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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE

Seventeenth Session

Vigo, Spain, 25–29 November 2019

GLOBAL THEMES AND WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Executive Summary

This document presents a short overview of work undertaken by FAO within the context of global programmes, especially the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Blue Growth, and with other international organisations and bodies, especially those within the United Nations (UN) family.

The majority of work in this context is carried out directly by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, often in cooperation with other FAO units, such as the Legal and Ethics Office, the Economic and Social Development Department and the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department.

Suggested action by the Sub-Committee

- Note the progress made with the FAO Blue Growth Initiative in the biennium;
- Recognize the efforts made in alignment of FAO work to the SDGs;
- Note the progress achieved with collaboration with other international organisations and bodies;
- Provide guidance on other international organisations, bodies or initiatives that FAO could benefit from in its work related to fish trade.

INTRODUCTION

1. Fisheries and aquaculture are truly global in nature and fish trade plays an important role in connecting the various stakeholders – producers, processors, policy makers, control agencies, importers, exporters and consumers. In this context, FAO continues its efforts to implement more integrated approaches in dealing with trade and resource management, coastal management, aquaculture, livelihoods, food security and nutrition, value chains and food systems.

2. The activities are increasingly linked to the objectives of Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs, in particular SDG14 (Life below Water), SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

3. In this global context, it is important that FAO works with other international organisations to maximise complementarities and minimise duplication and, as such, FAO continues to collaborate with many other UN agencies and international bodies working on issues of relevance to international fish trade, in particular in its capacity building and standard setting activities.

GLOBAL THEMES

COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ)

4. During the 10th Session of COFI:AQ (Trondheim, August 2019), Members underlined the importance of market access and the relevance of the work of FAO on post-harvest issues, especially reducing losses and waste, the importance of small-scale producers, and the positive contribution of aquaculture to food security and livelihoods; and highlighted the work of FAO on tracking market and trade data on fish and fishery products, suggesting to further expand its coverage to commodities of relevance to aquaculture.

5. COFI:AQ also recognized the need to provide relevant information on the nutritional value of diverse aquaculture products, guidelines on the monitoring of dietary intake, methods to improve value-chain efficiency, and enhance capacity to assess the quality of aquaculture products. Members requested FAO to continue and strengthen actions of technical support and capacity building involving the inclusion of women and youth in policies, and the provision of a better understanding of the complex relationships between nutrition, poverty, gender, youth, competition for scarce resources (water, land, coastal areas, etc.) and climate change.

6. In addition, COFI:AQ:

- recognized the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) as a useful self-assessment tool, which helps Members in developing relevant policy guidance to provide further support for aquaculture development and reach the SDGs. Possible modifications were suggested to the survey tool to facilitate information gathering and avoid duplication in the overall CCRF survey questions;
- welcomed and commended FAO on the finalization of the report on The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- agreed with the thematic modules proposed for the Sustainable Aquaculture Guideline (SAG).

7. The full Report of the Session is available as COFI:FT/XVII/2019/Inf.4.

The Blue Growth Initiative (BGI)

8. Across the world, interest in and the application of the blue economy and blue growth approaches is increasing as a means to address sustainable development of aquatic-based sectors (such as tourism, maritime transport, fisheries, etc.) while recovering ocean health and redefining humans' relationship with the ocean. Although approaches differ, in general they are inter-sectoral in nature and

based on the idea that coordination across sectors leads to an outcome greater than the sum of its parts. Blue Economy approaches also aim to generate benefits across the three pillars of sustainable development including environmental, economic and social benefits.

9. FAO recognizes a rising interest and awareness related to Blue Growth approaches, especially when they include value chains, and is working with several member countries to ensure that these approaches are inclusive of all stakeholders. Blue Growth projects often include small-scale fishers, women, youth and indigenous peoples so that everyone can benefit from transitioning to Blue Growth without risking the sustainability of the resources. FAO's Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) maintains some unique distinctions from other approaches and applications in that it focuses not just on oceans but also inland waters and even water scarce areas. Also, the BGI aims to foster sustainable and inclusive development and not to exclusively protect the environment, as is the case with many blue economy approaches. FAO's BGI also primarily deals with fisheries and aquaculture through a value chain lens while trying to find ways to synergize with other sectors including emerging blue sectors like tourism and maritime transport in a thoughtful and evidence-based way.

