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Продовольственная и
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Объединенных
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Organización
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Naciones
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para la
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y la
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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

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RECOFI CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPEMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Commission on the main findings and outcomes 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 the 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.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

3. The preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission (RECOFI/VI/2011 Inf. 11) 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
- 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 also indicated by the RECOFI record of publications (see Appendix 1 in document RECOFI/VI/2011/3), expressed considerable concern regarding the lack of follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations from technical meetings convened by the Commission. Reasons for this lack of follow-up were identified 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 than the total national Members' contributions over the same period (USD 80 000). The Secretariat noted that FAO contributions over the same period represented 73.61 percent 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 approximately 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.

9. 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 Members on a voluntary basis; and
- III. replacing equal payments with indexed contributions based on a variety of variables.

10. 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).

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

12. 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 FAO.

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

- I. 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 consolidate the responses for consideration by the Commission. The Members' responses to the questionnaire are reported in Appendix 1 of this document.
- II. Institutional: The meeting noted that 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 are 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 considered. Decisions relating to the Commission's structure and other institutional considerations were needed.
- III. Financial: Based on the information contained in the meeting document "Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options", it was recognized that RECOFI's financial needs, including the level of Members' contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was also recognized 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 on 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.

14. 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.

15. It was 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.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

16. The Commission is invited to consider the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development and to comment and decide on them as deemed appropriate. The Commission may also 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 an RFMO.

Appendix 1

Responses to the questionnaire on technical recommendations made by the Special Meeting

Number of Replies	Eight			
Response Percentage from Members	100%			
Topic	1. Knowledge about the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
1.1. Working on the definition of management units for regional and strictly national stocks from a RECOFI perspective;	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
1.2. Supporting national technical capacity related to the harmonization work already completed;	62.5%	12.5%	25%	
1.3. Widening the set of ecosystem-wide data to include economic data specific to the fisheries sector.	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
Members' comments: None.				
Analysis: <i>Most of the members found the three specific recommendations on the knowledge about the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing extremely relevant. The rest of the members considered this topic contribution as of medium or low relevance.</i>				

Topic	2. Knowledge about the status of aquaculture			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
2.1.Pursue and consolidate RAIS;	75%	25%		
2.2.Promote a strategy for the development of aquaculture programmes according to environmental standards, minimizing risk and the strengthening of economic, commercial and food interests in the area;	75%	12.5%	12.5%	
2.3. Engage RECOFI as a forum to exchange lessons learned from past experience and operational capacity.	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
Members' comments: 1. IRAN: There should be some more survey activities regarding Urbanization of coastal areas and building Artificial Islands which might increase load of pollution and endanger ecology of the region.				
Analysis: <i>Most of the members highly supported the three recommendations different aspects related to the knowledge about the status of aquaculture, with a percentage ranging from 75% to 62.5%. The rest of the members consider these recommendations as of medium (12.5% and 25% of respondents) or low (12.5%) relevance.</i>				

Topic	3. Regional dimensions of the fishing sector			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
3.1. Accord flexibility to the national experts invited to technical workshops according to the skills required;	62.5%	37.5%		
3.2. Define criteria and set protocols to identify common issues and prioritise actions;	75%	12.5%	12.5%	
3.3. Set up a process for the programming and the operationalisation of cooperation in defined areas (research, surveillance, legislation, international cooperation, fiscal arrangements, economics and trade, etc.);	62.5%	12.5%	25%	
3.4. Emphasise the regional dimension of issues related to fisheries whilst offering practical and functional solutions to address them;	75%		25%	
3.5. Integrate measures to control IUU fishing into other functions and basic mission;	37.5%	50%	12.5%	
3.6. Facilitate by means of operational measures and by evolution of its structure, a stronger involvement of member countries as, hopefully, will be evidenced by the empowerment of RECOFI.	50%	37.5%	12.5%	
Members' comments:				
<p>1. Kuwait: RECOFI should facilitate to achieve common consensus among member countries on the following issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conservation of shared fish stocks 2. IUU Fishing activities and by-catch reduction <p>Habitat destruction, over- exploitation and pollution effects</p>				
Analysis:				
<p><i>Members highly agreed on most of the recommendations related to the regional dimension of the fishing sector by a percentage ranging from 62.5% to 70%. The two recommendations on integrating measures to control IUU fishing into other functions and basic mission, and facilitating by means of operational measures and by evolution of its structure a stronger involvement of member countries, were ranked as less relevant.</i></p>				

Topic	4. Regional dimensions of the aquaculture sector			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
4.1. Engage RECOFI as a forum to exchange lessons learned, as well as knowledge and operational capacity;	75%	25%		
4.2. Develop a regional approach since it will lead to harmonization of laws and regulations and thus facilitate regional trade of aquatic animals and aquaculture products;	50%	37.5%	12.5%	
4.3. Open a dialogue with commissions that have investment resources and with private economic operations.	62.5%	25%	12.5%	

Members' comments:**1. Kuwait:**

- a. RECOFI's focus on invasive species in the region is so important
- b. Priority for augmenting aquaculture production through local fish species in RECOFO region

Analysis:

Most members considered most of the recommendations regarding the regional dimensions of the aquaculture sector as of medium to high relevance. However, some respondent ranked two of the three specific recommendations as of low relevance.

