



DRAFT REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES - FOR ADOPTION

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Thirty-fourth Session from 1 to 5 February 2021. The Session was convened virtually, on an exceptional basis, in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the associated public health concerns and constraints. This followed consultations by the Bureau and endorsement by the Committee Members on the alternative arrangements for the holding of the Session virtually.
2. Prior to beginning its deliberation, the Committee confirmed that the virtual 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 virtual meeting for the purposes of this Session. The Committee also agreed to the application of any special procedures or amended working modalities as may be required for the efficient conduct of the Session.
3. The Session was attended by 96 Members of the Committee, by observers from 11 other FAO Member Nations, the Holy See and Palestine, and one Associate Member of FAO, by representatives from nine specialized agencies of the United Nations and by observers from 39 intergovernmental organizations and 32 international non-governmental organizations. A list of delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.
4. Mr Sidi Mouctar Dicko, Chairperson, Thirty-fourth Session of COFI, opened the Session and welcomed the participants.
5. Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General of FAO inaugurated the meeting and delivered a statement, as attached as Appendix D.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

6. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session with an addition of Agenda item 17.2, "Progress report on the World Fisheries University Joint Pilot Partnership Programme and next steps", for information. The Agenda adopted is attached as Appendix A to this Report. The list of documents that were placed before the Committee is attached as Appendix C.
7. The Committee expressed disappointment with regards to the late circulation of the session documents and the availability of the documents in all official languages.

DESIGNATION OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE

8. The following Members were elected to the Drafting Committee: Argentina, Cabo Verde, China, Indonesia, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sudan and United States of America. New Zealand chaired the Drafting Committee.

STATUS, TRENDS, EMERGING ISSUES AND INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO ENSURE RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE: BUILDING BACK BETTER

The Committee:

9. Highlighted and emphasized the vital role of FAO regarding fisheries and aquaculture, and stressed the need to enhance the emphasis and visibility of fisheries and aquaculture within the Organization.
10. Commended FAO for the 2020 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication, including the addendum on the impacts of COVID-19, and reiterated that SOFIA serves as the benchmark publication for global status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture.
11. Requested FAO to consider, in future SOFIA reports, additional information and methodological improvements to better reflect the regional 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. Furthermore, the Committee also recommended a more robust and participatory peer review process, and to share the report with Members well in advance of publishing.
12. Called on FAO to engage more actively in international processes, offering its fisheries management and aquaculture expertise, including through the development of technical guidance, to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine conservation, and sustainable and inclusive ocean economies.
13. Reiterated the importance of operational and harmonized national data collection systems to support decision-making processes.
14. Highlighted the anticipated benefits of implementing innovative solutions and collaboration through, for example, the FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative.
15. While welcoming the progress made in some regions, the Committee expressed concern for the continued deterioration of the status of marine fish stocks at global level, and emphasized the need to improve fisheries management based on the ecosystem approach, including through building capacities and strengthening the link between decision-making on fisheries management and the best available science.
16. Called on FAO and COFI Members, consistent with the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, to bring fisheries and aquaculture fully into the discussions during the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit.
17. Highlighted the importance of reaching an outcome in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the need to refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations.

18. Underscored the importance of sustainable aquaculture in meeting future food demand and in achieving sustainable food systems, and stressed the contribution of small-scale and artisanal fishers and fish farmers in this regard.
19. Recognized the progress made in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) since its adoption, whilst noting that further improvements are needed.
20. Called on FAO to continue supporting Members to overcome challenges in implementing the Code, especially in view of the added complexities posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
21. Called on FAO to cooperate with relevant regional and international organizations working in areas related to fisheries and aquaculture for increased coordination, consistency and harmonization of information requests to limit the reporting burden placed upon Members.
22. Called on FAO to continue to preserve the core purpose of the questionnaire in monitoring the implementation of the Code, while noting that it can also be used to support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator reporting.
23. Endorsed the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture to renew its commitment to the Code and refocus priorities to secure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector.

**DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE, TRONDHEIM, NORWAY
23–27 AUGUST 2019**

The Committee:

24. Endorsed the report of the last session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ).
25. Recommended further development of the Global Integrated Sustainable Aquaculture Programme (GISAP), including an implementation plan, considering middle-income countries.
26. Noting the fast growing aquaculture sector, called on FAO and its Members for increased recognition and support to the development of sustainable aquaculture, including small-scale aquaculture.
27. Encouraged continued collaboration between FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The Committee supported the need for a FAO Action Plan on AMR for 2021–2025, based on robust scientific evidence and risk analysis, including training and the capacity building needs of Members.
28. Encouraged the development of a multi-donor assisted long-term component of GISAP on aquaculture biosecurity including collaboration with OIE.
29. Welcomed the publication of the report on The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

30. Recommended the further development of a draft Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and continuation of the development of a global information system, including a registry of farmed types.
31. Welcomed the holding of the Global Conference on Aquaculture Millennium+20 in Shanghai, China (22–27 September 2021) and encouraged all Members to participate in this Conference.
32. Warmly welcomed the kind invitation of the Government of Mexico to host the Eleventh Session of the COFI:AQ in Mérida, Mexico (15–18 November 2021).
33. Welcomed the further development of the voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture in 2021 as a tool towards further development of national policies for the aquaculture sector, including through the organization of regional consultations towards their development. In that context, the Committee requested FAO to consider guidance for concrete actions for the sector – according to national contexts, capacities and priorities – on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE, VIGO, SPAIN, 25–29 NOVEMBER 2019

The Committee:

34. Endorsed the report of the last Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT).
35. Recalled the crucial function of COFI:FT as the global forum solely dedicated to the discussion of technical and economic aspects of international trade in fisheries and aquaculture products.
36. Underlined the importance of rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable international trade of fisheries and aquaculture products, through cooperation in relevant regional and multilateral fora. Any associated trade and technical measures should be transparent, based on scientific evidence and must not create unnecessary barriers to trade or undermine conservation measures.
37. Reiterated the importance of having small-scale actors effectively participating in international trade, including by encouraging more opportunities and market access for small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.
38. Emphasized the importance of accurate data to support decision-making and the relevant function of FAO in collecting, analysing and disseminating fisheries and aquaculture statistics.
39. Called on FAO to continue the work to develop fisheries and aquaculture-specific, voluntary, non-binding practical guidance on social responsibility in the fisheries value chains, based on existing international instruments and guidelines, in cooperation with relevant specialized agencies and stakeholders.
40. Supported the continuation of trade-related fisheries and aquaculture services work using a value chain perspective.

41. Recognized the positive collaboration between FAO, WTO and other relevant international organizations, focusing on core elements in trade of fisheries and aquaculture products.
42. Requested FAO to continue providing technical support in the framework of negotiations on fisheries subsidies carried out in the WTO.
43. Requested FAO to continue supporting Members in the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
44. Expressed strong support for FAO's scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), reiterating the need for appropriate funding, including through multi-year voluntary contributions, as well as for continued collaboration with the OIE.
45. Called for FAO to continue cooperating with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including the provision of scientific and technical advice on proposals and issues relating to the listing and implementation of such listing of commercially exploited aquatic species.

CONTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA

The Committee:

46. Underlined the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to food security and nutrition, and towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including synergies and interlinkages with other SDGs beyond and within SDG 14.
47. Requested FAO to continue to assist Members in strengthening statistical capacity and delivery of data, especially in data-poor situations, as well as in integrating innovative technologies.
48. Noted that selected information submitted through the FAO Questionnaire for Monitoring the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was used for reporting on SDG indicators 14.6.1 and 14.b.1, subject to validation by Members.
49. Noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified data scarcity problems, jeopardizing timely policy responses.
50. Highlighted that Members would require additional human and financial resources to strengthen independent data collection, monitoring and reporting, and welcomed the establishment of the FAO Multi-Donor Umbrella Programme to fill capacity gaps in national statistical systems.
51. Noted the importance of science and evidence-based measures in the sustainable management of all fish stocks.
52. Stressed the importance of increasing availability, affordability and access to consumers of safe, healthy and sustainable aquatic food products throughout the value chain, and the role of small-scale and artisanal producers in this regard. At the same time, it recalled that all trade measures must be consistent with WTO rules.

53. Emphasized that according to WHO, the international trade of animals and animal products is not contributing to the spread of COVID-19. There is currently no scientifically based evidence that humans can be infected with COVID-19 through food, including fish and fish products, or the packaging in which they are stored. In this regard, Members were encouraged to refrain from imposing restrictive measures, and the need to avoid unnecessary barriers to trade was emphasized.