10. FAO's BGI has made extensive progress since its inception in 2014, at international, regional and national scales. At the international level, the BGI has articulated and refined its methodology for carrying out blue growth work by integrating existing FAO instruments. The Blue Growth approach integrates and capitalizes on such instruments as the ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture; value chain guidelines, the small-scale fisheries guidelines, RuralInvest for mobilizing financial resources to support communities' transition to more sustainable models and other tools for livelihood diversification. This integration often creates synergies between fishing sectors and growing tourism industries across the world, providing new decent work opportunities. Furthermore, FAO contributed significantly to the world's first major international meeting on the blue economy, Kenya's Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi in November 2018, by hosting and participating in various events related to aquaculture, mobilizing financial resources and blue fashion.

11. At regional level, The Blue Hope Technical Cooperation Programme initiated in 2018 in Turkey, Algeria and Tunisia, and it focuses on delivering sustainable growth through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), inclusive value chain methodologies and diversification of fishing livelihoods, particularly through pescatourism. In 2019, FAO's BGI launched the GEF-funded Coastal Fisheries Initiative in Cabo Verde, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, which aims to foster blue growth in these countries by enhancing fisheries management and value chains. Also in 2019 FAO, with the support of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States Secretariat, organized workshops in each ACP region focused on advancing blue growth through sustainable and inclusive value chain development, as well as supporting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Secretariat (IGAD) to host its first regional blue economy conference for IGAD member countries.

12. At a national level, the BGI supported: the implementation of Cabo Verde's Blue Charter and investment portfolio through support from the African Development Bank (beginning of 2017); Morocco's international benchmarking for their blue economy strategy (April 2018); Madagascar's development of its national blue economy strategy (May 2018); the development of multi-sectoral investment plans in Turkey, Tunisia and Algeria through the Blue Hope Initiative (October 2018); Kenya's International Blue Economy conference (November 2018); Bangladesh's blue economy dialogue, particularly in the context of its sustainable coastal and marine fisheries project (March 2019); among a number of other blue economy and blue growth related dialogues and meetings.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

13. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is built on 17 SDGs, which are global objectives that all members of the United Nations have agreed to pursue and implement. The SDGs are shaping the development agendas of countries, setting a new policy framework focused on ending all forms of poverty, reducing inequality and tackling climate change, with inclusive development at the heart of

all policies. There are 17 SDGs, with 169 targets and 232 related indicators that monitor progress in social, economic and environmental development. FAO is currently the custodian agency responsible for monitoring and reporting on four of the indicators related to SDG14, which aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".

14. SDG Indicator 14.4.1 measures the proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels. A fish stock of which abundance is at or greater than the level, that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is classified as biologically sustainable. In contrast, when abundance falls below the MSY level, the stock is considered biologically unsustainable. To calculate this proportion, a reference list of stocks needs to be established and status of each stock is assessed with agreed methodologies. In ideal circumstances, a stock assessment would need to be conducted to diagnose the current status of all stocks in the reference list. Stock assessment requires catch statistic data as well as fishing effort data, life history parameters of fish stocks and technical parameters of fishing vessels, which in many cases are not available. In addition to this high data demand, stock assessment requires numerical modelling skills. As a result, today only about 25 percent of the global catch come from numerically assessed stocks. How to assess the large number of unassessed stocks is a highly challenging task, but a task that is needed to significantly increase the volume of reported stocks. For the implementation of SDG Indicator 14.4.1, FAO has made a huge effort to maintain current methodologies for assessed stocks while developing new methods that are applicable to data-limited and capacity poor fisheries. FAO has invested a great deal of human and financial resources over the last decade in developing new methods in pursuit of increased coverage of its assessment and monitoring of global fish stock status. Although a universally applicable, reliable method has not appeared yet, cumulative progress and achievements have led to the stage that a potential method is emerging. FAO is now collaborating with external institutions to produce such a new method, which should be ready for test by 2020. In addition FAO is developing an e-learning course aimed at providing guidelines to stakeholders for the reporting of SDG14.4.1 and expected to be published during late 2019/early 2020.

