



High – Level Dialogue on Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in BRICS-Agricultural Working Group, under India's Chairship.

Focus on Sustainable Growth, Technology Exchange, Trade, and Livelihood Enhancement

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The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D), Government of India, convened a High-Level Dialogue on the Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in BRICS-Agricultural Working Group, under India's Chairship on 28 May 2026 in virtual mode. The dialogue was co-chaired by **Shri Sagar Mehra, Joint Secretary (Inland Fisheries) and Dr. Surabhi Rai, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries)**. Senior officials and representatives from **Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, and the UAE participated in the dialogue. Mr. Takayuki Hagiwara, FAO Country Representative for India; Dr. Joykrushna Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), ICAR and Dr. P. Krishnan, Director of BOBP-IGO** also actively participated in the event.

Dr. Surabhi Rai, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), in her welcome address, highlighted that the Joint Ministerial Declaration adopted under Brazil's Presidency in 2025 underscored the growing need for structured and continuous BRICS engagement in this sector, beyond periodic dialogues. She emphasized that such engagements should be aligned with BRICS sectoral priorities, promote knowledge sharing, and translate discussions into tangible collective actions. The deliberations focused on enhancing cooperation among BRICS nations in fisheries and aquaculture, with particular emphasis on sustainable development, food and nutritional security, and strengthening resilient aquatic ecosystems.

The Dialogue brought together policymakers, experts, and stakeholders to deliberate on shared priorities, emerging challenges, and collaborative pathways for advancing fisheries and aquaculture of BRICS countries. It was highlighted that BRICS nations collectively contribute nearly **70% of global aquaculture production and around 30% of capture fisheries**, reflecting their significant role in global aquatic food systems.

The discussions covered key areas of cooperation including exchange of technology, knowledge, and best practices in hatchery and breeding systems, implementation of genetic improvement programmes, ensuring availability of quality seed, and promotion of seaweed culture and germplasm development.

Shri Sagar Mehra, Joint Secretary (Inland Fisheries), highlighted that while aquaculture is emerging as a key driver of global growth, the sector faces challenges from climate variability, biosecurity risks, and market volatility, requiring coordinated and technology-driven responses among BRICS Member Countries. He also emphasized the importance of farmer-centric approaches, digital transformation, and strengthening value chains to enhance productivity, sustainability, and livelihoods in the fisheries sector.

Mr. Takayuki Hagiwara, FAO Country Representative for India, highlighted FAO's role in supporting fisheries through technical cooperation, innovation, and knowledge exchange, aligned with the Blue Transformation agenda. He emphasized sustainability, inclusive growth, and empowering women and youth through value addition and entrepreneurship, while reaffirming FAO's commitment to supporting BRICS nations in strengthening resilient aquaculture, capture fisheries, and the blue economy.

Dr. Joykrushna Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), ICAR, emphasized on research undertaken by ICAR, Species diversification, genomics and genome editing, genetic improvement program, extension services. The vision of "Fish for All" with a focus on quality and safety, noting key challenges such as disease, climate change, energy needs, market volatility, and feed constraints.

Dr. P. Krishnan (BOBP-IGO) underlined the strategic importance of the expanded BRICS platform for the Global South, given its large consumer markets and reliance on fisheries for nutrition and livelihoods. He proposed an Inter-BRICS Trade Platform to reduce dependence on Western certification systems and highlighted the Bay of Bengal as a hub for safety, digital catch systems, and capacity building.

During the country presentations, the following key insights were reflected:

Shri Sagar Mehra from India emphasized that it is advancing farmer-centric and sustainable fisheries development through cooperation, innovation, trade, and climate resilience, while showcasing its strong initiatives in the fisheries and aquaculture sector including large investments, modern infrastructure, digital transformation, and inclusive livelihood support; it highlighted the importance of ecological sustainability, social equity, and economic viability, along with strengthening small-scale fishers, promoting women's participation, adopting technology (like AI, drones, and satellite monitoring), and building resilient value chains to boost production, exports, and global food security.

Mr. Eduardo Sfoggia from Brazil emphasized the need to promote sustainable, resilient, and adaptive aquatic food systems, highlighting its strong growth potential. With increasing demand for aquatic foods and inputs, the country is positioning this sector as a key driver of food security, climate resilience, and economic development, reinforcing the importance of strengthening sustainable practices and cooperation across nations. Emphasis was given to the continuation of the dialogue.

