



WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-28 March 2014

Recommendations and resolutions adopted by WECAFC

Recommendations:

- WECAFC/15/2014/1 “on the establishment of a regional closed season for fisheries in the WECAFC area to protect spawning aggregations of groupers and snappers”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/2 “on the sustainability of fisheries using fish aggregating devices in the WECAFC area”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/3 “on the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/4 “on strengthening fisheries management planning in the WECAFC area”.

Resolutions:

- WECAFC/15/2014/5 “on the process of transformation of WECAFC into a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO)”. **(Not adopted)**
- WECAFC/15/2014/6 “on region-wide support to the implementation of the CRFM “Castries, St Lucia, (2010) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/7 “promoting the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean, as prepared by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and partners”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/8 “promoting the implementation of voluntary guidelines on Small-scale fisheries and tenure”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/9 “on the implementation of the Port state Measures Agreement and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on flag State performance in the region”.
- WECAFC/15/2014/10 “on the strategic action programme for the sustainable management of the shared living marine resources of the Caribbean and north Brazil shelf large marine ecosystems (CLME+ SAP)”.

Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/1

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL CLOSED SEASON FOR FISHERIES IN THE WECAFC AREA TO PROTECT SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS OF GROUPERS AND SNAPPERS

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

RECALLING the recommendations of the Regional Workshop on the Management of Nassau Grouper and the agreement of the 13th session of WECAFC (both held in Colombia, October 2008) with these recommendations on the management of Nassau Grouper;

REAFFIRMING its commitments, made at the 14th session, through establishing the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations with an aim to provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies and regulations to protect spawning aggregations and aggregating species;

RECOGNIZING the conclusions of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations, which convened in Miami, USA, 29-31 October 2013, reviewed the status of some species that aggregate to spawn in the WECAFC Area and discussed a large variety of management and conservation options;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) at its 6th Session assessed that several fish species that aggregate to spawn (in particular Nassau Grouper and Goliath Grouper) are overexploited, some with a high risk of collapse, and that sustainable management requires that measures aimed at limiting the fishing of spawning aggregations and aggregating species are implemented;

NOTING that both the Working Group and the SAG advise of the need to establish a harmonized regional closed season for commercial and recreational fisheries of fish species that aggregate to spawn;

NOTING that both the Working Group and the SAG advise the WECAFC members to establish year round no-take marine protected areas at known transient multi-species spawning aggregation sites;

RECOGNIZING that various WECAFC members have already established closed seasons for commercial grouper fishing and/or closed areas to protect spawning aggregations;

NOTING that many of the spawning aggregations of grouper and snapper in the Caribbean have seriously declined or disappeared in the last two decades and that immediate action is required to stop further reduction in spawning areas and depletion of the stocks;

CONSIDERING that current management and conservation efforts targeting spawning aggregations and addressing aggregating species have shown mixed results in the Caribbean, and that application of closed seasons in other regions has proven to be successful when implemented regionally, it is fundamental to limit the fishing effort in areas where adults of important species aggregate to spawn to allow these stocks to reproduce, and, in many cases to recover, thereby allowing for their sustainable exploitation and ongoing contribution to long-term food security and social and economic objectives of the governments in the WECAFC region;

CONSIDERING that more scientific information and research is needed with a view to better understanding the relevance of areas on the continental shelf and slope for the protection of spawners in known aggregations and sensitive habitats, as well as to better know the level and spatial distribution of the fishing effort exerted on aggregating species in general;

