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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-ninth Session

Rome, Italy, 31 January – 4 February 2011

SAFETY AT SEA IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

1. This document provides a summary of recent FAO activities that support the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries with regard to safety at sea in the fisheries sector.

2. Fishing is considered to be the world's most dangerous occupation, with more than 24 000 casualties per year¹. The issue of the safety in the fisheries sector was raised at the Twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and there was widespread support for the development of guidelines on best practices for safety at sea as recommended by the Expert Consultation.² The Committee recognized the effective working relations that FAO enjoys with IMO and ILO and encouraged such collaboration to continue, especially in the areas of safety at sea, work on fishing vessels and health standards. In addition, the ILO representative suggested that FAO might consider addressing issues relating to child labour in the fisheries sector.

Guidelines on best practices for safety at sea in the fisheries sector

3. The Expert Consultation on Best Practices for Safety at Sea in the Fisheries Sector, which was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 10 to 13 November 2008, noting the recommendation contained in the report of the Twenty-seventh Session of the Committee on Fisheries that "FAO should develop guidelines on best practices for safety at sea", recommended that the FAO Secretariat should proceed with the development of the Guidelines and proposed an outline and general guidance. The FAO Secretariat is now in the process of preparing the first draft of the Guidelines.

¹ ILO.1999. Tripartite Meeting on Safety and Health in the Fishing Industry, Geneva, 13-17 December 1999.

² FAO. 2009. Report of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Committee on Fisheries. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No 902. FAO. Rome. 64p. (paragraphs 19 and 20). FAO Expert Consultation on Best Practices for Safety at Sea in the Fisheries Sector held in Rome, Italy, from 10 to 13 November, see FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No 888.

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FAO/NIOSH International Study on Fishing Management Regimes and their Impacts on Fishing Safety

4. In 2008, FAO and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the United States of America (NIOSH) collaborated to conduct the *International Study on Fishing Management Regimes and their impacts on Fishing Safety* to provide a first empirical review of the effects of fisheries resource management measures on the safety of fishing operations and to provide guidance to fisheries managers on how to make commercial fishing safer. The study, which was based on 16 diverse case studies sponsored by FAO, concluded that fisheries managers should acknowledge that their decisions have indirect and direct effects on safety and therefore should consider safety as an explicit management objective. It was recommended that fisheries managers and safety professionals should work together to develop shared understanding on issues of mutual concern.

The global safety at sea programme for small-scale fisheries in developing countries (GCP/GLO/200/MUL)

5. FAO is in the process of closing the global safety at sea programme for small-scale fisheries in developing countries that has been ongoing since December 2006. The programme has been implemented in two regions, the West Africa Region and the South Asia Region. The programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and IMO, with support from the Swedish Maritime Administration (SMA), was aimed at improving the livelihood of small-scale fishing communities by decreasing the number of accidents at sea and the effects of such accidents. One of the outputs of the programme was the Safety for Fishermen website, which has been developed to facilitate distribution of good quality information on safety at sea in the fisheries sector as well as creating and maintaining a network of experts and stakeholders. The website may be consulted at <http://www.safety-for-fishermen.org>.

Cooperation between IMO, ILO and FAO on the subject of fishermen's safety

6. There is an ongoing and long-standing cooperation between IMO, ILO and FAO on the subject of fishermen's safety. The development of a new safety standard for small fishing vessels titled "FAO/ILO/IMO Safety recommendations for decked fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length and undecked fishing vessels", was recently completed. It was approved by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in May 2010, after which it was sent to ILO and FAO for subsequent acceptance. The text of the "Safety Recommendations", as approved by MSC in May 2010, is available at <http://www.sigling.is/pages/1266> as well as a made-available document. The list of contents and the preamble of the document are set out in Annex 1.

7. Furthermore, new FAO/ILO/IMO guidelines to assist Competent Authorities in the implementation of Part B of the Fishing Vessels Safety Code, the Voluntary Guidelines and the Safety Recommendations³, which are voluntary instruments, are expected to be completed by the IMO Sub-Committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels Safety in January 2011 for approval by the MSC in May 2011. Thereafter, these guidelines, also referred to as the "Implementation Guidelines", as approved, would be transmitted to ILO and FAO for their consideration, as appropriate, with due regard to timely publication⁴.

8. FAO has been assisting IMO in accelerating the entry into force of the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol and the most recent related activity is the development of a new draft Agreement and draft Assembly resolution on the implementation of the Protocol, together with associated amendments, to facilitate its entry into force. This activity is a follow-up to the 2nd Joint FAO/IMO *Ad Hoc* Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters, which was held at FAO Headquarters in July 2007. The basis for this work is the outcome of regional IMO seminars (in Beijing, China; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Bali, Indonesia), where FAO assisted in their preparation and conduct. It is envisaged that the new instrument would be adopted at the IMO Assembly in November 2011 or alternatively at a Conference to be held at the same time as the Assembly.

³ The full titles of these documents are: The Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels; The Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels; and The Safety recommendations for decked fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length and undecked fishing vessels.

⁴ This document is available at: <http://www.sigling.is/pages/1122> as well as as a made-available document