

Report of the fifth session of the

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES RESEARCH

Rome, 12–15 October 2004



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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report approved by the fifth session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR), held in Rome from 12 to 15 October 2004.

Distribution:

Members of the Committee
Other interested nations and international organizations
FAO Fisheries Department
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ABSTRACT

The Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) held its fifth session in Rome from 12 to 15 October 2004.

The Committee reviewed the FAO work programme in fisheries with a focus on aquaculture and inland fisheries as well as on fish utilization and trade. It examined the outcomes of its Working Parties on Small-scale Fisheries and on Human Capacity Development and elaborated a future work programme for 2005/2006.

As in the past, the Committee extended its deliberation to include the manner in which scientific research could contribute to the development of fisheries policies with particular emphasis on questions of resource management, food security and poverty reduction.

The Committee appreciated the extensive range of research activities undertaken by the Fisheries Department and its partners and stressed that these partnerships were essential and should be maintained. It recommended that the Fisheries Department examine issues related to species domestication in aquaculture and that FAO produce an authoritative and balanced review of the aquaculture sector, including commercial aquaculture and the role of aquaculture in poverty reduction.

The Committee strongly supported FAO's work in fish utilization and trade and recommended that the work be strengthened in a number of areas including certification and quality requirements, fish trade and resources management, trade-related measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the promotion of South-South and regional trade, etc. The Committee was appreciative of the FAO-MFA (Norway) study on the impact of international trade on food security, its important conclusions and recommendations and suggested that the planning, organization and implementation process of the initiative be followed to advance the case study concept which the Committee requested the FAO Fisheries Department should consider to use in advancing work in a number of areas.

The Committee commended the work of its Working Parties on Small-scale Fisheries and on Human Capacity Development. While acknowledging the practical approach adopted in assessing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to rural livelihoods in developing countries and in elaborating a research agenda for small-scale fisheries, the Committee identified a number of critical gaps that needed to be addressed, preferably through case studies. The Committee suggested a few additions to the Strategic Framework on Human Capacity Development and recommended that the document be widely disseminated as the basis upon which work plans can be built. The Committee strongly advocated for the application of the Strategic Framework on Human Capacity Development in the context of the FAO Field Programme and urged the Department to present it at the next session of COFI in March 2005 to create greater awareness of the subject among FAO Members and the international community and encourage its use.

The Committee agreed on a future work programme and elaborated terms of reference on four key issues including trade in aquatic products, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee encouraged a more active involvement of the Department in the follow-up process on the key fisheries issues of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD-2002). It suggested that the Department should purposefully inform the Committee on Fisheries at its next session on ongoing work to address the key targets of WSSD-2002.

The Committee expressed appreciation to Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, for personally welcoming and interacting with the members of the Committee. The members of the Committee were encouraged by the positive remarks made by the Director-General about the importance of the work of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifth Session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) was held in Rome, Italy, from 12 to 15 October 2004.
2. The Session was called to order by the Chairperson of ACFR, Ms Meryl Williams.
3. The Session was attended by all the eight members of the Committee and a special observer. The list of participants is attached as Appendix B.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

4. The Session was opened by Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries Department. In opening the Session, Mr Nomura stressed the important role the Committee had played and was expected to continue to play in providing FAO with guidance and advice on the general work programme of the Department and on issues related to fisheries and aquaculture research. He informed the Committee that its achievements were recognized by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) when, at its Twenty-fifth Session, COFI adopted the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries that the Committee so actively crafted and promoted over the years. He stated that the emphasis which ACFR had placed on the issue of small-scale fisheries resulted in the inclusion of this subject as a stand alone item on the agenda of the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI.

5. Mr Nomura noted with pleasure the active participation of members of ACFR in intersessional technical meetings organized by the Secretariat on behalf of the Committee. He invited the Committee to review the outcomes of these meetings, and to continue its thorough review of the work of the Fisheries Department addressing not only research but also policy matters for small-scale fisheries and the strategy on human capacity development. Such review would help to ensure that critical gaps and emerging issues of the fisheries sector were appropriately addressed. Mr Nomura, in addition, requested the Committee to give special attention to the elaboration of a future work programme, the implementation of which would contribute in promoting sustainable fisheries. The full text of the opening statement is attached in appendix D.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

6. The Committee adopted the Agenda as contained in Appendix A of this report. The documents which were before the Committee are listed in Appendix C.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

7. The Chair welcomed all the members of ACFR and the FAO Fisheries Department staff in attendance. She thanked the Fisheries Department staff for the excellent preparations for the meeting and the follow through from the Fourth Session of ACFR. She noted with regret that this would be Dr Satia's last meeting as Secretary to ACFR as he would shortly be retiring from FAO. ACFR had found Dr Satia's intellectual input and operational support to be outstanding.

8. The Chair reminded the Committee of the role of ACFR as a statutory body of FAO to advise the Director-General on research and research-related matters for fisheries and aquaculture. To better discharge this duty, ACFR had brought its biennial meeting forward by two months to enable its advice to be provided as fully as possible to the forthcoming meeting of COFI. She also noted that, at the Fourth Session of ACFR, the Committee agreed that, intersessionally, priority should be given to the Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) and the "mega-priority cross cutting" issue of human capacity development for fisheries. Both small-scale fisheries and human capacity development would be addressed by the agenda of the Fifth Session of ACFR, as well as the review of

the FAO work programme, with a focus on inland fisheries and aquaculture and on fish utilization and trade. The Fisheries Department noted that ACFR issues had been dominated by capture fisheries and marine fisheries issues to the present. Also, the Committee must look ahead and identify topics for future work with and for FAO, including building on the achievements with intersessional progress on small-scale fisheries and human capacity development.

9. The Chair noted that ACFR's links with COFI were strengthening and that the report of this session would be provided to the forthcoming session of COFI as an information paper. The Chair also usually attended to support the Committee's advice on key topics. She also noted that individual ACFR members were establishing an excellent track record of following through on special topics for intersessional work by FAO and encouraged them to keep in mind at this meeting where they could contribute to the follow-up.

10. Finally, she indicated that the Committee would be paying more attention to communicating the results of its work, in addition to the traditional formal report. A press release would be developed from this meeting for use by FAO and she would be presenting a verbal report to the Department staff at the end of the Session. The Committee should consider other communication methods on individual agenda issues or the whole of its work also.

