

COFI 29 HIGHLIGHTS:

WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2011

COFI 29 reconvened in plenary sessions throughout the day. During the morning and afternoon, delegates discussed progress made on measures against IUU fishing, including port state measures, flag state performance, market-related measures and a Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (GR). In the afternoon and evening, the plenary discussed fisheries and aquaculture in our changing climate and FAO's role for improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

PROGRESS MADE ON MEASURES AGAINST IUU FISHING

On Wednesday morning, the agenda item on measures against IUU fishing (COFI/2011/5 and INF.11, and the letter dated 18 January 2011 by COFI 28 Chair concerning the technical consultation on the GR) was introduced. The Secretariat highlighted: the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA); Article 21 of the PSMA addressing requirements for developing states, including an *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms; developing international guidelines on criteria for assessing the flag state performance; market state measures; and the GR.

During discussions, many countries highlighted the importance of port state measures and urged those members who had not done so to ratify the PSMA. NEW ZEALAND said IUU fishing is a governance issue. CANADA, with CHILE and ECUADOR, called for strengthening flag state control. The EU emphasized the need to define flag state performance criteria.

NORWAY suggested closer collaboration between FAO and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on information sharing, criminal investigation techniques and prosecution assistance. COLOMBIA said qualified observers and satellite monitoring to combat IUU fishing are important. CHINA, INDIA, IUCN and PEW supported the use of unique vessel identifiers.

IRAN said RFMO measures to manage IUU fishing should be transparent and not eliminate rights of one state while advantaging others. VENEZUELA said FAO should be the coordinating body for technical consultations and provision of adequate resources. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored tackling IUU fishing carried out under flags of convenience and called for a binding document on flag state measures.

Mozambique, for the AFRICAN GROUP, drew attention to limited capacity to deter IUU fishing. He proposed that COFI recommends that the FAO Secretariat support the swift implementation of the PSMA, and the establishment of a task

force to draft terms of reference (TORs) for the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms. With TONGA and BRAZIL, the AFRICAN GROUP called for operationalizing Article 21 prior to entry into force of the PSMA, including the *ad hoc* working group on funding mechanisms.

The US supported the compilation of existing training activities by FAO and RFMOs and, with CANADA and AUSTRALIA, preparation of TORs for the *ad hoc* working group. ARGENTINA opposed establishment of the *ad hoc* working group unless it is independent from the implementation of the PSMA. The EU said the TORs for the *ad hoc* working group should be approved at or before COFI 30.

NORWAY, with JAPAN, MEXICO, THAILAND and GHANA, stressed the need to assist developing countries to become parties to, and implement the PSMA. AUSTRALIA and NAURU supported capacity building, especially for small island developing states (SIDS). VIET NAM suggested training programmes for port inspectors.

MALAYSIA noted that his country had not yet signed the PSMA due to lack of implementation capacity. BANGLADESH said the effect of stringent measures on poor and marginal communities should be accounted for prior to making IUU fishing measures mandatory for developing countries.

On market state measures, Brazil, for GRULAC, MAURITIUS, OMAN and INDIA noted that they should not constitute a non-tariff barrier to trade. REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the need to harmonize them.

ANGOLA, ALGERIA, CHILE and MAURITIUS said that FAO should manage and administer the GR. CHINA noted that the GR should be voluntary and, with INDIA, said that the GR should be confined to vessels operating in the high seas. ECUADOR, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, said that it should be gradually implemented. JAPAN expressed concerns over the cost implications of maintaining the GR and proposed that RFMOs maintain it until FAO is able to procure funding to do so. ICELAND, AUSTRALIA and the US said the GR should be cost effective.

BRAZIL, TANZANIA and URUGUAY said developing countries may require assistance and capacity building to implement the GR. TURKEY called for limiting the GR to vessels over 24 feet and VIET NAM said it should not apply to artisanal fisheries. COSTA RICA, with PANAMA, noted regional agreements on fisheries records and vessel control in Central America.

The UN highlighted recommendations of the Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement held in May 2010, which, *inter alia*, encourage countries to ratify the PSMA and develop guidelines on flag state performance and

records. A number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations highlighted their efforts to address IUU fishing and called for ratification and entry into force of the PSMA.

The Secretariat highlighted issues raised, including: port state measures as a potent and cost effective tool for combating IUU fishing; capacity development and support required for ratifying and implementing the PSMA; support to commence work on the implementation of Article 21; support for convening the technical consultation on flag state performance; and ensuring that market state measures do not become barriers to trade and the need for capacity development in this area.

