



WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Guadeloupe, 20-24 June 2016

Recommendations and resolutions adopted by WECAFC

Recommendations:

- **WECAFC/16/2016/1** “on the regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen conch in the WECAFC area – *addendum to recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3*”
- **WECAFC/16/2016/2** “on spiny lobster management and conservation in the WECAFC area”
- **WECAFC/16/2016/3** “on the sub-regional fisheries management plan for flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean”
- **WECAFC/16/2016/4** “on the management of deep sea fisheries in the high seas”
- **WECAFC/16/2016/5** “on the management of shrimp and groundfish resources in the WECAFC area”.

Resolutions:

- **WECAFC/16/2016/6** “on sea cucumber fisheries management and aquaculture”
- **WECAFC/16/2016/7** “on Marine Protected Areas as fisheries management tool in the Caribbean”.

Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1

ON THE REGIONAL PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF QUEEN CONCH IN THE WECAFC AREA – addendum to Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

REAFFIRMING recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3 “on the management and conservation of queen conch in the WECAFC area”, adopted by WECAFC 15, held in Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), 26-28 March 2014;

FURTHER REAFFIRMING the commitments made by Queen Conch range states at the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP 16), held in Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013 to implement the Decisions on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)” agreed at CoP16;

RECALLING the outcomes of the second meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch, held in Panama City, Panama, 18–20 November 2014;

FURTHER RECALLING that most WECAFC members have endorsed the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme (SAP), including SAP Sub-Strategy 4B, which aims at facilitating the adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach to the Queen Conch fisheries;

RECOGNIZING the progress made by WECAFC members towards implementing the CITES COP16 Decisions and the WECAFC 15 Recommendation on Queen Conch;

NOTING that the 10th meeting of the CRFM Ministerial Council held on 15th June 2016 in Jamaica, approved the Regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area, recognizing that it is a regional framework document and that each country would need to develop their own national Queen Conch Management Plans, customized to address their national priorities and local characteristics as considered appropriate and necessary;

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 “Regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area” as appropriate, and report from 2018 onwards, through WECAFC and the CITES Secretariats, on progress with the implementation of the plan to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties of CITES and the WECAFC sessions.
2. Members of WECAFC determine and adopt national-level conversion factors for the standard reporting of queen conch landings as nominal weight, and in the absence of national factors, apply the following regionally agreed conversion factors for various meat processing grades:

Processing grade	Conversion factor to nominal weight
Dirty meat	5.3
50% clean	7.9
100% clean	13.2

3. Member States should determine the meat processing grades which apply in their countries or use the appropriate conversion factor from the table above to: a) Adjust historical time series catch data from processed weight to live weight¹, and b) report future catch statistics in live weight on an annual base.
4. Members of WECAFC adopt and apply the terminology used in relation to processing grades of Queen Conch that is laid out in the report of the second meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch.
5. Members of WECAFC, to the extent possible, apply the guidelines for the making of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) as reviewed at the second meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch, in support of a well-informed decision-making processes at the national and regional levels, for the sustainable trade in, and the effective conservation and management of, Queen Conch.
6. The WECAFC Secretariat, in close coordination with OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, CITES and the SPAW Protocol Secretariats, continues to share these and future recommendations, as well as the work of the Working Group on Queen Conch, with all relevant stakeholders in the Queen Conch range states.
7. Members of WECAFC adopt by the end of 2016, either national or the regional Queen conch meat conversion factors, report these factors to FAO and include the degree of processing in the description field of the CITES export permit as agreed at CITES CoP 16 in the decisions relating to the “Regional Cooperation on the Management of and Trade in the Queen Conch“.
8. Members of WECAFC collaborate on the standardization of methodologies for assessing conch resources and fisheries and assist each other in building capacity among all conch range states for implementing these methodologies.