REVIEW OF FAO'S RESEARCH-RELATED PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES

Some main thrusts of work in the Fisheries Department

11. This agenda item was introduced by the Secretariat on the basis of document ACFR/V/2004/2. The Committee was reminded that the FAO Constitution gives FAO and *ipso facto* the Fisheries Department a clear mandate to undertake, promote and support technical, policy and prospective studies relating to fisheries management and sustainable development at the international, regional and national levels. Although "pure" research in the traditional sense is not undertaken within the Fisheries Department, a range of activities by FAO staff do fall within the broader category of "applied" research, in the sense of all knowledge-generating activities leading to a better understanding of fisheries resources, their environment and ways in which they are exploited and managed.

12. It was noted that the Fisheries Department promotes broad based research programmes focused on development and management issues and concepts necessary for the elaboration of policy advice. This work has four principal aims, as follows:

- Develop, maintain and make available global and regional databases as tools to monitor and evaluate the status and trends of capture fisheries and aquaculture as well as management systems at regional and global levels. National information systems are also developed on request.
- Develop/adapt and transfer methodologies, guidelines, analytical and modelling software and other tools (including GIS) with the view to improve countries' capacity to deal with their fisheries;
- Undertake analysis of priority and emerging issues, as a means to better understand the evolution of the sector and keep FAO members fully informed of policy developments (including the implications of non-fisheries agreements and international law), options and needs for new global initiatives.
- Inform FAO's constituency and partners of the results of the above activities through a flow of publications in the form of background papers for meetings, formal publications in or outside FAO, newsletters, communications at conferences, CD-ROMS and websites.

13. The Committee was further informed that the Fisheries Department cooperates with a diverse range of national and international institutions and organizations in the execution of its research

related activities. Such short- or long-term partnership arrangements are implemented in a contractual, collaborative, cooperative or collegiate mode depending on the activity concerned, and the type of relationship between FAO and the partners and their capabilities and strengths.

14. Two longer-term research-related partnership arrangements have been of importance to the Fisheries Department in recent years. These are SIFAR (Support unit for International Fisheries and Aquatic Research) and FAO's umbrella FishCode Programme. Work undertaken through field projects, such as the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme involving 25 countries in West Africa, also contribute in enhancing the quality of policy advice provided by FAO to its members.

15. Committee members were also reminded that FAO operates a network of regional fishery bodies. Many of these bodies have a scientific advisory committee which together with their ad hoc working parties stimulate and coordinate research undertaken by member countries or those carried out jointly by members under the aegis of the regional fishery body in such fields as stock assessment, statistics, economics, etc.

16. The main thrusts of some research-related activities were reviewed, and it was underlined that a wide array of issue areas were covered. These included:

- impact of towed fishing gear on benthic communities;
- discarding practices;
- poverty analysis and poverty profiling in fishing communities;
- fleet capacity studies, including the question of "genuine link" between vessels and their flags;
- markets for fish and fishery products;
- the use of socio-economic indicators in community-based fishery management;
- a variety of issue areas addressed through projects under the FishCode Programme.

17. It was further emphasized that the recently evolving concepts in fisheries were heavily policy-oriented and this was reflected in the nature of the work of the Department, the work of the Committee, and the recommendations and output of Committee deliberations.

18. The Committee appreciated the extensive range of research activities undertaken by the Fisheries Department and its partners. The Committee stressed that these partnerships were essential and should be maintained. Concerning discarding practices, the Committee noted the strong attention that had been given to the first report on global discards and advised the Department that, in publishing the results of its new work which indicates a drastic reduction of discards worldwide, the Department should explicitly describe the methodology, the possible reasons for this sharp reduction in estimating discards as well as the implications on the overall status of stocks. The Committee indicated that some of its members would be willing to provide comments on the report.

19. The Committee undertook a review of the work of the Department in aquaculture and inland fisheries as well as fish utilization and trade.

Aquaculture and inland fisheries

20. The Committee considered specific presentations on aquaculture and inland fisheries contained in ACFR/V/2004/2 and ACFR/V/2004/Inf.5. The Committee addressed issues regarding inland fisheries and aquaculture separately, and then discussed areas on conflict or complementarities.

21. The Committee appreciated the potential of commercial aquaculture in alleviating poverty and enhancing economic growth, but stated that the maximization of profits should not lead to negative impacts on resources or communities. The Committee took special note of the role of fishmeal/oil in feeding farmed fish and appreciated the Fisheries Department's efforts to conduct

research on feed inputs and alternatives to using fish to feed fish. The Committee recognized the usefulness of the “consortium” approach, as established for marine shrimp, to promote partnerships and increase information exchange in order to improve aquaculture productivity and sustainability. The Committee stated that the role of States as regulators should be examined as should the impact of aquaculture on other sectors.

22. The Committee recommended that the Fisheries Department examine issues related to species choice in aquaculture, i.e. domestication processes, genetic improvement, and genetic conservation. The Committee noted that this is being planned in collaboration with partners, such as NACA, WorldFish Center and academic institutions, and suggested that the ACFR may be able to play a role in this area.

23. The Committee took note of the high profile given to aquaculture and the diversity of aquaculture farming systems, their use of resources, their different impacts, and their varied objectives (i.e. providing food security, maximizing profits, etc.). Some members of the Committee alluded to the perception of some groups that aquaculture is not an efficient user of resources, that it is unsustainable, and that there have been many aquaculture failures. These perceptions are mainly based on salmon and shrimp mariculture. The Committee recognized that, while there are some misconceptions, real concerns exist over the environmental and social impacts of some aquaculture systems. The Committee also recommended that FAO produce an authoritative and balanced review of the aquaculture sector, including commercial aquaculture, and the role of aquaculture in poverty reduction. The Committee stated that FAO needs to monitor and, in some circumstances, be involved in research that will address environmental and social impacts of aquaculture.

24. The Committee stressed that, because of its integrity and the confidence of its Members, FAO is well positioned to provide an authoritative review. The Fisheries Department should strive to survey lessons learnt from past experiences, including successes and failures, and advise its Members on key issues in aquaculture accordingly. Efforts in this field would be similar to the pronouncements on fishing capacity and stock assessments in marine capture fisheries.

25. In addressing inland fisheries, the Committee noted a decline or levelling of production in many areas and requested information on the methodologies of collecting the statistics used to generate the information. The Committee was informed about the particular problems of acquiring accurate information on the status of fishery production in inland waters, the species harvested, the numbers of people dependent on inland fishery resources, and the contribution those resources make to food security. The Committee acknowledged that inland fishery resources are extremely important to food security and that efforts should be made to improve information on the status of inland fisheries and fishery stocks, in particular through implementation of the Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy–STF).