PENDING the delivery of this additional information by the Working Group and the SAG;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Members of WECAFC identify and monitor all known and exploited spawning aggregation areas of groupers and snappers and inform the SAG of any changes in these areas.
2. Members of WECAFC issue a regional seasonal closure for all commercial and recreational fishing activities of Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) in the identified areas for the period 1 December – 31 March.
3. For the fisheries restricted area referred to in paragraph 1 above, Members call the attention of the appropriate national and international authorities in order to protect spawning aggregations from the impact of any other human activity jeopardizing the spawning aggregation areas, and ensure enforcement of closed seasons during the reproductive period, if necessary by also implementing sales bans during the closed season.
4. Members of WECAFC not permit any export of Nassau grouper and Nassau grouper products (e.g. roe, fillets) for the duration of the regional seasonal closure.
5. Members conduct research to ascertain the ecological, social and economic impacts of the proposed management measures to inform future management decision-making.
6. Members prepare national grouper and snapper fisheries management and conservation plans.
7. Members communicate to the WECAFC Secretariat the measures taken to adhere to the above paragraphs.
8. The WECAFC Secretariat, together with the Members, establish an outreach and communication campaign on the closed areas and regionally agreed closed season.
9. The WECAFC Secretariat, together with the Members, seek to mobilize resources to assist the Members in the implementation of research, monitoring and management measures.
10. Members take note that boundaries of the identified spawning areas, spawning seasons and conditions to fish therein, as referred to in previous paragraphs may change on the basis of Working Group and SAG advice coming from additional knowledge.
11. WECAFC, CFMC, and as appropriate CRFM and OSPESCA, support the development of a regional plan for the management and conservation of fish species that aggregate to spawn (targeting groupers and snappers), in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to the 16th session of WECAFC in 2016 for review, consideration and regional adoption.
12. Members assess the timing, location and status, of all known transient multi-species spawning aggregations. A list of aggregations should be prioritized for monitoring, conservation and management based on status and institutional capacity for management at each site.

13. Members conduct assessments along with local fishers who are presently fishing those aggregations, in part to gather their support and in part to offer economic alternatives to fishing those aggregations.
14. Members solicit support for direct and immediate implementation by the countries in the Wider Caribbean Region of the above listed recommendations.

Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/2

ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERIES USING FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES IN THE WECAFC AREA

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

RECALLING the conclusions and proposals of the first and second meetings of the WECAFC ad hoc working group on the development of sustainable moored fish aggregating device fishing in the Lesser Antilles (Martinique, 8- 11 October 2001 and Guadeloupe, 5–10 July 2004);

REAFFIRMING its commitments, made at the 14th session of WECAFC, through establishing the IFREMER/WECAFC Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored FAD Fishing in the Lesser Antilles. In this respect the 15th session will agree [agreed] to expand the Working Group into a joint Working Group on FADs in which WECAFC, JICA, IFREMER and CRFM will participate;

RECOGNIZING the conclusions and recommendations of the CRFM-JICA CARIFICO/ WECAFC-IFREMER MAGDELESA Workshop on FAD fishery Management, which was held in St Vincent and the Grenadines, 9-11 December 2013;

RECOGNIZING the high quality of the scientific research and capacity building carried out on FADs by the EU funded MAGDELESA project, as well as the pilot activities on FADs conducted under the CRFM-JICA project on the "Formulation of a Master Plan on sustainable use of fisheries resources for coastal community development in the Caribbean";

RECOGNIZING also the significant contribution of the offshore pelagic fisheries to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, income, and employment for present and future generations in the Caribbean;

CONSIDERING that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) issued at its 23rd regular meeting, held in South Africa, November 18-25, 2013, a recommendation (13-01) amending the recommendation on a multi-annual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin tunas, which binds a number of WECAFC and CRFM members in terms of FAD fisheries by industrial fleets catching these tunas;

NOTING the ongoing effort of the CRFM through its annual scientific meetings and in collaboration with the CLME and ACP Fish II Projects, to improve conservation and management of the offshore pelagic resources;

REAFFIRMING the need for further action by all interested parties to ensure the long-term sustainable use and management of the offshore pelagic fisheries resources in the region based on the ecosystem approach to fisheries;

REAFFIRMING also its commitment to promote the use of co-management and other participatory approaches involving all affected parties in the development and implementation of relevant policies and programmes;

NOTING the concerns of the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries about the billfish stocks in the Caribbean and the untapped value of this resource in terms of catch-and-release fisheries;