15. Recently, FAO has designed and established an internationally recognized methodology for SDG Indicator 14.7.1, which monitors the economic contribution of marine resources to national economies through fisheries by calculating sustainable fisheries as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). The methodology is built on international standards, namely: GDP, the value added of fisheries and the biological sustainability of fish stocks. All of these inputs are utilized by international agencies, policymakers and public bodies, amongst others, for informing decision making and planning. An indicator to monitor the economic contribution of sustainable fisheries may provide a relevant picture of the importance of fisheries in national economies, ensuring a more balanced allocation of resources that may benefit the sector. Given the SDG global nature, SDG Indicator 14.7.1 was developed to be applicable to as many countries as possible, while keeping to a minimum any additional reporting requirements for countries by using internationally accepted and already available data for the calculation.

16. SDG Indicator 14.6.1 looks to measure the progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing based upon responses by Members to the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the CCRF and related international instruments (CCRF questionnaire). The indicator is comprised of five variables, each of which has been attributed a weighting[1] depending on its importance in eliminating IUU fishing, while taking into consideration areas of overlap between certain instruments.

[1] Adherence and implementation of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (10 percent weight); adherence and implementation of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (10 percent weight); development and implementation of a national plan of action to combat IUU fishing in line with the IPOA-IUU (30 percent weight); adherence and implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (30 percent weight); and implementation of Flag State Responsibilities in the context of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement and FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (20 percent weight).

The indicator looks to assess the level of implementation for each variable with regard to policy, legislation, institutional framework and operations and procedures. The indicator scores are available every two years, after each edition of the CCRF questionnaire

17. The SDG Indicator 14.b.1 – progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal, regulatory, policy and institutional framework – is assessed based on three questions on the implementation of the CCRF questionnaire, filled in by Members every two years. These questions are proxies for capturing efforts of promoting and facilitating access rights for small-scale fishers and they relate to: (1) the existence of laws, regulations, policies, plans or strategies that specifically target or address the small-scale fisheries sector; (2) any ongoing specific initiatives to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines); (3) the existence of mechanisms through which small-scale fishers and fish workers contribute to decision-making processes. Even if SDG14.b only relates to marine resources, the target and its indicator should equally guide action in relation to small-scale inland fisheries, which play a similar role in terms of food and nutrition security and poverty eradication. FAO is assisting its Members and other partners in better understanding and reporting in relation to SDG14.b and an e-learning course is available online in six languages.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES

Codex Alimentarius and World Health Organization (WHO)

18. FAO and WHO have been working together to provide scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius. During the intercessional period, key outputs include the recently published “Technical guidance for the development of the growing area aspects of Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation Programmes”, requested by the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products; the organization of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on the Safety and Quality of Water Used in Food Production and Processing, to provide advice on matters related to seawater use and water management for fisheries and aquaculture that will result in a FAO/WHO Joint Report to provide the basis for guiding the elaboration of appropriate Codex texts and to advise Member States, and; the organization of an Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning, requested by the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food, that will also result in an FAO/WHO Joint Report to provide the basis for guiding the elaboration of appropriate Codex texts and to advise Member States.

19. FAO and WHO are working closely with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in a global response to the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by addressing and coordinating global initiatives addressing AMR at the animal-human-ecosystems interface. Finally, FAO and WHO are also working the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the development of an Inter-Agency Global Ciguatera Strategy and the establishment of a global food safety early warning system for toxic harmful algal bloom events and marine toxins.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

20. The cooperation during the biennium between FAO and ILO has been continuous and productive. Representatives of the respective secretariats have participated in a number of meetings and dialogues both at head-quarters and in the field, and provided technical inputs and data in the development process of papers and guidelines.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

21. At the request of the 23rd Session of COFI, the Secretariats of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and FAO worked together to establish the Joint FAO/IMO ad hoc Working Group

on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing and Related Matters (JWG) in October 2000. Since its establishment, the JWG has been convened three times, with the last meeting of the JWG being held in Torremolinos, Spain, on 23–25 October 2019, which for the first time was expanded to officially include the ILO.