26. The Committee was further informed on how changes in fishery management, such as limiting access, enhancements, and habitat rehabilitation may further complicate interpretation of information on the status of the resource. The Committee acknowledged that traditional survey methods may be difficult to implement in many inland fisheries and that a range of alternative and novel approaches such as household surveys and consumption studies should be developed. Sampling strategies and techniques to increase the efficiency of information collection should be developed and the Fisheries Department may wish to conduct further training courses in sample design, research methodologies, etc., appropriately tailored for the needs of the sector. The Committee made special note that an ecosystem approach, including rapid appraisals of the status of inland aquatic ecosystems, should be adopted and may make fishery management more tractable. The Committee was informed that it is planned to develop and promote low cost rapid appraisal survey methodologies as one of the elements of the FishCode project on implementation of the Strategy–STF.

27. The Committee was informed that many of the problems facing the inland fishery sector arise from outside of the sector. Some Committee members cautioned that overfishing should not be

neglected as a concern for inland fisheries and that overfishing could be even a more significant threat in inland areas than in marine and that linkages with the water management sector was often critical.

28. The Committee noted the diversity of the inland fisheries sector; from part-time, small-scale informal fishers in small wetlands, to highly industrialized fisheries on the world's large lakes and inland seas. Committee also noted that most inland fishers are among the least empowered and vulnerable members of society and, in particular, in comparison with small-scale inland aquaculturists. Many governments appear to give priority for the use of inland waters for other high earning endeavours in policy decisions, e.g. hydro-electric development, draining wetlands for agriculture, and marine export fisheries, over inland fisheries development. Thus the Committee remarked on the importance of improving information base on the role and contribution of inland fisheries, so that the governments and policy makers would be informed when making decisions that affect inland fisheries or pay adequate compensation where inland fisheries were sacrificed. The Committee noted that a viable first step would be to raise awareness of the importance of inland fisheries and to internalize many of the costs associated with poor inland fisheries management and poor development decisions that do not take into account the true value of inland fishery resources

29. The Committee pointed out that several of the problems of the inland fishery sector derive from problems with governance and ownership of the living resources, and the land and water resources. Existing institutions may be inappropriate or inadequate in many areas to address accurately inland fisheries leading to the objectives of fishery management and development decisions being also inappropriate or inadequately addressed. The Committee suggested that the Fisheries Department and regional fishery bodies dealing with inland fisheries should request better information from members on inland fisheries. It was noted that information collection methods for inland fisheries will not be the same as for marine fisheries and that FAO should assist Members put in place appropriate data collection systems, especially in regards to lake and reservoir habitats.

30. The Committee noted the existence of conflicts and complementarities between the inland fishery and aquaculture sectors. Culture based fisheries and fishery enhancements were areas identified where the sectors can work together. The Committee noted that conflicts may arise in regards to cage culture in open-water bodies limiting access to resources and pollution as well as introduction of alien species. The efforts to train fishers to become fish farmers had often not been successful.

Fish utilization and trade

31. The FAO research-related activities in fish utilization and trade were introduced by the secretariat. The presentation highlighted the fact that: i) Developing countries contribute around 50 percent (in value) of international fish trade; and ii) the main importing countries or the integrated Economic Union are the European Union, Japan and the USA, with around 80 percent (in value) of fish imports. These three major markets have stringent market access requirements. This presents FAO with two critical challenges: to meet the needs and requests of developing countries to conform to the requirements of highly demanding, but lucrative markets; and to ensure that trade promotion goes hand in hand with food security and responsible fisheries.

32. The Committee was informed that FAO research activities were both normative and field oriented in nature. The normative activities stemmed from the deliberations and requests of the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) and of the relevant Committees of the *Codex Alimentarius* Committee (CAC), especially the Committee on fish and fishery products. The field oriented activities were related aspects of fish technology, fish safety and quality, fish marketing and trade.

33. The Committee noted that the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade provided a neutral global forum to discuss and decide on issues relevant to fish utilization and trade, as well as the preparation of relevant technical guidelines, normative documents and papers. These issues have evolved to include

safety and quality regulations, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) implementation, implications of the Uruguay round of negotiations for fish trade, responsible fish trade and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, implications of SPS/TBT agreements for fish trade, fish trade and food security, fishmeal and the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing criteria, ecolabelling, harmonization of catch documentation, impact of subsidies on fish trade, traceability in the fish industry, access of small scale fisheries to international fish trade. The Committee further noted that in fulfilment of the role of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade as an International Commodity Body for the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), FAO had implemented, in collaboration with the InfoService, seven fishery commodity related projects. The projects were in the field of product and market diversification, with a strong capacity building component.

34. The Committee welcomed FAO's initiatives in support of access of developing countries to timely marketing information, analysis and forecasts in order to promote international fish trade. It noted that these initiatives have been expanding to address the increasing needs of developing countries where fish processing and trade play a major role as a source of employment and foreign exchange earnings. The information requirements of the fish industry and the support to government institutions in developing countries cover market analysis by fisheries commodities, price developments and statistics, in addition to an understanding of market access requirements and the availability of trade contacts.

35. The Secretariat informed the Committee that FAO had organized or actively contributed in several commodity and investment conferences, to allow matchmaking and information exchange. The *International Shrimp Conferences*, the *Tuna Conferences*, the *Squid Conferences*, the *Small Pelagic Conferences* and the *EAST WEST Conferences* have become milestones for fish industry and governments during the last 10 years.

36. The Committee noted that, faced with increasing requests for the exchange and dissemination of timely and relevant information on fish processing technologies, safety and quality, FAO had launched the Aquatic Food Product Initiative (AFPI) in partnership with other institutions such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the International Association of Fish Inspectors (IAFI). This long-term initiative is harnessing the competence of renowned scientists to create an integrated global knowledge based on safety and quality of aquatic food products.

37. The Committee was informed that the implementation of the FAO Fisheries Department work plan in fish utilization and fish trade relied on strategic partnership arrangements with several divisions within the Organization as well as many national, regional and international institutions. Similarly, the FAO Fisheries Department has initiated and animated the work of several networks of fish technologists, fish inspectors or women in fisheries in Latin America, Asia or Africa as well as establishing a network of six Fish Information and technical advisory services, the FishInfoNetwork, coordinated through the Rome based Globefish.

