

**REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES**

**RECOFI**

**TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**



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### **Bibliographic reference**

**RECOFI.** Technical Performance Review. FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. Cairo. 2011. 83p.

# Executive Summary

At the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from May 12 to 14 2009, the Commission agreed to hold an ad hoc intercessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Members recognised the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth.

The purpose of the technical performance review is first, to provide an overview of the organisations, structures, and objectives of RECOFI and second, to consider the technical performance with regard to the organisations' objectives. Mr Joseph Catanzano, International Consultant, was recruited by the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat to carry out the review.

As the core objective is increasing efficiency of the Commission, this evaluation will focus on the relevance of the strategy and pursuant activities and will also address how well RECOFI develops, pursues and implements the strategy.

## Competence of the Commission

The Commission, within its area of competence, is empowered to formulate and recommend appropriate measures for the conservation and management of living marine resources. Additionally, it is mandated to: review the economic and social aspects of the fishing industry and recommend measures for its development; encourage, recommend and coordinate training and extension activities; encourage, recommend, coordinate and undertake research and development activities; assemble, publish and disseminate information regarding living marine resources and fisheries based on these resources; and carry out any other activities as may be necessary for RECOFI to achieve its purpose as defined in the Commission's Agreement.

## RECOFI's core budget

*RECOFI's core budget is funded by the contributions of the Member countries of the Commission, the shares of which are paid annually. The practice has been for Member countries to pay their share of the budget equally, i.e. USD 5 000 per country per year. The annual core budget of the Commission is currently of USD 40 000. The core budget of RECOFI takes the form of a multi-lateral trust-fund project with the FAO symbol MTF/REM/001/MUL and title "Support to the Secretariat of RECOFI". The project began in April 2003 and has been renewed on a yearly basis. Its budget is revised regularly in order to monitor annual contributions by Member countries and the cash flow of expenditures.*

## The technical performance review

The Technical review of the Commission's activities has been developed throughout four last RECOFI Sessions (Session II Muscat, 2003, Session III Doha 2005, Session IV Jeddah, 2007 and Session V Dubai 2009). The methodology used is based on document analysis, questionnaires (Members State) and interviews conducted by FAO staff involved in RECOFI activities and completed by a visit to the Secretariat of RECOFI. Interviews with national delegations during the meeting in Rome (May 11-12, 2010) complete the materials used in the review.

The technical review of debates and activities is presented according to the following main themes:

- statistics and resources survey for the RECOFI area;
- aquaculture;
- general fisheries management issues;
- relationships with other international organizations and non-RECOFI member states.

The following issues are addressed by the technical performance review:

- Knowledge on the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing;
- Knowledge on the status of aquaculture;
- Regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- Decision making, transparency, participation and methods for: defining and implementing the Commission Strategy, and assessing the results
- Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis
- The Decision making process for adopting Commission recommendations and measures
- Capacity-Building, Training and Technical Assistance
- Communication and information dissemination
- Organization and financing: scenarios for the future.

Each of the issues is elaborated in detail (i.e. activities and experiences, assessment and recommendations) in the main Technical Performance Report.

### **Main Strengths and weaknesses identified by Member countries (Source: questionnaire RECOFI completed by Member countries, March 2010)**

#### **Strengths**

- Framework of the United Nations;
- Good platform to discuss and resolve issues;
- RAIS website;
- Increasing technical backstop by FAO;
- Well qualified and knowledgeable personnel managing RECOFI activities;
- Efficient and fast preparation of meetings and facilitation of missions;
- Appropriate forum to address all fisheries issues in Persian Gulf & Oman sea Region;
- Availability of experts and capabilities;
- Good internal and external communication;
- Firm commitment to membership and committees by regional experts;
- Presence of high level technical expertise;
- Awareness of member countries' lack of capabilities in scientific research;
- Consulting member countries' experts in the analysis of collected data;
- The organizational role it plays and the development of generally sound scientific recommendations.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Low budget and financial input;
- Interactions between Focal Points in the groups and between Secretariat and NFPs;
- Level of importance given by some members to the meetings and workshops;
- Level of awareness of RECOFI and its role within the region ;
- Relations with other RFMOs and International Agencies;
- Limited capability for effective execution for the conservation and management of fisheries resources under Article 14 of the FAO Constitution;
- Conflict of interest between the policies of member countries and the primary objectives of the Commission;
- Lack of scientific and practical instruments to implement the Commission's decisions;
- Lack of training workshops;
- Insufficient support from FAO at a higher level;
- Low representation by some member countries (meetings);
- Incomplete implementation of agreed upon projects;

- Unorganized work program;
- Unpaid contributions by some member countries;
- Lack of agreement by member countries on unified measures to study fish stocks and the collection of data.

**Compendium of the recommendations developed by the independent technical performance review by issues addressed:**

- The Commission mandate should evolve towards a more ambitious knowledge production programme. The current process should therefore be pursued with a greater contribution from Member countries and/or the external support of a partner. Greater understanding of national contexts and greater involvement of fisheries sector professionals and the national bodies with stock assessment skills should be promoted within the RECOFI framework, perhaps through an initiative aiming to develop a work plan on this issue. This work should constitute the framework to organize RECOFI's work and future efforts aiming to consolidate national systems (institutional capacity building for fisheries policy definition and contribution to fisheries governance in particular as regards its regional dimension).
- Pursue and consolidate the Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS) through the facilitation, within RECOFI, of a network of experts and potential decision-makers in order to contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region. Pursue, through RECOFI, the dialogue between Member countries towards a strategy for the development of aquaculture programmes according to environmental standards, risk prevention and the strengthening of economic, commercial and food interests in the area. A network of experts should be set up which would contribute to RAIS and lead to exchanges with the sector's operators within a policy framework for the controlled and sustainable development of aquaculture activities. RAIS and the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) should pool their knowledge within a Committee open to actors and decision-makers. The WGA should seek increased commitment from RECOFI Member countries through appropriate programmes.
- RECOFI should endeavour to integrate measures to control Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing with its other basic missions such as successful resource conservation, efficient catches and effort monitoring, effective fishing capacity management, sound scientific research, reliable fisheries data collection, compilation and dissemination. The achievement of these objectives necessarily requires the availability of adequate financial and human resources.

The shared nature of many of the stocks could make national fishery resources assessments and management initiatives of limited use in developing effective management plans.

Given the legitimacy of the regional fisheries dimension in the RECOFI zone, work is needed to define criteria and set protocols to identify common issues and prioritize actions. This work should be followed by the preparation of RECOFI programmes and projects (validated by the Commission during the sessions) and presented to partners (donor Member countries or external donor agencies).

- Member countries, under the aegis of countries with a major interest in aquaculture development, should use RECOFI as a platform to exchange lessons learnt, knowledge and operational capacity in order to plan and drive the development of investments in the aquaculture sector. Aquaculture should be considered as a sector with a common strategic interest (markets, food requirements, growth contribution) despite the fact that the regional dimension of projects does not necessarily imply a common territorial dimension. The interest of cooperation in this sector should be promoted through projects and a strategy minimising ecological, financial and commercial risks. It is also by rapidly opening a dialogue with commissions that have investment resources and with private economic operators (national and international) that RECOFI actions can be pursued and strengthened in the sustainably-established aquaculture sector and that RAIS can be developed as a network, information system and a platform for dissemination and exchange of knowledge. The

regional dimension should also involve economic, commercial and development aspects. For aquaculture, a regional approach is opportune since it will lead to harmonization of laws and regulations and thus facilitate regional trade of aquatic animals and aquaculture products. In addition, not all countries have similar access to the specialised advice that is required to update national legal frameworks.

- From a legal point of view the RECOFI agreement is in compliance with the RECOFI missions, objectives and stakes. Nevertheless it would be advisable to facilitate by means of operational measures and structural evolution, a stronger implication of member countries seen by the empowerment of RECOFI; national contributions increased and the commitment diversified by member countries according to operating modes as those experimented by RAIS project. There is a need to rethink the location and the funding of the Commission headquarters in one of the Member countries for reasons of proximity and physical appropriation by the Member countries. There is a need to rebalance the implication of FAO and the Member countries through the nomination and the financial support of staff from Member countries. Regional staff could have ongoing functions or rotate within the head of the Secretariat and at the head of the WGs. The RECOFI Agreement needs to be amended in order to incorporate modern fisheries management principles and new international conventions (Flag State duties, Port State measures, the precautionary principle, the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture).
- There is a need to strengthen the Commission through the creation of a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee (STEC) that would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development. In order to progress in the process of exchanging scientific capacity, a regional initiative coordinated by RECOFI could be organized, such as a scientific, technical and economic conference which would clarify national capacity, create synergy between researchers, economists and technicians and launch actions towards co-programming within RECOFI. Such an initiative could also contribute to the visibility of RECOFI, both for its achievements and its mandate, and be used as a platform for potential donors wishing to submit common projects or actions.