Ms. Zhang Yan Xuedan from China highlighted a strong focus on future-oriented agriculture, driven by advances in species development, ecological sustainability, and agricultural technology. With the development of over 300 new aquatic varieties, along with innovations such as underwater robots, IoT, big data, and smart aquaculture systems, China is transforming fisheries into more efficient and technology-driven sectors. The emphasis on comprehensive disease prevention, support for small-scale fisheries, and capacity building through technical training for fishers reflects a balanced approach that combines innovation with inclusivity and sustainability.

Dr. Fasil Dawit from Ethiopia emphasized aquaculture as a primary driver of future aquatic food systems, focusing on enhancing resilience through innovation and technology adaptation. Key initiatives include organic mono-sex male tilapia fry production, modern pond designs with water reuse systems, and the expansion of floating cage culture in reservoirs. These approaches reflect a strong commitment to sustainable intensification, improving productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability and efficient resource use. Ethiopia Proposed for Inter-BRICS Trade Platform.

Ms. Siti Fatimah from Indonesia highlighted its flagship Blue Economy policy, emphasizing the steady growth of capture fisheries supported by advanced technology and digital monitoring systems, including satellite and drone surveillance. The country also underscored the critical role of small-scale fisheries in employment and livelihoods, demonstrating how its blue economy approach balances economic growth with sustainability and inclusive development. Indonesia Proposed for Inter-BRICS Trade Platform.

Ms. Olga Sedykh from Russia underscored its support for the FAO Blue Transformation Initiative, focusing on the sustainable growth of aquatic food systems through strengthened breeding and hatchery systems, expansion of domestic feed production, and the use of satellite monitoring and automation. Emphasizing sustainability and efficiency, Russia identified joint scientific research, technology exchange, and sharing of best practices as priority areas, while reaffirming its openness to continued cooperation and dialogue among partner countries.

Miss Bakhita Mohammad Alhemeiri from UAE emphasized its commitment to sustainability, environmental protection, and food security, particularly in addressing a significant demand–supply gap. The country has established comprehensive fishing regulations, including federal laws on sustainable fishing practices, species protection, and trade controls. Its national framework for sustainable fisheries development adopts a holistic approach, integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions to ensure long-term resilience and responsible resource management.

The Dialogue deliberated on adoption of advanced technologies such as smart aquaculture systems, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, drones, and digital monitoring systems to enhance productivity, sustainability, and traceability across fisheries and aquaculture value chains. The importance of strengthening traceability and certification systems, as well as enhancing digital cooperation including data sharing and monitoring frameworks, was also highlighted.

The Dialogue also recognized key challenges impacting the fisheries and aquaculture sector, including climate change effects on aquatic ecosystems, disease risks, biosecurity concerns, resource sustainability, and market and trade disruptions. Member States emphasized the need to address these challenges through strengthened biosecurity and aquatic animal health systems, adoption of sustainable and climate-resilient practices, enhanced monitoring and early warning systems, and greater cooperation in technology, research, and knowledge exchange to improve resilience and ensure sustainable growth of the sector.

The importance of strengthening trade cooperation and addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and market-related challenges was emphasized. Member States also highlighted the need to promote value addition, processing infrastructure, cold chains, and logistics to ensure resilient and fair intra-BRICS trade.

The Dialogue underscored the need to promote inclusive and people-centric development with a focus on artisanal, traditional, and small-scale fishers and aquaculture producers. Member States highlighted the importance of strengthening livelihoods through improved access to inputs, finance, insurance, extension services, and risk mitigation mechanisms, while promoting gender equality, youth participation, and social inclusion.

Recognizing the impacts of climate change and environmental factors on aquatic ecosystems, the Member Countries emphasized the need for sustainable resource management, climate-resilient practices, and the use of technology-enabled early warning, risk assessment, and decision-support systems to enhance sectoral resilience.

The Dialogue also highlighted the importance of capacity building in deep-sea fisheries, development of modern infrastructure including sustainable and efficient fishing harbours, and adoption of science-based approaches for responsible and sustainable harvesting.

The Member States further emphasized strengthening research collaboration, innovation, capacity building, and knowledge exchange to enhance productivity, efficiency, and resilience in fisheries and aquaculture.

The meeting concluded in a constructive and forward-looking manner, reaffirming the shared commitment of BRICS Nations to deepen cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture, leveraging collective expertise to improve productivity, enhance resilience, expand trade opportunities, and ensure environmentally

sustainable livelihoods for fishers, farmers, and other stakeholders.

Dr. Surabhi Rai, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), in her closing remarks, thanked all participating Member States and organizations for their valuable contributions and emphasized the need to translate the discussions into practical, implementation-oriented collaboration. She reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening cooperation among BRICS countries for promoting sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

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