NOTING that the fishery on fish-aggregating devices (FAD) in the Lesser Antilles has grown substantially in the last ten years, apparently increasing catches of pelagic species but also catches of vulnerable and already overexploited stocks of species;

REAFFIRMING its commitment to the application of the precautionary approach, which establishes that lack of scientific evidence should not be used as a reason for not taking management measures for fisheries resources;

ACKNOWLEDGING the good efforts of various WECAFC and CRFM members to license FADs fishers, prepare legislation for FAD fishery, ensure disaggregated data collection and analysis in terms of FAD fishery, encourage best-practice design and training in FAD construction and use, promote safety-at-sea when fishing with FADs, reduce conflicts over the use of FAD, notify maritime authorities of FADs locations, establish co-management regimes for FAD fishery and promoting the proper maintenance of FADs;

NOTING that the exchange of information between researchers, fisheries managers and fishers on FADs fishery has improved in recent years and needs to be strengthened;

RECOGNIZING that the current development of FAD fisheries in the WECAFC area provides new opportunities for income generation, livelihoods and contributes to food security, as well as may reduce [temporarily] the pressure on coastal and reef fish stocks;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need to improve data and information to reduce uncertainties to stock assessment methodologies currently used and to monitor the long term impacts of these fisheries on the stocks;

CONSIDERING the need to conduct more research related to the potential impact of moored FADs on the migration patterns, size/age/sex structures and compositions of stocks, change in yields per recruit and other biological effects, as well as on the currently used concept of CPUE, co-management options, social and economic aspects, environmental and climate change, fishing techniques and technologies;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the Working Group, CRFM annual scientific meeting and the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG);

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the **RECOMMENDATION** that:

1. Members of WECAFC prepare (if relevant) national level FADs fishery management plans, in line with the ICCAT measure, and put in place appropriate legislation in support of a sustainable FADs fishery.
2. Members of WECAFC apply a standard terminology (as determined by the Working Group on FADs) for the different varieties of FADs fishery and report in an agreed format on their total landings, catch and effort data of FADs fishery in FAO Area 31 to the Working Group on FADs in support of ongoing research, decision making and management processes at national and regional level.
3. Members of WECAFC, in line with similar recommendations from ICCAT, IATTC and other RFBs, aim to:
 - prohibit the transshipment at sea of FAD caught fish in the WECAFC area.
 - collect and analyze biological, ecological, social and economic data and information to inform decision making processes on FAD Fishery.
4. WECAFC, CRFM, and as appropriate OSPESCA, support the regional harmonization of national FAD fishery management plans and related legislation, in accordance with the best available information (including scientific evidence and local and traditional knowledge) and consistent

with international best practices, and present the progress made to the respective regular sessions of these RFBs.

5. Members communicate to the Working Group on FADs the measures taken to adhere to the above paragraphs.
6. The Working Group on FADs support the Members, in the establishment of stakeholder- and public outreach and communication campaigns, including addressing the need to transfer research findings on FAD fisheries and communicate best-practices to the fishers and facilitate inputs from stakeholders.

Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3

ON THE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF QUEEN CONCH IN THE WECAFC AREA

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC);

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING with concern the ongoing challenges in ensuring sustained and legal utilization of Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) resources, complying with CITES Appendix-II provisions for international trade in the species, and the limited progress made in terms of regional collaboration and coordination of the management of the resource;

MINDFUL of the high socio-economic importance of the Queen Conch fisheries for the Wider Caribbean Region;

RECOGNIZING that in recent years, national efforts for the management and conservation of Queen Conch have increased in the region, leading to encouraging developments such as better stock protection, improved understanding of the species ecology and management needs, and enhanced enforcement to combat illegal catch and trade, and that most of this progress made was CITES driven;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the efforts at local, national and regional levels to manage Queen Conch fisheries in line with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the precautionary approach and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) as regionally promoted by the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch members, the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, and the provisions of CITES for international trade in the species;

MINDFUL of the obligations and available opportunities to the countries that are Party to the SPAW (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife) Protocol to work collaboratively to implement plans for conservation of Queen Conch, which is listed in Annex III of that Treaty;