38. The Committee strongly supported FAO work in fish utilization and trade and noted the emphasis placed on tariffs and tariff escalation, safety and quality, traceability, value addition, implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements in the fish industry, ecolabelling, CITES, fish trade and food security. It expressed the view that many of these activities were of importance especially to developing countries which are in need of assistance to meet more and more stringent market access requirements.

39. In addition, the Committee recommended that FAO should strengthen its work in a number of areas. These include promotion of South-South and regional fish trade, development and trade of value added products in developing countries, certification and quality requirements, aquaculture issues (safety, environmental impacts), fish trade and resources management, trade-related measures to combat IUU, comparative studies on fish trade in small- and large-scale fisheries and also investigate how the access of small-scale fishers markets, and their terms of trade could be improved.

40. FAO–Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway) study of the impact of international fish trade on food security was presented by the Secretariat. The Committee was appreciative of the study and its important conclusions and policy recommendations. The Committee highlighted the need to take measures to make hard copies of the report widely available at the earliest. It also recommended that consolidation of the country case studies be published where appropriate.

41. The Committee recommended that the gender dimension should be given a particular attention, as the proportion of women deriving their livelihood from post-harvest fisheries was very important in all countries.

Dissemination of research results and information

42. The Committee noted the various mechanisms which the Department was presently using to disseminate information. It advised that, in the face of growing pressure of fisheries and marine ecosystem issues, and the tendency of interest groups to interpret or “spin” information to support their own views that FAO needs to take the “high ground” as an objective, science-based, information source. To be effective, it must recapture the communication agenda rather than being reactionary. The Committee advised that FAO should not respond to individual reports. It recommended that FAO consider convening a small informal high level meeting of scientists and policy makers to review the matter and consider how to recapture the communication agenda. The panel should address the subject from the view point of science ethics, particularly within the framework of the FAO Internal Committee on Ethics in Food and Agriculture.

SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

43. This agenda item was introduced by the Secretariat on the basis of documents ACFR/V/2004/3, and ACFR/V/2004/Inf.4, Inf.7, Inf.8, Inf.9, Inf.10 and Inf.13.

44. The presentation focused on: an evaluation of the importance, role and contribution of the sector, the draft research agenda on small-scale fisheries, and the ways in which the transition to responsible fisheries could be facilitated bearing in mind the developing paradigm of ecosystem approach to fisheries. The Committee was informed that the majority of the information had been generated by its Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries, which was convened by the Director-General and held under the joint auspices of the FAO Fisheries Department and the FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, from 18 to 21 November 2003. The meeting was chaired by Dr John Kurien, Vice-Chair of ACFR. Financial support for this meeting was also provided by the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP).

45. The Committee commended the work that had been undertaken by its Working Party on Small-Scale Fisheries since the last session. The Committee acknowledged the practical approach adopted in assessing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to rural livelihoods in developing countries. It however expressed the view that the vision statement, although adequate for advocacy purposes, needed to be recast in a research context in terms of soliciting information for a better understanding and improved management of the sub-sector. The Committee pointed out that sufficient emphasis had not been given in the document to the interactions between small-scale and large-scale fisheries and the consequent conflict that arise from such interactions. Similarly the unaccounted contribution of women as well as issues related to safety at sea and safety of the products needed to be stressed.

46. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the elements of a research agenda on small-scale fisheries presented by the Secretariat. The Committee indicated that the material provided a good foundation for the elaboration of a concise strategy document on small-scale fisheries. Such a document should provide guidance on modalities of implementation as well as priorities in terms of geographical location. The Committee also noted the complementary nature of the Sustainable

Livelihood Approach, the Ecosystem Approach for Fisheries and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in guiding the research agenda.

47. The Committee recommended that the research agenda needed to encompass the connection between human development issues including poverty alleviation and food security with natural science and technology aspects, especially the impacts of environmental variability and climatic change. Furthermore, international issues of small-scale fisheries, in particular migration of small-scale fish workers, migrant fishing vessels and management of shared stocks needed more attention. The Committee noted that there was also the need for gaining a better understanding of the historical development of small-scale fisheries in the context of the specific demographic, social, cultural, political and economic developments in the different regions and sub-regions.

48. The Committee also felt that the role of aquaculture in contributing to improved fisheries management needed to be given increased attention, especially with regard to its potential to allow for re-stocking and resource enhancement as well as serve as a source of alternative income and employment. The potential impact of the release of cultured specimens on the genetic richness of the wild population was of concern and needed to be further researched.

49. One area of priority accorded by the Committee was the strengthening of fishworkers organizations which were considered of central importance for greater participation of the small-scale sector in policy decisions and in the implementation of effective fisheries management and development programmes. It also considered important to gain a better understanding on the best ways and means to facilitate communication among small-scale fishworkers and between them and other stakeholders including government fisheries agencies. Whether or not communication strategies were needed specifically for small-scale fisheries versus the fisheries sector in general would depend on the particular conditions in a country. The Committee felt, however, that generalized communication strategies ran the risk of neglecting small-scale fisheries or assigning them too low a priority. The Committee recognized the increasing importance of fishworkers' organizations and civil society organizations supporting small-scale producers and their organizations in the areas of communication and exchange, and more broadly in empowerment.

50. The Committee noted the joined World Food Congress (WFC)–FAO project proposal on Integrated Assessment of Small-Scale Fisheries for which donor support was currently sought and whose concept included partnerships with academic institutions and national fisheries research agencies. It further noted that, especially with regard to natural science assessments, the approaches applied in large-scale temperate water fisheries were of little applicability in small-scale fisheries in tropical waters. More direct assessments of ecosystem health were needed that perhaps required a shift in paradigm. It also concurred with the desirability of developing a set of integrated assessment tools that are tailored to small-scale fisheries and which could then form the basis for training and capacity-building.

51. The Committee strongly recommended that a larger number of case studies of small-scale fisheries should be conducted in order to develop lessons-learned on the reasons for success or failure in sustained small-scale fisheries development and management. These case studies should be well designed and based on clearly articulated research questions or hypotheses including, for example, how the influence of globalization manifested itself in different small-scale fisheries, especially in relation to various characteristics such as the nature of fishing rights. Where appropriate, the critical research questions/hypotheses could be translated into research templates, perhaps with different emphasis for different regions and sub-regions.