54. Welcomed the Draft Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition and appreciated its comprehensive consultative development process. The Committee emphasized the need to strengthen the critical role of aquatic foods in national plans and action for sustainable food systems, food security and nutrition.

55. Emphasized the need to improve data and scientific evidence on the role of aquatic products in healthy diets to support policy and action, including advocacy. The Committee requested FAO's support in capacity development, and stressed the need to strengthen gender equality, and gender and youth empowerment issues within the strategy.

56. Noted the importance of sustainable and inclusive ocean economies, and the further implementation of the FAO Blue Growth Initiative, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It took note and requested additional information on the proposal for a voluntary Blue Ports Network for the development of coastal areas in collaboration with Members and relevant organizations.

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The Committee:

57. Reaffirmed the fundamental role of marine and inland small-scale and artisanal fisheries for achieving the SDGs and, in particular, SDG 14.b to eradicate hunger and poverty; achieve food security and improve nutrition; secure sustainable food systems, sustainable resource utilization and sustainable livelihoods; and reiterated the importance of the Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines as a tool for that purpose.

58. Recognized that COVID-19 has had a particularly negative impact on small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, and stressed the need to provide the appropriate support and foster resilience for the sustainable development of this sector.

59. Commended FAO on progress of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme and related activities. It reiterated the importance of continuing FAO's efforts and encouraged seeking synergies and interlinkages with global, regional and national processes and relevant organizations.

60. Requested increased work in relation to support for small-scale and artisanal fisheries with: i) better access to markets; ii) fair access to fishing rights, considering potential impacts of competing sectors and activities; iii) improved legal frameworks; iv) strengthened small-scale and artisanal fisheries organizations; v) improved gender equality and gender and youth empowerment; vi) use of information and communication technology; and vii) reduction of food loss and waste.

61. Appreciated the efforts to improve data collection and analysis, and affirmed the usefulness of the Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) study to better understand the challenges and the opportunities facing small-scale and artisanal fisheries and improve related livelihoods through better policies and participation of stakeholders.
62. Requested FAO to intensify support to Members by building on the IHH study, using its findings and conducting further analyses, and to develop capacity on small-scale and artisanal fisheries' data and information, in particular at the national and regional level.
63. Reiterated its support for the Global Strategic Framework in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines and for FAO to further develop the knowledge-sharing platform and monitoring system for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
64. Expressed its commitment to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) in 2022, welcomed the proposed planning roadmap and invited countries and partners to be part of the activities. It emphasized the opportunity to focus attention on the role of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in poverty eradication, ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. The Committee also emphasized the need for IYAFA to increase awareness and understanding of this sector for the social and economic development of coastal communities and the provision of food of high nutritional value, sustainable use of natural resources, and COVID-19 response and recovery. IYAFA will also create a positive narrative through promoting partnerships, effective participation of small-scale and artisanal producers and exchange best practices, technical assistance and capacity building, taking into account the diverse nature of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.
65. Recommended promoting the importance of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in relevant events, such as the UN Ocean Conference, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the UN Food Systems Summit and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, among others, such as Our Ocean Conference and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021, and encouraged collaboration with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Family Farming.

COMBATTING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

The Committee:

66. Welcomed the progress that Members have made in fulfilling their flag, port, coastal and market state responsibilities, but stressed that further efforts are needed to address the challenges faced in combatting IUU fishing.
67. Welcomed the increase in the number of Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and the growing global commitment for its effective implementation, and encouraged further adherence to the Agreement.
68. Expressed appreciation for the technical assistance provided by FAO to developing states and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to effectively implement the PSMA and complementary international instruments and regional mechanisms, as appropriate, to combat IUU fishing through the Global PSMA Capacity Development Programme and encouraged FAO to continue reinforcing the Programme.

69. Voiced support for the outcomes of the Second Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA, Santiago, Chile (3–7 June 2019), noting the role of FAO as Secretariat to the Agreement, and welcomed the convening of the Third Meeting of the Parties (Review) to be hosted by the European Union from 31 May to 4 June 2021, and encouraged Members to attend, as appropriate, and Parties to respond to the questionnaire which aims to monitor the implementation of the Agreement.

70. Reiterated the key role of information exchange in combatting IUU fishing and welcomed the continuation of the work on the development of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES) by FAO.

71. Recognized the role that the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels, and Supply Vessels plays in the implementation of the PSMA and other international instruments and initiatives, and called for the further development of the Global Record and increased submission of information by Members on their fleets, including periodic updates, as required.

