

ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Report of the Twenty-eighth Session



RAP publication 2004/19

Report of the Twenty-eighth Session of the

ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION (APFIC)

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 3-5 August 2004



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 2004

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Ó FAO 2004

PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

This is the edited version of the report approved by the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission.

For bibliographic purposes this document should be cited as follows:

FAO, 2004. *Report of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission, 3-5 August, 2004.* FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand. RAP publication 2004/19. 35 p.

ABSTRACT

This is the final report of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 3 to 5 August 2004. Major topics discussed were: the overview of the status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia and the Pacific; report of the executive committee; the new APFIC as a consultative forum for fishery issues; regional arrangements for fisheries – an analysis of gaps and opportunities and APFIC work plan 2004-2010.

Distribution:

Participants in the Session
Members of the Commission
Other interested nations and international organizations
FAO Fisheries Department
Fishery Officers in FAO Regional Offices

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) held its Twenty-eighth Session from 3 to 5 August 2004, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The Session was attended by the representatives of 15 Members of the Commission and by observers from ten Regional Organizations. A list of the delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.
2. The Deputy-Chairman of APFIC, Mr Jaranthada Karnasuta, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand, welcomed the Commission at the official opening of the Session. Mr Jaranthada noted the longstanding achievements of APFIC over its more than 50 years of activity. He drew attention to the emergence of sub-regional fishery bodies and organizations, many of which originated as FAO projects, which had enjoyed APFIC support. Despite the range of organizations that have competence in fisheries in the region, there are still many gaps in coverage and mandate and Mr Jaranthada emphasized the potential role that APFIC could provide as a Regional Consultative Forum in bridging some of these gaps and facilitating collaboration on fisheries issues within the region. His opening remarks are attached as Appendix D.
3. The welcoming address to the commission was made by Mr Kwanchai Wongnitikorn, Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai. Mr Wongnitikorn expressed the pleasure of the city of Chiang Mai in hosting the 28th Session and hoped that the members and participants would have an enjoyable and fruitful meeting. His welcome address is at Appendix D.
4. On behalf of the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General (Fisheries Department) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Mr Jean-Francois Pulvenis de Seligny expressed his gratitude to the Government of Thailand for hosting the Twenty-eighth Session of APFIC. Mr Pulvenis de Seligny emphasized the vital function of regional cooperation on dealing with fisheries issues and the central role of regional fisheries bodies in achieving this. After recalling the global process underway in strengthening the governance of regional fisheries bodies and the goal of making these bodies more responsive to the needs of members, he drew attention to work that has been carried out within APFIC to that effect. Mr Pulvenis de Seligny reiterated FAO commitment to provide its fullest support to APFIC in its new role, but underscored that strong commitment from its members was necessary in order to ensure the effective implementation of whatever understanding would be reached in this matter at this session of the Commission. In conclusion, Mr Pulvenis de Seligny thanked the Governor and people of Chiang Mai, Thailand for the excellent hospitality and asked him to convey to the Government of Thailand, FAO's gratitude for the excellent arrangements and hosting of the 28th Session of APFIC. His statement is attached as Appendix D.
5. In inaugurating the Session, Mr Sitdhi Boonyaratpalin, Director-General of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand welcomed the delegates and observers to the Twenty-eighth Session of APFIC. He emphasized the need for increased collaboration on fisheries issues of common interest amongst APFIC members. He drew attention to the alarming trend of declining capture fisheries production in many coastal fisheries in the region and emphasized the need for effective action to address management needs in small-scale fisheries. Mr Boonyaratpalin indicated that development of national codes of practice for capture fisheries and improved information systems for trade and fisheries management were also required.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Commission adopted the Agenda as shown in Appendix A and agreed on the arrangements for the Session. The documents considered and reviewed by the Commission are listed in Appendix C.

INTER-SESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF APFIC

7. The Secretariat introduced document APFIC/04/2, summarizing the main events and activities which had taken place during the inter-sessional period. The Commission observed that Mr Veravat Hongskul who had served APFIC as its Secretary for more than ten years had retired in December 2002, and that he was succeeded by Mr Derek Staples, former Senior Advisor to the Minister of Fisheries of Australia in September 2003. The Commission expressed its sincere appreciation for the outstanding service of Mr Hongskul and warmly welcomed Mr Staples, wishing him every success in discharging his duties.

8. The Commission noted that the Director-General of FAO had circulated a letter inviting Members of APFIC to reaffirm their continued interest in and commitment to APFIC, in response to its request during its Twenty-seventh Session (2001) regarding the future of APFIC. The Commission also thanked the Secretariat for its initiative in conducting a study to elaborate the options for the future of APFIC and agreed to discuss the issues fully in Agenda Items 5 and 6.

9. The Commission was informed of the continued collaboration of APFIC with a number of global, regional and sub-regional bodies and arrangements concerned with fisheries. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific had also implemented a number of Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) of special interest to the Commission. A detailed review of these activities was provided to the Commission in the Report of the Sixty-ninth Session of the Executive Committee and under Agenda Item 5.

10. The Commission also noted with appreciation other recent initiatives taken by the Secretariat. These included the production of a CD archiving the reports and technical papers of the past sessions of APFIC (formerly known as the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council and the Indo-Pacific Fishery Commission (IPFC)) from its inception in 1949 to 1998. The Commission was informed of the development of the APFIC website (www.apfic.fao.org) and the publication of a handbook on *Regional fishery bodies and arrangements in Asia and the Pacific* which is designed to act as a Regional fisheries information resource and will include fisheries overviews, national and regional contacts, information related to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, fisheries overviews, and links to the many international and regional organizations and arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region that address fishery issues. This would be available both for the benefit of the Members of the Commission and also other interested parties.

11. It was agreed that these information resources would help facilitate the transition of APFIC to a Regional Consultative Forum. At the same time, they would enhance better understanding, at the sub-regional, regional and global levels, of the contributions of APFIC to the sustainable development of fisheries resources and the rational management of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region.

12. Following this agenda item the APFIC website was formally launched by the Deputy-Chairman.

OVERVIEW – STATUS AND POTENTIAL OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

13. The Commission considered this agenda item on the basis of document APFIC/04/3 which had been abstracted from a draft report on the status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region. This is currently in preparation by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (document APFIC/04/Inf.8). The Commission congratulated the Secretariat for the production of this comprehensive review and affirmed that fisheries and aquaculture are vital to the Asia-Pacific region, providing food security, revenue and employment to millions of people. In several member countries, fisheries and aquaculture make notable contributions to the GDPs and the region also contains some of the highest per capita fish consumption in the world.