Topic	5. Decision making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy, and to assess the results			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
5.1. Develop capacity to assess the state of governance in each national sector and capacity for managing fisheries and developing aquaculture section;	62.5%	12.5%	25%	
5.2. Provide a forum for dialogue and cooperation among their member countries;	62.5%	12.5%	25%	
5.3. Solicit external advice that is independent of the Secretariat and session participants in the formulation of action plans, ToRs and the national resources;	37.5%	25%	25%	12.5%
5.4. RECOFI Agreement needs to be amended to incorporate modern fisheries management principles as well as established and emerging international conventions (Flag State duties, Port State measures, the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture;	62.5%	37.5%		
5.5. Review and update rules of procedure of RECOFI;	37.5%	62.5%		
5.6. Rethink the location and the funding of the Commission headquarters to one of the Member countries for reasons of proximity, ownership and physical appropriation of the Commission by the Member countries;	25%	50%	25%	
5.7. Rebalance the involvement of FAO and the Member countries through the nomination and the financial support of staff from Member countries.	50%	25%	25%	
Members' comments: None				
Analysis:				
<i>Recommendations 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4 were ranked as of high relevance by most of respondents. Recommendation 5.3 received varied ratings, from high to irrelevant relevance. Items 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 were mostly ranked as of from medium to high relevance.</i>				

Topic	6. Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
6.1. Developing criteria and technical protocols to improve cooperation between national institutions with a view to their participation in the RECOFI activity plan (research, monitoring, control and surveillance);	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
6.2. Developing a framework to take action in the face of uncertainty and weakness in scientific advice;	87.5%		12.5%	
6.3. Taking into account economic analysis (rent assessment) and fisheries management plans (target species and high value species) as well as current principles of fisheries management, including ecosystem based approach, biodiversity protection, etc;	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
6.4. Developing capacity to assess the state of governance in each national jurisdiction and the capacity for managing fisheries and developing the aquaculture sector;	37.5%	25%	37.5%	
6.5. Addressing management questions at the regional level, not simply in the quest for harmonized technical measures, but also to resolve at the appropriate geographical scale, certain problems that face the sector (e.g. fishing capacity or trade).	50%	37.5%	12.5%	
<p>Members' comments: None</p> <p>Analysis: <i>The majority of members regarded the recommendations related to the quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis as highly relevant with a percentage ranging from 62.5% to 87.5%. The recommendations on addressing management questions at the regional level and on capacity development related to fisheries governance and management, and on aquaculture development were ranked as of relatively minor relevance.</i></p>				

Topic	7. Decision making process to adopt Commissions recommendations and measures			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
7.1. Target the dissemination and exchange of reports focused on specific issues and work projects.	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
<p>Members' comments: 1. Iran: Although it is very important but, it seems that item 7.1 must not be mentioned under this Topic (Decision making process...). If you enlist it under Topic 8, then our answer would be "High"</p> <p>Analysis: <i>Target the dissemination and exchange of reports focused on specific issues and work projects was found highly relevant by most of respondents.</i></p>				

Topic	8. Capacity development, training and technical assistance			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
8.1. Seeking increased financial support (including extra-budgetary contributions) to augment the output from, and impact of, capacity building initiatives;	37.5%	37.5%	25%	
8.2. Prioritising the needs of Member countries in a more operational way in order to prepare a plan to build national capacity;	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
8.3. Strengthening the human and financial capacity of the Secretariat to support the focal points in the dissemination and the facilitation of national actor networks concerned with fisheries and aquaculture problems;	50%	25%	25%	
8.4. Giving focal points the resources and an action plan to disseminate RECOFI achievements as well as to mobilise the technical human capacities required to execute the ToRs;	50%	37.5%	12.5%	
8.5. Giving the focal points the resources, thorough financial and technical support of the Secretariat, to encourage and articulate the demands from Member countries consistent with RECOFI missions;	75%		25%	
8.6. Continuing with the comparative national thematic review work, and solicit the more advanced countries to build capacity, to develop partnerships within RECOFI in order to benefit from their achievements and their technical skills.	62.5%	25%	12.5%	
<p>Members' comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Iran: With respect to "increased financial support" in item 8.1, there should be more emphasis on international donors. Kuwait: With respect to "increased financial support" in item 8.1, there should be more emphasis on international donors. <p>Analysis:</p> <p><i>Members gave a varied response to the recommendations related to capacity development and technical assistance. As a trend, the recommendations were ranked as of medium to high relevance. Some topics, however, were regarded as highly relevant (8.2, 8.5, and 8.6) by the majority of respondents, while other items received a more varied and less pronounced appraisal.</i></p>				

Topic	9. Communication and information			
Relevance of recommendation	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
9.1. Prepare a communication and information plan to deal with relations of Member countries with non-member countries in the same geographic area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops.	75%	12.5%	12.5%	
<p>Members' comments:</p> <p>1. Kuwait: Member Countries shall financially support the RECOFI activities in more efficient manner. Support from the non-member countries in this regard should be decided in the forth coming meetings of RECOFI.</p> <p>2. Saudi Arabia: Supporting RECOFI is conditioned to the payment of all RECOFI member countries their due fees up to the year 2010. Until then Saudi Arabia will be ready to discuss RECOFI new budget proposal.</p> <p>Analysis:</p> <p>Most of the members found highly relevant the preparation of a communication and information plan to deal with relations of Member countries with non-member countries in the same geographic area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops.</p>				