52. The Committee recognized that safety at sea remained a particularly serious problem in small-scale fisheries. It recognized that FAO had many years of experience in providing expert advice and assistance on this subject and was well placed to continue to raise awareness of the problem among the various stakeholders and provide assistance for improved fishers safety in the fields of data collection and data management, training, education and the development of regulations, as well as

the designing and use of safer vessels and equipment. Given the importance of the issue, the Committee recommended that the Department continued its efforts to improve safety and working conditions of fishers and fishworkers.

53. The Committee noted that a significant amount of knowledge and experiences in small-scale fisheries were not communicated through existing journals including the findings of especially local level case studies and case-specific experiences. This was the reason why other means of knowledge sharing were especially important for small-scale fisheries. The idea was also mentioned of launching a new journal (traditional or electronic) that would focus on reporting the findings of fisheries case studies (see Appendix F).

54. The planning, organization and implementation process used for the FAO – Norway Fish Trade and Food Security Study was considered an excellent example that could be followed to advance the case study concept. The Committee also encouraged cooperation with existing projects and programmes that would allow for the conduct of a larger set of case studies at lower costs to FAO. It also recommended to draw upon past and ongoing information gathering, initiatives and research efforts on small-scale fisheries including, for example, the Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) initiative of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) that is supported by the Australian Government's overseas aid program (AusAID), the Department for International Development (DFID), FAO and the Volunteers Sharing Organization (VSO).

HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN FISHERIES

55. This agenda item was introduced by the Secretariat on the basis of documents ACFR/V/2004/4, and ACFR/V/2004/Inf.4, Inf.11 and Inf.12.

56. In the first section, the Committee was informed of the results of the ACFR Working Party on Human Capacity Development in Fisheries, which was convened by the Director-General of FAO at FAO headquarters, Rome, from 19 to 22 April 2004. The meeting was chaired by Dr Kwame Koranteng, Vice-Chair of ACFR. In addition to regular programme funds, financial support was provided by FishCode.

57. The definition of human capacity development (HCD), as agreed by the Working Party, was reiterated as “The process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies develop their abilities – both individually and collectively – to set and achieve objectives, perform functions, solve problems and to develop the means and conditions required to enable this process”.

58. The Committee was informed that the Working Group had also adopted a Vision Statement to characterise HCD in fisheries, which read as follows: “A society that has the ability, means and conditions to achieve the sustainable development of fisheries, at local to global levels, for the benefit of all and to meet the targets of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) ‘Plan of Implementation’ as well as the Millennium Development Goals”.

59. Whereas past approaches to HCD have tended to focus primarily science, research and development, greater emphasis was now being placed on areas such as the ecosystems approach to fisheries, the sustainable livelihoods approach, poverty assessments, and on issues of governance and wider generic, non-fisheries specific knowledge and skills.

60. A number of key lessons deriving from a review of previous HCD initiatives were identified by the Working Party. It was stressed that HCD interventions must:

- be participatory in design, implementation and monitoring;
- build on core-capacities and be a two-way process of knowledge transfer;
- provide for flexibility to fit with the individual needs of those being assisted;

- take greater cognisance of the overall societal/political context in which interventions operate;
- be effectively integrated to their regional/geographical, intra-sectoral, inter-sectoral, and vertical linkages;
- have appropriate built-in incentives;
- be delivered by those who themselves have adequate levels of capacity development.

61. In terms of HCD delivery modalities, the Working Party was of the view that a wide range of mechanisms are available, which can be categorized into (i) face-to-face mechanisms (e.g. classroom-based training, seminars, conferences and workshops, research programmes, exchange programmes, demonstration trials, on-the-job training and mentoring); (ii) remote mechanisms (publications, manuals/training material, radio, distance-based learning, and information and communication technology [ICT] based mechanisms); and (iii) a mixture of the two.

62. The Committee was informed that the Working Party on HCD, on the basis of its deliberations, adopted a Draft Strategic Framework for Human Capacity Development in Fisheries. The key points of the Framework were then summarized, and the Committee's guidance was sought on its utility and application.

63. During ensuing discussion, Committee members congratulated the Secretariat for effectively facilitating the activities of the Working Party on HCD, as well as the compilation and presentation of its outcomes and recommendations.

64. Members of the Committee expressed appreciation for the way the Working Party had conceptualised HCD as an internally driven process that involves multiple levels, embracing individuals within nested and interacting organizational, sector/network, and broader societal contexts. Members also expressed appreciation for the way the HCD Strategic Framework was strongly linked to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

65. The Committee welcomed the fact that, whereas past approaches to HCD have tended to focus more on the development of individual practitioner skills, the processual and holistic approach that informs the Draft Strategic Framework recognizes that individual capacities can only be actualized in a sustained way within broader institutional and societal settings.

66. The Committee expressed the view that, in the past, inadequate attention to the broader setting of human capacity development had sometimes resulted in failed development interventions and these could have been due to timing mismatches between the push and pull factors involved. The Committee pointed out that, if there was a "supply" of individuals with enhanced skills, there had also to be a broader institutional and societal "demand" to foster and sustain them. This further underscored the importance of encouraging broader awareness of the contributions and meaning of the fisheries sector, and of the importance of responsible fisheries principles and practices, amongst policy makers as well as the wider public.

67. In this connection, the Committee was informed of a new project about to be launched through the FishCode Programme, on Training and Awareness for Responsible Fisheries. Project activities, which were designed with reference to the outcomes of the Working Party on HCD in Fisheries, will aim at fisheries policy makers and management practitioners on the one hand, and a larger public audience, including younger people, on the other. Project activities will be further elaborated during the six-month inception phase, at the end of which a conference will be convened in order to mobilise further donor partner support.

68. In addition to expressing their appreciation for the conceptual base of the Draft Strategic Framework, and the fact that it draws heavily on lessons learned, members of the Committee strongly

advocated for its application in the context of the FAO Field Programme itself, as well as through linkages with regional fisheries organizations. It was agreed that the Strategic Framework with the suggested changes listed in paragraph 70 should be brought forward as it stands, as the basis upon which workplans can be built, rather than channelling it through the formal and time-consuming policy adoption process involving an FAO Technical Consultation and COFI approval.

69. It was further agreed that it would be appropriate to include reference to the Strategic Framework, as endorsed by the Committee, in the report on progress towards implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to be presented at the next COFI session in March 2005. The Committee urged that the document should be made available to COFI as an information document in order to create greater awareness and the subject and to further encourage the use of the contents of the Strategic Framework document. Consideration should also be given to organizing a side event at the Twenty-sixth Session of COFI.

