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منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

## CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION

### EIGHTH SESSION

**Baku, Azerbaijan, 19–20 December 2023**

### Main decisions and recommendations of the respective FAO Regional Conferences, Committees and Regional Fisheries Bodies

#### Summary

This document highlights of the topics discussed and recommendations/decisions taken at the:

- i) Thirty-fifth Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries, held in hybrid modality in Rome, Italy from 5 to 9 September 2022;
- ii) Thirty-third Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, held in hybrid modality in Łódź, Poland from 10 to 13 May 2022; and
- iii) Thirty-First Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission held in Killarney, Ireland from 22 to 24 June 2022; and
- iv) Seventh Session of CACFish, held in Istanbul, Türkiye from 11 to 13 October 2021.

#### Suggested actions by the Commission

The Commission is invited to:

- note the discussions, recommendations and decisions of FAO Regional Conference for Europe and the respective FAO Regional Fisheries Bodies; and
- as appropriate, provide further guidance regarding the implementation of these recommendations and decisions.

## I. Main decisions and recommendations from the 35th Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was established in 1965. It is a Governing Body of FAO currently serving as the only global inter-governmental forum for addressing fisheries and aquaculture issues. The two main functions of COFI are to review the programmes of work of FAO in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture and their implementation, and to conduct periodic general reviews of fisheries and aquaculture problems of an international character, appraise such problems, and propose their possible solutions with a view to concerted action by nations, FAO, intergovernmental bodies and civil society. The Committee also reviews specific matters relating to fisheries and aquaculture referred to it by the Council, the Director-General, placed by the Committee on its agenda at the request of Members, or the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
2. The primary agenda items of 35th Session of COFI were as follows<sup>1</sup>:
  - State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
  - The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  - Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries, including in the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFa);
  - Decisions and recommendations of the sub-committees of COFI;
  - Contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  - Addressing climate change in fisheries and aquaculture: reporting on progress and action plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031;
  - Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture;
  - Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture;
  - Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
  - Proposal of the establishment of the Sub-committee on Fisheries Management;
  - Development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (2022–2025);
  - FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework;
  - Multi-year work programme of the Committee.
3. Listed below are the key outcomes of the 35th Session of COFI<sup>2</sup>:
  - a) Endorsement of a new COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management. Encouraging increased efforts to address sustainable resource use and management in small-scale fisheries, and in particular co-management systems. Reiterating the fundamental role that a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management could play in relation to the development of sustainable small-scale fisheries;
  - b) Endorsement of the new FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment as a new instrument within the framework of FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. A call for its implementation, including through adoption by regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) and associated arrangements;
  - c) Support for Blue Transformation and for making it the focus of a well-received State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2022 report; while recognizing the core objectives of Blue Transformation and its alignment with the 2021 COFI Declaration for

<sup>1</sup> Agenda of the 35th Session of the COFI can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/nj180en/nj180en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Report of the 35th Session of the COFI can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc6471en/cc6471en.pdf>

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the FAO Strategic Framework (2022–2031).