72. Expressed concern on the risks of inadequately regulated, controlled and monitored transshipment in relation to IUU fishing, and welcomed FAO's in-depth global study on transshipment.

73. Called upon FAO to proceed with developing draft voluntary guidelines for the regulation, monitoring and control of transshipment, and to convene an expert consultation to review the draft, followed by a member-led negotiation process through the convening of a technical consultation, with a view to forwarding these voluntary guidelines for COFI's endorsement at its Thirty-fifth Session.

74. Noted that there are different types of transshipment operations, not all of which have negative impacts on the sustainability of fisheries, and that consideration should be made for regional specificities of transshipment operations. Furthermore, it emphasized that the development of the draft voluntary guidelines for the regulation, monitoring and control of transshipment should strengthen existing regional mechanisms and practices. Meanwhile Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) should not delay actions in this regard.

75. Commended FAO for the work in developing the FAO Technical Guidelines on Methodologies and Indicators for the Estimation of the Magnitude and Impact of IUU fishing, and encouraged their use. The Committee called for FAO to keep progressing on the development of these technical guidelines.

76. Recognized the important role that FAO – the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Joint Working Group (JWG) on IUU Fishing and Related Matters, including on measures to attain safe, healthy and fair working conditions and improve safety at sea, lays in engaging multiple agencies and stakeholders, and supported the JWG's recommendation to review the terms of reference and develop rules of procedure for the JWG in cooperation with Members through COFI Bureau. The Committee called on FAO to facilitate discussions with the Secretariats of ILO and IMO, with a view to presenting them in a timely manner at COFI 35 and the relevant IMO and ILO governing bodies for adoption, and encouraged FAO to develop a process for COFI to consider the recommendations of the JWG.

77. Reiterated the key role that RFMOs and Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs) play in combatting IUU fishing and expressed appreciation for the actions undertaken to strengthen conservation and fisheries management measures, and encouraged RFMOs to increase cooperation to continue to strengthen these measures.
78. Reiterated the importance of **traceability schemes to combat IUU fishing**, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes (VGCDS) and encouraged information exchange on catch documentation.
79. Considered the latest developments on the negotiations related to the regulation of fisheries subsidies at the WTO and encouraged FAO to continue providing technical advice to the process.
80. Encouraged further FAO efforts to support Member's achievement of SDG 14.6 through the promotion of FAO related instruments and National Plans of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU), where appropriate.
81. Highlighted the importance of technological innovations to strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing operations.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES RELATED TO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

The Committee:

82. Noted with concern that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture, including RFMOs and RFABs.
83. Noted further that countries are facing difficulties in participating in certain RFMOs' meetings that have been organized virtually.
84. Expressed concern that the Part VII Assistance Fund of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) remains underfunded, and encouraged Members to make additional contributions.
85. Commended FAO on its work on achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches with relevant global and regional organizations, bodies and initiatives, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), CITES, WTO and IUCN, including the support to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) related work on oceans and fisheries, the UN Ocean Conference, UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and requested FAO to continue strengthening such work.
86. Commended the regular participation of FAO in the process of deliberation on an instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and noted that the outcome of the negotiations of this instrument may have implications for the implementation of fisheries instruments and the role of fisheries institutions. The Committee, therefore, requested FAO, within its mandate, to continue providing technical advice and relevant information, including on the objectives and implementation of existing fisheries instruments, noting that this process and its result should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks, as well as relevant global,

regional and sectoral bodies, as indicated in UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/72/249 para.7).

87. Called on Members to ensure the presence of fisheries and aquaculture experts within their delegations at relevant international fora, both directly or indirectly related to fisheries and aquaculture.

88. Underscored the central role of RFMOs and RFABs, within their sphere of competence, in the implementation of international fisheries instruments, such as those aimed at combatting IUU fishing.

89. Highlighted that RFMOs and RFABs play a key role in supporting and strengthening fisheries science, fisheries management and monitoring, control and surveillance, at both national and regional level.

90. Called upon FAO to further increase its support to marine and inland RFMOs and RFABs, including those bodies with a mandate on aquaculture, particularly in the strategic reorientation of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), and provide technical assistance to the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fisheries Organization (RAAFO).

91. Reiterated its appreciation of the role of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN) in supporting RFMOs and RFABs, and stressed that regional fishery bodies should cooperate to ensure common approaches on a number of cross-cutting issues.