RECOFI should consider 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).

RECOFI should develop capacity to assess the state of governance in each national sector and capacity for managing fisheries and developing aquaculture sector.

- Given the fact that RECOFI does not yet produce recommendations based on recognised scientific work as regards to fisheries management issues at a regional scale, efforts should target the dissemination of exchanges and of reports produced on issues addressed and work projects. There is no need to modify the process apart from developing more communication activities or papers and through a dissemination plan for the results and recommendations.
- Seek extra-budgetary funds to increase the output from, and impact of, capacity building initiatives. On the basis of these extra resources, widen the panel of stakeholders who could benefit from sessions, workshops and training sessions on the central themes of fisheries management and aquaculture development. Strengthen 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. These actors could then contribute to work undertaken by RECOFI and promote RECOFI capacity building resources. Give focal points the resources and an action plan to disseminate RECOFI achievements as well as to mobilise the technical human capacity required to execute the Terms of Reference (ToR). Prioritize the needs of the Member countries in a more operational way in order to prepare a plan to build national capacity that could, through dealing with some of the issues, provide support to the projects run by RECOFI; for example as regards the issue of ecosystem indicators and stock assessment, the

creation of a fisheries observatory, the development of an artisanal and industrial fishery registry, the fight against IUU fishing, the monitoring of markets in the area, the development of a management plan for a shared fishery (e.g. pelagic stocks) or one of common economic interest (shrimp fishery)

- RECOFI should prepare a communication and information plan to deal with relational aspects with Member countries and with non-member countries in the same area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops. This plan should clearly define the mandates and the role of each of the Commission's bodies including the focal points (specialised or national) and define their means of action. This plan could contain a training section in order to consider all the resources, products and strategic elements that could strengthen the Commission visibility and hence its capacity to promote initiatives in the area. This Information Communication Training (ICT) plan could lead to a more autonomous Commission and to the dissemination of achievements, which is more direct and in a more appropriate format for public and private operators involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

### **Scenarios for the future: seek ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity.**

- Maintain an equal contribution (excluding any other criterion than the fact of being a RECOFI Member country) with an upward readjustment of annual national contributions;
- Maintain the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions decided by Member countries according to their involvement in work programmes where they take on the leadership; this was successfully the case on the RAIS supported by Kuwait. On the other hand, the equal and imposed extra-budgetary co-funding of Member countries proved to be inappropriate and did not lead to the work that was planned for aquaculture. This process should therefore be abandoned;
- The ending of an equal payment for all via indexed contributions based on an indicator calculation taking into account the level of wealth of the country, the shares of fisheries and aquaculture in the economic growth or the contribution indices of the sector to food requirements, to the trade balance, to employment or other physical parameters related to marine or inland activities (coastal length, EEZ size, surface available for aquaculture, etc). This solution should then be studied with a view to achieving a target total budget which would not lead to more resources but would introduce a differential which would only work on the basis of a strong and secure agreement written into the RECOFI Agreement. More than the process, it is this commitment which would illustrate a political change in the RECOFI working context.

Depending on the budgetary forecast and expectations from other recommendations, a budget of around USD 450 000 to 500 000 per biennium (i.e. USD 30 000 to 35 000 / year / Member country) would be a significant step towards the Commission's autonomy and would signal its long-term commitment to regional work programmes which support good fisheries governance and aquaculture development. This budget could constitute a working capital and would hence be a guarantee for national or international donors (stakeholders in the area's marine and inland interests) given that partners pay increasing attention to the self-financing capacity of Member countries, regional organizations and to their own capacity regardless of their access to extra-budgetary funds.

The Commission, whilst maintaining the current *modus operandi* concerning the recovery of FAO and Member country staff expenses could progressively prepare projects covering some thematic work programmes that could be submitted to external donors or partners (Gulf Cooperation Council –GCC-funding, Member country or donor unilateral funding to support development, environmental protection, public investment concerning research, monitoring, control, surveillance etc) .

As it currently stands, a wider panel of national actors could be involved with national financial support, but in practice this makes the choice of resource persons somewhat haphazard and affects their medium and long-term thematic commitment. The best option is always for the Commission to meet the cost of inviting the resource persons required to develop activities and build its human capacity.

A more operational and narrower cooperation with the GCC should be considered on the basis of an agreement between the RECOFI Member countries of this organization and in parallel with other possibilities.

## **Conclusion**

1. In order to build on the current dynamics, it is advisable to revise the priorities for the upcoming actions as following:
2. The updated review of the needs and capacities of Member countries (governance);
3. The definition and the implementation of criteria and working methodology to define and select the regional issues to address;
4. The participative definition of a “vision” for the future of the role and the place of RECOFI in the region;
5. A reform of the functioning of the Commission (rebalancing the involvements between stakeholders and partners, criteria of programming, creation of a SETC, and a better use of the regional human capacities to propose projects to donors);
6. The adaptation of the RECOFI agreement on the financial aspects (increasing the level of the national contributions);
7. The updating of the RECOFI agreement to include the new international instruments and conventions;
8. The opening of the Commission to the new stakeholders (private, NGOs, other public administration (i.e. finance, environment, foreign office, trade, etc).

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THE TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

At the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12 to 14 May 2009, the Commission agreed to hold an ad hoc intersessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Members recognised the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth.

The purpose of the technical performance review is first, to provide an overview of the organisations, structures, and objectives of RECOFI and second, to consider their technical performance with regard to their objectives. Mr Joseph Catanzano, International Consultant, was recruited by the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat to carry out the review.

As the core objective is to increase the Commission's efficiency, this evaluation will focus on the relevance of the strategy and pursuant activities and will also address how well RECOFI develops, pursues and implements the strategy.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF THE ORGANISATION, STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONS,**

### **2.1 The organisation**

*The Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries* was drafted to replace the Committee for the Development and Management of the Fisheries Resources of the Gulfs (the so-called 'Gulfs Committee')<sup>1</sup>, which was a subsidiary of the now-abolished Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC). The Agreement entered into force on 26 February 2001<sup>2</sup>.

*The mandate area of the Commission* is delineated as follows: from Ras Dhabat Ali in (16° 39'N, 53° 3'30"E) then to a position in (16° 00'N, 53° 25'E) then to a position in (17° 00'N, 56° 30'E) then to a position in (20° 30'N, 60° 00'E) then to Ras Al-Fasteh in (25° 04'N, 61° 25'E) (Article IV). The

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Commission for Fisheries (hereinafter referred to as "RECOFI" or "the Commission") has expanded its functions and powers from those of the Gulfs Committee. RECOFI is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization established by international agreement under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> The Commission may amend its founding Agreement by a two-thirds majority of its Members. Amendments to the Agreement are reported to the Council of the FAO, which has the power to disallow them if it finds that such amendments are inconsistent with the objectives and purposes of the Organization or the provisions of the Constitution of the Organization (Article XII). Proposals for the amendment of the Agreement may be made by any Member in a communication addressed to the Secretary. The Secretary transmits to all Members and to the Director-General of the FAO a copy of such proposals for amendment immediately upon their receipt. No action on a proposal for the amendment of the Agreement is taken by the Commission at any session, unless it has been included in the provisional agenda of the session (Rule XVI.1 and 2). At its first Session, in the Sultanate of Oman in October 2001, the Commission approved its Rules of Procedures. The Commission may, by a two-thirds majority of its membership, amend its own rules of Procedure provided that such amendments are not inconsistent with the Agreement or with the Constitution of the FAO (Article II.7). The Commission may, by a two-thirds majority of its membership, adopt (and amend) its own Financial regulations, (Article II.8). There are at present no such Regulations adopted; the financial regulations of the Organization are applied for the management of the budget of the Commission.

Any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of the Agreement is first to be settled by the Commission, after which it shall be referred to a committee composed of one member appointed by each of the parties to the dispute, and in addition an independent chairman chosen by the members of the committee. The recommendations of the committee are not binding but become the basis for renewed consideration by the parties concerned. If the dispute remains unsettled, it shall be referred to the International Court of Justice, unless the parties to the dispute agree to another method of settlement (Article XVI).

Commission covers all living marine resources, including aquaculture, in the sea area with the exception of internal waters.

**Map. 1 : RECOFI geographical coverage**



Source : [www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en) “The Commission carries out its functions and responsibilities in the region, bounded in the south by the following rhomb lines: from Ras Dhabat Ali in (16° 39’N, 53° 3’30”E) then to a position in (16° 00’N, 53° 25’E) then to a position in (17° 00’N, 56° 30’E) then to a position in (20° 30’N, 60° 00’E) then to Ras Al-Fasteh in (25° 04’N, 61° 25’E).