Production trends

14. The Commission reaffirmed that the Asia-Pacific region continued to be the largest producer of fish and fishery products in the world, totaling approximately 92 million tonnes or approximately 69 percent of global production in 2002. Of the top ten producers in the world, five countries are in the region (China, Indonesia, Japan, India, and Thailand). The Commission noted that despite the significance of fisheries and aquaculture in the region, this sector is often overlooked during national policy development and often given lesser priority relative to other agriculture production sectors.

15. For **marine capture fisheries**, there was rapid growth in production between 1950-1990, but this has slowed down over the last decade. The Commission was informed that over the past 30 years there has been a trend from larger sized demersal fish towards smaller pelagic fish species. It was particularly noted that an increasing proportion of these catches are being used directly or indirectly as fish meal in aquaculture and livestock feeds. It further noted that the demand for these low-value 'trash fish' for this purpose had fuelled increasing pressure on the fish stocks.

16. The production from **inland capture fisheries** was observed to have increased significantly in the 1990's. The Commission noted that this could be the result of improved estimation and reporting of inland catches, because the earlier reported production from inland waters is known to have been underestimated in many sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific, especially production from artisanal small-scale fisheries in rural areas.

17. Growth in **aquaculture** has been noticeably strong over the past ten years with aquaculture production from the region doubling since 1990. The contribution of China to the region's aquaculture production is particularly significant. Carps and barbs continue to be the dominant freshwater species and marine Penaeids continued to dominate crustacean culture. Recently, the culture of white shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*, introduced from South America) has increased, especially in China, and South and Southeast Asia. It was noted that with the increasing production of this species, there have been price instabilities and trade disagreements over allegations of dumping. Production of aquatic plants and molluscs continued to increase, although site limitations were expected to constrain this in the future.

State of the fishery resources

18. The Commission noted with concern evidence from studies conducted by the WorldFish Center (Trawl-base project) indicating declining demersal fish resources from a number of fisheries in the region. The study also revealed changes in the composition of the trawl catches with a significant increase in the amount of smaller fish, indicating the effect known as 'fishing down the food chain'. It was noted that accompanying socio-economic studies indicated that fishing was still profitable for semi-commercial or commercial trawl fisheries but not for small-

scale fisheries. The evidence of large rent dissipation and excess capacity in the fisheries was noted and pointed to the urgency of reducing the overall fishing effort. The Commission concurred with the studies and recommended that there was an urgent need for implementation of better and more effective fisheries management plans.

19. The Commission was appraised of the status of a number of large marine ecosystems (LMEs) in the region. It noted that in a number of heavily fished LMEs, such as the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand and to a lesser extent the Sulu-Celebes Sea, there was evidence of ‘fishing down the food chain’, with the fisheries becoming more dependent on smaller low-value ‘trash fish’.

20. The Commission agreed that a more holistic approach to fishery management was needed that balanced the needs of the different parts of the fishery sector, as well as balanced the human well-being against ecological well-being.

21. The delegate of Republic of Korea drew the Commission’s attention to the use of the term ‘Sea of Japan’ in document APFIC/04/Inf.8 and stated that it should be referred to as the ‘East Sea /Sea of Japan’. The delegate of Japan stated that the APFIC session was not the appropriate forum for discussion of this matter and reserved its comments. The Secretariat agreed that it would seek legal advice on this matter.

22. The Commission observed that reported production from inland fishery resources continued to rise, but noted that many of the inland water habitats had been degraded due to pollution and activities under agricultural and/or economic development initiatives. It acknowledged the importance of inland fisheries in sustaining rural livelihoods in many countries of the region. In particular, it noted that the lack of accurate information on small-scale capture fisheries in inland waters, such as the impact of water management infrastructure, agriculture and industrial development, as well as increasing fishing pressure had led to difficulty in properly assessing the status of inland fisheries resources.

23. The Commission emphasized the need for more focused efforts at improved information and assessment of the status of inland fisheries resources in the region, and requested assistance to implement this. The Commission pointed out that this was particularly important for effective management decision making but also for effectively informing national policy and development processes.

Outlook

24. The Secretariat informed the Commission of the conclusions of recent study on “Fish to 2020” (International Food Policy Research Institute and WorldFish Centre). The Commission noted the forecast revealed by the study that fish production and consumption would continue to rise in developing States, but slow down in developed States. The effect would be increasing prices for fish, fish meal and fish oil and increased demand over supply. This contrasted with the forecast for the livestock sector which suggests that prices for meat would decrease over the next 15 years. It was further noted that development in South-South trade in fish and fishery products, including seafood, would most likely be greater than North-South trade, with developing States remaining net exporters. The Commission acknowledged that the longer term implication of this would be that fish would become less affordable for the poor and increasingly become a luxury food item.

25. The commission was informed that with the overall increase in global demand, it is expected that the abundance of coastal fishery resources in the region would continue to decline unless excess fishing capacity and fishing effort were greatly reduced. The Commission concurred with the study that parallel to the reduction of the capacity and fishing effort in commercial or

industrial fisheries, there was a need to introduce improved management of small-scale fisheries. The latter could be effected through co-management, whereby relevant government agencies devolved some of the responsibilities to local communities together with the adoption of a holistic approach, balancing human needs with ecological well-being. The Commission reiterated its recommendations from previous sessions regarding the continuing need for capacity building and technology transfer for fisheries administrators and technicians as well as other stakeholders in the sector by the developing member countries of APFIC.

26. The Secretariat informed the Commission that the abundance of offshore resources would probably be considerably less than those found in coastal waters. The Commission cautioned that if these limited off-shore resources became uneconomical, commercial fleets would return to the coastal fisheries, further aggravating existing problems of near-shore overfishing.

27. The Commission noted that continued aquaculture expansion was possible, but the land or water resources required for this would be increasingly constrained. In particular, the Commission emphasized the need to identify and develop alternatives to fish meal as aquaculture feeds since this resource was finite and possibly already at a point where it could not increase further.

28. The Commission agreed that the dominance of low value 'trash fish' in the catches was a major issue of concern, noting that 'trash fish' now exceeds 60 percent of capture fisheries in the South China Sea. It was observed that there is emerging evidence of high rates of discards in some fisheries as day boat fisheries with limited storage capacity change to multi-day fisheries. The Commission unanimously agreed that the 'trash fish' and discard issues should be properly addressed to effect sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in the region.

