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للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

### Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010

### OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL MEETING ON RECOFI CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ROME, ITALY, 11-12 MAY 2010) AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

#### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on the main findings and outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that was held in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. A short summary about the meeting and its outcome is provided below.

#### BACKGROUND

2. The Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development was convened as a follow-up to the Fifth Session of RECOFI held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009. At this meeting Commission requested the Secretariat to convene an *ad hoc* inter-sessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO). The Meeting was attended by seven Members of the Commission. The agenda of the meeting is in Appendix 1.

#### ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

3. The preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission were presented and discussed. The technical review was to make recommendations to enhance RECOFI's role and efficiency. The analysis and preliminary findings of the technical review were based on eight considerations:

- a. Knowledge on the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing;
- b. Knowledge on the status of aquaculture;
- c. Regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- d. Decision making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy and to assess the results;
- e. Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis;
- f. Decision making process to adopt Commission recommendations and measures;
- g. Capacity development, training and technical assistance; and

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h. Communication and information.

4. A number of pertinent issues were highlighted in the technical review including that the Commission:

1. was heavily reliant on FAO services, both financial and in kind;
2. had not yet made recommendations to its Members concerning fisheries management and aquaculture despite having the mandate to do so; and
3. had served as a forum for the transfer of knowledge and for strengthening capacity for fisheries research and management and aquaculture development.

5. In addition, it was noted that:

1. Members lacked the financial and human resources to maximize benefits for the initiatives already being undertaken by the Commission;
2. the non-political nature of FAO regional fishery bodies (RFBs) was an important element in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among Members;
3. efforts to overcome Members' constraints identified in the questionnaire should be addressed including fostering a more participatory approach in the Commission's work and decision-making;
4. an assessment of national governance capacities was required;
5. criteria and principles to define and develop RECOFI's regional governance priorities was needed;
6. weaknesses in raising financial resources to support RECOFI's activities required attention, and
7. a new vision was required to guide the Commission.

6. The Special Meeting, while noting the considerable amount of work carried out by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during the last biennium as indicated in the up-to-date list of RECOFI publications (Appendix 2), expressed considerable concern about the lack of follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations from technical meetings convened by the Commission. Reasons were identified for this lack of follow-up and it was agreed that RECOFI should be involved in assisting Members in implementing decisions. However, it was recognized that such a role had financial implications and that funding would need to be secured if activities to support the implementation of Commission decisions were to be undertaken.

7. The Secretariat reviewed the financial situation of the Commission as of May 2009 highlighting in particular the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. In the last biennium (2008-09), the actual total working costs related to RECOFI activities were USD 557 459.91, including the cost of FAO staff members (technical support and travel costs) supporting the Commission. The latter cost was about seven times greater the total national Members' contributions over the same period (USD 80 000). The Secretariat noted that FAO contribution over the same period represented 73.61% of financial commitments. If the Commission was to be fully autonomous and financially self-supporting, Members' annual contributions would need to rise. The independent consultant estimated the rise to be around USD 35 000 per country per year, *as a minimum*.

8. The Secretariat expressed the view that RECOFI should evolve towards an organisation capable of better delivering services to Members, broadening the scope of activities, and involving other stakeholders such as regional bodies and the private sector. The importance of ways and means of improving the Commission's financial capacity was based on the following utilities:

- more autonomy for the Commission;
- more activities in service of Members;
- more participation of internal and external human capacities; and

- a higher ability to attract partners/donors as the commitment of the latter was based on the degree and ability of RECOFI to self-finance on an ongoing basis.

Looking to the future, three scenarios were presented with respect to financing the Commission:

- I. status quo of equal payment with upward adjustment of annual contributions;
- II. maintaining the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions by Member's on a voluntary basis; and
- III. replacing equal payments with indexed contributions based on a variety of variables.

9. Delegates noted that besides the three aforementioned scenarios, other options could be identified also and taken into consideration. Moreover, it was highlighted by the Secretariat that there were two different financial means to support the Commission:

1. directly through agreed contributions by Members and,
2. indirectly, and additionally, through extra-budgetary funding of field projects (national or regional).

10. The Special Meeting took note of the very significant financial contribution that FAO has provided to RECOFI during the last biennium. The Meeting was informed that this level of support could not be continued indefinitely, given the financial constraints faced by FAO.

11. The Special Meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. However, it was recognized that the movement towards a stronger and more dynamic Commission should be achieved in a phased, stepwise approach. It was stressed that Members should lead the Commission's work and activities, both in the period of reorganization and strengthening, and afterwards, as RECOFI took on its role as a fully functional and operational RFMO. Under this scenario the Commission, as a FAO body, would continue to benefit from support and guidance provided by the Organization.