*The main objective of the Agreement*<sup>3</sup> is to establish a regional fishery commission for promoting the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Agreement Area.

## **2.2 The structure**

*Membership in RECOFI* is open to Members and Associate Members of FAO as well as non-member States of FAO, which are Members of the UN or its specialized agencies that are coastal States or Associate Members which have territories situated wholly or partly within the Commission's area of competence (Article II.2).

*RECOFI is composed* of a Commission and two subsidiary bodies. The Commission is the governing body of RECOFI<sup>4</sup>.

*The Commission may decide to establish temporary, special or standing committees and working groups* to study and recommend on specific technical problems (Article VII.1)<sup>5</sup>. In keeping with

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<sup>3</sup> Status of acceptance of the RECOFI Agreement: Kingdom of Bahrain (17 October 2008), Islamic Republic of Iran (6 December 2001), Republic of Iraq (20 August 2008), State of Kuwait (19 May 2006), Sultanate of Oman (19 December 2001), State of Qatar (12 July 2000), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (3 November 2000), United Arab Emirates (26 February 2001).

<sup>4</sup> At its First Session in the Sultanate of Oman, in 2001, the Commission agreed that it would concern itself with organizational, strategic and policy issues and on reviewing the work of subsidiary bodies (Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission, paragraph 12.ii).

<sup>5</sup> At its first session, the Commission agreed that subsidiary bodies should address technical and scientific matters and be established for such purpose (Report of the first session of the Commission, para.12.1 and 12.2). It was also agreed that Member countries may, if they wish, bring national, bilateral and multilateral issues to the consideration of the Commission and its technical members. It was however anticipated that the Commission would give more emphasis to marine and fisheries issues of regional importance (Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission, paragraph 12.1).

Article VII.3 of the RECOFI Agreement, the establishment of committees and working groups is subject to the availability of necessary funds. The Secretary of the Commission makes available to the Commission a report on the administrative and financial implications involved before a decision on this matter is taken. At its First Session, in the Sultanate of Oman, October 2001, the Commission agreed to establish two ad hoc Working Groups. These are: a working group on Aquaculture (WGA) and a working group on Stock Assessment and Fishery Statistics. At the fourth session, held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 7 to 9 May 2007, the Commission decided to expand its current Working Group on Stock Assessment and Fishery Statistics to a wider Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM).

*National focal points:* at its first session, held in the Sultanate of Oman, October 2001, the Commission agreed to communicate to the Secretary the name and title of country focal point to RECOFI (First RECOFI Session Report, paragraph 12.viii).

*Observers:* at the proposal of the Secretary of the Commission, observers of these organizations may be invited by the Commission to attend sessions of the Commission or meetings of the committees or working groups (Article VIII). At its first session (October 2001), the Commission agreed to develop and strengthen partnership arrangements and liaisons with other relevant organizations, including in the first instance, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (currently the WorldFish Center) and other relevant organizations.

At its Fourth session in May 2007, the Commission identified and discussed a number of standing problems constraining the Commission's functions, among which was the strengthening of the Secretariat. As a result, in November 2007 FAO designated the Senior Fishery Officer assigned at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo (FAO RNE) to act as Secretary of RECOFI. The Senior Fishery Officer took charge of his duties in February 2008.

FAO also nominated the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM, formerly Working Group on Fishery Statistics, WGS). The Technical Secretary will support and assist in the establishment of this new Working Group and in the revision of the former Working Group on Fishery Statistics.

The Commission continued to benefit from the support provided by the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and the Information Officer who coordinated the development of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS). The RECOFI fishery statistics database was regularly maintained and updated thanks to the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service (FIES). The Secretariat further relied on consultancies to address specific issues (e.g. fisheries statistics, fisheries legislation, information technology applications, animal health, etc.). Lastly, the Secretariat continued to benefit from the efficient services provided by the bilingual Secretary/Administrative Assistant.

### **2.3 The principal functions of RECOFI**

The Commission, within its area of competence, is empowered to formulate and recommend appropriate measures:

i) The conservation and management of living marine resources, including the following measures:

- regulate fishing methods and fishing gear,
- prescribe the minimum size for individuals of specified species,
- establish open and closed fishing seasons and areas, and

- regulate the amount of total catch and fishing effort and their allocation among Members.

ii) For the purpose of implementing recommendations:

The Commission also has the ability to review the economic and social dimensions of the fishing industry and recommend measures for its development; encourage, recommend and coordinate training and extension activities; encourage, recommend, coordinate and undertake research and development activities; assemble, publish and disseminate information regarding living marine resources and fisheries based on these resources and carry out any other activities as may be necessary for RECOFI to achieve its purpose as define in the Commission's Agreement.

Importantly, the Commission shall apply the precautionary approach with regards to conservation and management decisions and take into account the best scientific advice available and the need to promote the development and proper utilization of marine living resources.

## **2.4 Functioning and decision making**

*The Commission normally meets every year at the site and date the Commission determines (Agreement, Article II.4). At its first session in Muscat, Oman, October 2001, the Commission agreed to convene regular annual sessions during the first two weeks of the month of May<sup>6</sup>, starting on the second Tuesday of the month of May (Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission, paragraph xii.4). In practice, the Commission has not been meeting annually but bi-annually as follows: the first session was held in October 2001 (Sultanate of Oman), the second session in May 2003 (Sultanate of Oman), the third session in May 2005 (State of Qatar), fourth session in May 2007 (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), and the fifth session in May 2009 (United Arab Emirates). As a management body and as per Article II.4 of the Agreement, it cannot be excluded that the Commission will in future meet annually.*

The Commission may take recommendations for action into consideration by Members<sup>7</sup> on any matter pertaining to the functions above described (Rule XV.1). Consideration for management measures and decisions are included in the provisional agenda of the regular session and circulated to Members together with the provisional agenda not less than sixty days before the date of the session (Rules IV.1 and IV.3). Since its establishment the Commission has adopted no recommendation.

Proposals for consideration by the Commission may also come from subsidiary bodies. The process is the same as above. Working Groups' proposals are compiled and analyzed by the Secretary for submission to the Commission for consideration. The Commission takes decisions and makes recommendations as appropriate by consensus or by voting.

A Member of the Commission that is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to, has no vote in the Commission if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Commission may, nevertheless, permit such a

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<sup>6</sup> Second session, in May 2003 (Sultanate of Oman), third session in May 2004 (State of Qatar), fourth session in May 2005 (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), fifth session, in May 2006 (United Arab Emirates), sixth session in May 2007 (State of Bahrain), seventh session in May 2008 (Islamic Republic of Iran), eighth session in May 2009 (Republic of Iraq), ninth session in May 2010 (State of Kuwait).

<sup>7</sup> The Members of the Commission commit to the implementation of recommendations from the date determined by the Commission, which shall not be before the period for objection (Article V.2). The objection period is one hundred and twenty days from the date of notification of the recommendation by the Chairperson of the Commission (acting through the Secretariat). Any member of the Commission may within this period object to the recommendation and in that event is not under obligation to give effect to that recommendation (Article V.3). A member may at any time withdraw its objection and give effect to a recommendation. The Chairperson notifies each member immediately upon receipt of each objection or withdrawal of objection (Article V.4).

Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay was due to conditions beyond the control of the Member but in no case shall it extend the right to vote beyond a further two calendar years (Article IX.7).

**Box. 1: Process applied where individual States propose an action**

- I -

Members send proposals for consideration by the Commission to the Secretary (Rule XV.1).

- II -

The Chair – acting through the Secretary – communicates to each Member of the Commission the text of such proposals (Article V.1).

- III -

The Secretary receives Members' replies in respect of such proposals and prepares a summary and an analysis of the replies for presentation at the next session (Rule XV.2).

- IV -

The Commission considers the proposals during the regular session. It is the usual practice for the fishery bodies established within the framework of FAO to adopt decisions and recommendations by consensus or, by voting if a consensus cannot be achieved. Each member of the Commission has one vote (Article II.2). Participation of alternates, experts, and advisers do not possess the right to vote, except where an alternate is acting in the place of a delegate in his or her absence. Decisions of regional fisheries bodies such as the RECOFI are usually taken by a majority of the votes cast (Article II.2). Recommendations regarding management measures are adopted by a two-thirds majority of members of the Commission present and voting (Article V.1).

- V -

The Commission transmits the adopted conclusions and recommendations to the Director-General of FAO at the close of each session. The Director General circulates them to Members of the Commission, nations and international organizations that were represented at the session and make them available to other Members and Associate Members of the Organization for their information (Rule XIV.4).

*Working groups* are governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Commission (Rule X.2). In the same manner as the Commission, Working Groups elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. The Chairpersons have complete control over the proceedings of the meetings. FAO provides a Technical Secretary who is responsible for facilitating the work of the Working Group and for coordinating the preparation of working documents.