¹ Live weight = nominal weight = complete animal, including the shell

Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/2

“ON SPINY LOBSTER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION 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 harvests of the Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*), while recognizing the ecosystem value of these stocks and the increased need for further development of regional collaboration and harmonization of the management of this important regional resource;

MINDFUL of the high socio-economic importance of the spiny lobster fisheries for the WECAFC area, its contribution to export earnings, employment and coastal livelihoods;

RECOGNIZING the important step taken by the OSPESCA membership in 2009 when they adopted regulation OSP-02-09 on Regional Management of Caribbean Lobster Fisheries (*Panulirus argus*) and the efforts by OSPESCA members to implement this regulation;

RECOGNIZING the St. George’s Declaration on Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) adopted by the CRFM Ministerial Council in 2015, which harmonizes lobster fisheries management measures within the CRFM membership;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the CRFM members and other major lobster fisheries countries in the WECAFC region (including also Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, France, Mexico, Venezuela, UK/Bermuda and the USA) to manage lobster fisheries sustainably in their waters;

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, spiny lobster research and sustainable management, and the ongoing work by the CLME+ project, CFMC and WECAFC towards sustainable utilization of the resource;

DEEPLY APPRECIATING the collective contributions of experts from the CRFM and WECAFC members to “A review of the methodologies used for monitoring and evaluation of the spiny lobster stocks in the WECAFC countries and the development of a common methodology”;

RECALLING the outcomes of the first meeting of the newly established OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Spiny Lobster, held Panama City, Panama, 21–23 October 2014, which was generously supported by the Government of the United States of America;

RECALLING that most WECAFC members have endorsed the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme (SAP), including SAP Sub-Strategy 4A, which aims at facilitating the adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach to the Caribbean spiny lobster fisheries, and RECALLING the inclusion under the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project of dedicated financing to support the implementation of the aforementioned SAP Sub-Strategy;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/4 “On strengthening fisheries management planning in the WECAFC area”, which amongst others, requested members to establish and maintain a suitable management process that includes proper planning, legislation and participatory approaches, ensures skillful management and funding, stock assessments and enables the collection and dissemination of the necessary data and information in support of fisheries management;

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 Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Members of WECAFC implement measures that are consistent with regulation OSP-02-09 on Regional Management of Caribbean Lobster Fisheries (*Panulirus argus*) and the St. Georges Declaration on Spiny Lobster, as far as practically possible, and as appropriate, and taking into consideration the differences in the fisheries in the region.

These may include the incorporation in national legislation of the following (minimum) measures, among others:

- a. A closed season for lobster fisheries of 4 months annually (in the peak period of reproduction).
- b. A maximum number of lobster-specific traps to be used in the fishery.
- c. A requirement that each lobster-specific trap used contains an escape gap (2 1/8 inches, equivalent to 5.4 cm) for juvenile lobsters and a bio-degradable panel that opens when a trap is lost.
- d. A requirement that all lobster-specific traps are out of the water during the closed season.
- e. A requirement for an inventory of harvested lobster in stock at wholesalers, processing plants and retailers within 3 days after the closed season starts.
- f. A minimum harvest size for spiny lobster, with a tail length of at least 140 mm and a weight of not less than 4.5 ounce (128 grammes) of fresh tail, where larger country-specific measures do not exist.
- g. Prohibition of the catch, storage and sale of lobster in its reproductive and molt phases.

2. In view of their negative impact on the aquatic biodiversity and human wellbeing the use of entanglement nets and other unsustainable fishing practices should be progressively phased out.

3. Relevant stakeholders are engaged in the discussions on the adoption of regional management measures and awareness raising programs are designed and implemented.

4. The OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Spiny Lobster continues to collect, generate and share information on lobster resources and its fisheries on an annual basis, and pays particular attention to the assessment of performance of current management and conservation measures for the spiny lobster and adaptation of such measures, if required, to meet the management objectives.

5. Members of WECAFC prepare (where applicable) national level Spiny Lobster management and conservation plans by the end of 2016 addressing ecological, social, economic and governance issues and put in place appropriate legislation in support of long-term sustainable lobster stocks.

6. WECAFC, in close coordination with OSPESCA, CRFM and CFMC, adopt the regional plan for the management and conservation of Spiny Lobster, in accordance with the best available scientific evidence, addressing ecological, social, economic and governance issues and taking into consideration the preparatory work by the CLME/OSPESCA-supported MASPLESCA project.

7. WECAFC, in close coordination with OSPESCA, CRFM, and CFMC develop and implement a joint regional programme for the assessment of spiny lobster stock, taking into account issues of connectivity and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

8. Members collaborate, through the OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Spiny Lobster, on the standardization of data and information collection and reporting methods and involve the private sector in data collection.

9. Members collaborate, through the OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Spiny Lobster, on the standardization of methodologies for assessing lobster resources and fisheries and assist each other in building capacity among all lobster range states for implementing these methods.