22. The JWG has addressed many common concerns with regards to flags of convenience, re-flagging of vessels engaged in IUU fishing, flag and port State responsibilities and other IUU fishing related matters. A recent outcome of discussions held in the JWG led to the extension of the IMO numbering scheme to all fishing vessels over 100 gross tonnes as well as fishing vessels operating in waters beyond national jurisdiction down to a size limit of 12 metres in length overall. This was an important development for the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated transport Vessels and Supply Vessels, the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and other related international instruments and initiatives.

23. FAO is assisting the IMO in promoting the Cape Town Agreement including through communications and support for the Ministerial Conference on Fishing Vessel Safety and IUU Fishing in Torremolinos, Spain, on 21–23 October 2019. Further joint activities with IMO on safety at sea matters are also ongoing, particularly following-up on issues from the Fifth International Fishing Industry Safety and Health Conference (iFish5) held in June 2018.

24. Collaborative work is ongoing on abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, which constitutes a significant part of marine plastic pollution. The IMO contributed to the drafting of the 2018 FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear and supports the implementation of these guidelines through regional capacity building workshops. In 2019, IMO and FAO established the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) Working Group 43 on "Sea-based sources of marine litter including fishing gear and other shipping related litter", with its first meeting held in October 2019.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

25. Although extinction of fully marine teleost fish from over-fishing is unrecorded in recent millennia, the increased risk of such events in aquatic systems is currently a media 'hot topic'. This risk is highlighted in the a recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report, that publishes figures sourced from IUCN Red List. The IUCN Red List relies on an assessment process to identify species needing targeted recovery effort.

26. IUCN has in the last few years twice proposed the use of the Red List Index (RLI) as a complementary indicator to FAO's fish stock status indicator for SDG14.4 (fishery target). The RLI provides an indication of the direction in trend of species risk classifications, by examining the change in Red List assessments through time. Today there are relatively few commercially exploited aquatic species for which IUCN has RLI data. However IUCN proposes to complete more Red List re-assessments of whole taxonomic clades of fish (exploited and non-exploited fish species), so as to be able to report more widely in the future.

27. Under the direction of COFI, FAO has formed an Ad Hoc Working Group with IUCN to work through these and a range of other issues, including in assisting in their assessments of species proposed for listing amendments on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices, and in reporting on progress of the Convention on Biodiversity commitments (Aichi Biodiversity Targets). In the case of CITES, FAO shares data and information with IUCN when they join with TRAFFIC[2] to advise on the status of species proposed for listing in CITES Appendices. To facilitate reporting on both target stocks and resilience of biodiversity more

[2] TRAFFIC is a non-governmental organization working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

generally, FAO provides technical assistance in describing sustainable use of fishery resources (Aichi Biodiversity Target 6) and implementation of spatial controls of fishing pressure (Aichi Biodiversity Target 11). The latter cooperation provides advice on fishery governance structures for implementation of the novel CBD definition and criteria for 'other effective area based conservation measures' (OECMS), an initiative to promotes area based biodiversity conservation under fishery oversight.

Interpol

28. FAO has initiated collaboration with Interpol, headquartered in Lyon, France. This has focused on the joint interest of FAO and Interpol in combatting food fraud across the world. In Europe, Interpol work with Europol, and together these organizations undertake joint operations fighting crime. Under Operation OPSON (which means food in ancient Greek), Europol and Interpol target fake and substandard food and beverages. A significant action in OPSON VII was a European-wide action targeting fraudulent practices in the tuna fish industry. The illicit practices included species substitution and fraudulently selling tuna intended for canning as fresh (this is against EU legislation). In total, more than 51 tonnes of tuna were seized.

29. In November 2018, at the launch of OPSON VIII at Interpol headquarters, FAO was invited to present its work and, more importantly, the work of Codex Alimentarius in combatting food fraud. There was significant interest from Interpol, Europol and other enforcement agencies in the work of FAO and Codex, with a commitment to strengthen the cooperation. As a result, Interpol has been invited, as a key resource, to an expert workshop on food fraud being held in Rome in November 2019. The workshop aims to agree on key elements that contribute to a definition of food fraud and to identify the elements, institutions and mechanisms that a country should put in place to effectively address food fraud.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

30. FAO is regularly collaborating with OECD on many activities of interest to both organizations, including the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook, fishery and aquaculture statistics and potentially on the Fisheries Support Estimate (FSE) database. The annual OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook publication covers medium-term perspectives on supply and demand for selected agricultural commodities. The 2019 issue provides an outlook for the years 2019–2028. Since 2011 this publication has included a separate chapter on fish that describes the main results of a fish model developed by FAO in collaboration and agreement with the OECD. This model has links to, but is still not fully integrated with, the Aglink-Cosimo model used for the agricultural 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.

