

Update on the Central Asia and Caucasus Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission

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FAO's governing Council unanimously approved on the creation of a new regional fisheries and aquaculture management body for the Central Asia and Caucasus region. The approval of the Agreement on the Central Asian and Caucasus Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission took place at the Hundred and Thirty Seventh Session of the Council on 1 October 2009 through Resolution No 1/137.

The FAO-affiliated commission (a so called Article XIV body under the FAO Constitution) will become active as soon as three countries formally accept it at the national level. In December 2009, the Director General of FAO sent the Agreement and related information on the instrument of acceptance to the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, People's Republic China, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia and Ukraine. In February 2010, the first instruments of acceptance were deposited by the Governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. A third national-level ratification is expected to come quickly.

Talks toward the establishment of the new Commission started in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in November 2008. Various meetings followed; these included meetings which took place in Turkey in March 2009 (Ankara¹), June 2009 (Trabzon²) and February 2010 (Istanbul). In these meetings, the type of collaboration was discussed and the Agreement and Rules of Procedure for the Commission were prepared. Many of the above listed countries have participated in the establishment process of the Commission so far, as well as observers from the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Coordination Water Commission (SIC - ICWC), the World Bank, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA), the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Eastern Europe (NACEE) and the Caspian Environment Programme.

FAO supported the establishment of the commission through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) facility project "Establishment of a Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries Organization (TCP/RER/3203)" and through its

Central Asia Regional Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (FishDev – Central Asia) (GCP/RER/031/TUR), funded by the FAO Turkey Partnership Programme (FTPP).

FAO's Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) in Ankara, Turkey, will secretariat assistance until the Commission becomes fully operational; the establishment process is further guided by the FAO Legal and Ethics Office (LEG), the Policy, Economics and Institutions Service of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FIPI) and FAO SEC.

The Commission is expected to work on both capture fisheries and aquaculture issues. In terms of aquaculture activities of the Commission, issues such as transboundary movement of live fish, fish introductions, restocking, hatchery management and better management practices (BMP) development, are likely to get prominent in the work programme for the first five years of the Commission. The Commission would also support the normative work on above-listed issues as well as assist in collection and review of aquaculture data and information in the region and technology transfer and human capacity development.

The Government of Kyrgyzstan has kindly offered to host the 3rd Intergovernmental meeting on Fisheries and Aquaculture in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the period 6-8 September 2010 on the shores of Lake Issyk-kul. Preparations for this meeting by the FAO Secretariat³ and the Kyrgyz Government are ongoing. ■

¹Report of the Steering Committee Meeting to Prepare for the second Regional Intergovernmental Meeting on the Establishment of a Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries Arrangement. Ankara, Turkey, 24 – 26 March 2009, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report, No. 900, 2009 (Bilingual) accessible at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/i0918b/i0918b00.pdf>

²Report of the second Intergovernmental Meeting on the Establishment of Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries Organization. Trabzon, Turkey, 3–5 June 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report, No. 912, 2009 (Bilingual) accessible at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1374b/i1374b00.pdf>

³More information can be obtained from the FAO Secretariat to the Steering Committee which supports the establishment process, Mr Raymon Van Anrooy, SEC Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, e-mail: Raymon.vanAnrooy@fao.org