70. Finally, the Committee suggested that, in taking the Draft Strategic Framework forward, revisions be made at appropriate points to reflect the concerns of members that:

- more direct reference be made to the role of fisher organizations in the human capacity development process;
- the human capacity development “lessons learned,” as cited by the Working Party, be included directly in the Strategic Framework itself, possibly as a further Appendix;
- under the fisheries science and research skills grouping, mention should be made of science-related governance issues, including ethics, objectivity and quality assurance themes; and
- under the societal skills grouping, the question of promoting greater awareness and “societal literacy” with respect to the issues involved should be highlighted.

FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

71. The Committee emphasized the need to continue work on the ongoing themes of fish trade and small-scale fisheries and also identified the necessity to increase its focus on aquaculture related activities. In this light the Committee elaborated terms of reference on the following topics:

- a) Trade in aquatic products;
- b) Small-scale marine and inland fisheries: realms of transition;
- c) Aquaculture: How can species choice and domestication drive sustainable aquaculture development?

In addition the Committee elaborated terms of reference on “Sustainability of Livelihoods and Environmental Fluctuations”. These research proposals are provided in appendixes E through H. The Committee encouraged the Fisheries Department to facilitate the implementation of these studies.

72. The Committee, after reviewing the planned activities over the period 2006-2011 as regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries concluded that the proposed Medium Term Plan covered some of the activities referred to in this report and, in particular, those listed in paragraph 71 above. It acknowledged that there were no inconsistencies in the planned activities and those the Committee had made during the session.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

73. The Committee re-elected the following officers for the Sixth Session:

Chairperson:	Meryl Williams
First Vice-Chairperson:	John Kurien
Second Chairperson:	Kwame Koranteng

DATE AND PLACE OF THE SIXTH SESSION

74. The Committee agreed to hold its Sixth Session in October 2006.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

75. The Committee welcomed information provided to it by the Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries Department concerning the organization of the Twenty-sixth Session of COFI and the Ministerial Meeting 2005. The Committee invited the Department to draw attention to the Strategic Framework on Human Capacity Development and make it available to COFI. It also welcomed the continued importance given to small-scale fisheries.

76. The Committee recalled the high profile that was given to fisheries at the WSSD in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, and noted that this profile was due in part to the excellent work of the FAO Committee on Fisheries. ACFR noted that COFI has the recognized competences at the international level to address the WSSD time-bound targets related to fisheries. The Committee encouraged a more active involvement of the Department in the WSSD follow-up process. The Committee suggested that the Department should purposefully inform the Committee on Fisheries and the international community on ongoing work to address the key targets of WSSD-2002. In this regard it pointed out that the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) should be seen as an evolution of conventional fisheries management which needed to be implemented incrementally through the incorporation of such issues as bycatch, the rebuilding of fish stocks, the management of fishing capacity, the creation of marine protected areas etc. It was further suggested that these matters should figure as operational paragraphs in the Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting 2005 as appropriate.

77. The Committee expressed appreciation to Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO who, despite his heavy schedule, particularly during the preparations for World Food Day 2004, dedicated time to personally welcome and interact with members of the Committee. The Director-General urged the Committee to feel free to be sharp and critical in its work. The Committee was encouraged by the positive remarks made by the Director-General about the importance of the work of ACFR and its recognition as a high level panel of experts in fisheries. The Committee welcomed the proposal that it should continue to expand the scope of its work and that it should keep up the thorough examination of the Organization's work in the fisheries sector.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

78. The report was adopted on 15 October 2004.

Agenda

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements for the Session
3. Introductory Statement by the Chairperson
4. Review of FAO's Fisheries Research-related Programmes/Activities
5. Review of the Work of the ACFR Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries
6. Review of the Work of the ACFR Working Party on Human Capacity Development in Fisheries
7. Future Work of the Committee
8. Election of Officers
9. Date and place of the next Session
10. Any other Matters
11. Adoption of the Report

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List of documents

ACFR/V/2004/1	Provisional Agenda and Timetable
ACFR/V/2004/2	Review of the FAO's Fisheries Research-Related Programmes/Activities
ACFR/V/2004/3	In Search of a Research Agenda for Small-scale Fisheries
ACFR/V/2004/4	Enhancing Human Capacity Development to Promote Responsible Fisheries Management and Sustainable Aquaculture Development
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.1	Provisional List of Documents
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.2	Provisional List of Participants
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.3	Statement by the Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.4	Report of the Fourth Session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research, Rome, Italy, 10-13 December 2002
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.5	Background, Rationale and Justification for Research-related Activities in Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.6	Background, Rationale and Justification for Research-Related Activities on Fish Utilization and Trade
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.7	Report of the Second Session of the Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries, Bangkok, Thailand, 18–21 November 2003
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.8	Small-scale Fisheries: Assessing their Contribution to Rural Livelihoods in Developing Countries
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.9	A Research Agenda for Small-scale Fisheries
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.10	In Search of a Research Agenda for Small-scale Fisheries. Papers Presented at the Second Session of the Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research , Bangkok, Thailand, 18–21 November 2003
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.11	Report of the Working Party on Human Capacity Development in Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 19–22 April 2004
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.12	Human Capacity Development in Fisheries, FAO Fisheries Circular No. 1003
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.13	Report of the Expert Consultation on the Role of Small-scale Fisheries in Poverty Reduction and Food Security, Rome, Italy, 5–8 July 2004
ACFR/V/2004/Inf.14	Planned Activities over the Period 2006–2011 as Regards Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries

**Opening statement by Mr Ichiro Nomura
Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries Department**

Madam Chairperson, Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to FAO headquarters and to the Fifth Session of ACFR. It is heartening to see all of you present at this session. Your presence here reflects your consciousness of the importance of your role to advise the Director-General of FAO and, through him, the international community, on aspects related to sustainable development of fisheries. I wish also to welcome Dr Thabit Zahran Al Abdessalaam, Director of the Marine Environment Research, Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency of the United Arab Emirates as our special observer to this Session.

Madam Chairperson,

This is too an excellent opportunity to stress that the achievements of your Committee were recognized by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) when, at its Twenty-Fifth Session, it adopted the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries, which your Committee so actively crafted and promoted over the years. The Strategy was approved afterwards by the FAO Council in June 2003 and then endorsed by a Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly during the same year. Congratulations.