On the GR, the Secretariat highlighted: the recognition of the GR as an essential tool and wide endorsement of the recommendations of the technical consultation; that the GR should be voluntary and implemented with a phased approach; the need for capacity building; securing funding through the FAO regular programme and supplemented by extra-budgetary funds.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

In the afternoon, this agenda item (COFI/2011/6) was introduced and the Secretariat presented activities on fisheries and climate change in 2009-2010 work programme, *inter alia*, creation of the Global Partnership on Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PaCFA) and a proposed five-year strategy for fisheries, aquaculture and climate change. The Secretariat also presented recommendations to COFI, including: increasing resilience of aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture production systems and communities; understanding emission and mitigation potentials of fisheries; and mainstreaming of fisheries into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

Azerbaijan, for the REGIONAL COMMISSION ON FISHERIES FOR CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS, and BELIZE requested support for regional fisheries programmes. ALGERIA encouraged the development of partnerships focusing on the implementation of regional action plans. INDONESIA emphasized capacity building for adaptive management strategies for fisheries and aquaculture. CANADA proposed that FAO attempt to facilitate fisheries sector access to funds pledged under the outcome on long-term finance at the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun.

OMAN suggested a digital programme for information exchange on climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture. MOROCCO, with ALGERIA, stressed increasing national capacities to understand climate change related impacts on fisheries. The EU noted the need to study environmental and anthropogenic factors affecting aquatic species. ZAMBIA underscored global and regional early warning systems. The US said states and RFMOs should reduce other stressors on fisheries including IUU fishing and bycatch.

GAMBIA lamented the marginal role of fisheries in climate change negotiations. AFGHANISTAN called for ensuring coherence and cohesion of FAO work on climate change with other organizations.

FAO'S ROLE FOR IMPROVED INTEGRATION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In the evening, the Secretariat introduced this item (COFI/2011/7 and INF.12). The Secretariat highlighted that while fisheries and aquaculture have negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems, many other sectors contribute more heavily to degradation.

COFI was invited to endorse the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards as adopted by the Technical Consultation to Develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards, held from 6-10 December 2010 in Rome, Italy.

Many parties welcomed efforts on integration and called for adoption of the guidelines on bycatch and discards. NORWAY said FAO should be the primary source of fisheries relevant information and establish closer cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and relevant UN agencies. He said listing of species under CITES should only occur when management plans have failed.

COLOMBIA said artisanal and small-scale fisheries should be conserved. ANGOLA highlighted the management of statistical data, particularly for developing countries. INDONESIA requested FAO to develop national capacities to control invasive alien species, eutrophication, protect critical habitats and establish marine protected areas.

COLOMBIA, with the FAROE ISLANDS, underscored the need to counter negative perceptions about the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on conservation. COSTA RICA, for a number of Central American countries, highlighted transparent and participatory approaches to achieving innovative management mechanisms. The US supported strengthening the use of marine protected areas and highlighted the impact of marine debris.

JAPAN highlighted fisheries co-management systems. Regarding implementation of the Deep-sea Guidelines, CANADA stressed improvement of criteria for vulnerable species identification and technical guidelines for conducting assessments.

MEXICO suggested coordinating efforts of multilateral organizations on aquatic resources conservation and use. He said that bycatch guidelines should not impose trade barriers. REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for support to countries for phased implementation of the bycatch guidelines. The EU requested a study to establish the impact of fishing on marine species occupying low trophic levels.

UNEP noted its collaboration with FAO on reconciling conflicting uses of aquatic resources. The CBD highlighted work being undertaken on ecologically or biologically significant areas, and, with the NORTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION, called for greater collaboration with FAO.

Numerous NGOs welcomed the guidelines on bycatch and discards, and further collaboration between FAO and other concerned bodies, with some calling for greater involvement in ocean noise reduction and eliminating harmful fishing practices.

The Secretariat summarized the discussions and noted that they will be recorded in the Committee report.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates continued their deliberations well into the evening on Wednesday, with issues like the IUU fishing and the global record receiving a lot of attention in the morning. Welcoming the international guidelines on by-catch management and reduction of discards, one delegate said "of course everything is relevant but you have to realize that COFI 29 is the first opportunity since the technical consultations late last year to really exchange our views on some of these hot issues." "How far parties adhere to these guidelines will be their ultimate test," said another. Noting the scant attention given to the implications of these measures for small-scale fishers, one observer said "let's hear what the discussions on artisanal fisheries will bring tomorrow."