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TWENTY-EIGHTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 26-30 April 2004

REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR INLAND FISHERIES OF LATIN AMERICA (COPESCAL)

1. The Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America (COPESCAL) was established by the FAO Council at its seventieth session (1976, Resolution 4/70) under Article VI-1 of the FAO Constitution. Its objectives are to promote, coordinate and support fisheries research and development programmes for the rational utilization of inland fishery resources; to assist Member Governments in establishing the scientific basis for regulatory measures; to support the development of aquaculture, recreational fishing and the capture, marketing and utilization of fish; to promote education and training; to help member countries formulate national and regional programmes to achieve the objectives set out in its Statutes. Its current members are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.
2. The Commission has promoted studies on the management and conservation of living aquatic resources of the Amazon basins, the River Plate basin and the reservoirs of the region; and has examined and recommended measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of small-scale fisheries and rural aquaculture and promoted cooperative research and training activities in specialized aquacultural fields: prevention and control of disease and management of food and nutrition in aquaculture; handling, processing, marketing and quality assurance of fishery products; fisheries legislation; planning and management of inland fisheries and aquaculture in the region. The results of the Commission's work have been published in the *FAO Fisheries Technical Papers*, *COPESCAL Technical Papers* and *COPESCAL Occasional Papers*.
3. The ninth session of the Commission was held from 28 to 31 January 2003 in San Salvador, Republic of El Salvador, at the kind invitation of the Salvadorian Government. The session was attended by delegates from 12 member countries of COPESCAL, as well as observers from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA) and the Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA).
4. The main topics dealt with by the Commission were the state and trends of inland fisheries and aquaculture in Latin America; progress in implementation of the Code of Conduct

for Responsible Fisheries; management of fisheries in large river basins and reservoirs: and ways of strengthening the future role of COPESCAL.

5. Because of the importance that the countries of the Region attached to the fisheries sector in requesting that FAO establish the Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America, it was thought appropriate to make available to the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean the decisions and recommendations arising from the Ninth Session of COPESCAL. Recommendations on specific agenda items are listed in paragraphs 6 to 30, while the numbers in parentheses refer to the paragraphs in the Final Report of the Session in which the recommendations were made.

Measures Adopted Regarding te Decisions ad Recommendations o te Eighth Session ad Intersessional Activities

For the attention of FAO

6. Consider activities not accomplished and pursue these during the next intersessional period, with the assistance of the countries concerned (12).

Progress Made in Implementation of the Code of Conductf for Responsible Fisheries

For the attention of FAO

7. Continue supporting national and regional efforts for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, including the preparation of technical guidelines for inland fisheries and aquaculture (23).

Review of the State and Trends of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in the COPESCAL Region

For the attention of FAO and Governments

8. Continue working on commercial aspects of inland fisheries and aquaculture, with a view to identifying the main products and species for international trade (28).

For the attention of Governments

9. Improve the compilation and examination of information on social and economic aspects of inland fisheries and aquaculture in order to enhance the decision-making process, particularly as regards small-scale fisheries (29).

10. Supplement the application of appropriate management approaches (including the co-management of resources) with other measures that will help reduce population pressure on fishery resources and through the generation of alternative sources of employment and income (32).

11. Apply management and development criteria that will promote and strengthen the organization of fishers and fish farmers (including the participation of women), and their greater involvement in the processing and marketing of their products (35 and 36).

12. Administer the sector in close consultation with, and with the participation of, fishers, fish farmers and other interested parties (37).

13. Use policy instruments available to Governments in an appropriate and coherent manner and play a proactive role in enhancing those instruments for the sustainable development of inland fisheries and aquaculture (38).

14. Review national fishery policies, paying due attention to inland fisheries and aquaculture. Review legislation and adopt a catchment approach, paying due attention to environmental problems, institutional coordination, research, compilation and analysis of fishery statistics and cooperation between scientific institutions (42).

15. Facilitate access to credit by inland fishers and small-scale fish farmers, and to training and technical assistance in order to raise the involvement of fishers and their communities in the management and development of inland fisheries (43).

For the attention of Governments and FAO

16. Promote the utilization of regulatory instruments, such as land- and water-use planning and integrate inland fisheries and aquaculture into these processes (30).

17. Promote the criterion of catchment management and integrate inland fisheries and aquaculture, with broad participation of interested parties and inter-institutional coordination (31).

18. Promote consultations between Governments and the conclusion of bi- and multilateral agreements, at regional and international level, for fisheries management in large rivers and reservoirs and for implementation of regional projects of fisheries research and development (44).

19. Intensify training and technical assistance efforts for application and dissemination of the principles of the Code of Conduct on major rivers, reservoirs and other water bodies of the region (45).

Strategies to Strengthen the Future Role of COPESCAL

For the attention of Governments

20. Take steps through delegates acting upon their respective Governments and civil society to secure greater financial commitment to supplement the resources made available by FAO for the activities of COPESCAL (47).

21. Nominate topic or activity coordinators who, with the support of FAO officers and National Focal Points, will promote the development of their topics or activities at regional level (47).

For the attention of FAO

22. Maintain the same budgetary allocation to the work of the Commission (47).

23. Maintain the services of the subject-area technical secretaries according to the terms of reference of their technical officers (47).

24. Subject to the availability of funds, help requesting member countries identify legal and institutional agreements and carry out interdisciplinary studies to improve international cooperation in the management and conservation of fishery resources in transboundary river basins (49).

For the attention of FAO and Governments

25. Identify areas of common interest to the Members and draw up a programme of priority activities for the intersessional period, with clear objectives, expected outputs, time frames and accountabilities (47).

26. Conduct intersessional activities by electronic communication between experts and institutions and by other working parties or *ad hoc* consultations, should resources be available,

or, where appropriate, by means of short-term subcommittees appointed to deal with clearly defined priority matters (50).

27. Strengthen the ARPE network and establish a network of aquaculture centres of the American continent and formulate a project to be submitted to APEC for the funding of a study to establish a regional cooperation mechanism (51).

28. Adopt procedures to improve the Commission's performance and to ensure that the delegations attending its sessions are at the highest level and include experts and representatives of civil society (52 and 53). Explore alternative sources of funding (54).

29. Through the Chairman of COPESCAL, assisted by the Secretariat and a voluntary working group, submit draft updating of the Commission's Statutes and Rules of Procedure for submission to FAO, and draw up a draft framework strategic plan to facilitate and ensure the achievement of the Commission's objectives (55).

Other Matters

For the attention of Governments

30. Take note of the technical cooperation proposal made by the delegation of Brazil for the culture of tilapia.