We look now forward to your continued guidance to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy.

It is also important to recognize that the emphasis which your Committee has placed on the issue of small-scale fisheries resulted in the inclusion of this subject as a stand alone item on the agenda of the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI. The Committee on Fisheries strongly advocated that more efforts be made to support the small-scale fisheries sector, both inland and marine, and requested the preparation of technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. Small-scale fisheries will again be addressed at the Twenty-sixth Session of COFI in March 2005 with a view to encourage governments, other stakeholders and the international community to improve the environment in which small-scale fisheries operate. The outcome of your Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries during the intersession period has been reflected in the draft of the document that will be submitted to COFI. Copies of this draft will be made available to you at this Session, with a view to duly take into account your informed opinion on this subject in finalizing the document.

During the intersession, FAO has also worked to implement the major recommendations you formulated at the Fourth Session of ACFR. In this regard, the Working Parties on Small-scale Fisheries and on Human Capacity Development were convened. The preparation and organization of these meetings generated a lot of information, much of which is placed before you at this Session. The outcome of these meetings provided valuable background material for the Expert Consultation on the Role of Small-scale Fisheries in Poverty Alleviation and Food Security that was held in Rome from 5 to 8 July 2004.

I am pleased to note the active participation of Members of ACFR in all these meetings. Your Committee will have the opportunity to review during this Session the work that was done within the Working Parties.

Madam Chairperson, Gentlemen,

Allow me to refer to a very important and ongoing phenomenon. As you are aware, FAO and other international institutions dealing with renewable resources and the environment are facing growing pressure from some interest groups. In particular, these interest groups have a tendency to interpret or “spin” information to support their own views and to develop in the public and political arenas a dramatic perception of the state of world fisheries. By design or inadvertently, the information they spread often corrupts the communication landscape on which we operate. FAO has the responsibility to provide our Members and the international community, objective information and accurate description of the reality of the world fisheries situation, as far as we know it. Your Committee’s advice on what strategies to adopt in the face of such negative and distorted media coverage would be most appreciated.

Madam Chairperson,

This is an important Session because you will undertake an exhaustive review of the work of the Fisheries Department and also address not only research but also policy matters for small-scale fisheries, as well as a strategy on human capacity development to ensure that critical gaps and emerging issues of the fisheries sector are appropriately addressed.

As you have a tight schedule, I will refrain from going into further details of these and other topics listed in the provisional agenda. The substance of your whole discussion will be conveyed to the Twenty-sixth Session of COFI to be held in March 2005.

I wish you a very stimulating and successful Session and hope you will enjoy your stay in Rome in spite of the amount of good work that you are expected to do.

Thank you.

Trade in aquatic products

The study on trade in fishery products and food security indicates that trade in fish is not harmful to food security. But it did highlight the negative impacts of increasing trade in aquatic products on resources. In aquaculture, these impacts likely arise from the need to be competitive and therefore resorting to “shortcuts” that impact on sustainability. In capture fisheries, these arise from neglect to manage the resources.

Further research on trade in fish should address the following problems:

- effects of trade barriers on trade flows and prices,
- importance of resource management on trade.

Tariffs affect the price that fish exporters get from their products. Tariffs often discriminate against products with high value added, impeding fish processing in fish exporting countries. Anti-dumping measures also affect trade flows and the price received by exporters. The magnitude of these effects needs to be investigated.

A further research issue is to find ways of increasing the value that producers get from trade and to give them incentives for better management of aquaculture and fisheries resources.

A further area of trade-related research is enabling developing countries to cope with health and food safety regulations and the requirements of environmental seafood labels.

A complementary research issue is the fragmented nature of the production units and the extent to which this prevents utilization of economies of scale.

Given the importance of safety at sea, studies should be undertaken to improve safety and working conditions of fishers and fishworkers.

Small-scale marine and inland fisheries: realms of transition

The ACFR appreciated the efforts made by the FAO to put small-scale fisheries back on the central agenda of fisheries development and management. This is a clear recognition of its crucial importance in the realm of fisheries most importantly in developing countries and also in several developed countries too.

There are many challenges before the fisheries sector in many developing countries in the context of small-scale fisheries development and management. A matter of great importance is that, in many countries, these fisheries are in a process of major transition. These transitions are fuelled by both internal factors (e.g. loss of rights, population growth) and external factors (e.g. market demand) factors. This situation throws up many issues that need further investigation and nuanced study and research.

These include importantly:

1. The need to highlight the relevance of small-scale fisheries to national economies using a menu of multi-criteria indicators that relate to matters of national priority. It is important that these indicators stress features such as foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, contribution to direct food security and poverty alleviation, etc.
2. There is need to investigate the role of collective action among small scale fishers which can alter the “power relations” and thereby ensure that their contributions are recognized and their problems are addressed in a holistic manner. The concrete manner in which this process of collective action can be articulated (unions, cooperative etc) should be investigated.
3. The governance of the fisheries sector with particular reference to the hard decisions that need to be taken to re-instate or introduce the concept of rights to the resource should be examined. The compulsions that lead to governments being reluctant to take these decisions warrant closer examination. The political, economic and socio-cultural factors, which vary across countries and regions, which may explain this reluctance, need to be studied.
4. The nature of market distortions, particularly at the lower end of the chain of custody of fish that are an important factor for small-scale fishing communities being unable to fully benefit from the fruits of their labour, warrant close investigation. The circumstances and the causes that lead to the emergence of these distortions as well as the manner in which they can be removed (collective action from below, enabling legislation from above, a combination of these) need careful study.
5. The increasing competition for coastal space by activities other than fishing has greatly expanded in the recent phase of globalisation. In the context of these competing claims, the small-scale fisheries always seem to loose out. The mechanisms by which their claims to access to the resources and space can be given adequate priority should be examined.
6. The nature of demographic and occupational transitions taking place in small-scale fishing communities and the varying impact (e.g., income, health such as prevalence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV] aids, education) of this on the future of the small-scale fisheries sector.
7. The question of issues that directly affect the condition of the stocks, in particular overcapacity fuelled by a race for fish in open access, and its implications on sustainability of the resources need to be addressed.

8. Fishing is the most dangerous occupation with far reaching social consequence, especially in developing countries. Safety in the fishing sector remains a serious problem in small scale and artisanal fisheries. What are the factors that make fisheries dangerous, and how can small-scale fisheries be made safer? FAO has many years of experience in providing advice and assistance to improve safety at sea, and ACFR recommends that awareness of the issue of safety should be heightened, and that FAO should continue to provide assistance to improve safety and working conditions.