10. Members make the best possible use of the resources available under the CLME+ project to support the aforementioned activities.

Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/3

“ON THE SUB- REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR FLYINGFISH IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN”

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

MINDFUL of the social and economic importance of flyingfish fisheries to the Eastern Caribbean states, and particularly of the role of flyingfish in local fish consumption traditions, as provider of coastal livelihoods and for tourism purposes;

RECOGNIZING that recent regionally coordinated 2008 evaluations using data, expertise and inputs from the Fisheries Divisions in Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Martinique (France), Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, as presented to CRFM, WECAF) and to the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project, indicate that the stock of flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean is not experiencing overfishing, that catch rates have remained fairly stable even with increased overall catches, and it is unlikely that catches have exceeded Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for this stock;

NOTING the limitations in the data and information available to inform management decision making, which requires application of a precautionary approach to fisheries;

COMMITTED to individually and collectively taking measures and actions to implement the Agreement on the Establishment of the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP), adopted in October 2014 by the CARICOM Ministerial Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), in terms of managing the shared flyingfish resources in the Eastern Caribbean;

TAKING NOTE OF the CRFM 2010 Castries (St. Lucia) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and the WECAFC/15/2014/6 calling for region-wide implementation of the Castries declaration;

RECALLING that most WECAFC members have endorsed the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme (SAP), including SAP Sub-Strategy 5A, which aims at facilitating the adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach to the Four-wing Flyingfish Fisheries, and the inclusion under the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project of dedicated financing to support the implementation of the aforementioned SAP Sub-Strategy;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing work of the CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean;

RECALLING the endorsement of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Management Plan for Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean² by the eight meeting of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism’s (CRFM) Ministerial Council held in Roseau, Dominica in May 2014;

AGREE to make all efforts to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management with stakeholders, which contributes to efficient fishing activities of the flyingfish resource within an economically viable and competitive small-scale fisheries sector, providing a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing flyingfish and taking the interests of consumers into account;

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

² CRFM, 2014. Sub-Regional Fisheries Management Plan for Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean. CRFM Special Publication No. 2. 42 p. + annexes.

1. WECAFC members collaborate with CRFM to actively implement the sub-regional fisheries management plan for flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean.
2. WECAFC members share catch and effort data and information and establish a mechanism to do so in a standardized manner.

Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/4

“ON THE MANAGEMENT OF DEEP SEA FISHERIES IN THE HIGH SEAS”

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;

MINDFUL of the fact that eighty-nine percent of the waters in the WECAFC area of competence have a depth of 400 meters or greater, that eighty-six percent of the water surface area has a depth greater than 1000 meters, and that fifty-one percent of the WECAFC area is considered high seas;

NOTING with concern the very limited information currently available about deep sea fish stocks and their respective catches in the WECAFC area;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the 2001 Reykjavik Declaration call for application of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF);

MINDFUL of the various UN General Assembly resolutions to sustainably manage fish stocks and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems for deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, and noting particularly the importance of paragraphs 80-90 of resolution 61/105 and of paragraphs 113-120 of resolution 64/72;

ACKNOWLEDGING further that in the WECAFC mandate area currently no regional fishery management organization (RFMO) exists which is responsible for deep sea fisheries management, and that as a consequence (and in line with UNCLOS) States participating in deep sea fisheries should cooperate to adopt and implement interim conservation and management measures to ensure sustainable management of fisheries in the long term and to prevent significant adverse impacts on VMEs;

RECALLING the establishment of the WECAFC Working Group on the management of deep-sea fisheries by WECAFC 14 in 2012 and the Resolution WECAFC/14/2012/1 “On Strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments”;

REAFFIRMING that the 2008 FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide the necessary guidance on appropriate management measures including the assessment of the impact from such fishing activities. These measures are ranging from an appropriate regulatory framework to the components of good data collection programs and include the identification of key management considerations and measures necessary to ensure conservation of target and non-target species, as well as affected habitats, and encourage implementation by all WECAFC members involved in DSFs;

RECOGNIZING that deep sea fisheries RFMOs which cover adjacent areas to the WECAFC mandate area (e.g. Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization -NAFO, South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation –SEAFO, and North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission -NEAFC) have made considerable progress in managing deep sea fisheries and identification of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), and that lessons can be learned from their processes and measures;