*National focal points*: the Secretariat intends to propose for adoption at the Fifth Session of the Commission the TORs for RECOFI country focal points. Subject to their adoption, the focal points will have an advisory and liaison function with respect to the programme of work of the Commission and the relevance of the latter to the national policy of fisheries development and management. He/She will be:

- In direct contact with the RECOFI Secretariat; Informed by the RECOFI Secretariat on the most important Commission activities planned and under implementation at the regional level;
- Considered at the head of the RECOFI Secretariat mailing list and be provided with all the technical output;
- Informed on all the activities carried out at national level.

*At the end of each Session, the Commission approves a report* embodying its views, recommendations, resolutions and decisions, including, when requested a statement of minority views (Rule XIV.3). The Commission transmits after each session the report to the Director-General of FAO (Article VI). Copies of all communications concerning the affairs of the Commission are sent to the Secretary for purposes of information and record (Rule V).

## **2.5 Budget and finances**

*RECOFI's core budget is funded by the contributions of the Member countries of the Commission, which pay their share annually. The practice has been for Member countries to pay their share of the budget on an equal basis, i.e. USD 5 000 per country per year. The annual core budget of the Commission is currently of USD 40 000<sup>8</sup>.*

In the formulation and negotiation of the Agreement there was a consensus that the annual core budget should cover the cost of RECOFI meetings and the cost of publications of the reports and of any studies prepared as a result of workshops. The costs of cooperative activities would be divided into the RECOFI Members depending on the nature of the activities and interest of these countries, subject to the approval of the Commission.

The core budget of RECOFI takes the form of a multi-lateral trust-fund project with the FAO symbol MTF/REM/001/MUL and title "Support to the Secretariat of RECOFI". The project began in April 2003 and since then has been renewed on a yearly basis. Its budget is revised regularly in order to monitor annual contributions by Member countries and the cash flow of expenditures. The book-keeping activity continued to be ensured through the FAO central accounting system (based on Oracle).

At the time of negotiation, it was recommended that FAO extend to RECOFI the same level of administrative and budgetary support as was formerly provided to the former Gulfs Committee. FAO currently provides i) the seat of the Commission, hosted by the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo, ii) the Secretariat, headed by an FAO staff member, Mr Piero Mannini, and iii) the technical and legal backstopping. The Commission may decide in future to relocate the Secretariat within the Agreement area after consultation with the Director-General of FAO and at its own expense (Article II.5).

Expenses not funded by the core budget of the Commission but instead funded by governments or organisations concern:

- The expenses incurred by delegates, their alternates, experts and advisers when attending, as government representatives, sessions of the Commission, its committees and working groups (Article X.1).
- The expenses incurred by observers at sessions (Article X.1).
- The expenses of research and development projects undertaken by individual Members of the Commission, whether independently or upon recommendation of the Commission (Article X.3).
- The expenses incurred in connection with cooperative projects (Article III.1.e) unless the budget is otherwise available.

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<sup>8</sup> There are at present no financial regulations governing the administration of the budget of RECOFI, consequently the financial regulations of the FAO apply to the Commission. Article IX.1 states that 'Each Member of the Commission undertakes to pay annually its share of the budget for cooperative activities'. Articles X.1 and X.2 state that "the expenses of experts invited by the Commission to attend, in their individual capacity, meetings of the Commission, its committees or working groups shall be borne by the budget of the Commission" and "the expenses for publications and communications and the expenses incurred by the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission, when performing duties on behalf of the Commission between Commission sessions shall be determined and paid for from the budget of the Commission".

At each regular session, the Commission adopts its budget through consensus by its Members. If, after every effort has been made, a consensus cannot be reached in the course of that session, the matter is put to a vote and the budget is adopted by a two-thirds majority of its Members (Article IX.2).

Member countries' contributions and donations and other forms of assistance received are placed in a Trust Fund administered by FAO in conformity with the Financial Regulations of the Organization (Article IX.6).

### **3. REVIEW OF THE RECENT ACTIVITIES**

The technical review of activities refers to the four last RECOFI Sessions (Session II Muscat, 2003, Session III Doha 2005, Session IV Jeddah, 2007 and Session V Dubai 2009).

#### **3.1 Technical Review of debates and activities**

The technical review of debates and activities can be presented according to the following main themes:

- statistics and resources survey for the RECOFI area,
- aquaculture ,
- other general fisheries management issues,
- relationships with other international organizations and non RECOFI member states.

##### *3.1.1 Reported landings for the RECOFI-mandated area*

During the session II, the commission reviewed reported landings for the member countries of RECOFI. Particular note was made of two issues: (a) the variable national practices in disaggregation of reported data by taxonomic level (i.e., to family, genus, species level, etc.) and (b), the need for improved geographical resolution, i.e., where fish were landed.

The need to be clear about the objectives of data collection programmes was noted. The major goal was collection of data for resource management. Emphasis ought to be on stocks that are exploited by more than one country. Species or species groups of particular attention are: Sciaenidae, shrimp, *Scomberomorus*, cuttlefish, Lethrinidae, Serranids (a complex of >30 species, of which seven were of particular importance).

Discussion focussed on what regional arrangements for handling of fisheries statistics would be desirable and how they might be undertaken. The issues to be resolved include: (a) what are the desirable levels of disaggregation of statistics in terms of taxonomic identification; (b) geographical disaggregation; (c) assistance in developing acceptable data collection (i.e. design of survey programmes); and (d) processing procedures that can be harmonized across the region. Should a regional centre be established, it would require appropriate terms of reference, staffing and budget. It was agreed that a working group to examine this issue may be the way to proceed in this manner.

The Secretariat raised the issue of the establishment of a RECOFI statistics working group and the Commission agreed that the FAO Statistics and Information Service (FIPS) of the Fisheries and Aquiculture Department is requested to work with the Commission's member countries to increase the level of taxonomic disaggregation of reported landings that are reported in the FAO Nominal Fisheries Landing Database. FIPS was asked to maintain data reported by RECOFI countries disaggregated into the Statistical Sub-regional Areas of 51.2 and 51.3. In the case of Sub-Area 51.3, a further division should be made to separate the area of the Gulf of Oman from the North-western Arabian Sea. This information should be made available in FAO's main Nominal Fisheries Landing Database.

There was general agreement as to the need for regular demersal surveys in the RECOFI-mandated area as part of normal fisheries management practices. FAO stated that demersal surveys were important and that the successful experience of the UAE in undertaking a similar survey could be used as a model for future programmes.

During the RECOFI Session III, FIDI promotes the improvement of the species breakdown in the reported catch statistics. Some countries in the region are making statistics available for a number of major species, although it may result in some disruption of the data series and in their analysis. Note was made of the new species identification guide for sharks that had been prepared for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the possibility, if funds would be identified, to produce a similar one for the RECOFI area. Improved identification of shark catches would allow a wider range of shark species to be included in the reported catch statistics.

A demonstration of the FISHSTAT+ system was provided. A short presentation on catch trends was made noting that total regional catches had been increasing by about 3.5 percent per year though there had been fluctuations in the trend between some years. Different levels of species breakdowns throughout the years is complicating the interpretation of long-term trends of fish species or groups of species. Particular note was made of trends in the landing statistics of valuable species groups like tuna, crustaceans and molluscs, for which the catch trends by the two divisions were shown.

The Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF) was introduced. The request by the Commission of a comparative survey of the fisheries data collection systems in the region would fit under Component 1 of the Strategy-STF. Several delegates requested FAO help in improving the quality of fisheries data that are collected through development of harmonized methods.

Particular concern was expressed regarding the state of groupers and other demersal resources in the Commission area. Trends for national catches were shown; however, it was noted that a demonstration of CPUE (Catch per unit efforts) was not possible through data in FISHSTAT+ alone as it does not include data on effort. The collection of fishing effort data on a regular basis was progressively stopped by other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) due to low returns and difficulties in standardizing units of measurement; presently only one Commission (Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization – NAFO) continues to collect this type of data.

There was general agreement as to the need for regular demersal surveys in the RECOFI area as part of normal fisheries management practices. One member expressed agreement to the suggestion in the background paper of extending RECOFI activities to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden areas as well as the issuing of a periodic RECOFI bulletin. FAO stated that demersal surveys were important and that the successful experience of the UAE in undertaking a similar survey could be used as a model for future programmes.

During the Session IV, several delegates observed that FAO ought to place more effort in assisting RECOFI countries to evaluate and improve the fisheries statistical programmes. Such assistance should include field missions aimed at closing existing data gaps and improving the performance of national data collection systems.