12. The Meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs:

13. Technical: It was agreed that Members would review the meeting document "Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries" in their countries and provide written comments on each of the eight points raised in the document to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.

14. Institutional: The meeting noted that the RECOFI operated with a part-time Secretariat. This situation limited the scope and depth of the Commission's work. Members should consider whether the services provided by FAO at the current level were sufficient and adequate to meet the fisheries needs and challenges of the region. If this was not the case a decision concerning a permanent Secretariat would have to be faced as an option. Decisions relating to the Commission's structure and other institutional considerations were needed.

15. Financial: Based on the information contained in the meeting document "Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options", the meeting recognized that RECOFI's financial needs, including the level of Members' contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was recognized also that the current contribution level (USD 5 000 per year) was quite inadequate, particularly when the amount of arrears were taken into account. After having assessed and agreed the Commission's technical and institutional requirements to address fisheries and aquaculture issues in the region, RECOFI should determine how the work programme would be funded. The Commission's core functions and activities should be covered at

least by Member contributions while other activities of a project nature could be funded by extra-budgetary funding.

16. Members were aware that a major challenge for delegates attending the Special Meeting would be how to present its recommendations and outcomes to relevant national authorities after returning to their respective capitals. This would be important to ensure that solid decisions could be made at the Commission's 2011 session. The Meeting underscored the fact that RECOFI was vital to the region if regional fisheries cooperation was to be strengthened further and if problems such as overfishing, resource depletion, and environmental damage were to be mitigated or avoided and if food security in the region is to be enhanced.

#### **FOLLOW-UP**

17. The technical performance review of the work and operations of the Commission that was being prepared by an independent consultant will be finalized by the Secretariat and submitted to RECOFI Members. The review will include the results of the survey questionnaire completed by Members as well as the outcome of the interviews made with delegations attending the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development in May 2010.

18. In addition, the Secretariat circulated a questionnaire to Members on 24 August 2010 containing the technical recommendations that should be considered by Members to strengthen RECOFI. The Special Meeting agreed that Commission Members should review the suite of recommendations to appraise their relevance to the needs and priorities of Members and the region as a whole. The completed questionnaire should be returned to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

19. The Working Group is invited to consider the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development and to comment on them, as appropriate. In particular, the Working Group may wish to consider the possible scenarios and consequences for the long-term sustainability of the RECOFI fisheries, should the Commission fail to identify and adopt ways and means to fulfil its mandate and to enhance its role as a RFMO.

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**Appendix 1****SPECIAL MEETING ON RECOFI CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT****ROME, 11-12 MAY 2010****AGENDA****Tuesday, 11 May 2010****Morning: 9:30 hours**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the meeting
3. Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries
4. Outline of some existing arrangements and financing mechanisms of regional management bodies

**Afternoon: 14:30 hours**

5. Financial and activities scenarios: present situation and future options
6. The point of view and experience of a stakeholder of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
7. Options and recommendations to the VI Session of RECOFI on the consolidation and development of the Commission
8. Any other matters

**Wednesday, 12 May 2010****Morning:**

Free

**Afternoon: 14:30 hours**

9. Adoption of the report

**RECOFI PUBLICATIONS****(2008 TO PRESENT)****List of publications**

Stamatopoulos, C. Improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members. Regional Commission for Fisheries, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo. 2008. 56p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 6-10 April 2008). *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 876. Rome, FAO. 2008. 119p.

FAO. Report of the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 889. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 65p.

Regional Commission for Fisheries. Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production (1986-2006). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. CD-Rom prepared for and presented at the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, 27-30 October 2008, Cairo, Egypt.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 25-26 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 892. Rome, FAO. 2009. 135p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 27–28 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 895. Rome, FAO. 2009. 44p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 30 March – 2 April 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 903. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 30p.

FAO. Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. Report of the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Dubai. United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 915. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 70p. [Bilingual version English/Arabic].

FAO. Report of the third meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 922. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 63p.

Swan, J. Review of fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular*. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. 2009. 81p. [English version]

Swan, J. Review of fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular*. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. 2009. [Arabic version]

FAO. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status. Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. XXX. Cairo, FAO. 2010. XXp. In preparation

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FAO. Report of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development. Rome, Italy, 11-12 May 2010. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. XXX. Cairo, FAO. 2010. XXp. In preparation

All RECOFI publications are available at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en>