- d) Appreciation for FAO's work and strong support for FAO's Biodiversity, Climate Change and Science and Innovation Strategies and associated action plans; while amongst others,
- acknowledgement of the importance of area-based management tools in fisheries and aquaculture for biodiversity conservation, and encouraging FAO to continue the consultative process to develop and disseminate practical FAO-led guidance on “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs);
  - recognition of the important role that RFMOs and other regional initiatives play in mainstreaming biodiversity in the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, and a call on FAO to further strengthen its support to them in this area;
  - urging effective cooperation between fisheries and environmental bodies at national, regional and global levels. Stressing the need for collaboration to ensure coherence in policy-making for oceanic and inland waters, and to contribute to the protection of biodiversity;
  - encouraging FAO to increase knowledge and awareness on climate change impacts in fisheries and aquaculture, and to provide guidance on adaptation and mitigation, highlighting the need for guidance on climate resilient fisheries management, including the convening of a workshop with RFMOs and RFABs, and the further encouragement for the inclusion of climate change in the GSA;
- e) Recognition of the importance of fisheries and aquaculture for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the numerous requests to boost FAO's role in international fora; while amongst others,
- recommending FAO to continue assisting Members in strengthening their capacity to collect and communicate data, and encouraging countries to take ownership in monitoring and reporting processes of the relevant 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicators for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
- f) Continued emphasis on Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) throughout the meeting and report, including the activities related to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), and the recommendation for a SSF summit to be conducted biennially before COFI; while, amongst others,
- emphasizing the need for increased access to resources and support to small-scale fisheries livelihoods and incomes through appropriate technologies, market access and value chain development, and encouraging FAO to provide related tools, guidance and capacity development;
- g) Strong support for global aquaculture development and the adoption of the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture that are recommended to be finalized before the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture;
- h) Noted the importance of the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and FAO's key role in providing technical assistance to the WTO secretariat and to Members for its implementation; and
- i) Strong commitment to Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs)/ RFMOs, particularly pertaining to their critical role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, and their importance to the WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies.

## **II. Main decisions and recommendations from the Thirty-third Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe**

4. Being the main Governing Body in the European and Central Asian region, the FAO Regional Conferences for Europe serve as an official forum where Ministers of Agriculture and other high

officials from all FAO Members in the region meet to discuss challenges. The Conferences also provide a forum for the formulations of regional positions on global policy and regulatory issues within the mandate of FAO. Furthermore, the Conferences also review and advise on the regional related plans, programme or projects of FAO. Outcomes of the regular sessions of CACFish are reported to FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).

5. The primary thematic agenda items of the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference were as follows<sup>3</sup>:

- Implications on world food security and agriculture, including global food prices, arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
- The road to transform agrifood systems in European and Central Asian regional actions and the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-2031).
- Supporting sustainable food value chains for nutrition, and the development of a practical approach for transforming agrifood systems to promote healthy diets in Europe and Central Asia.

6. The Session included a ministerial round table which focused on the identification of trends, priority issues and challenges in the European and Central Asian regions. The round table also included discussions and an exchange of ideas on the promotion of healthy diets; how the principle of Leaving No One Behind can be considered in all agriculture and rural development efforts; and the development of nutrition-sensitive agrifood value chains<sup>4</sup>.

7. Under the item on the *implications on world food security arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine*, among others, the Regional Conference,

- Expressed grave concerns that the war in Ukraine posed serious risks for short-term global food security outcomes, as well as for the implementation of the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.
- submit for the next session of the FAO Council a report containing an overview of the work of the FAO and FAO-related bodies, including Article XIV bodies and other Regional Commissions, in and with Ukraine and countries most affected in the region;

8. As per the agenda item on *road to transformative agrifood systems*, the Regional Conference, among others,

- Underlined the need to effectively implement the food systems transformation agenda, including accelerators to fast-track progress and facilitate knowledge platforms, especially to promote innovative solutions in order to maximize the prospects for sustainable agriculture development and achievement of the SDGs.
- Recommended Members to
  - o Strengthen resilience by investing in smallholders and family farms, short supply chains, local markets, and updating agrifood systems to be better prepared, adaptable and autonomous;
  - o To promote sustainable agrifood systems through nature-based solutions and the greening of the sector, including through responsible investments, agroecology, bioeconomy and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Requested FAO to
  - o Support Members and agrifood systems actors through the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-2031), including a focus on accelerators, cross-cutting themes (gender, youth and inclusion), and FAO corporate strategies and

<sup>3</sup> Agenda of the 33rd Session of the ERC can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/ni153en/ni153en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Report of the 33rd Session of the ERC can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/nj289en/nj289en.pdf>

initiatives.

- Continue to support Members to effectively implement the food systems transformation agenda, including accelerators to fast-track progress and facilitate knowledge platforms. Encourage the promotion of innovative solutions to maximize the prospects for sustainable agriculture development and the achievement of the SDGs;
- Continue to support Members to adopt and apply the One Health approach, including the provision of support to fight antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and zoonotic diseases through the deployment of effective national action plans.