It was recognized that a satisfactory degree of regional comparability, particularly in species nomenclatures (harmonization), ought to be reached by the RECOFI member countries and that this issue should be brought forward at the next meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Statistics (WGS). In view to not cause disruption to national historical data and time series at the national level, regional harmonisation does not require the introduction of a single statistical system but rather the establishment of logical links between national species and gear classifications with the view of making national fisheries statistics comparable at a commonly agreed level of detail. The Commission agreed that such issues should be regularly reviewed by the WGS.

Some countries expressed the view that the WGS's role and functions ought to be described more accurately. It was also proposed that the WGS role should be expanded to handle not only statistical but also evaluation, assessment and management aspects, particularly in the case of shared resources as originally envisaged when the Working Group was established.

### 3.1.2 *Aquaculture*

- RECOFI WGA

The Secretariat raised the issue of the establishment of a RECOFI Aquaculture working group<sup>9</sup>. In the technical aquaculture meeting immediately preceding the Second Session of RECOFI (18–19 May 2003, Muscat, Oman), a working document with recommendations on the form and structure of the aquaculture body along with a proposed work programme for 2003–2004 was prepared and submitted to the Commission for consideration and approval.

The Commission endorsed the recommendation to establish a standing Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and its Terms of Reference. It was agreed that this structure would enable the WGA to retain the flexibility required for it to carry out its mandate and work plan, following submission and approval by the Commission during its annual session. The Commission approved the proposed WGA structure, its focus on marine and brackish water aquaculture, and for it to convene on an annual basis prior to the regular Commission Session.

It was agreed that the Focal Point for Bahrain would act as the WGA Interim-Chairperson, as Bahrain proposed to convene and host the First Annual Meeting of the WGA. Furthermore, it was agreed that the first WGA Chairperson would then be officially nominated during the First Annual Meeting of the WGA in Bahrain. The agenda for the First Annual Meeting of the WGA would be drafted by the Interim-Chairperson in close collaboration with the RECOFI Secretariat and circulated to all the WGA Focal Points well in advance in order to allow suggestions, modifications, and sufficient time to collect data and reports that may be required at the meeting.

- Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS)

During the Session III, the Secretariat presented a document on the progress made for the establishment of the RAIS. The Commission expressed its appreciation on the proposed structure of the regional information system and strongly recommended to go ahead with this project. It was also agreed by the Commission that the RECOFI Country hosting the Regional Centre would provide the estimated funds required for the development of the system. The delegate of Kuwait confirmed their strong interest in hosting the Centre. Furthermore, it was agreed that the system should be developed by FAO as soon as the necessary funds would be made available by the hosting country (contribution of USD30 000 was received from the Government of Kuwait as extra-budgetary funds for the development of RAIS).

During the Session IV, the WGA agreed to make it possible for private companies to advertise on the RAIS website to generate funds to support further development of the system and provide financing to information activities of regional interest, such as production statistics analysis, marketing studies, and regional aquaculture reviews.

The Secretariat reported the future steps agreed by the WGA to finalize the information system by the end of 2007, which include web site development, establishment of the Regional and National Centres, training of the system administrators, preparation of the user manual and, official launching

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<sup>9</sup> During the technical meeting held in Kuwait, 16–18 February 2003, the participants from the RECOFI member countries recommended that a working aquaculture body be formally established. The draft Terms of Reference for this aquaculture body were discussed and drafted.

and promotion of the RAIS. The Commission endorsed the RAIS work plan and timeframe as presented.

During Session V, Members welcomed the presentation on RAIS. They recommended that it be developed further and strengthened, particularly by supporting the communication strategy by the RAIS National Coordinators/National Focal Points and by establishing national networks of authorized data entry users. The Secretariat reminded Members that the structure of the information system was complete. However, to ensure the system's utility all Members should continue to input continuously validated national data and information to ensure that it remained up to date.

- Legal and policy framework for Aquaculture

The FAO Legal Consultant presented a regional project proposal to strengthen the legal and policy framework for aquaculture of RECOFI Member countries. During its second session (Muscat, Oman, 18–21 May 2003), the Commission identified the evaluation of existing aquaculture legislation and the adoption of common regulations at a regional level as a priority activity of the WGA. During its first meeting (Manama, Bahrain, 18–20 April 2004), the WGA further discussed the level of legislation development among the Member countries and recommended the Secretariat to seek assistance from FAO through a preparatory mission to develop a regional project proposal. At the same meeting, it was stated that a preparatory mission would not guarantee FAO's financial support to the project and countries were invited to explore other funding possibilities.

The preparatory mission took place from 13 to 26 March 2005 in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Following the recommendations of the WGA, a comprehensive approach was taken and the mission consisted of a Legal Expert, an Aquaculture Expert and an Aquaculture Policy Expert. A mission report was subsequently prepared and submitted to FAO. The report included the findings on the policy, institutional and legal framework of the visited countries as well as conclusions and recommendations including a draft project proposal prepared according to the TCP format. The draft project proposal was distributed at the session.

The background and justification for the project were summarized. First, it was stressed that in some instances the sustainable development of the sector is hindered by a lack of policy and planning to provide a reference point for management and development of the sector and by institutional constraints due to a lack of technical capacity and/or weak institutional arrangements. Second, the legislative arrangements for the management and development of aquaculture are generally uncertain and inappropriate. In particular, there is a need to streamline authorization processes, address the environmental impacts of aquaculture, introduce and harmonize legislation on aquatic animal health certification, quarantine measures and the quality and safety of aquaculture products. Finally, monitoring and enforcement provisions can be improved.

The objective of the project is therefore to strengthen the policy, institutional and legal framework for aquaculture in the RECOFI Member countries in order to increase the contribution of the sector to the economy and food security, and to develop and manage the sector in a sustainable manner. A regional approach is opportune since it will lead to harmonization of laws and regulations and thus facilitate regional trade of aquatic animals and aquaculture products. In addition, not all the countries have similar access to the specialised advice that is required to update national legal frameworks.

During Session IV, the delegates of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait and Oman confirmed that in principle they had no objection in contributing their share and indicated that they would officially inform the Secretariat of their position as soon as possible and not later than the end of August 2007. The Secretariat was also invited to send an official letter to the member countries requesting them to confirm their commitment in supporting the project and the date when the funds could be transferred to the RECOFI account. Due to the difficulty of securing the funding within the current financial year, the Commission acknowledged that the funds may only be available by April 2008.

During Session V the Secretariat advised the Commission that the project proposal to develop a legal and policy aquaculture framework in the region was presented initially at the third RECOFI session. It was noted that only two Members had paid their agreed share of the project budget. The Commission reviewed the situation regarding this long-standing activity concerning equal co-funding of projects and requested the Secretariat to resend the official and original letter to Members urging them to provide their contribution.

- Other issues for WGA

The Commission agreed that the issues related to marine stock enhancement and artificial reefs should be further discussed within the terms of references of the WGA. The delegate of Bahrain proposed to host an ad hoc meeting of the WGA on these issues. It was noted that the presence of international experts would be appropriate.

During Session IV, the issues of stock enhancement and the use of artificial reefs were debated again and some members observed that stock enhancement issues were not closely linked to the functions and mandate of the WGA. It was agreed that the WGA should take into consideration matters involving production of fingerlings for stock enhancement and collaborate with fisheries experts who could be part of a proposed ad hoc Working Group on Stock Enhancement. The Commission welcomed the offer of Bahrain to host a working group meeting on this topic as well as the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize a regional seminar to present the results and current findings from their national artificial reef programme. The Commission recommended that the WGA examine the issue of artificial reefs as suitable nursery areas for releasing hatchery produced fingerlings of selected species of commercial interest in the region.

Regarding the introduction of exotic species, and acting upon the request of the Third RECOFI Session, the WGA addressed the risks from the introduction of exotic species, and noted that their control is required even though some species had enabled commercial developments. Guidelines based on the recommendations of several organizations were noted and the WGA proposed precautionary approach procedures.

Among the emerging issues identified in Session V, several Members recognized that the phenomenon of harmful algal blooms (HABs) was an urgent technical issue to be addressed. Although this phenomenon was not new in the region, recent outbreaks had caused serious damages to fish cage culture throughout the region, particularly in Oman and the United Arab Emirates where commercial companies had lost their entire production. It was noted that red tide also seriously affected capture fisheries.

The major output of the workshop on aquatic animal health (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 6–10 April 2008) was the “Proposal for a regional programme for improving aquatic animal health in RECOFI member countries”. The proposal, along with its components, elements and activities, was endorsed by the Commission. It was noted that the report of the workshop (RECOFI/V/2009/Inf.6) provided an excellent roadmap for Members to follow. It included actions and activities that would be implemented incrementally, some at the national level and others as regionally coordinated activities.

RECOFI noted that the focus of the workshop had been on environmental impact assessment, environmental monitoring and aquaculture licensing. Two guiding proposals for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework and licensing procedure were formulated at the workshop. It was recalled that the region required the development of clear protocols and transparent legislation that would enable the sector to expand by encouraging and promoting environmentally and economically sustainable private investment.

