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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**Programmatic implications of the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries
and Aquaculture**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The *2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture* was formally endorsed at the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 34), held on 1-5 February 2021, in the context of the High-level event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- The *Declaration* is a collective statement of the Committee of Fisheries to (i) acknowledge the achievements of the fisheries and aquaculture sector since the endorsement of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and (ii) gather collective momentum in tackling the challenges and opportunities to secure the long-term sustainability of the sector, as we celebrate this milestone.
- This document provides information on programmatic implications of the *Declaration*.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to take note of how the priorities identified in the *Declaration* are being incorporated into the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Medium Term Plan 2022-25, and Members are invited to provide additional extra-budgetary resources for its full implementation.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **welcomed the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture; and**
- **took note of the recommendations of the Declaration in relation to the FAO Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan, as well as through extra budgetary resource mobilization.**

I. Introduction

1. The *COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture* was formally endorsed at the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 34), in the context of the High-level event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).
2. The *Declaration* (COFI/2020/2.3)¹ is a collective statement of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to (i) acknowledge the achievements of the fisheries and aquaculture sector since the endorsement of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) 25 years ago, and (ii) gather collective momentum in tackling the challenges and opportunities to secure the long-term sustainability of the sector, as we celebrate this milestone.
3. The *Declaration* resulted from an extensive consultative process led by the COFI Bureau, including periodic consultations with Members and key partners from November 2019 to January 2021.
4. The *Declaration* has two parts: (i) a preambular section where FAO Members, Member Organizations, and Associate Members reflect on the evolution that the fisheries and aquaculture sector has gone through since the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF, Resolution 4/95 FAO Conference 31 October 1995), in the context of FAO's mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty, and (ii) an operational section where the COFI reiterates its commitment to the objectives of the CCRF and to the relevant binding and non-binding fisheries and aquaculture international tools and instruments elaborated since the adoption of the CCRF. It also identifies priority actions for the fisheries and aquaculture community, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector and to enhance its contributions to the objectives of 2030 Agenda.
5. The *Declaration* further supports an evolving and positive vision for fisheries and aquaculture in the 21st century, where the sector is fully recognized for its contribution to fighting poverty, hunger and malnutrition, its ability to prepare for and respond to changing climate and ocean conditions, and its commitment to sustainability.

II. Programmatic implications

6. In the *Declaration*, FAO Members, Member Organizations and Associated Members further commit to the objectives of the CCRF and relevant binding and non-binding fisheries and aquaculture international tools and instruments with actionable commitments.
7. Most of these commitments are considered to be adequately reflected in the proposed Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) under the new FAO Strategic Framework, in particular, but not exclusively, in the following PPAs:
 - BP2 Blue transformation.
 - BP4 Small-scale producers equitable access to resources.
 - BN1 Healthy diets for all.
 - BN4 Reducing food loss and waste.
 - BN5 Transparent markets and trade.
 - BE3 Biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture.
 - BL1 Gender equality and rural women's empowerment.
 - BL5 Resilient agri-food systems.
8. The *Declaration* offers opportunities for the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources on the collectively identified sectoral priorities, and in support of the Strategic Framework 2022-31, in particular:

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ne472en/ne472en.pdf>

- a) Op. Par. 2 – Improve fisheries assessment and management systems in all regions, particularly in those where fish stock status is declining or unknown, including through coordinated capacity building programmes with particular attention to data-poor regions and towards reducing the digital divide.
- b) Op. Par. 3 – Strengthen the scientific basis in support of fisheries and aquaculture management decisions, including through the use of new technology, such as electronic monitoring and reporting, and the promotion of international scientific cooperation.
- c) Op. Par. 4 – Reiterate the importance of the ecosystem approach as an effective framework for integrating conservation and sustainable utilization objectives and promote the application of management measures across all aquatic systems.
- d) Op. Par. 5 – Foster the potential of aquaculture growth through innovative practices and inclusive sustainable aquaculture development programmes, particularly where population growth will challenge food systems most.
- e) Op. Par. 6 – Support international cooperative governance mechanisms to help improve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and protect the ocean environment and strengthen the conservation and management regimes of Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).
- f) Op. Par. 8 – Encourage the consumption of fish, aquatic plants and their products, recognizing they are among the healthiest foods on the planet, and especially the consumption of underutilized resources.
- g) Op. Par. 9 – Promote policies that support the contribution of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in food security, employment and income, improve data collection systems, especially from small scale and artisanal fisheries, and further support the access of small-scale fishers and fish farmers to markets.
- h) Op. Par. 10 – Ensure that fish are fully considered in food security and nutrition strategies and contribute to the long-term sustainability of food systems.
- i) Op. Par. 11 – Encourage the reduction of pre- and post-harvest loss and waste in the sector, including discards, by implementing internationally agreed standards through appropriate actions.
- j) Op. Par. 12 – Ensuring that trade and technical measures are transparent, based on scientific advice, non-discriminatory, consistent with internationally agreed rules and standards, and do not result in non-tariff barriers or undermine conservation measures.
- k) Op. Par. 13 – Promote the attainment of safe, healthy and fair working conditions for all in the sector, facilitate access to social protection programmes for fishers and aquaculture producers and their communities.
- l) Op. Par. 14 – Enhance women’s full access to and equal opportunities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector through gender-based policies, take action against discrimination and abuse in the workplace, and combat systemic gender inequalities.