29. The Commission felt that the rising trend of live-fish trade for ornamental aquariums or food was driving unsustainable fishing methods in the region. It was suggested that the Commission contribute to raising awareness amongst consumers regarding the impact that these practices were having on marine resources.

30. The Commission, in discussing these two issues as highlighted by the Secretariat, also suggested that future reports should include other issues such as food safety and post-harvest practices, especially as they relate to small-scale fisheries and rural aquaculture.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

31. The Commission reviewed the report of the Sixty-ninth Session of the Executive Committee which was convened in Pattaya, Thailand, from 15 to 16 December 2003 (document APFIC/04/4). It noted with appreciation that, besides commenting on the inter-sessional activities undertaken by the Secretariat (already discussed under agenda item 3 of this report), the Executive Committee had given thorough consideration to the future of APFIC, taking into account the response of the APFIC Members to the letter of the Director-General and relevant proposals from the Secretariat.

32. The Commission endorsed the report of the Executive Committee which strongly recommended that APFIC should continue its activities as a regional consultative forum.

THE NEW APFIC – APFIC’S POTENTIAL AS A CONSULTATIVE FORUM FOR FISHERY ISSUES

33. The Commission discussed this agenda item on the basis of documents APFIC/04/5, APFIC/04/4 and APFIC/04/Inf.3.

34. The Commission recalled the conclusions it reached during its previous sessions as well as the recommendations made by its Executive Committee at its 69th Session in December 2003, and reaffirmed that, while continuing its work in capacity building and collaborative research, APFIC should adapt its working methodology to better respond to the needs of its Members and forge partnerships with other relevant organisations and arrangements.

35. The Commission unanimously agreed that APFIC should function as a Regional Consultative Forum (RCF) to provide a framework for Members to discuss fisheries issues which affect groups of States across the wider Asia-Pacific region and to formulate recommendations for action. In this context, APFIC could act as a platform to discuss emerging issues relating to fisheries, trade and sustainable management facing its Members.

36. It underscored that APFIC would undertake a range of activities, including the provision of information via a website, publications, direct advice to members, consultative workshops and working groups leading to a “flagship” biennial RCF meeting. The Regional Consultative Forum Meetings would constitute a regular activity of APFIC and would provide visibility of fisheries problems and issues in the Asia-Pacific region that could also be communicated at the global level.

37. The Commission noted that APFIC would take steps to include FAO Members, non-member nations, other RFBs and arrangements, and other relevant international initiatives in environmental and coastal management as well as regional and international experts to participate. In this way APFIC would seek to avoid duplication of effort in the region and promote its role as a fishery integrative and consultative body.

38. The Commission stressed that the RCF should not entail any additional financial burden for its Members whose contributions should remain voluntary.

39. The Commission concurred with the recommendations of the Fourth Session of the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) held in 2002 and the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI (2003) that problems associated with small-scale fisheries and aquaculture development both in inland and marine waters needed to be properly addressed, considering this sub-sector’s contribution to national social and economic development. Therefore the Commission agreed that the theme for the 2006 RCF meeting should be small-scale fisheries (both marine and inland capture fisheries) and rural aquaculture.

40. Several Delegations indicated that a clear definition for small-scale fisheries was required in order to clarify the scope of the work. The Commission noted that currently different classifications are used by different countries for separating fishery sectors. The Secretariat noted that a harmonized, universally acceptable definition may be difficult to reach and circulated for information a characterization developed by experts during the Second Session of the Working Party on Small-Scale Fisheries of the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research in November 2003 (see Appendix E).

41. The Commission stressed the need for full-time staff in the APFIC Secretariat, in addition to the current part-time involvement of the Senior Fishery Officer and Aquaculture Officers at RAP. Several options were discussed, taking into account the current budget constraints, including the use of Associate Professional Officers (APO’s), either funded by their own government or seconded national staff, under a capacity building arrangement, sponsored by a another country

that allows sponsoring of foreign nationals under their APO scheme. The Secretariat was requested to look into these possibilities.

42. In view of the diversity of RFBs and other relevant international organisations and arrangements in the region, the Commission agreed that APFIC was best suited to take on a regional coordinating role and to promote cooperation amongst these organisations and arrangements. It was suggested that APFIC could also serve as a clearing house for information related to these organisations and arrangements, including statistics.

43. Some Delegations mentioned the importance of management interventions based on good quality data and information on the state of the resource and resource use, but regretted that such data and information were either poor or non-existent. It was suggested this was an area where APFIC could develop guidelines for the generation of good quality fisheries information. Effective linkages with Regional Fishery Bodies and arrangements need to be developed to address this issue.

44. Several organizations indicated their willingness to cost-share proposed activities and others offered their own meetings as a venue to present status and progress of the RCF work.

REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR FISHERIES – AN ANALYSIS OF GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

45. The Commission reviewed an analysis of regional arrangements for fisheries in the Asia-Pacific region based on document APFIC/04/6. The analysis grouped these bodies or arrangements into (i) Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs); (ii) Economic cooperation arrangements; and (iii) Coordinating arrangements. Regional Fishery Bodies were further sub-divided into three categories, viz., (i) those that have a mandate for fisheries management and are empowered to establish management measures; (ii) those that provide members with scientific and management advice; and (iii) those that provide scientific advice and information.

46. The Commission noted that the region is relatively well served with coordination and advisory bodies and arrangements, especially those that relate to providing information sharing and dissemination. However, although the Asia-Pacific region is the highest production region in the world, it only has two regional fisheries management bodies. These are the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the newly-formed Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC).

47. The Commission also noted the number of economic cooperation arrangements in the region, notably the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN); the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC); and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), formerly South Pacific Forum. It was thought that these economic cooperation arrangements may play a larger role in future regional or sub-regional fisheries arrangements. Many general coordinating mechanisms have fisheries amongst their mandates, although several of them are project-based and of limited duration. These included the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded project on 'Reversing environmental degradation trends in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand'; the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) which implements the East Asian Seas Action Plan; and the GEF/UNDP/IMO Partnership for Environmental Management of the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). For inland waters, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) has a fisheries Programme that provides advice and coordination amongst the member States.