### *3.1.3 General fisheries management issues*

During Session II, the FAO Fisheries Department Fishing Technology Service (FIIT), presented document RECOFI/2003/6 in response to a FAO directive that Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) issues be brought to the attention of all regional fisheries commissions. Member countries of RECOFI were advised to consider becoming members of the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Network so as to keep abreast of recent developments in MCS and VMS technologies. In response to a question about the applicability of VMS technology to the region, it was agreed that VMS use in the immediate future may be limited in the region because of the large number of small vessels. However, as costs declined (current capital costs on the on-vessel transmitter was approximately USD 600 to USD 2 000 depending on the system used), VMS would become feasible even for these small vessels.

During Session V, after amendments, the terms of reference for the Working Group on Fisheries Management were adopted by the Commission and the revised terms of reference have been produced. The Commission endorsed the RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan, and adopted the terms of reference for the National Focal Points on Fisheries Management. As a point of clarification the Secretariat noted that Members would not be obliged to implement the terms of reference but that they would be encouraged to do so in the interest of promoting better fisheries management in the region.

### *3.1.4 Relationship with other international organizations and non-RECOFI member states*

In 2003, during the second session, it was asked how the RECOFI Secretariat could play a part in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) fisheries activities, particularly demersal surveys. The Secretariat replied that ad hoc meetings were planned with both the GCC and the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME).

The Secretariat advised that some Red Sea countries had requested their own regional fisheries commission. It was suggested that cooperative projects, (including demersal surveys) with other countries, rather than full membership of RECOFI by other countries may be a way of establishing initial contacts in areas of common interest.

During Session III, the delegate from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted the overlap of the issues addressed by RECOFI with those of other Regional/International Organizations (UNEP, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment [ROPME], Regional Organization for Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden [PERSGA]) and recommended the coordination of efforts in this regard, including the development of a “Regional Action Programme”, or enhancing/utilizing existing ones, on the protection of marine environment/ecosystems and the sustainable management of marine resources.

During Session V, it was suggested that the two RECOFI Working Groups should consider planning a joint activity covering this issue in close cooperation with other regional organizations, such as the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME). Members also emphasized the significance of cooperating with other organizations concerned with fisheries management such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Members encouraged the Secretariat to seek cooperation and partnership with other organizations in the region, mainly the standing committee for fisheries of the GCC that were involved with fisheries and fisheries-related issues.

## 4. TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW BY ISSUES<sup>10</sup>

The following issues are addressed by the technical performance review

- Knowledge regarding the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing
- Knowledge regarding the status of aquaculture
- Regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors
- Decision making, transparency, participation and methods to : define the Commission Strategy, implement the strategy, and assess the results
- Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis
- Decision making process to adopt Commission recommendations and measures
- Capacity-Building, Training and Technical Assistance
- Communication and information
- Organization and financing: scenarios for the future

### 4.1 Knowledge regarding the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing

#### *Assessment*

As soon as it became operational, RECOFI organized a work programme on the issue of fisheries statistics based on a progressive approach and the FAO statistical system. By doing so, RECOFI created a working environment aiming to promote the quality and the exchange of statistical data within its area of action. FAO (FIPS) support was widely and appropriately used and an approach aiming to improve the quality of data on the basis of a statistical reorganization was promoted. This was followed by the progressive harmonisation of the organization, validation and presentation tools used for production data. At the same time, current systems were preserved in order not to disrupt existing time series. This work was accompanied by improvements in the description of sectors, fisheries, stocks, shared or common species thanks to contributions from national delegations during sessions or meetings of the working group. However, this does not mean that work on the classification and documentation of the state of resources and fisheries is completed. It should continue in order to fulfil the countries' expectations concerning the statistical knowledge of the stocks, the resources and the fisheries. As yet, there are no consolidated data at RECOFI level on the state of the stock (assessment and dynamics), nor are there sufficiently reliable data on the results of fishing capacity and effort deployed in the RECOFI zone according to international scientific standards. At Commission level, no systematic, common or standardised evaluations are yet available, there are no common fleet registries, no data concerning standardised fishing effort indicators, let alone eco-systemic indicators.

Current achievements, although relevant and coherent given the resources available within the Commission, are limited to data monitoring fisheries rather than stocks (fishing potential, MSY, abundance index, catch size frequency, etc). The series still have significant gaps (cf. RECOFI/V/2009/6). It is not yet possible to produce management recommendations to support national decisions. Efforts should be directed towards the joint programming of stock assessment studies through genuine scientific cooperation. The diversity of national contexts and of systems and capacity to monitor fisheries makes this cooperation difficult to envisage. Nonetheless, RECOFI has managed to commit the Member countries and generate a strong interest in developing this work, following technical terms adopted and agreed by all Members. All the fisheries statistics work stages appear to be coherent, in particular as regards FAO involvement and the linkages with its fisheries statistical system. This represents a starting point for broadening RECOFI's work ambitions according to national demands and expectations and with increased financial commitment (Member

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<sup>10</sup> This section is based on the review of the available RECOFI documentation and on the Members' response to a questionnaire purposely prepared (Annex 5 and 6)

Countries or external partners through a project for the joint assessment of exploitable resource potential).

### *Recommendations*

The Commission mandate should evolve towards a more ambitious knowledge production programme. This requires the creation of a Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee which could help with the formulation, the institutional framework and the management of a project or an action plan related to the production of data required to formulate recommendations.

The current process should therefore be pursued with a greater contribution from Member countries and/or the external support of a partner. Greater understanding of national contexts and greater involvement of fisheries sector professionals and the national bodies with stock assessment skills should be promoted within the RECOFI framework, perhaps through an initiative aiming to develop a work plan on this issue (Conference on common bio-economic potentials and on the ecosystem indicators to be measured). This also involves a more thorough data analysis within the framework of stock and resource classification according to their strictly national or regional interest. These efforts should now be pursued within the framework of the Working Group for Fisheries Management (WGFM).

Work on the issue of management units for regional and strictly national stocks should be undertaken from a RECOFI perspective. This work should constitute the framework to organize RECOFI's work and future efforts aiming to consolidate national systems (institutional capacity building for fisheries policy definition and contribution to fisheries governance in particular as regards its regional dimension). The selected approach for improving the quality of statistical monitoring should be complemented now by some support to national technical capacity related to the harmonisation work already completed.

This process should respect each national system's characteristics and be based on more significant operational and financial resources in order to increase the long-term involvement of national institutions. RECOFI could then progressively acquire regional data in line with fisheries management standards (management unit, management plan ...) that could be useful to supranational governance according to the needs defined by the resources and the fisheries.

Data related to stocks, catches, fishing capacity and effort should be part of a wider set of ecosystem data and de facto be completed as soon as possible with economic data specific to the fisheries sector. This work should raise the awareness of and rally Members and partners on the economic potential of the fisheries sector as well as on the bio-economic risks related to the absence or weakness of fisheries management policies (resource rent dissipation, conflict, stock depletion, etc). Such data should also constitute a useful decision-making basis for each of the common investments in fisheries management services (such as research and stock assessment, monitoring, control and surveillance, and international agreement negotiation, etc) and assist fiscal and incentive policies towards a greater contribution from the sector to the economic growth of marine areas.

RECOFI should as soon as possible launch a regional technical work programme in order to structure information bases and develop further, through common, standardised and comparable statistical protocols, the cooperation between Member countries by integrating all the eco-systemic parameters. This could be the responsibility of an internal RECOFI substructure in charge of data such as an 'economic, scientific and technical fisheries observatory'. The purpose of such an observatory would be to promote partnerships between public institutions, professional and scientific organizations.

## 4.2 Knowledge about the status of Aquaculture

### *Assessment*

The early decision to create a Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) has greatly contributed to the development of a set of coordinated and technical studies to support cooperation between Member countries. This group's dynamics benefited from FAO commitment in two ways, through the permanent involvement of technical aquaculture staff and through national staff who benefited from targeted extra-budgetary funding in particular from RAIS activities (Kuwait funds). This mutual commitment quickly led to conclusive results concerning aquaculture information systems and to the sharing of current achievements between Member countries and other partners via a standardised and transparent system. Within the WGA, the contributions made to common aquaculture issues made it possible to address the following: marine stock enhancement and artificial reefs, matters involving production of fingerlings for stock enhancement, artificial reefs as suitable nursery areas for releasing hatchery produced fingerlings of selected species of commercial interest in the region, risks from introduction of exotic species, phenomenon of harmful algal blooms (HABs), the "Proposal for a regional programme for improving aquatic animal health in RECOFI member countries", guidelines for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework and licensing procedure...). It should be noted that the success of the RAIS project is also due to the way it was funded (unilateral contribution from Kuwait) which strengthened the Commission's resources for this target action and the technical skills and funding brought by FAO. Unfortunately, the other source of funding (equal and voluntary contributions from each country which is a stakeholder in the project) that was recommended to support the transversal and very important issue of "institutional and legal framework for aquaculture in the RECOFI Member countries" did not succeed and is still pending.