NOTING the report with deliberations and outcomes of the FAO/WECAFC Technical Workshop on Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas Areas of the Western Central Atlantic, Barbados, 30 September - 2 October 2014;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the Working Group 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, as appropriate, the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.
2. Members of WECAFC develop data and information collection programmes and research projects, as appropriate, to assess current practice and scope for socially and economically viable and ecologically sustainable investments in DSF in the WECAFC mandate area.
3. Members and non-members of WECAFC, involved in experimental, exploratory and established DSF in the high seas of the WECAFC area, report annually (in August for the previous year in the format presented in Appendix 3³) to the WECAFC Secretariat on their activities, including detailed catch and effort statistics at a suitable spatial resolution, to inform the membership of these activities on an annual basis.
4. Members of WECAFC and non-members submit to the WECAFC Secretariat any plans to engage in DSF, including exploratory fishing and/or research on deep sea resources, in the high seas areas of the WECAFC area prior to implementation.
5. The following areas in the WECAFC area are identified as containing VMEs or likely to contain VMEs, and that States act accordingly as per UNGA Resolution 61/105 that these areas be closed to bottom fisheries on a temporary basis and subject to review, pending more detailed survey work and assessment by this working group:

Corner Seamounts

Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
33° 36' 28" N	52° 53' 30" W
35° 0' 00" N	52° 53' 30" W
35° 0' 00" N	47° 6' 28" W
33° 36' 28" N	47° 6' 28" W

New England Seamounts

Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
34° 08' 12" N	57° 37' 46" W
35° 00' 00" N	57° 37' 46" W
35° 00' 00" N	56° 16' 39" W
34° 08' 12" N	56° 16' 39" W

Wyoming Seamount

Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
33° 13' 11" N	57° 22' 15" W
33° 52' 41" N	57° 22' 15" W
33° 52' 41" N	56° 29' 20" W
33° 13' 11" N	56° 29' 20" W

³ Of the report of the Technical Workshop, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4329e.pdf>

Congress and Lynch Seamounts

Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
32° 30' 9" N	55° 8' 56" W
33° 25' 10" N	55° 8' 56" W
33° 25' 10" N	53° 51' 20" W
32° 30' 9" N	53° 51' 20" W

Mid-Atlantic Ridge Hydrothermal Vents

Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)
30° 16' 32" N	41° 41' 41" W
29° 46' 5" N	42° 01' 8" W
29° 47' 23" N	42° 34' 10" W
24° 08' 30" N	45° 26' 31" W
23° 55' 33" N	44° 36' 38" W
23° 05' N	44° 43' 7" W
23° 41' 17" N	47° 01' 46" W
30° 50' 14" N	42° 45' 50" W

- Members of WECAFC collaborate in the identification of other VMEs in the areas beyond national jurisdiction in the WECAFC mandate area. WECAFC explores options to work cooperatively with neighbouring RFBs, in particular with NAFO in regards to the seamount areas that are shared between both areas, and FAO, on the improvement and harmonization of exploratory fishing protocols, DSF management plans, precautionary measures, and collection of monitoring data and other DSF information and statistics.

Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/5

“ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES 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 that most WECAFC members have endorsed the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and that under its Strategy 6 “Implement EBM/EAF of the Guianas-Brazil continental shelf with special reference to the shrimp and groundfish fishery” the same members are required to “Strengthen the FAO-WECAFC-CRFM sub-regional arrangement for the management of the shrimp and groundfish fisheries, and establish a decision-making capacity for policy formulation and management”, as well as the inclusion under the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project of dedicated financing to support the implementation of the aforementioned strategy;

NOTING the long history of work of WECAFC (since 1975) on shrimp and groundfish resource assessment and biological and economic modeling of shrimp fisheries, that guided the management of these resources by the members, as well as the more recent CLME project Trans boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), which demonstrated the current challenges to the sector, including habitat damage and destruction of mangroves, land-based water pollution, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, overexploitation of some resources, piracy, and conflicts between stakeholders within the sector and with other sectors;

REAFFIRMING its commitments, made at the 15th session of WECAFC, through establishing the WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf;

MINDFUL of the discussions and outcomes of the Inter-American Development Bank financed Workshop on Investing in Ecosystem-based shrimp and groundfish fisheries management of the Guianas –Brazil shelf, which was held Barbados, 7-8 September 2015;

RECOGNIZING the significant contribution of the shrimp and groundfish fisheries to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, income generation, and employment for present and future generations in the WECAFC area;