31. Extensive work has been carried out between the two organizations in order to streamline the FAO and OECD collection of fisheries and aquaculture statistics with the aim to reduce as much as possible the burden on the countries and better harmonize disseminated statistics.

32. The FSE database measures and describes government support to fisheries in a consistent and transparent way across all OECD member countries and non-member economies with significant marine fisheries. It currently includes 37 countries. Due to its relevance, in order to expand its coverage, preliminary discussions have been held on how to make the database global, through co-operation with other agencies including FAO and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

33. FAO continues its collaboration with UNCTAD on trade-related issues involving fisheries, particularly on SDG14.

34. FAO, UNCTAD and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched an inter-agency Plan of Action (IAPoA)[3] on trade-related aspects of SDG14 to "accelerate the achievement of trade-related targets of SDG14 (namely targets 4, 6, 7 and b) through improved trade and trade-related policies that safeguard food security and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, living marine resources and livelihoods". This Plan of Action focuses on:

- promoting multilateral oceans and trade-related reforms through dialogue, cooperation and consensus-building;
- strengthening national and regional capacities on policy frameworks for sustainable seafood trade and the development of other oceans based sectors; and
- enhancing awareness, knowledge and capacity to implement effective governance and sustainable seafood trade and other oceans based sectors.

35. In addition, FAO continues to technically support UNCTAD's periodical meetings and events in Geneva on issues involving the trade of fish and fishery products.

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

36. During the last biennium, the ongoing cooperation between UNSD and FAO was further strengthened. Major areas of active collaboration included the sharing of the trade statistical collection and the revision of the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP).

37. COICOP is the international reference classification of household expenditure and is an integral part of the System of National Accounts. COICOP 2018 is the outcome of a revision process that started formally in 2015 and was finalized with its endorsement by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2018. FAO had a leading role in the revision and expansion of Division 01 (Food) in order to expand the coverage of agricultural and fisheries and aquaculture products. Work has been carried on both the core of the classification as well on setting an optional high detail structure for food products.

World Customs Organization (WCO)

38. The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) is used as a basis for the collection of customs duties and international trade statistics by more than 200 countries, with over 98 percent of the merchandise trade classified in terms of the HS. FAO has been collaborating with the WCO to improve the quality and coverage of fish trade through an improved specification for species and product forms in the HS. The present version (HS 2017), and the previous one (HS 2012), both reflect the modifications proposed by FAO.

39. The revision of the HS is done on a regular basis, with five year intervals. The process leading to an updated HS 2022 is nearly finalized and FAO did not submit any additional proposals for revision of the codes, mainly due to the issue of not having enough free codes to be used to add new species or product forms. FAO worked mainly with WCO to reply to technical questions received from the WCO Secretariat and to avoid the deletion of codes on fish and fishery products covering an amount of trade lower than the set threshold (USD 50 million for sub-headings).

[3] https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ditc-ted-14062019-oceans-JPoA-Pamphlet.pdf

World Trade Organization (WTO)

40. At the WTO Ministerial Conference (Buenos Aires, December 2017) countries agreed to continue to engage constructively in the fisheries subsidies negotiations with a view to adopting, in 2019, an agreement on comprehensive and effective disciplines that prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing. Countries have also recognized that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing country Members and least-developed country Members should be an integral part of the process.

41. In addition, SDG14.6 also calls for a prohibition of certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, with no introduction of new such subsidies by 2020. SDG14.6 also recognizes that an appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations.

42. During the current negotiation process on fisheries subsidies, FAO continues to provide technical support to WTO when requested. Since the last Session of COFI:FT, FAO experts were invited by WTO to participate in specific sessions involving the discussion of particular themes such as stock assessments, small-scale fishers, the role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and IUU fishing.