There is no doubt that aquaculture has benefited from this active process as a result of the resources, the motivation, the human capacity available and the particular ways in which it was funded. Nevertheless, the work accomplished so far is not sufficient to meet the objectives assigned to the Commission. RECOFI has played a federating role in resources and human capacity (FAO and Member countries with the involvement of some leader and donor countries) on an issue that was more necessary than difficult (information systems) and where technical support could be transferred from other RFBs (i.e. GFCM).

The WGA process has also led to debates on common issues. However a truly common approach to launch and drive a work programme harmonising and/or establishing a regional aquaculture centre of excellence remains to be developed. Member countries' motivation and commitment to this higher objective will determine whether exchanges continue on the basis of the established information system. The latter cannot continue to perform without greater autonomization. This implies greater involvement by Member countries and particularly the creation of an active regional network built around a cooperation policy based on a strategy of common or regional interests (production, financial, bio-ecological, technico-economic, commercial, environmental ...).

The running and the programming of the WGA seem to correspond to RECOFI's ambitions but lack strong commitment from Member countries and sufficient financial autonomy. This could, in the long term, restrict progress which is significantly supported by staff outside the Member countries.

### *Recommendations*

Pursue and consolidate RAIS through the facilitation, within RECOFI, of a network of experts and potential decision-makers in order to contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region. Pursue, through RECOFI, the dialogue between Member countries towards a strategy for the development of aquaculture programmes according to environmental standards, risk prevention and the strengthening of economic, commercial and food interests in the area. A network of experts should be set up which would contribute to RAIS and lead to exchanges with the sector's operators within a policy framework for the controlled and sustainable development of aquaculture activities. RAIS and

the WGA should pool their knowledge within a Committee open to actors and decision-makers. The WGA should seek increased commitment from RECOFI Member countries through appropriate programmes. Lessons can be learnt from the failed planned funding of the legislative harmonisation work and from the success of RAIS and the way it was funded, and RECOFI can, on the basis of an appropriate project document, begin the work programme planned on the theme of “strengthening the policy, the institutional and legal framework for aquaculture in the RECOFI Member countries”.

### **4.3 Regional dimensions of the fishing sectors**

#### *Activities, decisions and experiences*

Even if in the RECOFI region fisheries may appear to be of low importance in economic terms, marine fisheries production was nonetheless around 700 000 tonnes in 2007. This is a substantial volume of fish that contributes significantly to food security. Furthermore, capture fisheries employ more than 100 000 fishers and generate around 400 000 jobs in secondary activities such as processing. Overall, fisheries in the region assure the livelihoods of probably more than one million people.

The RECOFI region is characterized by rich marine biodiversity and productive ecosystems (the Gulf and the Sea of Oman), supporting valuable fishery stocks. Coastal countries benefit from the goods and services from these ecosystems, share many of the fishery resources as well as the responsibility for their sound management.

Turning to the issue of governance, it is recognized that regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As), such as RECOFI, are the cornerstones of international fisheries governance and for this reason regional cooperation should be strengthened. We know that many regional fisheries problems can be solved through effective consultation and the timely exchange of information. These activities are essential to the work of RFMO/As. Such cooperation is critical in dealing with common issues such as fish stock assessment, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, management of fisheries exploiting shared stocks, harmonization of data formats and aquaculture sector development and management. Moreover, the international and regional dimension of governance and sustainable development of aquaculture are being recognized gradually and coming to the forefront of policy discussion and debate.

Small-scale fisheries mainly exploit the stocks of demersal species in the Gulf area and pelagic fish stocks in the Sea of Oman. Nevertheless the shared nature of many of the stocks could make national fishery resources assessments and management initiatives of limited use in developing effective management plans. The 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) stated clearly the primary role of regional fisheries bodies such as the RECOFI in combating IUU fishing.

The delegate of Iraq with the support of the delegates from Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait requested the Secretariat to facilitate sub-regional cooperation among the three countries to address fisheries issues of common concern, including IUU fishing. After considerable discussion on the matter, the Commission agreed that the Secretariat should support, on an ad hoc basis, a sub-regional meeting among the three Members with the view to promote enhanced cooperation. The Commission agreed further that the Secretariat should liaise directly with the three Members concerning arrangements for the meeting.

At its fifth session (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009), the Commission agreed that:

- future work on stock assessment should focus on priority species supporting main fisheries of common interest. These species were identified at the second meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008) following a request by the fourth of the Commission (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 7–9 May 2009);

- there was considerable merit in standardizing information and reporting at the regional level in relation to stock assessment and that RECOFI should promote such harmonization; and
- an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and adaptive management procedures should be adopted. This approach should provide the framework within which fisheries management is pursued within the region.

To commence implementing fully the Commission's fisheries mandate, Members should consider appropriate harmonized fisheries management measures that could be adopted and implemented in a coordinated way for stocks of common interest. Such harmonization can be expected to yield important benefits including, for example, enhanced resource sustainability including fewer stock declines and collapses, more stable and improved financial returns for fishers and fishing communities and a more reliable contribution of fisheries to food security.

To encourage broader support for the identification, development and implementation of management measures, Members are urged also to promote stakeholder consultation (e.g. with fishers' associations and industry groups) and involvement in decision making. If stakeholders have been engaged in a consultative process, they are likely to champion and support the implementation of management measures, going so far as to monitor and enforce them among their membership. In addition, it has been demonstrated in fisheries that support from stakeholders can reduce significantly the cost of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance and improve the impact of management measures.

#### *Assessment*

As little is known about available resources and because of the diversity in marine environments covered by the RECOFI zone (Gulf and Sea of Oman), co-operation between neighbouring countries is imperative and gives marine issues a regional dimension. Whether in an open or closed zone, this co-operation is imperative as regards both the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities given the great mobility of fishers and the circulation of marketed products. The region's geomorphology imposes, therefore, that information should be shared and that co-operation between the Gulf and Sea of Oman States is essential.

At the regional level, in order to improve fisheries governance, RECOFI has to develop the ongoing activities to strengthen the legal and policy framework to combat IUU fishing and their essential role for the regional harmonization of fisheries management. RECOFI has to take into account the main components of post-UNCED instruments, including the 1993 FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (1993 FAO Compliance Agreement), the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the 1995 UN 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 (1995 Fish Stocks Agreement), the IPOA-IUU and the 2005 FAO Model Scheme on Port State Measures.

The monitoring data of fishing activities can be consolidated by subdivisions based on biological and ecological characteristics. However, it is obvious that environmental, economic, political and commercial dimensions reinforce RECOFI's legitimacy. Fisheries governance, from knowledge of fish resource potentials and dynamics, and rent levels and including the establishment of services and institutions for the sustainable management of fisheries, highlights the regional dimension and the need to act in close collaboration. This is the case for both coastal resources in confined areas and for migratory resources in deep sea areas (tuna-like species, small pelagics).

Recommendations produced during the "third meeting of the RECOFI WGFM", (Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009), and the conclusions of the "Review of fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries", (FAO, FIEL/C1049, Rome 2009), have confirmed the well-oriented strategy of the RECOFI to develop and to strengthen knowledge, policy and co operation to address the regional dimension of fisheries management issues.

Sessions IV and V reports as well as all the technical studies undertaken between sessions beginning with the first technical studies, show clearly the awareness of the regional dimension as regards fisheries management within RECOFI. The most recent meetings, technical workshops and initiatives supported by RECOFI which aim to develop a partnership between some of the Member countries (tripartite meetings for example) have contributed to increasing this awareness. This should be the basis for strengthening national and international motivation to provide RECOFI with the financial and technical resources and capacity to address the issues that have been identified.

Given efforts to identify needs and to programme actions (i.e. Terms of reference for the WGFM) there remains a lack of an ongoing presence of national technical experts with the appropriate operational resources to execute these ToRs. This might require the constitution of a core team responsible for monitoring the operationalisation of the ToRs alongside the Secretariat and outside FAO (closer to national structures).

A first stage could be the “National focal points” option but according to their ToRs (Appendix 1, FAO, RNE/RIEL/R915) and the reality of the situation, these could never actually fulfil the regular two-way relay function between the RECOFI Secretariat and the Member countries whilst also providing, when required, expert assistance on the particular theme debated in technical workshops. Over and above the need to pool national knowledge and to develop a regional network of experts, no current RECOFI work programme can lead to a protocol and common criteria for the identification and prioritization of regional issues. Of course, these criteria and the protocols to implement common actions should be in line with the Commission’s *modus operandi*. On what basis is an issue identified in view to be dealt with within RECOFI, what operational procedures are to be adopted?... Such issues remain to be jointly discussed and clarified. How, for example, to share scientific knowledge, how to pool MCS resources, how to use legally recognised common bases for monitoring activities, how to share pilot studies and so on.