REAFFIRMING the need for continued action by all stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainable use and management of the shared shrimp and groundfish fisheries resources in the region based on the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF);

NOTING the concerns of the WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf that available and shared information to inform fisheries management and decision making processes at the sub-regional level has been reduced over the last 15 years. Researchers and fisheries officers have not received the necessary capacity building to carry out such assessments, most management plans are in draft form only and enforcement capacity and collaboration in fisheries management is weak;

ACNOWLEDGING that this capacity building should be contingent on the availability of resources and the means to actually use the knowledge, abilities, and approaches to bioeconomic analysis and management of fisheries of the North Brazil-Guianas ecosystem;

RECOGNIZING the need to improve data and information to reduce uncertainties to stock assessment methodologies currently used, to investigate whether stocks are shared or not and to monitor the long term impacts of the trawl fisheries on the stocks;

RECOGNIZING that while certain shrimp and groundfish stocks may not be shared by all countries on the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, there are substantial linkages between the fisheries fleets from the different countries and the ecosystems where these stocks are exploited;

CONSIDERING the opportunities offered by the GEF projects on Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries (REBYC-II LAC) and on Catalyzing 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 (CLME+), for introducing and testing shrimp fisheries bycatch reduction technologies and fisheries co-management and for increasing regional collaboration in management of the common and transboundary resources, as well as for combating IUU fishing and building of national capacities;

RECOGNIZING the efforts of the CRFM through its Annual Scientific Meetings and intersessional activities, in facilitating assessment of the commercial seabob fisheries in Guyana and Suriname, the red snapper fishery in Guyana, as well as the shrimp fisheries, including two species of groundfish – the lane snapper and whitemouth croaker, in Trinidad and Tobago, to provide information in support of fisheries management decision making;

RECOGNIZING efforts made by France, the IFREMER in French Guiana, and in Brazil to carry out stocks assessments of penaeid shrimps and red snapper;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the Working Group, CRFM Continental Shelf Fisheries Working Group meetings 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 shrimp and groundfish fishery management plans, and put in place appropriate legislation in support of a sustainable shrimp and groundfish fishery.
2. WECAFC, in close coordination with CRFM, IFREMER and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention, develop a sub-regional shrimp and groundfish fishery management plan for the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf countries, in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to WECAFC 17 for final review and adoption.
3. WECAFC, in close collaboration with FAO, CRFM, IFREMER and NOAA develops appropriate methodologies for shrimp and groundfish data collection, management and use, including the sharing of the relevant information on catch, catch composition (i.e. species and sizes) and fishing effort (fleet specific, gear specific), for initial implementation by the members from 2018 onwards.
4. WECAFC, in close collaboration with FAO, CRFM, IFREMER and NOAA develops also a common methodology for multispecies shrimp and groundfish stock assessments in the sub-region taking in consideration environmental variables, for initial implementation by the members from 2018 onwards.
5. WECAFC, in close coordination with CRFM, IFREMER, CLME+, FAO, the FIRMS Partnership, and as required with the support of the iMarine/BlueBridge project, establishes a shared regional database matching confidentiality and security requirements⁴.

⁴The database should contain raw data of the collected biological and physical/environmental parameters and the required fishery data (catch, effort, length frequencies, ...), to support outcomes achieved through stock assessments, bio-economic modeling and other relevant information on shrimp and groundfish fisheries for decision making process for the management of these resources in the sub-region. The database outputs concerning state of stocks and fishery management status would be made available through the FIRMS website,

6. WECAFC, in close collaboration with FAO, CRFM and NOAA and IFREMER build capacity in the Brazil-Guianas region for periodic bioeconomic analysis of fisheries⁵.
7. The Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish to assist the Regional Working Group on IUU to develop a regional plan of action to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (RPOA-IUU).
8. The Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish assists the REBYC-II LAC project countries with the development of a regional trawl fisheries bycatch strategy, for review and endorsement by CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC in 2018.
9. WECAFC members promote the shrimp and groundfish fisheries general investment plan for the Brazil-Guianas shelf countries at the national and sub-regional levels.
10. WECAFC, IADB and CRFM to further facilitate the member countries (as needed) in conducting the necessary feasibility studies for the preparation of full-fledged, location-specific investment proposals.

applying well-established and agreed protocols for data and information sharing compliant with data policies of the participating countries.

