO, there is close cooperation between FAO and FIN members, including joint organization of commodity conferences, technical projects, capacity building activities and in the production of trade and market related publications.

40. GLOBEFISH is an integral part of the FIN and performs a coordinating role in the network activities. GLOBEFISH is located in FI and is jointly financed by FAO and GLOBEFISH Partners, which include national government administrations and specialized agencies dealing with fish marketing and trade. GLOBEFISH is responsible for information dissemination and analysis on international fish marketing and trade, and produces a number of publications on trend analysis (GLOBEFISH Highlights), price information (European Fish Price Report), data time series (Commodity Updates) and market studies (GLOBEFISH Research Programme). GLOBEFISH interacts with Partners in a number of ways including through annual Partner meetings and through internships and participation in the visiting scientist programme in Rome. During 2012 and 2013, Partners reiterated the importance of focusing on market access in GLOBEFISH activities and welcomed the efforts to achieve a higher degree of integration of fisheries issues into the wider food agenda.

41. The activities of the FIN and GLOBEFISH provide a complementary platform for FAO to interact with value-chain stakeholders, in particular industry associations in developing countries. Over the years, the activities of FIN and GLOBEFISH have strived to adapt to changing client needs as well as to changes in the sector itself. FAO is grateful for the support provided to GLOBEFISH.

LEGAL AND ETHICS OFFICE (LEG)

42. The Development Law Branch (LEGN) of LEG is engaged in a number of issues of relevance to fish trade. LEGN supports the development of international instruments that entail market related measures to *inter alia* improve the sustainability of fisheries operations, and to address IUU fishing. LEGN furthermore provides technical assistance to FAO Members to facilitate the implementation of requirements deriving from international instruments in national legislation through national and regional legislative projects.

43. A number of these projects aim at the implementation of standards developed in the context of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and the

[7] www.globefish.org

Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), in particular the standards developed by the OIE in relation to aquatic animal health and those developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in relation to food safety. For example, LEGN is currently involved in projects in Suriname and in a number of countries in the Western Balkans that facilitate the implementation of international standards on aquatic animal health in national legislation. Through the activities of LEGN in the field of fish trade, FAO Members benefit from legal support in developing appropriate legal frameworks for sustainable fisheries and for ensuring market access in line with WTO Agreements, as well as other bilateral and multilateral agreements.

FAO COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION (UNSD)

44. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and FAO actively collaborate in sharing trade statistics, including in the work of the annual meeting of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics. In addition, FAO is also working in collaboration with UNSD on the revision of the Central Product Classification (CPC) and of the System of Environmental Economic Accounts (SEEA).

45. The CPC provides a framework for the international comparison of commodity statistics. In March 2013 the UN Statistical Commission (UNCSC) accepted the modifications proposed by FAO to improve the breakdown for fish and fishery products in CPC. The aim of the revision was to reflect the implemented revision of the HS classification (HS 2012) and to separate primary commodities by wild and farmed origin.

46. SEEA is the statistical framework providing internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications, accounting rules and standard tables for producing internationally comparable statistics on the sustainability of the use of natural resources in relation to economic activities, including fishery and aquaculture. The SEEA framework follows an accounting structure similar to the System of National Accounts (SNA).

47. In March 2013, UNSC adopted the SEEA Central Framework as the global standard to monitor sustainable use of natural resources. FAO has actively participated in the revision process to ensure overall concepts utilized in asset account of aquatic biological resources were developed in a coherent way with those established through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and other fishery and aquaculture related instruments. Land use classification of SEEA was also modified to incorporate the utilization of water bodies, including coastal marine waters. FAO is currently in the process of developing implementation guidelines of SEEA in the fishery and aquaculture context as well as on the use of SEEA case scenarios data to support sustainable management of fishery and aquaculture sectors. FAO is also planning to compile SEEA for fishery and aquaculture using the existing data to obtain globally comparable indicators of sustainability of aquatic biological resources use.

48. Another area of collaboration with UNSD is the "Global Strategy of Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics"[8], adopted by the UNSC in 2010. This strategy aims to enhance integration between agricultural and rural statistics (including fishery and aquaculture statistics), with national statistical systems. For fisheries statistics, these integrations are expected to provide a framework for improved knowledge of the sector, including socio-economic aspects and small-scale operations. To apply the global strategy to fisheries, FAO is promoting:

- separation of 'fishery and aquaculture' from 'agriculture' in the question of employment in population census;
- active utilization of aquaculture and capture fisheries modules in agriculture census; and
- enhanced use of administrative information (e.g. licenses), GPS and satellite imageries with the intention to collect frame survey information, specifically of small holders and operators, to be used in the design of an effective sampling scheme.

[8] More information is available at http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/indicadores/prpa/segundo_texto.pdf

FAO'S WORK ON CUSTOMS CODES FOR FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS AND WITH WCO

49. The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, commonly referred to as HS, is used as a basis for the collection of customs duties and international trade statistics by more than 200 countries. This classification has been developed, introduced and maintained by the WCO. Since its introduction and general adoption in 1988, the HS classification has undergone regular reviews with the last version, HS 2012, entering into force on 1 January 2012 for all Contracting Parties to the Harmonized System Convention.

50. The HS 2012 version reflects the FAO joint proposal to WCO for the revision of the codes related to agriculture, forestry and fishery products. The FAO modifications for HS codes of fish and fishery products have attempted to improve the quality of fish trade coverage through an improved specification for species and product forms. The HS versions prior to HS 2012 presented an insufficient coverage in the classification of fishery species originating in developing countries. This deficiency was also reported to FAO by several countries and in 2003, the twenty-fifth session of COFI instructed FAO to work towards an improvement of the HS classification for fish and fishery products. This request was re-emphasized by the ninth, tenth and eleventh sessions of COFI:FT.

51. In order to further improve the HS classification for better monitoring trade in fish and fishery products, FAO is continuing its cooperation with WCO for HS 2017, with a new proposal submitted to WCO in March 2012. Most of the proposal was considered as technically accepted by the Harmonized System Committee in September 2013 and will be examined by the WCO Council for final approval in June 2014. If adopted, the HS 2017 will be released in January 2017.

52. The proposal included amendments related to fish and fishery products for species and/or product forms that need to be monitored for food security purposes and/or for better management of resources, in particular for endangered species, including sharks, skates and rays. In developing the proposal, FAO also took into account the suggested amendments for HS 2017 received during the thirteenth session of FAO COFI-FT. However, not all these proposals could be included as they were either too detailed for the scope of the HS or were restricted by the lack of available codes.