48. Several members commented that the analysis had identified some gaps in coverage among the existing arrangements, but also suggested that any future arrangements should build on these existing arrangements. The Commission re-affirmed that APFIC should not evolve into a

management body, but that it could facilitate the evolution of such arrangements, as required, for smaller geographical sub-regions.

49. The Commission supported the view that opportunities exist for closer collaboration between Regional Fishery Bodies, the Regional Sea Programmes and the Large Marine Ecosystem projects and that this should be promoted. It agreed that APFIC's Regional Fisheries Consultative Forum could be one of the avenues to facilitate such collaboration and it was suggested that a useful role of the new APFIC would be to inform Members on important activities and achievements of the various regional bodies and arrangements, as they relate to fisheries issues.

WORKPLAN 2004-2010

50. The Secretariat introduced the proposed APFIC work plan commencing in 2004 based on the Regional Consultative Forum (RCF) concept that was endorsed by the Commission (Agenda item 6). It was stated that the work plan had been formulated, taking into account the biennial session pattern of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), currently held in February/March of alternate years, and in conjunction with the meetings of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs). This would facilitate the input of views and recommendations of APFIC into the preparations of the following sessions of COFI and the meetings of RFBs.

51. The Commission adopted the programme for the biennium (2004-2006) and agreed to convene the first RCF Meeting, in conjunction with the Twenty-ninth Session of APFIC in 2006.

52. The Commission recommended that as a preliminary activity of the RCF, APFIC should undertake an e-conference to contribute to the development of documents for the forthcoming 26th Session of COFI (7-11 March 2005). It was additionally recommended that the Secretariat arrange a brief meeting in Rome immediately prior to the 26th session for those members participating at the 26th session.

53. The Commission noted that the preparations for the RCF Meeting of 2006 would require a number of activities including consultation with some Members of the Commission and other Regional Fishery Bodies and arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region.

54. The Commission highlighted priority areas for the work on small-scale fisheries which included; addressing the lack of information in inland fisheries in the region; the limited amount of information available relating to small-scale coastal fisheries; the application of co-management in small-scale fisheries both inland and coastal; issues of discards and by-catch, 'trash fish' and its interaction with aquaculture; and the need for a broader access to appropriate financing mechanisms.

55. The Commission considered the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in its work plan to hold two regional consultative workshops possibly in 2005. One of these workshops would cover issues relating to "Trash fish and discards in the Asia-Pacific region" and the other would cover "Coastal and inland fishery co-management in the Asia-Pacific region". The Commission agreed that these two broad issues needed to be properly addressed initially at the technical level as they had implications on responsible fisheries management in the region, especially small-scale fisheries. It was also suggested that a workshop be held on inland fisheries.

56. The Commission acknowledged that these workshops would produce a substantial output concerning regional fisheries sustainability for consideration of the first RCF meeting in 2006. The Commission endorsed these two proposals and directed that the Secretariat elaborate the appropriate prospectus.

57. The Commission identified other related areas such as food safety and quality issues in fisheries and aquaculture; promotion of rural finance mechanisms for small-scale fishers, which could also be addressed in partnership with other organizations.

58. The delegation of Thailand informed the Session that it would seek the support of APFIC to implement a project to develop a 'blueprint' for the management of complex multi-gear, multi-species fisheries and expressed the hope that this endeavour would be of value to other APFIC members. The Secretariat warmly welcomed this initiative and agreed to provide technical support.

59. The Commission directed the Secretariat to coordinate the preparations for the 2006 RCF meeting and associated activities. The Commission encouraged the Secretariat to seek extra-budgetary support in this respect.

60. The Commission endorsed the work plan (2004-2010) as proposed by the Secretariat, which appears as Appendix F.

OTHER MATTERS

a) Regional implementation of the Strategy on Status and Trends Reporting in Capture Fisheries

61. The Commission was informed (APFIC/04/Inf.6) of the FAO Strategy on Status and Trends Reporting in Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF) which was adopted at the 25th Session of COFI in 2003. It was further informed about a project to implement this strategy which has been elaborated within the framework of the FAO Fish Code Programme "Assistance to Developing Countries for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries". This project aims to address information needs for small-scale fisheries and capacity building of developing countries to collect such information.

62. The Commission welcomed the FishCode-STF project and acknowledged that it was timely and highly relevant to APFIC in its new role as a Regional Consultative forum with a focus on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. The Commission recommended active participation of the APFIC member countries in promoting this important Strategy and implementing it, in collaboration with relevant Regional Fishery Bodies and arrangements.

b) Main outcomes of the Technical Consultations on IUU Fishing and Fishing Capacity and on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector, Rome, Italy, 24 June-2 July 2004

63. The Commission was informed of relevant outcomes and recommendations of the Technical Consultations held at the FAO Headquarters, 24 June – 2 July (document APFIC/04/Inf.7). The Technical Consultation on "Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fishing capacity" reported that IUU fishing had increased in both its intensity and scope, with its wide-spread impacts being a major threat to the sustainable development of the world's fisheries. It recognized that problems associated with IUU fishing and over-capacity are inter-connected and undermine national and regional efforts to achieve responsible fishing.

64. The Consultation made a number of recommendations concerning IUU fishing and fishing capacity. These include (i) consider increasing the severity of penalties for IUU fishing, (ii) increase cooperation on trade of illegally caught fish to improve their fleet monitoring programmes; and (iii) establish better international controls on exports of fishing boats from one region to another. FAO was requested to consider establishing a global database for information related to IUU fishing, assist developing countries to increase their capacity in the effective implementation of IPOA-IUU Fishing and IPOA-Fishing Capacity and facilitate interaction amongst stakeholders in this implementation.

65. The Technical Consultation on the “Use of subsidies in the fisheries sector” noted that there had been an increasing trend of reducing subsidies to the fisheries sector in many developed States. However, many developing States believed that subsidies that lead to sustainable development and improved livelihood of their rural coastal communities are desirable and necessary. The Technical Consultation noted that the impact of subsidies varied depending on the nature and implementation of the fisheries management regimes, the state and nature of the fish stocks exploited and the type and magnitude of the subsidy and its duration. A need to have a better understanding of the nature and extent of links between subsidies and over-capacity was highlighted.

66. The Commission concurred with the views and recommendations of these Technical Consultations and recognized the importance of addressing socio-economic implications of controlling fishing capacity and the role and impact of subsidies on small-scale fisheries, especially food security and improved livelihood of rural communities.