⁵ Specifically, capacity should be built to undertake: (i) robust stock assessments (ii) costs and earnings studies of different fisheries of interest in the country/region, (iii) bioeconomic modelling and analysis of technologically interdependent fisheries (e.g. shrimp and snapper fisheries), (iv) bioeconomic modelling of sequential fisheries with fleets harvesting different components of the population structure (e.g. shrimp fisheries targeted by small-scale and industrial fleets in different stages of their life cycle), and (v) alternative bioeconomic models for different species being targeted (i.e. species with different degrees of mobility) and multi-species fisheries, e.g. groundfish and small-scale fisheries.

Resolution WECAFC/16/2016/6

“ON SEA CUCUMBER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND AQUACULTURE”

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

MINDFULL of the discussions and conclusions reached at the Workshop on lionfish and sea cucumber”, which was held in Havana, Cuba, from 29 to 30 April, 2014;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the information presented by the experts during the workshop shows that fisheries of sea cucumber in the Caribbean Sea present a wide variety of characteristics depending on the countries, each of them with their own challenges for management;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the main obstacles to achieve a sustainable management of the sea cucumber fishery include the lack of quantitative data on the state of the resource and fishing operations, inadequate management measures and insufficient monitoring, control and surveillance capacities;

NOTING that the lack of information on the markets of sea cucumber and the export operations also constitute a common problem;

CONSIDERING that sea cucumber resources in the countries that are part of the Greater Caribbean are limited and therefore, excessive captures can rapidly lead to the collapse of natural stocks;

ACKNOWLEDGING that sea cucumber markets are diversifying, looking for products in new locations, and that aquaculture of the most demanded species for these markets could satisfy an increasing demand and avoid the overexploitation of the wild species;

UNDERSTANDING that the sustainable management of natural resources, applying an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, and that the development of aquaculture techniques of the different species obtain better results with the full cooperation of the authorities, researchers and producers of the countries;

CONCERNED about the fact that Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing accounts for an important share of sea cucumber fisheries;

FURTHER CONCERNED that the rapidly growing Asian markets and related high market prices for the commodity are negatively affecting the sea cucumber stocks and their ecological functions in the WECAFC member countries prior to having any fishery regulation in place to regulate fisheries of this commodity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the best way for Latin American and Caribbean countries to jointly act is through common international and intergovernmental institutions, such as WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, etc.;

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

1. WECAFC members apply the precautionary approach to sea cucumber fisheries and that no sea cucumber fisheries should be allowed anywhere in the region without having appropriate management plans or science-based regulations in place for the harvesting, processing and trade in the species.

2. WECAFC members collaborate on and coordinate the following activities:
 1. Biological research on the life cycle characteristics and the reproductive biology of the commercially interesting species, including size at sexual maturity, longevity, recruitment and growth rate;
 2. Development of aquaculture technologies of native species applying a precautionary approach;
 3. Study the socio-economic aspects of the fishing communities and the stakeholders in the value chain;
 4. Monitoring of the fisheries of sea cucumber and combating of illegal fishing and trade;
 5. Research on the development of new products, including pharmaceutical uses, and the utilization of by-products;
 6. Marketing research and monitoring of international sea cucumber trade dynamics;
 7. Strengthening the monitoring and controls by international, regional, national and local authorities;
 8. Preparation and implementation of management plans applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries;
 9. Data collection on captures, prices, processing and foreign trade;
 10. Capacity building on all the above mentioned topics;
 11. Identification of funding from governments, regional and international organizations, for the implementation of effective actions on the points of this resolution.

3. WECAFC Members should actively endeavor to identify and implement appropriate value-adding initiatives of Sea cucumber before export to increase earnings for fishers and the fishing communities.

Resolution WECAFC/16/2016/7

“ON MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TOOL IN THE CARIBBEAN”

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECOGNIZING that in the Caribbean, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are widely used as a tool for biodiversity conservation and fisheries management. They have proved effective in terms of contributing to coral reef rehabilitation, protecting seagrass habitats, and increasing biodiversity and aquatic animal biomass inside their boundaries in numerous locations in the region. For this reason, and in response to international commitments, the number of MPAs has increased rapidly in recent years and is estimated to be about 385 in the Caribbean islands;

