

## Fifth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI/AQ)

27 September to 01 October 2010  
Phuket, Thailand

Aquaculture, still the fastest growing food producing sectors of the world, has achieved a reputation as a significant contributor to poverty alleviation, food security and income generation. The decision to establish the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA) under the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), in 2001, reflects the importance that FAO Member States attach to aquaculture development. Since its' First Session in 2002 April in Beijing, P. R. China, COFI/AQ held four successive sessions: second session in 2003 August in Trondheim, Norway; third session in September 2006 in New Delhi, India; and fourth session in October 2008 in Puerto Varas, Chile. The fifth session will be held from 27 September to 01 October 2010 in Phuket, Thailand. The continuing offers for sponsoring and hosting the SCA sessions by FAO Member States confirm the commitment that they attach to the Sub-Committee.

The fifth session will focus on several key issues pertinent to aquaculture development globally. The technical agenda consists of the following subjects:

### *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture: for discussion and recommendation*

As a stand alone agenda item, the Secretariat will present a brief overview of the efforts made by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, towards implementing the recommendations of the past sessions of the SCA. The Working Document developed by the Secretariat indicates that significant achievements have been made during the intersessional period on implementing the recommendations of the SCA.

### *Improving the progress reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), provisions relevant to aquaculture and culture-based fisheries and the proposal for a revised reporting mechanism on CCRF with an interactive questionnaire format: for discussion and decision*

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was adopted by the FAO Member States in 1995. FAO members are obliged to report to FAO on their efforts in implementing the provisions of the CCRF

on a regular basis. The session will discuss the current status and trends in the reporting of the progress of implementation of the CCRF by FAO members. FAO regularly assists its members to better implement the provisions of the CCRF. As it appears that determining the appropriate assistance required by the members is difficult under the present reporting mechanism, the Secretariat will propose a revised questionnaire and further improvements to the reporting mechanism, following recommendations of the last session of the Sub-Committee.

### *Guidelines on aquaculture certification: for discussion and decision*

Trading of aquaculture commodities are on the rise and expanding globally. People's awareness of how aquatic products are produced is increasing and the demand for sustainably produced, safe-to-eat products are growing. Aquaculture certification, thus, becomes a tool for improving consumer confidence. However, no internationally agreed guidelines or standards on aquaculture certification exist. On the request by FAO members, guidelines on aquaculture certification are being developed by FAO through a lengthy consultative process. COFI/AQ V is expected to finalise the guidelines development process and build consensus on the set of guidelines, which will be presented to next session of COFI in March 2011 in Rome for final agreement.

### *Aquatic biosecurity: a key for sustainable aquaculture development: for discussion and decision*

Biosecurity, as defined by FAO, is a strategic and integrated approach that encompasses policy and regulatory frameworks aimed at analysing and managing risks relevant to human, animal and plant life and health and including associated environmental





risks. It covers food safety, zoonoses, introduction of animal and plant diseases and pests, introduction and release of living modified organisms (LMOs) and their products (e.g. genetically modified organisms or GMOs), and the introduction of invasive alien species. The Secretariat will present an overview of major biosecurity concerns affecting modern aquaculture (e.g. transboundary aquatic animal diseases, food safety, public health risks on the use of veterinary medicinal products, bioinvasions, aquaculture issues pertaining to aquatic GMOs and some aspects of climate change), to the FAO members seeking guidance to meet these biosecurity challenges and advise upon appropriate biosecurity measures to protect the aquaculture sector.

*Climate change and aquaculture: opportunities and challenges for adaptation and mitigation: for discussion, recommendations and decision*

Climate change is a potential threat to the sustainability of aquaculture development. Impacts can occur as a result of both gradual warming and associated physical changes as well as from frequency, intensity and location of extreme events, and can take place in the context of other global socio-economic pressures on natural resources. Climate change impacts on aquaculture have both direct effects, e.g. through physical and physiological processes, and indirect effects, e.g. through variations in fish meal supplies and trade issues. Urgent adaptation measures are required in response to opportunities and threats to food and livelihood provisions due to climatic variations. During COFI/AQ V, the Secretariat will present a working document to the FAO membership which analyzes some of the evidence on climate change potential impacts to the aquaculture sector at global and regional levels and the Sub-Committee will be invited to discuss the urgent adaptation measures required in response to such issues.

*Moving aquaculture further offshore: governance issues and challenges: for discussion and recommendations*

The agenda item on moving aquaculture further offshore will share recent salient developments in offshore aquaculture, particularly in offshore mariculture and discusses the major impediments to its development

and some of their possible mitigating strategies whilst highlighting challenges ahead. Most mariculture occurs in coastal sheltered waters. Costly technology and limited coastal space threaten its development. One of the mitigating strategies is to move operations further offshore. Should offshore aquaculture extend to the high seas, there would be a regulatory vacuum. While the latter could be filled by the extension of state regulatory regimes or a treaty, adaptation of existing organizations and practices in fisheries to aquaculture, in combination with the CCRF could be a more viable option. The trend towards moving aquaculture further offshore will require adjustments in aquaculture governance, which will have to reconcile with ecological and human well-being, maintain societal harmony by protecting the interests of vulnerable groups such as small-scale farmers, without destroying entrepreneurial initiatives. The Sub-Committee is invited to advise FAO on the way forward on addressing this issue.

As a tool for improving data, statistics and information on aquaculture, FAO recently established the Coordinating Working Party on Aquaculture, under the purview of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics. The Sub-Committee will discuss its functions and advise the Secretariat on the priority issues to be undertaken during the intrasessional period, towards improving aquaculture information, data and statistics.

**COFI/AQ Attendance**

Since the fifth session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture will be held back-to-back with the Global Conference on Aquaculture 2010, it is expected that many FAO members will attend this fifth session and engage in fruitful discussions leading to meaningful decisions and agreements. ■

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