67. The Secretariat informed the Commission that some of these issues could also be dealt with through the Regional Consultative Forum.

c) Presentations by Regional Organizations

68. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to have been informed of the work of ten Regional Organizations (see names of organizations in Appendix B) operating in the Asia and the Pacific and welcomed the offer by these organizations to collaborate on activities of mutual interest. The Commission recognized the importance of these partnerships in promoting responsible fisheries and aquaculture in the region.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

69. Malaysia and Indonesia were unanimously elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission respectively.

70. Republic of Korea and India were unanimously elected to serve as members of the Executive Committee, in addition to the outgoing Chair (Thailand).

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF APFIC

71. It was agreed that the Forum meeting and the 29th Session will be held in August 2006. The venue would be decided by the Director-General of FAO in consultation with the Chairperson.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

72. In adopting the Report, the Commission unanimously agreed to record its deep appreciation to the Government of Thailand for the generous hospitality accorded to the Commission. This has contributed in large measure to the successful conclusion of its work.

73. The Chairman of APFIC, in making his concluding remarks, expressed his appreciation for the active participation of the delegates and declared the Twenty-eighth Session of APFIC closed.

74. The Report of the Session was adopted on 5 August 2004.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session
3. Inter-sessional activities of APFIC
4. Overview – status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia and the Pacific
5. Report of the APFIC Executive Committee
6. The new APFIC – APFIC’s potential as a consultative forum for fishery issues
7. Regional arrangements for fisheries – an analysis of gaps and opportunities
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 - a) Regional implementation of the Strategy on Status and Trends Reporting in Capture Fisheries
 - b) Main outcomes of the Technical Consultations of the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) and Fishing Capacity and on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector, Rome, Italy, 24 June-2 July 2004
 - c) Presentation by Regional Organizations
10. Election of Officers
11. Date and Place of the Twenty-ninth Session of APFIC
12. Adoption of the Report

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A. Working documents:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| APFIC/04/1, Rev. 3 | Provisional Agenda and Timetable |
| APFIC/04/2 | Inter-sessional activities of APFIC |
| APFIC/04/3 | Overview - Status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia and the Pacific |
| APFIC/04/4 | Report of the Sixty-ninth Session of the APFIC Executive Committee |
| APFIC/04/5 | The new APFIC – APFIC’s potential as a consultative forum |
| APFIC/04/6 | Regional Arrangements for Fisheries – an analysis of gaps and opportunities |
| APFIC/04/7 | APFIC’s Work Plan 2004-2010 |

B. Information Documents:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| APFIC/04/Inf. 1 | Provisional list of documents |
| APFIC//04/Inf. 2 | Provisional list of participants and observers |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 3 | Report of the Twenty-seventh Session of APFIC, Manila, Philippines, 19-21 September 2001 |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 4 | APFIC Archives (CD of IPFC and APFIC Publications) |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 5 | Handbook of Regional Fishery Bodies and Arrangements |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 6 | Report of the Regional Implementation of the Strategy on Status and Trends Reporting in Capture Fisheries |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 7 | Main outcomes of the Technical Consultations on IUU Fishing and Fishing Capacity and on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector, Rome, Italy, 24 June – 2 July 2004 |
| APFIC/04/Inf. 8 | Draft document on status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region |

Opening Remarks

by

Dr Jaranthada Karnasuta

Deputy-Director General, Department of Fisheries, Thailand

It is a great pleasure to welcome all the delegates of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission. It is also a privilege for Thailand to host this important Commission meeting. APFIC has been known as an advisory body which was established in the Region more than half a century ago. The functions and contributions of APFIC have been long serving and shown significant inputs to the Asia-Pacific Region. One of the results of APFIC activities is the emerging of various Regional Fishery Bodies and/or arrangements, with more than 20 organizations, established since the early seventies. They are serving the region well in numerous fisheries activities. Nevertheless, though many Regional Fishery Bodies fulfilled their mission serving as management bodies, scientific bodies or advisory body, there are still some gaps to be addressed in fisheries management and sustainable development. And just recently, during the 69th APFIC Executive Committee meeting held in Pattaya, Thailand in mid-December last year, we discussed the future role of APFIC and how we can bridge the gap in the Regional Fishery Bodies' operations or on the issues that have not yet been covered. The role of APFIC as a Regional Consultative Body has been brought up in order to promote an integration of regional activities relating to fisheries. The idea to have first a Regional Consultative Forum has also been encouraged not only in the last executive committee meeting but also in the last APFIC meeting in the Philippines.

We all look forward to the reform of the new APFIC with respect to its responsibilities, arrangements and management of the fisheries sector in the Asia-Pacific region. The discussion on the direction and activities of APFIC during these three days will help us to come up with a tangible approach to make APFIC very functional and manageable. Some important issues in the region like small-scale fisheries, co-management, trash fish and other issues will also be taken up in the meeting for our fruitful discussion in order to reach some solutions or remedial measures for fisheries management, environmental management, resource conservation and sustainability.

Once again, I wish to welcome you all to the 28th Session of Asia Pacific Commission. And although the next few days will be long days of work, we have also made some arrangements for you to see our famous northern-Thai handicrafts and culture of the north. I hope you will find these enjoyable and wish you will all enjoy your stay in our beautiful Chiang Mai.

Thank you.

Welcome Address
by
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Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai, Thailand

It is indeed a great honour for Chiang Mai Province to be selected as the meeting venue of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission. Allow me, on behalf of the people of Chiang Mai, to take this opportunity to extend our warm and sincere welcome to all the participants to Chiang Mai, the Rose of the North. Chiang Mai is blessed with stunning natural beauty and unique indigenous cultural identity. The Province is situated on the Mae Ping River basin some 310 metres above sea level and surrounded by high mountain ranges, *i.e.* Doi Suthep and Doi Inthanon. Today Chiang Mai is the economic, communications, cultural and tourism centre of Northern Thailand. Furthermore, we are also proud to inform you that His Majesty the King has initiated the Huai Khrai Royal Development Study Center and other hill tribe development projects in Chiang Mai in order to solve both human and environmental problems by rehabilitating the local environment and at the same time improving the lives of the local residents. The results of these projects have made Chiang Mai the strategic center for Northern Thailand as well as an example of a systematic method of rural development that can be applied in other provinces throughout the country.

Even though Chiang Mai is not directly involved in this forum, we hope that the fruitful outcomes of the Session will be beneficial to our province.