These issues require a two-pronged approach. The first deals with the development and implementation of sustainable programs to assess small-scale fisheries. These assessments need to address yield and product flow, welfare of participants including their safety, distribution of benefits, and efficiency (taking account of externalization of costs).

The second approach is to undertake case studies of selected small-scale fisheries. The case studies should be selected to address hypotheses about the characteristics of small scale fisheries that determine how they evolve and how well they perform in the face of change drivers (globalization, climate, technology). For example, case studies might be used to test the hypothesis that rights and collective action by participants in fisheries are necessary for small-scale fisheries to perform well. A secondary hypothesis might deal with enablers of rights and collective action.

ACFR recognizes that case studies are broadly important as a research tool. We suggest that an ongoing communication vehicle (e.g., traditional or electronic journal, database) be established for case studies in fisheries. In addition to case studies on small-scale fisheries, case studies on impacts of trade, response to climate change, performance fisheries with various types of rights, factors effecting safety in small-scale fisheries, and effectiveness of human capacity development programs, are examples where case studies would serve ACFR's priorities.

Aquaculture – how can species choice and domestication¹ drive sustainable aquaculture development?

Aquaculture requires suitable, marketable species. The majority of the species used today in aquaculture do not even have closed life-cycles, requiring sourcing of seed from the wild or from parents captured from the wild. However, the majority of production comes from species that do have fully closed life cycles and, increasingly, from those which are domesticated or especially bred to improve their production under farm conditions. A question in decision-makers' minds is whether aquaculture will, or is, developing towards a typical agriculture sector model where production is based on a small number of key exotic, domesticated species, and the benefits and threats of such a development pathway.

The choice of species sets in train all the factors that will determine the long term viability of individual enterprises and the collective viability and sustainability of the sector, including whether domestication will be possible. The following questions arise once an aquaculture species is chosen:

- Where, how much and in what product form is the demand for this species and its products?
- Will the expected long term prices enable a profitable business?
- What types of production systems will be feasible and where?
- What types of feeds will be needed, where will they be sourced and, if aquatic product-based feeds are required, how will this impact on fisheries?
- What are the environmental risks: biodiversity, including genetic resources conservation issues, such as the need for exotic introductions, the threats to local biodiversity and genetic resources, and the needs of ex-situ and in-situ conservation?
- What are the food security implications of growing this species?
- From where will the seed be sourced and how? Has the life cycle been closed?
- Can this species be domesticated for long term deliberate adaptation of strains for farming use?
- What are the economic and food security trade-offs in species choice, such as between quick gains from introducing a known exotic species versus domesticating a native species?
- What partnerships and institutions are important in determining species choice and domestication, especially those between technical experts and the farmers, and the institutions for maintaining the tools and products for domestication (gene banks, breeding collections, etc.)?
- Would this species be alternatively or additionally suitable for use in stock enhancement or culture-based fisheries, and if so, in which ecosystems and with what safeguards for responsible stock enhancement?

As part of its ongoing aquaculture research and development program, FAO is recommended to examine the question of how species choice for aquaculture and culture based fisheries and the full domestication of aquaculture species can be used to improve the sustainable contribution that aquaculture makes to the future world fish supply needs. The study should also address the procedures and criteria, implicit and explicit, that are and could be used in species collection.

¹ Domestication – The evolution of plants or animals either naturally or through artificial selection, to forms more useful to man, e.g. non-shattering seeds. These characteristics of domestication are frequently absent in wild types of the organism and may constitute a negative genetic load for survival in the wild state.

Source: *International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR), (comp.), 1991. Elsevier's Dictionary of Plant Genetic Resources. Rome.*

Sustainability of livelihoods and environmental fluctuations

Sustainability of fisheries has over the years become an increasing concern. In practice, however, it is not straightforward to apply the concept of sustainability to fisheries. The growth, reproduction and migration of fish stocks are heavily influenced by climatic fluctuations. These fluctuations operate on various time scales. Regime shifts that change the relative abundance of species in a given area are known to occur from time to time. On shorter time scales substantial changes in fish stock abundance and migratory pattern do occur. For most fish stocks it is probably undesirable or even impossible to stabilize catches on an annual basis.

The concern about sustainability derives largely and perhaps wholly from concern about the sustainability of the livelihoods of people that get their food and income from the sea. What needs to be looked into, therefore, is the potential threat to the sustainability of livelihoods that is posed by environmentally driven fluctuations in fish stocks and how this can be dealt with. This threat need not only lie in the fact that the abundance of fish stocks changes as a result of environmental fluctuations; it may also be the case that people in a given country are from time to time excluded from pursuing their traditional livelihoods because fish stocks change their migratory behaviour and occur in another country's jurisdiction.

A research agenda:

- How real is the threat to sustainable livelihoods posed by fish stock fluctuations?
- What are the areas or stocks where this problem is most severe?
- What are the remedies?

Potential remedies to this problem are presumably related to the flexibility and adaptability of the fishing industry and the opportunities available for the people who work there. Are there other stocks of fish available when one particular stock goes down because of adverse environmental conditions? Is alternative employment available when fishing must be curtailed? Are income insurance schemes needed, of a kind similar to crop insurance systems that deal with crop failures? Is there a need for closer cooperation between states in order to deal with changes in fish migration so that people can have access to fish stocks which are their traditional sources of livelihood but from which they might be barred temporarily?

A related research topic is the implications of fish stock fluctuations for the capacity of fishing fleets. It is highly likely that the variability in fish catches caused by climatic fluctuations will call for a fleet capacity that in some years is excessive because fish stocks are in a poor condition and in other years insufficient. Mobility of fishing fleets across national jurisdictions obviously has implications for this.

The FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research held its fifth session in Rome from 12 to 15 October 2004. The Committee appreciated the extensive range of research activities undertaken by the FAO Fisheries Department and its partners and provided guidance to foster this work, particularly in aquaculture and inland fisheries as well as in fish utilization and trade. The Committee commended the work of its Working Parties on Small-scale Fisheries and Human Capacity Development and recommended that the Strategic Framework on Human Capacity Development be presented to the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Fisheries in March 2005 in order to create greater awareness of the subject and encourage the use of the Strategic Framework. The Committee agreed on a work programme for 2005/2006.

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