CONVINCED that scientific research on the biology, life cycle, conservation and management of Queen Conch should continue to inform fisheries decision makers on, *inter alia*, sustainable harvest and fishery strategies, precautionary controls, appropriate fishing capacity, and measures to enhance enforcement and compliance;

RECOGNIZING the efforts of the CRFM to facilitate queen conch assessments during its annual scientific meetings, to improve and harmonize scientific approaches to assessing the status of Queen Conch stocks and to improve the regional capacity to conduct underwater surveys for the purpose of estimating abundance and setting Total Allowable Catches;

APPRECIATING the agreement on a Joint Action Plan of CRFM and OSPESCA, concluded in September 2012, which emphasizes the need for joint work on, *inter alia*, Queen Conch research and sustainable management, and the ongoing work by CFMC, CITES and WECAFC towards sustainable utilization of the resource;

ACKNOWLEDGING the work of UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme under the Cartagena Convention and in particular the listing of Queen Conch under its SPAW Protocol;

RECALLING the outcomes of the first meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch, held Panama City, Panama, 23–25 October 2012 and the Declaration of Panama City prepared by the same Working Group;

FURTHER RECALLING the need for immediate implementation, as applicable, of the recommendations made by the Queen Conch Expert Workshop held in Miami, USA, 22–24 May 2012, and reviewed and validated by the Working Group during the meeting in Panama City on 23–25 October 2012;

REAFFIRMING the commitments made by Queen Conch range states at the CITES Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16), held in Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013 and the decision made on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)”;

RECOGNIZING that some WECAFC members, including Belize, Bahamas, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras and Jamaica have conducted recent stock assessments of the Queen Conch in the waters under their national jurisdiction, and are implementing the recommendations from the Working Group and CITES and preparing the agreed Non-Detriment Findings;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the Working Group, CRFM Annual Scientific Meeting and the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG);

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Members of WECAFC implement the CITES COP 16 Decision on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)” and report, through FAO and the CITES Secretariat on progress with implementation of the decision, to CITES COP 17.
2. Members of WECAFC prepare (if relevant) national level Queen Conch management and conservation plans, in line with CITES COP16 Decision, and put in place appropriate legislation in support of long-term sustainable Queen Conch stocks.
3. WECAFC, FAO and CITES cooperate closely and work jointly on the improvement and standardization of trade data and statistics (through regionally agreed conversion factors in the absence of national conversion factors based on regionally agreed processing grades and terminologies) for Queen Conch and its derivatives such as pearls, shells and opercula.
4. Members of WECAFC work towards determining and adopting national conversion factors based on regionally agreed processing grades and terminologies before the end of 2015 and communicate the adoption formally to the FAO and CITES Secretariats.
5. Members of WECAFC apply the corresponding regionally agreed conversion factors by the end of 2016.
6. Members of WECAFC prepare and share their non-detriment findings in 2014 in support of well-informed decision making processes at the national and regional levels for better conservation and management of the Queen Conch.
7. WECAFC sends this recommendation to the CITES Secretariat with the request that CITES include this topic in the work of the Animals Committee.
8. WECAFC, in close coordination with OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, CITES and the SPAW Protocol Secretariat, develop a regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch, in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to the 16th session of WECAFC for final review and regional adoption.

Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/4

ON STRENGTHENING FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN THE WECAFC AREA

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

DEEPLY APPRECIATING the collective contributions of experts from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) to the “Review of current fisheries management performance and conservation measures in the WECAFC Region”, in Document WECAFC/XV/2014/7 (“the Review”);

MINDFUL that the Review took into account countries’ policy and legal frameworks, the status of fisheries, costs and funding of fisheries management, implementation of global fisheries instruments and initiatives and participation in regional fishery bodies (RFBs);