I sincerely hope that your stay in Chiang Mai will be a pleasant and memorable one. If there is anything for which I may be of assistance to you during your stay in Chiang Mai, please do not hesitate to let me know. I wish you a successful session and fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.

Opening Statement

by

Mr Jean-François Pulvenis de Séligny

Director, Policy and Planning Division, FAO Fisheries Department

It is for me a great pleasure and an honour to be here, in this beautiful and historical city of Chang Mai, the home of the Lanna Thai Kingdom, on the occasion of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission.

I bring with me the warm greetings of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, and of the Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries Department, Mr Ichiro Nomura, as well as their good wishes for a fruitful meeting.

I also wish to express FAO's sincere appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting this session of the Commission.

Since the Twenty-seventh Session, in September 2001, in Manila, there have been a number of significant developments in world fisheries, in the fisheries of the Asia-Pacific region and within your Commission. I wish to highlight four of them.

First, the Asia-Pacific region continues to be the world leader in terms of production from capture fisheries and aquaculture. This fact is well expounded on in the documents placed before you at this session. I wish to call your attention in particular to documents APFIC/04/3 and APFIC/04/Inf.8.

This is particularly important since, worldwide, fish provides more than 2.6 billion people with at least 20 percent of their average per capita animal protein intake, although consumption is not evenly distributed. Global production from capture fisheries and aquaculture supplied 101 million tonnes of food fish in 2002, which translates into an apparent per capita supply of 16.2 kg. There has been an increase in this per capita supply since 2000. This increase is mainly due to aquaculture. Global production from aquaculture continues to grow in volume and in terms of relative contribution to the world's supply of fish for direct human consumption. Production reached 51.4 million tons in 2002 and was 6.1 percent higher than in 2000.

The second development I wish to refer to is that, in addition to their role as a source of livelihood and food, fisheries in the region also contribute to economic growth. This contribution is quite significant in some countries. Exports of fish and fish products from the region have become a primary source of foreign exchange in several economies. The value of net exports for the region as a whole reached the equivalent of over US\$ 23 billion in 2002. This amount is quite substantial when we observe that the total world trade in fish and fishery products increased to US\$ 58.2 billion (export value) in 2002, up 5 percent relative to 2000.

The third development is the growing pressure that fisheries resources are facing, both worldwide and in the region. This pressure comes from many directions, which include excessive fleet capacity, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, introduction of new fishing technologies, natural population growth and migration as well as the impacts of urban and industrial development, including global climate change.

Globally, an estimated 9 to 10 percent of fish stocks have been depleted or are recovering from depletion. About 15 to 18 percent are overexploited, another 47 to 50 percent are fully exploited, and the remaining 25 to 27 percent are underexploited.

In the region, fisheries resources are under great stress. In the high sea areas, there is increased competition, particularly in tuna fisheries. As to coastal fisheries, many are overexploited and many more have shown signs of depletion. Coastal and riparian zones have become more crowded, impact from local and inland development is significant, and the ability of fisheries resources to meet growing needs is becoming increasingly strained. Under these circumstances, the fisheries sector, which is labour intensive, pro-poor and growth stimulating, cannot contribute fully to economic development, food security and poverty reduction. Its contribution remains very much below its potential and this situation is likely to have serious consequences on the poor, as their options are the most limited and their vulnerability the greatest.

If this trend is to be reversed, States and all those involved should afford special attention to the sector through improvements in fisheries governance and through creating and maintaining a supportive environment and by addressing a number of key issues. These issues relate to the phenomenon of open access, overcapacity and over fishing, vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities, the enhancement of monitoring, control and surveillance including vessel monitoring systems, the combat of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as by effecting improvements in status and trends reporting. As to aquaculture, there is an increased need for ensuring sustainable aquaculture practices and development strategies, particularly the adoption of more environmentally friendly approaches.

One important element is to ensure the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries as an essential step toward maintaining and restoring fish stocks at levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield in the near future. At the same time, it is important that States ensure full compliance with and implementation of other relevant international instruments including the 1992 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement.

All these issues have been central in the agenda of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and other international fora. Some have been regularly addressed by your Commission during its more than fifty years of existence. The draft agenda for this Session includes a number of these issues.

The fourth development I wish to refer to is related to the role APFIC is meant to play in the future. As you will recall, APFIC was born at a time of uncertainty, when the international community was still recovering from the havoc and devastation inflicted by the Second World War. The Commission adapted to subsequent changes with a sense of pragmatism. Its structure and functions have been kept under review and its constitutive agreement amended as the need arose.

In recent decades, the evolution of the international law of the sea and of the international law of the environment has led to the reaffirmed recognition by the international community of the vital function of regional cooperation in striving to achieve sustainable fisheries development. Not surprisingly, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law

of the Sea, the 1992 Agenda 21 and the global fisheries related instruments that were adopted later lay emphasis on the role of regional fishery bodies for the conservation and sustainable utilization of fisheries resources.

It is in this context that the Twenty-second Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, in March 1997, recommended that FAO regional fishery bodies be evaluated in depth by their members so that they could be strengthened and made more effective. This recommendation of COFI was reinforced by the FAO Conference at its Twenty-ninth Session in November 1997 by the adoption of Resolution 13/97 “Review of FAO Statutory Bodies”. The Resolution, *inter alia*, stressed the importance of moving towards increased self-financing for statutory bodies with a regional focus and of enhancing the responsiveness of these bodies to the needs of their members.

It is most gratifying to observe that this Commission and its members have performed this review over the past six years. As a result, in December 2003, the APFIC Executive Committee has recommended that the Commission should alter its role and assume that of a Regional Consultative Body. In essence, the new APFIC would serve as a regional framework to promote integration of the regional activities relating to fisheries. The Executive Committee proposed the organization and conduction of a biennial Regional Consultative Forum. Through this Forum, the Commission would, among others, address trans-boundary issues and issues common to groups of countries in the region and serve as a facilitator – not as a supervisor - to ensure that activities of fishery bodies and arrangements in the region are coordinated so as to avoid duplication and optimize the use of the limited development assistance funds.

We may expect that this Session of the Commission will be devoted to that important issue and to consider the new role of APFIC.

As in the past, FAO is committed to provide its fullest support, but this support cannot but be only catalytic in nature – this was stressed in the opening speech made on behalf of the Organization by the FAO Representative in the Philippines during the Twenty-seventh Session. This point was also reinforced by the statement of my predecessor on that occasion, when he underlined that APFIC belongs first to its members, although it was established within the framework of FAO and is one of its statutory bodies.