92. Emphasized the importance of safety at sea and working conditions in the fisheries sector and welcomed the close cooperation between FAO and ILO and IMO, including through the Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters. Members requested FAO to further strengthen international cooperation on occupational health and safety issues in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and to promote decent work for fishers and fish workers.

93. Noted the developments in Latin America and the Caribbean of sport fisheries to generate new opportunities for small-scale and artisanal fisheries, and highlighted the importance for FAO to continue providing follow-up and support to work on this topic.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER ENVIRONMENT-RELATED MATTERS

The Committee:

94. Commended the work of FAO on climate change in fisheries and aquaculture, and noted the progress made in supporting countries' adaptation resilience and mitigation measures, underscoring the climate vulnerability of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture-dependent communities.

95. Emphasized the relevance of cooperation between FAO and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and acknowledged FAO's role in the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogues.

96. Requested FAO to enhance technical guidance on mainstreaming climate adaptation and mitigation in fisheries management and aquaculture development, encouraged Members to support the development of technical guidelines, and welcomed the offer of the Government of Canada in this regard.
97. Recognized the climate change mitigation potential of fisheries and aquaculture and acknowledged the need to support the transition towards more carbon-efficient practices.
98. Called on FAO to continue assisting Members, subject to their request, on the implementation and updating of National Determined Contributions (NDCs) in accordance with the Paris Agreement and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and encouraged all Members to ensure the fisheries and aquaculture sector is included in these instruments, as appropriate.
99. Reiterated its concern over the potential possible negative effects of marine plastic litter (MPL), anthropogenic underwater noise, harmful algal blooms and invasive species, and encouraged FAO to continue supporting Members with evidence and science-based approaches.
100. In relation to abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), the Committee encouraged FAO to continue promoting the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) and its provision of capacity development at regional and national levels.
101. Welcomed efforts to prevent and reduce MPL through the GloLitter Partnerships project and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, and encouraged FAO to continue its collaboration with Members, IMO and other UN agencies, RFMOs, the private sector, civil society and relevant international organizations.
102. Recognized the increased science-based knowledge on underwater anthropogenic noise and encouraged FAO to assess its possible impacts, including its socio-economic consequences, on marine resources in collaboration with relevant international organizations such as IMO.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO STRATEGY ON BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING ACROSS FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

The Committee:

103. Recognized the important role of biodiversity in food production and the entire food chain, sustainable livelihoods and the provision of ecosystem services, and recognized the growing importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in light of increasing threats, pressures and shocks.
104. Welcomed the Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (2021–2023), noting that revisions will be needed to incorporate new global goals and targets for biodiversity, and address concerns over actions included in geographical indications and market-oriented biosecurity.
105. Appreciated FAO for its active participation in the process to establish a new global mainstreaming biodiversity framework (2021–2030) that will be adopted at the

CBD COP 15, and highlighted the concern that the ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture was not recognized in the targets and indicators for the framework.

106. Noted the importance of considering multiple effective time and area based management tools, such as protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures (OECMs) for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

107. Noted the relevance of OECMs to achieving a number of the SDGs and global biodiversity targets, and requested that FAO produce and disseminate practical guidelines to support Members in their identification and implementation.

108. Requested that FAO continue to work with CITES and related fora, to help ensure that decisions made in these fora and their implementation are based on the best scientific information available and relevant technical information.

109. Commended FAO for the publication of the Guidelines to Prevent and Reduce Bycatch of Marine Mammals in Capture Fisheries.

110. Encouraged FAO to continue to actively engage with relevant international organizations and processes, and to highlight the important and positive contribution of sustainable use to biodiversity conservation.

111. Noted the important role that RFABs, RFMOs and other regional initiatives play in mainstreaming biodiversity in the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, and requested FAO to strengthen its support to them in this arena.

ENHANCING COFI DISCUSSION ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: PROPOSAL FOR A NEW COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The Committee:

112. Noted the outcomes of the consultation process developed during the intersessional period between COFI 33 and COFI 34.

113. Recalled the importance of COFI's mandate as the global intergovernmental forum where major international fisheries and aquaculture issues and recommendations are discussed. The Committee also acknowledged the importance of having technical discussions on fisheries management before this theme is presented at COFI.

114. Agreed to continue a transparent and inclusive consultation process on the proposal of the establishment of a new sub-committee on fisheries management, under the leadership of the Chairperson of COFI, and looked forward to a proposal being submitted at COFI 35.