RECOGNIZING that the Review identified several challenges for achieving successful sustainable fisheries management, including in the areas of legislation, management process and plans, monitoring and enforcement, scientific information, stakeholder identification and participation, conflict resolution, fishing capacity measurements, multispecies fisheries and use of the ecosystem approach, more frequent application of management tools and measures to commercial fisheries than other fisheries, rising fisheries management costs and stagnant budgets for governments;

APPRECIATING therefore that the Review afforded an overall analysis of country situations, and based on this, afforded also identification of key areas of weakness and remedial actions that could assist countries to address these challenges, in the areas of legislation, management process and plans, monitoring and enforcement, scientific information and support, a participatory approach, fisheries management costs and public education and awareness;

FURTHER APPRECIATING that the Review identified key cross-cutting issues and possible specific actions for addressing the proposed recommendations, including those in the area of legislation and a participatory approach;

NOTING the steps recommended by the Review for a more effective management process;

RECALLING that the Sixth Session of the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) reviewed the document, particularly its conclusions and recommendations, and recommended that the Commission at this Session review the outcomes and recommendations of the Review and take appropriate action to address the recommendations;

ACKNOWLEDGING that fisheries management is considered to be a process of multiple steps, including planning, data gathering, analysis, interpretation, consultations, decision-making, actions, monitoring and evaluation;

RECOGNIZING the efforts at local, national and regional level by authorities, fisherfolk and their organizations to implement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and apply the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) in fisheries management planning;

COMMITTED to the strengthening of fisheries management planning with the aim of promoting the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources in the WECAFC area;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 (c) of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. WECAFC members, to the greatest extent possible, apply the actions identified by the Review that will assist countries to address the challenges for achieving successful fisheries management;

2. WECAFC members, to the greatest extent possible, take steps to establish and maintain a management process elaborated in the Review, including the following:
- (a) Address the legislation and participatory approach issues identified by the Review so as to improve the management process, while ensuring that these efforts are applied in concert with the use of strategies and tools for education, communication, and capacity building of all stakeholders concerned;
 - (b) Ensure that national fisheries authorities have routine access to professional skills and support in communication, business and stakeholder negotiations for successful performance of participatory approaches;
 - (c) Ensure skilful management of available fisheries management funds by allocating available financial resources so that all steps of the management process receive the best attention possible, in terms of time and quality of effort, for better overall management performance;
 - (d) Quantify and routinely make available information and knowledge on the value of the region's fisheries and associated ecosystems, especially regarding social and economic benefits, to inform and guarantee required overall sectoral investment planning and decision-making;
 - (e) Ensure development of a meaningful scientific information and knowledge base, which takes into account the multi-gear and multi-species nature of small-scale fisheries in the region, to inform management planning, decision-making, and performance review;
 - (f) Ensure quantitative fish stock assessments are undertaken to support national fisheries management actions.

**Draft Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/5
ON THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION OF WECAFC INTO A REGIONAL
FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION (RFMO)**

This draft resolution was not adopted by WECAFC 15.

Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/6

ON REGION-WIDE SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRFM “CASTRIES, ST LUCIA, (2010) DECLARATION ON ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING (Castries Declaration)

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

CONCERNED that Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to be one of the main impediments to sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the region;

ALSO CONCERNED that progress towards implementation of the International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (IPOA-IUU) has been slow and that very few members have developed and are implementing national plans of action (NPOAs–IUU);

RECALLING the Resolution of members of WECAFC “on Strengthening the implementation of International Fisheries Instruments (WECAFC/14/2012/1), in which the members, amongst others, “agree to cooperate through, support and strengthen existing sub-regional, regional and international organizations and initiatives in efforts to implement international fisheries instruments and, as appropriate, establish new mechanism and initiatives”;

CONSIDERING the limited resources (human and financial) available within the CRFM and among its membership to combat effectively IUU fishing in a region that is vast and is characterized by a patchwork of SIDS that are member of CRFM, as well as neighbouring island states and overseas territories that belong to other arrangements, including WECAFC;

CONCERNED that as efforts to combat IUU fishing increases at the Global level, there is a risk that IUU fishers from elsewhere may divert their activities to the region where sub-regional and regional initiatives for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) are only slowly gaining ground;