Consequently, in the end, it rests with you to reach an understanding at this session and later to ensure that whatever understanding is reached is implemented in your respective countries.

Before concluding this statement, I wish to thank the Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai for personally participating in this opening ceremony. On behalf of the participants and the Secretariat, I wish also to request him to convey our gratitude to the Government and to the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, for their wonderful hospitality as well as for the excellent facilities that they have provided.

I wish all of you a very constructive and successful Session.

Thank you.

Inaugural Address
by
Dr Sitdhi Boonyaratpalin
Director-General, Department of Fisheries, Thailand

It is a privilege and honor for me to be here today at the Opening Ceremony of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission. First of all, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I wish to congratulate the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission for its long success and continued service to the region.

The capture fisheries and aquaculture sectors are of fundamental importance to the Asia-Pacific region in terms of food security, revenue generation and employment. In many countries, catching or farming aquatic resources forms a vital part of rural people's livelihoods. In cultural terms, aquatic resources mean more than a mere source of income or food supply; traditional fishery products such as fish sauce and fish-based condiments are important ingredients of people's daily diet, which are not easily substituted. People utilize all sizes and types of fish and there is very little discard or wastage of this valuable resource. It is only now becoming apparent that fish play an important role in both the food security and nutritional security of many rural and coastal populations.

In terms of the production trends of fisheries and aquaculture, the Asia-Pacific region has been recognized as the world's largest producer of fish for decades. A recent FAO report shows that global capture fisheries and aquaculture production have contributed on average 130 million metric tons for world consumption. For capture fisheries, production in the year 2002 showed as much as 45 million metric tons or nearly 50 percent of global capture fisheries production. In this regard, out of the top ten producers of capture fisheries in the world, five states come from the Asia-Pacific areas, namely China, Indonesia, Japan, India, and Thailand. For aquaculture, this region is by far the world's largest contributor to world aquaculture, producing 47 million metric tons or 91 percent of global aquaculture production. Nevertheless, with the significant contribution of fish food in the region to the world, there are still many common trends that will have a large impact on the future supply of fish. One alarming trend that we should be aware of is the rapid decline in the status of coastal fishery resources and ecosystems throughout the region.

In the Asia-Pacific region, fisheries management on the basis of sustainability should be a primary focus and a number of activities and appropriate measures should be urgently established. Some fisheries management activities have been conducted to cope with the problems of concern to various Regional Fisheries Bodies in the region such as Bay of Bengal, IGO and SEAFDEC. However, even with these activities, there are still some gaps that need to be covered.

Concerning the problems by the Asia-Pacific region, we are quite fortunate to have APFIC as an advisory body to assist in filling this gap, particularly on the issues that have not been thoroughly explored. The issue on capture fisheries; particularly small scale-fisheries; seems to be an issue that APFIC could help in coming to a better understanding of and suggesting improved fisheries management measures or practices. APFIC could also help us in bridging other issues relevant to the Asia-Pacific region for the betterment of fisheries management towards sustainability of resources. Practical Code or Code of Practice for capture fisheries should also be identified and conducted regionally so that common

resources will be utilized in a sustainable manner. Trade and information gathering are also important issues that need to be well addressed. Moreover, at the start of the new century, food safety has been given lots of attention in global food consumption, particularly by the buying or developed countries such as the European Union, the United States, Japan, and even some countries in Africa. Some producing countries mostly in Asia like Thailand, put more emphasis on food safety issues of agricultural products including fisheries products. In this regard, seafood products safety would certainly be another dimension of world interest, at least in the next decade for fisheries and related industries.

Last, but not least, I hope the Twenty-eighth Session of Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission held in Chiang Mai in the next few days will be a fruitful meeting bringing us an efficient and effective cooperation program among APFIC member countries for the betterment of fisheries in the region. I wish you all the best and have a pleasant stay in Chiang Mai.

I now declare the Twenty-eighth Session of Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission open.

Thank you.

DEFINITION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

(Drawn from the *REPORT OF SECOND SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES RESEARCH*, Bangkok, Thailand, 18–21 November 2003. FAO Fisheries Report No. 735 FIPL/R735 (En))

A VISION FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

The vision for small-scale fisheries is one in which their contribution to sustainable development is fully realized. It is a vision where:

- *they are not marginalized and their contribution to national economies and food security is recognized, valued and enhanced;*
- *fishers, fish workers and other stakeholders have the ability to participate in decision making, are empowered to do so, and have increased capability and human capacity, thereby achieving dignity and respect; and*
- *poverty and food insecurity do not persist; and where the social, economic and ecological systems are managed in an integrated and sustainable manner, thereby reducing conflict.*

Definition of Small-scale Fisheries¹

The Working Party agreed that it would be inappropriate to formulate a universally applicable definition for a sector as dynamic and diverse as small-scale fisheries. It felt that it would be best to describe the sector on the basis of the range of characteristics that are likely to be found in any particular small-scale fishery. The Working Party endorsed with slight modification the characterization that was used by the FAO Committee on Fisheries at its Twenty-fifth Session which is as follows:

*“Small-scale fisheries can be broadly characterized as **a dynamic and evolving sector** employing labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources. The activities of this sub-sector, conducted fulltime or part-time, or just seasonally, are often targeted on supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, and for subsistence consumption. Export-oriented production, however, has increased in many small-scale fisheries during the last one to two decades because of greater market integration and globalization. While typically men are engaged in fishing and women in fish processing and marketing, women are also known to engage in nearshore harvesting activities and men are known to engage in fish marketing and distribution.*

Other ancillary activities such as net-making, boat-building, engine repair and maintenance etc. can provide additional fishery-related employment and income opportunities in marine and inland fishing communities. Small-scale fisheries operate at widely differing organizational levels ranging from self-employed single operators through informal micro-enterprises to formal sector businesses.

This sub-sector, therefore, is not homogenous within and across countries and regions and attention to this fact is warranted when formulating strategies and policies for enhancing its contribution to food security and poverty alleviation.”

¹ This vision is adapted from: Berkes, F., R. Mahon, P. McConney, R. Pollnac and R. Pomeroy. 2001. *Managing small-scale fisheries: Alternative directions and methods*. IDRC, Ottawa, Canada, 308 p.