DEFINING an MPA as “any marine geographical area that is afforded greater protection than the surrounding waters for biodiversity conservation or fisheries management purposes⁶” and that therefore an MPA is not necessarily a no-take zone (where no extraction is permitted), but could as well be a multiple-use area (where a range of resource uses are allowed);

ACKNOWLEDGING that while most MPAs appear to address certain ecological objectives well, their performance in terms of meeting social and economic objectives requires strengthening. Their impact on fisheries is in many cases not known, in particular with regard to effects outside the MPA boundaries;

NOTING THAT whatever the objectives, only well-managed MPAs can be successful. For successful management, engagement by coastal communities and key stakeholders is essential. Participation by fishers and coastal communities from the very beginning of an MPA planning process is crucial, and the process itself is critical for successful outcomes;

AWARE that there is generally a need to take a more people-focused approach, recognizing that access to fishery resources is fundamental for the livelihoods of fishing communities. Planning and management of MPAs should recognize the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic sustainability;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the FAO “Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries on MPAs and Fisheries” and the positive contributions implementation of these guidelines could make to address the interface between fisheries management and biodiversity conservation and provide support for MPAs with multiple objectives;

RECALLING the discussions at the Regional Workshop on Marine Protected Areas as a Tool for Responsible Fisheries and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Caribbean, held in Barbados, 6–8 November 2014;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the *conclusions and recommendations* from the above mentioned workshop through this RESOLUTION:

1. The focus of MPAs as a fisheries management tool should include the well-being of fishers and their communities. Accordingly, participation by coastal communities in MPA planning and management is imperative. In many cases, fisherfolk organizations need to be strengthened to allow for their effective participation in MPA planning and management.

⁶ Adopted from Fisheries management. 4. Marine protected areas and fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 4, Suppl. 4. Rome, FAO. 2011. 198p, available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2090e/i2090e.pdf>

2. Secure access by fishing communities to the resources they depend on should be ensured, in accordance with the Tenure Guidelines and the SSF Guidelines.
3. Accordingly, stewardship by resource users should be promoted. Managed access or TURFs can be useful tools in this respect. Generally, it would appear that MMAs with zoning and a set of different management measures, reflecting the need for areas with multiple purposes, could be more effective than strict no-take areas. However, it should be noted that the terminology is not always clear and that the term “MPA” and other expressions (e.g. marine reserves and fish sanctuaries) often have different meanings in different countries and contexts.
4. Lack of compliance with MPA rules is often an issue that is related to overall management effectiveness. Buy-in from coastal communities and participation of resource users in MPA planning and management are essential for good compliance. A combination of incentives for respecting the MPA rules and adequate enforcement mechanisms are also needed.
5. For MPAs to be effective as a fisheries management tool, they should be complemented by other fisheries management tools and embedded in broader management frameworks (applying an EAF or ecosystem-based management), including also the area outside the MPA. Moreover, it should be recognized that there often are also many external factors, outside of fisheries, that need to be addressed, e.g. land-based pollution and agricultural runoff, in order to ensure ecosystem health, biodiversity conservation and sustainable fish stocks.
6. Where fishing effort needs to be reduced to ensure sustainability, the social and economic importance of fishing and related activities to local communities has to be recognized, and solutions should be identified and developed that respect the needs of the fishers and their families. The focus on identifying “alternative” livelihoods is not enough. Any strategy aimed at reducing fishing pressure must focus at diversification and securing sustainable livelihoods in a more holistic manner.
7. The planning and management of MPAs should be informed by relevant information. Social sciences need to be considered equally with biological research and data, as well as research on the ecosystem itself and the impacts on the ecosystem. Traditional and local knowledge should be used, and the expertise of fishers and coastal communities at the resource base should be respected. Adequate participatory monitoring and evaluation systems should be established that promote adaptive management.
8. Considering that many marine resources are shared in the region, and that issues and concerns are often common to several countries, strengthened regional collaboration on MPAs and fisheries management is needed. Existing RFBs and other stakeholder organizations have important roles to play in this respect.
9. Most MPAs are established with the help of external funding, ensuring financing of the MPA only for a limited number of years. Solutions need to be found for how sustainable long-term financing can be secured. Sustained and effective management of MPAs require considerable financial and human resources.
10. WECAFC Members should implement programmes aimed at sensitization or awareness that demonstrate how MPAs would benefit communities and the country as a whole.
11. WECAFC Members should establish programmes that monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of MPA and make adjustments where necessary to achieve the desired objectives.