RESPONDING to the recommendation of the 6th session of the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group, November 2013, to acknowledge the CRFM’s “Castries Declaration” as important for combating IUU fishing in the WECAFC region;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provisions under Article 6 (m & p) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RESOLUTION that:

1. WECAFC members collaborate with CRFM to strengthen implementation of the Castries Declaration in the region, in a concerted effort to combat IUU fishing.
2. WECAFC support CRFM to seek international community cooperation in terms of provision of financial and technical support, to transfer technology and build capacity, as well as, facilitate the development and implementation of policies and measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing within the region.

Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/7

PROMOTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CONTROL OF INVASIVE LIONFISH IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN

RECOGNIZING that Invasive lionfish populations can reach high densities and cause extreme disruption to native fish communities; they have been shown to reduce biodiversity, are responsible for the decline of ecologically important species, and hinder stock-rebuilding efforts for economically important fisheries target species;

ACKNOWLEDGING that International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) prepared in 2013 a Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean;

RECALLING that the five objectives that form the basis of this strategy are:

- i) Facilitate collaboration among governments, reef-reliant industries, civil society, and academia by providing mechanisms for coordination of efforts across political and geographical boundaries;
- ii) Encourage a coordinated research and monitoring agenda;
- iii) Encourage governments to review and amend relevant legislation and, if necessary, develop new regulations and policies to control lionfish;
- iv) Control invasive lionfish populations where possible using regionally coordinated, effective methods; and
- v) Provide education, information, and outreach mechanisms to generate public support and foster stewardship in invasive lionfish programs.

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC RESOLUTION that:

1. WECAFC members promote the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean in their respective countries.
2. WECAFC members make all efforts to create a mechanism to promote coordination of control and management of lionfish in the Wider Caribbean through existing regional bodies and international organizations.
3. WECAFC members promote the adoption of existing standardized survey methods for Lionfish and incorporate these into relevant monitoring programs.

Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/8

Promoting the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Food Security (SSF Guidelines)”

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the decisions of the 29th and 30th Sessions of the Committee on Fisheries, which agreed to the development of an international voluntary instrument for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries and agreed on the need to develop implementation strategies for the SSF Guidelines at various levels including related policy reforms as well as the establishment and implementation of a Global Assistance Program;

RECOGNIZING the long and participatory consultative process that informed the development of the Guidelines and noting that the SSF Guidelines will be presented to the 31st Session of the Committee on Fisheries for endorsement;

MINDFUL of the discussions and conclusions reached during the FAO/CRFM/WECAFC Caribbean Regional Consultation on the Development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (Kingston, Jamaica 6-8 December 2012);

HIGHLIGHTING the implementation process of the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines), endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012, and including the results of the Caribbean Technical Workshop on Raising Awareness of the Tenure Guidelines (Georgetown, Guyana 19-21 June 2013) and a similar Regional Technical Workshop (Bogota, Colombia, 16-18 September 2013);

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RESOLUTION that:

1. WECAFC members and other stakeholders active in fisheries in the WECAF region encourage implementation of the SSF Guidelines as endorsed by the 31st Session of COFI (June 2014), or initially as adopted by the Technical Consultation pending endorsement by COFI.
2. WECAFC participate actively in regional processes to promote and implement the SSF Guidelines, including the development of a Regional Plan of Action in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
3. WECAFC members, in coordination with FAO, promote the implementation of the Tenure Guidelines at the regional, sub-regional and national levels.

Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/9

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT AND THE FAO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FLAG STATE PERFORMANCE IN THE REGION

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the WECAFC Area and its detrimental effect upon fish stocks, marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of legitimate fishers in particular in Small Island Developing States, and the increasing need for food security in the region;

CONSCIOUS of the respective roles of the port State and the flag State in adopting effective measures and meeting agreed criteria to promote the sustainable use and the long-term conservation of living marine resources;

RECOGNIZING that measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing should build on the primary responsibility of flag States and use all available jurisdiction in accordance with international law, including flag State measures, port State measures, coastal State measures, market related measures and measures to ensure that nationals do not support or engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

ACKNOWLEDGING that port State measures provide a powerful and cost-effective means of preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the need to improve the performance of flag States in meeting their international responsibilities, including through ensuring it meets agreed criteria and enhancing cooperation between coastal States and flag States;

AWARE of the need for increasing coordination at the regional and interregional levels to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through implementation of port State measures and improved flag State performance;

TAKING NOTE OF the binding Agreement on port State measures to combat IUU fishing which was adopted and opened for signature within the framework of FAO in November 2009, and desiring to implement this Agreement in an efficient manner in the WECAFC Area;

TAKING FURTHER NOTE of the Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance, adopted by a FAO Technical Consultation in February 2013 and submitted to the FAO Committee on Fisheries for review and endorsement at its Thirty-first Session in June, 2014;

BEARING IN MIND that, in the exercise of their sovereignty over ports located in their territory, WECAFC Members may adopt more stringent measures in accordance with international law;

RECOGNIZING that both instruments provide for cooperation with and assistance to developing countries to adopt and implement port State measures and improve flag State performance;

RECALLING the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, hereinafter (“the Convention”);

RECALLING the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 December 1995, the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Resolutions by Fishing

Vessels on the High Seas of 24 November 1993 and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

RECALLING the WECAFC Resolution on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments in the Caribbean region adopted at the 14th Session in 2012, in which Members agreed to take actions and measures to strengthen the implementation of existing international fisheries instruments and those that may be developed in the future;

NOTING the FAO/WECAFC Regional Workshop on Port State Measures held in Trinidad, 24-28 March 2014;

ADOPTS in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 (b) of the WECAFC Revised Statutes, the following Resolution:

1. WECAFC Members make all efforts to become party to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures where this has not been done, and to implement the Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance in relation to vessels entitled to fly their flag and through cooperation with flag States.
2. WECAFC Members cooperate and collaborate, including through WECAFC, to share information and identify priorities in the process of implementing the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures and Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance, and give full consideration to implementation of the outcomes of the 2014 FAO/WECAFC Port State Measures Workshop.
3. WECAFC Members harmonize, to the greatest extent possible, measures and actions taken to implement the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures and Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance.
4. WECAFC Members cooperate through the Secretariat, as appropriate, to:
 - (a) identify such assistance to developing countries as may be relevant or required in the implementation of these instruments; and
 - (b) monitor progress on the implementation of the instruments.

Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/10

ON THE STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE SHARED LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF THE CARIBBEAN AND NORTH BRAZIL SHELF LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS (CLME+ SAP)

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

ACKNOWLEDGING the significant contributions of the GEF financed Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project to sustainable fisheries in the region, and particularly in terms of facilitating the strengthening of the governance of key fishery ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean Region, at the regional, sub-regional and national levels in recent years;

RECOGNIZING that the CLME project, through transboundary diagnostic analysis and case studies, and with support from all key stakeholders, produced a strategic action programme for the sustainable management of the shared living marine resources of the Caribbean and north Brazil shelf large marine ecosystems (CLME+ SAP), which is endorsed or supported by all countries in the region;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that FAO and partners in the CLME project, including UNEP, OSPESCA, CANARI, CRFM and CERMES have, jointly with the CLME countries, initiated collaborations and partnerships that contribute to a “healthy marine environment in the CLME+ which provides benefits and livelihoods for the well-being of the people of the region”(CLME+ vision);

MINDFUL of the responsibilities assigned to WECAFC in this 10-year CLME+ SAP in terms of enhancing regional fisheries governance arrangements for sustainable fisheries;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (a) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC this RESOLUTION that:

1. WECAFC members promote the implementation of the CLME+ SAP in their respective countries.
2. WECAFC make all efforts to assume the responsibilities and coordinating roles assigned to it under the CLME+ SAP.
3. WECAFC participate actively in the preparation for and implementation of the CLME+ project “Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems”.