WORK PLAN

a) Regional Consultative Forum activities 2004-2006*APFIC Website*

The APFIC Secretariat will continue to develop and update its website. The website has been designed to inform Members and other interested parties about fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific. In particular it provides regional information (and statistics, where available) on aquaculture small-scale fisheries, inland fisheries and industrial fisheries. The website will also provide easy access to information relating to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its implementation. As an information portal, the website provides links to other sub-regional organizations and projects that impact on fisheries and aquaculture in the region. It will continue to promote the importance of fisheries in the region and provide a sound platform for informed policy development and decision making.

Publications

APFIC will continue to publish reports and articles informing Members and other interested parties about the status, trends and potential of aquaculture and fisheries in the region. In particular, it will focus on the issues and management of small-scale coastal and inland fisheries and aquaculture sustainable development and their interrelationships with industrial fisheries and other sectors.

Consultative workshop on “Trash fish”

As “Trash Fish” is one of the regional issues affecting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in the region, it is felt that the interaction between capture fisheries, “trash fish” and aquaculture needs to be examined in greater detail. It is proposed therefore, that a Regional Workshop on Trash Fish and aquaculture be organized by APFIC tentatively in February 2005.

Consultative workshop on Co-management in coastal and inland fisheries

Co-management has been promoted as a means to implement better fisheries management in the region. This has been accompanied by a large policy change promoting decentralization of government authorities in many States of the region. Up until recently, attempts at co-management has largely been implemented under a range of donor-funded projects. To “main-stream” co-management into national policies and fisheries management, APFIC is planning to hold a major workshop to review lessons learnt by the different projects and interventions and provide guidelines for “best practice”.

b) Proposed work schedule of the Regional Consultative Forum Meeting

In order to provide an integrating mechanism for APFIC to play such a role effectively, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Commission at its present Session the adoption of the Regional Consultative Forum meeting as its main event amongst the activities of APFIC.

This document proposes the work plan to be carried out by the Secretariat commencing 2004 leading up to the first Regional Consultative Forum meeting in 2006.

The work plan takes note of the Biennial Meeting of COFI (currently in February/March of alternate years) held concurrently with the FAO Meetings of RFBs. The timing is based on the ability of APFIC to provide inputs arising out of its Forum into the preparatory stages for the 26th (and subsequent) session(s) of COFI.

The Commission agreed that the following activities would be undertaken leading up to the Regional Consultative Forum Meeting in 2006.

- (i) The secretariat would undertake an e-mail based conference to enable the preparation of some input for the forthcoming 26th Session of COFI (Scheduled February 2005).
- (ii) The APFIC secretariat will arrange a short meeting with APFIC members participating in the COFI meeting in Rome. This will take place immediately prior to the COFI meeting to enable a review of the Commissions recommendations and the agenda items of particular interest to the commission's members.
- (iii) Following the COFI session, the Secretariat reports the outcome of the APFIC 28th Session to the Regional Fishery Bodies Meeting (held immediately post-COFI).
- (iv) The Secretariat informs Members, all regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements with relevance to fisheries in the Asia-Pacific region of the proposal for the Regional Consultative Forum meeting and invites their participation and suggestions for the agenda of the forum. Where practical, the Secretariat should meet with other interested parties and gain support.
- (v) The APFIC Secretariat contributes to the collection and dissemination of quality fishery data and information, particular as they relate to 'small-scale fisheries' and build awareness of the importance of sharing information and experiences among member countries.
- (vi) The newly completed APFIC website will be used to provide a platform for the dissemination and exchange of information. The Secretariat will commission work in support of the First Regional Consultative Forum meeting and implement any *Ad hoc* working groups that may be required.
- (vii) The Seventieth Session of the Executive Committee of APFIC meets in June/July 2005 to review (i) the report of the 28th Session, (ii) the report of the COFI meeting (ii) preparations for, development of the agenda of, and the *modus operandi* for the First Regional Consultative Forum, and (iii) work of any *ad hoc* working groups. The Executive Committee also develops the agenda for the 29th Session of the Commission.
- (viii) The First Regional Consultative Forum meeting is scheduled to be held in August 2006. The immediately ensuing 29th Session of APFIC will consider additional matters raised by the Members and their reaction to the recommendations from the forum which may serve as a basis for the development of APFIC recommendations to COFI and the FAO RFB meeting.
- (ix) The Secretariat develops the draft report and recommendations of the forum (which may include high priority activities for the Commission's *ad hoc* working groups). The proceedings of the forum should be published as quickly as feasible. The draft report and recommendations of the forum are circulated to all Members for comments.

The cycle of preparation for the Regional Consultative Forum and reporting is repeated until 2011.

c) APFIC timetable for biennial Consultative Forum Meetings and APFIC Sessions

Meetings of the Forum should be organized to facilitate reporting to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC). The following tentative schedule is proposed:

2003-04

- 69th APFIC Executive Committee Meeting - December 2003 (Pattaya, Thailand)
- 28th Session of APFIC - August 2004 (Chang Mai, Thailand)
- E-conference pre-preparatory for COFI (September 2004)
- Pre-COFI Briefing meeting with APFIC members participating in COFI 7 March 2005 (Rome, Italy)
- 26th COFI Session – 7-11 March 2005 (Rome, Italy)
- Secretariat participates in Regional Fisheries Bodies Meeting ~12 March 2005 (Rome, Italy)

2005-06

- 70th APFIC Executive Committee Meeting - June/July 2005
- FAO Asia-Pacific Regional Conference Session - May 2006 (subject to confirmation)
- First APFIC Regional Consultative Forum Meeting - August 2006 and 29th Session of APFIC, August 2006 (Malaysia – subject to confirmation)
- 27th COFI Session – February/March 2007 (Rome, Italy)
- Secretariat participates in Regional Fisheries Bodies Meeting ~12 March 2005 (Rome, Italy)

2007-09

- 71st APFIC Executive Committee Meeting - June/July 2007
- APRC Session - May 2008
- Second APFIC Regional Consultative Forum, August 2008 and 30th Session of APFIC, August 2008
- 28th COFI Session – February/March 2009 (Rome, Italy)

2009-11

- 72nd APFIC Ex Co. June/July 2009
- Third APFIC Regional Consultative Forum, August 2009 and 31st Session of the Commission, August 2009 which will *inter alia* evaluate its past performance and consider, as appropriate, its future options.
- 29th COFI Session – February/March 2011

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