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

The Committee:

115. Considered FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the current FAO Strategic Framework and appreciated the results achieved.

116. Welcomed the development of a new FAO Strategic Framework (2022–31), and called upon FAO to fully include fisheries and aquaculture under the four new Aspirations of Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment and Better Life.

117. Encouraged FAO to also reflect on the importance of SDG 14 in the new Strategic Framework and the significant role of FAO in achieving this goal, as part of the indivisible 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

118. Welcomed the proposed Blue Transformation Programme under the new FAO Strategic Framework and looked forward to additional information.

119. Endorsed the identified fisheries and aquaculture priority areas of work for the biennium 2020–2021, and looked forward to considering them in the new FAO planning cycle, noting the importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for livelihood improvement, poverty alleviation, food security, nutrition and human health, and its interlinkages with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, among others, and the importance of an integrated approach that balances trade-offs.

120. Recommended the relevant FAO Governing Bodies duly consider integrating actions identified in the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, as well as additional actions concerning post COVID-19 response and recovery, as priority areas, while examining the draft strategic framework and the Medium Term Plan, and to improve the visibility of the sector within FAO.

121. Reaffirmed the importance of FAO's role in collecting, analysing and disseminating statistics on fisheries and aquaculture, including gender disaggregated data when possible, and requested FAO to inform Members on additional needs to improve data collection systems, in particular for small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

122. Encouraged FAO to continue to strengthen its collaboration with relevant international organizations, RFBs and RFMOs, to advocate the positive contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to sustainable development, and avoid the duplication of efforts.

123. Urged FAO, in collaboration with its partners to promote the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in relevant events and initiatives such as: UN Ocean Conference, UN Food Systems Summit, UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, UN Decade of Family Farming, UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, Our Ocean Conference and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, and encouraged FAO and its Members to highlight the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, in that regard, and in particular in the framework of the activities and celebrations of the IYAF 2022.

124. Urged FAO to promote good experiences and practices, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, in order to enhance food security and nutrition.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM FOR DIGITAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

125. Expressed its support for the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, and requested FAO to ensure that the activities of the International Platform include issues related to digital technology applications on fisheries and aquaculture, and create synergies

between International Organizations and stakeholders, while avoiding duplication of efforts and activities.

126. Further requested FAO to develop a solid funding concept for the International Platform based on voluntary contributions, and continue developing and refining its terms of reference for further review by the Programme Committee and the FAO Council.

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

The Committee:

127. Approved the progress report of the MYPOW 2018–2021.

128. Underlined the importance of the timely preparation of the documents and requested to keep the indicator “All COFI documents including SOFIA are made available in all FAO languages at least four weeks before the Session commences” in Paragraph 18(b) of the draft MYPOW 2020–2023, including the annotated agenda, clarifying items for discussion and decision.

129. Recommended to utilize MYPOW to streamline agendas for COFI and its sub-committees in consultation with the Bureau.

130. Recommended to avoid duplication of work with other Governing Bodies and further strengthen coordination with the respective Secretariats.

131. Recommended, for follow up purposes, to monitor the implementation of MYPOW 2020–2023 intersessionally and report, through a reporting matrix, on the progress to the Bureau.

132. Recommended to add “...and the elaboration of new intersessional working methods and/or the development of the proposed fisheries management sub-committee” at the end of Paragraph 20(c) of the draft MYPOW 2020–2023.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE 35TH SESSION OF COFI

133. The Committee elected Mr Shingo Ota (Japan) as Chairperson. It also elected the following six Vice-Chairpersons: Canada, Chile, Kuwait, New Zealand, Senegal and Spain. On an exceptional basis, the Committee mandated the Bureau members to identify, from among themselves, the Member to serve as first Vice-Chairperson.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

134. The Committee agreed that the Thirty-fifth Session of COFI will be held in Rome from 5 to 9 September 2022.

DEVELOPMENTS IN FORA OF IMPORTANCE FOR THE MANDATE OF COFI: FOR INFORMATION

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

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PILOT PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAMME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORLD FISHERIES
UNIVERSITY**

136. The Committee welcomed and appreciated the update provided by the Republic of Korea on the Pilot Partnership Programme for the establishment of the World Fisheries University and looked forward to receiving further information at the next COFI session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

137. The report of the Thirty-fourth Session of COFI was adopted on