9. With regards to the item on *sustainable food value chains for nutrition*, the Regional Conference,

- Requested FAO to
  - Assist countries in Europe and Central Asia in upscaling the use of the nutrition-sensitive value chain approach as part of the agrifood systems transformation and the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-2031).
  - Assist countries to implement all relevant Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products and recommendations in their specific contexts; promote CFS policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches as well as the development and updating of sustainable national food-based dietary guidelines.
- The Members requested FAO to
  - support the development and implementation of voluntary tools, mechanisms or instruments that encourage the adoption of responsible business practices and enterprise risk-based due diligence. To provide technical assistance to existing extension and advisory services for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive solutions in value chain development as well as to facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing and capacity development, and to promote investment in a nutrition-sensitive value chain approach.
  - promote the establishment of an international measurement standard for true pricing and to identify and share best practices for nutrition-sensitive social protection measures that improves access to healthy diets.

10. Under the item on *regional results, priorities, the four betters and the Sustainable Development Goals*, the Regional Conference endorsed the three revised Regional Initiatives maintaining emphasis on poverty reduction, their alignment with the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), and the priority areas of the region, which will guide FAO's actions in 2022-23 and beyond.

- The Regional Conference welcomed the development and latest drafts of both the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, and provided further recommendations for the finalization of the strategies. The Regional Conference further discussed the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and expressed its opinion on it.

11. The Regional Conference

- reviewed the Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 7th Session of CACFish.
- encouraged relevant Members of ERC from Central Asia and the Caucasus to announce their intention to join the Commission; and
- promoted the celebration of International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 and propose regional and national artisanal fisheries and aquaculture (AFA)-oriented policies and strategies to optimize the role of AFA.

### **III. Main decisions from the Thirty-First Session of The European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)**

12. The thirty-first Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) was held in Killarney, Ireland, from 22 to 24 June 2022. The Session presented and discussed the results achieved by EIFAAC, its Management Committee and its Technical and Scientific Committee since the thirty Session of EIFAAC in 2019. The Commission adopted four Resolutions and one Recommendation: 1) On EIFAAC Resolutions, Recommendations and Advisory Notes; 2) On the Code of Conduct for Recreational Fisheries and Invasive Alien Species; 3) On the protection of vulnerable and endangered fish species from unsustainable predation from cormorants; 4) On small-scale fisheries and aquaculture; and 5) On the Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries<sup>5</sup>.

13. The Commission also reviewed and endorsed the recommendations from the well-attended EIFAAC International Symposium on “Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture - Advances in Technology, Stock Assessment and Citizen Science in an Era of Climate Change”, held in Killarney, Ireland, from 20 to 21 June 2022. Finally, the Commission reviewed and endorsed the updated EIFAAC Rules of Procedure and the work programme 2022–2024 and elected new officers.

14. The Session and Symposium received generous support from the host organizations, Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Irish Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

### **IV. Main decisions and recommendations from the Seventh Session of CACFish**

15. Four Members attended the session: Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Türkiye. Seven invited Observer countries were present, namely: Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The EUROFISH International Organization and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution participated in the Session as intergovernmental organizations with observer status.

16. The Commission was briefed on the main decisions and recommendations arising from the latest sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies, namely the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe and the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) as well as the 6th Session of the CACFish.

17. The Commission reviewed the Third Five-year Regional Work Programme for 2021–2025. The Commission decided to abolish the Five-year Regional Work Programme as suggested by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

18. The Commission reviewed the key outcomes and main recommendations of the Fifth Meeting of TAC. The Commission agreed on its work plan for the 2021–2023 intersessional period.

19. Discussions took place about strategic approaches to increase the number of CACFish Members and further strengthen cooperation with non-CACFish Members. The Session had lengthy discussions over the financial mechanisms that would facilitate an increase in the membership of the Commission<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the 31st Session of the EIFAAC can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc1986en/cc1986en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Report of the 7th Session of the CACFish can be accessed here: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb8226b/cb8226b.pdf>