For these reasons, RECOFI has to become increasingly the leading mechanism for promoting regional cooperation in fisheries management in this part of the world. Other organizations at the national and international levels are also focusing on issues relating to fisheries and their long-term sustainability, the ecosystem, the economic development, the environment and climate change. Broadening RECOFI’s cooperation and forming partnerships with these regional organizations is highly desirable and should be encouraged.

### *Recommendations*

RECOFI should endeavour to integrate measures to control IUU fishing with its other basic missions such as successful resource conservation, efficient catches and effort monitoring, effective fishing capacity management, sound scientific research, reliable fisheries data collection, compilation and dissemination. The achievement of these objectives necessarily requires the availability of adequate financial and human resources.

There is a need for flexibility in the experts invited to technical workshops according to the skills required. Topics such as access rights, fishing capacity, IUU or other subjects require technical skills such that a system with a single national focal point is not always appropriate. Flexibility is important and this means more operational resources in order to diversify regional expert panels alongside international experts.

Given the legitimacy of the regional fisheries dimension in the RECOFI zone, work is needed to define criteria and set protocols to identify common issues and prioritize actions. This could be done within the framework of a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee open to public institutions and to resource persons with an advisory role as well as to actors from the industry. This work should be followed by the preparation of RECOFI programmes and projects (validated by the Commission during the sessions) and presented to partners (donor Member countries or external donor agencies...).

Therefore, RECOFI should 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...) in order to be able to act in accordance with international conventions or agreements but also to promote good regional fisheries governance. To that effect, other Commissions such as “SRFC or RFCO” have undertaken preliminary groundwork on these criteria and established technical cooperation protocols, prior to identifying projects or during their execution (i.e. SFRC for IUU project).

RECOFI should constantly emphasise the regional dimension of issues related to fisheries whilst offering practical and functional solutions to address them. This requires effective communication and raised awareness levels based on sustained and open exchange and cooperation

#### **4.4 Regional dimensions of the aquaculture sector**

##### *Activities, decisions and experiences*

The development of aquaculture in the RECOFI area varies from one member country to another in terms of commercial production and research. Therefore, the Commission at its Second session held in Muscat in 2003 approved the establishment of a WGA so as to play a vital role in increasing the cooperation between members in the field of aquaculture. The WGA provides opportunities for aquaculture officers from RECOFI members to meet regularly and discuss joint issues and obstacles facing the development of aquaculture in the area and sharing information and experiences.

The regional dimension of aquaculture depends, of course, on sharing lessons learnt and knowledge. It is also subject to similarities in the technical-economic production modes and in a regional context of demand for animal protein. It also depends in some areas on bio-ecological interests due to risk prevention in confined common zones (introduction of new species, development of intensive techniques ...).

The WGA activities and the successful outcome of the RAIS project (cf. Paragraph 4.2) confirms this particular feature of aquaculture which depends more on exchange of information and on networking than on common commitments to resolve truly specific issues.

##### *Assessment*

There is a need to introduce and harmonize legislation dealing with aquatic animal health certification and quarantine measures to facilitate regional trade in living aquatic animals, while minimising the risk of spreading diseases. At the regional level and for cooperation between member countries, the quality and safety of aquaculture products is manifested as harmonized and appropriated monitoring procedures and introduction of measures to sanction infringement of relevant laws and regulations.

At present, aquaculture represents less than 15 percent of the overall fish production in the sub-region but in many countries there are good opportunities for marine aquaculture and, accordingly, governments have placed priority on the development of this sector. So the strategies for national development plan have to be developed in a regionally controlled system to minimize risk. The Governments of the participating countries fully recognize the urgent need to strengthen their aquaculture legal framework to ensure that the sector develops in a sustainable manner.

In order to achieve this, RECOFI aims, through the WGA achievements and scheduled activities, to constitute a platform for exchange and contact between the Member countries. RECOFI also serves as a platform to update and transfer knowledge and/or to highlight successes in one or other of the countries or in other parts of the world. These activities are already part of existing global networks dealing with common aquaculture issues.

The regional dimensions concerning standard harmonisation, legislation and other technical, environmental, fiscal or economic and health conventions concerning aquaculture, are not in themselves strategic elements specific to RECOFI cooperation. This does not mean that this cooperation cannot contribute usefully to the dissemination of past experience, including the issue of prevention and supervision for the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector.

For aquaculture, a regional approach is opportune since it will lead to the harmonization of laws and regulations and thus facilitate regional trade of aquatic animals and aquaculture products. In addition, not all countries have similar access to the specialised advice that is required to update national legal frameworks.

It was stressed that in some instances the sustainable development of the sector is hindered by a lack of policy and planning to provide a reference point for management and development of the sector and by institutional constraints due to a lack of technical capacity and/or weak institutional arrangements. The legislative arrangements for the management and development of aquaculture are generally uncertain and inappropriate. In particular, there is a need to streamline authorization processes, address environmental impacts of aquaculture, introduce and harmonize legislation on aquatic animal health certification, quarantine measures and the quality and safety of aquaculture products. Finally, monitoring and enforcement provisions can be improved. The WGA activities are compatible with the capacity for the emergence of a regional aquaculture and its potential for development. The numerous themes addressed and discussed in technical workshops are relevant as regards dissemination of knowledge and exchange of experience. The platform function is all the more efficient in that it is structured around progress made during the RAIS technical workshop. This workshop, supported by specific funds, provided the conditions for an ongoing networked facilitation to support the emergence of national focal points on the subject. However, besides this success, the delays in commitment from Member countries on the other key subject identified by the Commission towards the harmonisation of aquaculture policy and legislation shows the weaknesses in cooperation and in RECOFI where autonomisation conditions are very limited. The absence of commitment from private actors in the aquaculture component may also explain why there is a problem in moving towards greater member country involvement.

### *Recommendations*

Member countries, under the aegis of countries with a major interest in aquaculture development, should use RECOFI as a platform to exchange lessons learnt from past experience, knowledge and operational capacity in order to plan and drive the development of investments in the aquaculture sector. Aquaculture should be considered as a sector having a common strategic interest (markets, food requirements, growth contribution) even though the regional dimension of projects does not necessarily imply a common territorial dimension. The interest of cooperation in this sector should be promoted through projects and a strategy minimising ecological, financial and commercial risks.

It is also by rapidly opening a dialogue with commissions that have investment resources and with private economic operators (national and international) that RECOFI actions can be pursued and strengthened in the sustainably-established aquaculture sector and that RAIS can be developed as a network, information system and a platform for dissemination and exchange of knowledge. The regional dimension should also involve economic, commercial and development aspects.

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environmental impacts of aquaculture, introduce and harmonize legislation on aquatic animal health certification, quarantine measures and the quality and safety of aquaculture products. Finally, monitoring and enforcement provisions can be improved.

#### **4.5 Decision making, transparency, participation and method to define the Commission Strategy, enforce the strategy, and assess the results**

##### *Assessment*

The RECOFI agreement offers an adequate level of transparency and openness, providing for participation of observers, such as FAO/UN Members and Associated Members, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs.

The RECOFI agreement gives the opportunity to create subsidiary bodies as necessary and referring to free choice of the state members. This possibility represents a strong flexibility in term of needs and strategy to address main issues for fisheries or aquaculture.

In the current state of the Commission structures and bodies, the functioning and internal decision-making mode of the Commission appears to work and has yet to meet any significant difficulty. Nevertheless, it is clear that several challenges remain if the Commission is to evolve in its composition and in its functioning, in particular towards greater appropriation by Member countries and a better balance between FAO and RECOFI resource persons.

The process for the adoption of proposals seems to be satisfactory. Such proposals may originate from Member countries, and they follow a clear and transparent protocol as described in RECOFI texts. Proposals for consideration by the Commission may also come from subsidiary bodies. The process is the same. Working Groups' proposals are compiled and analyzed by the Secretary for submission to the Commission for consideration. The Commission takes decisions and makes recommendations as appropriate by consensus or by voting.

The strategy is discussed, adopted and implemented within the framework of RECOFI sessions and working groups according to the principles of the RECOFI Agreement. The programming of actions depends on annual operational budgets and no action can be started without adequate finance. On that point, it may be noted that there is a disequilibrium between the ToRs of the subsidiary bodies (WGA and WGF) and those of the focal points (part of its operational structure) and its self-financing capacity. Currently, the implementation of actions is highly dependent on FAO availability.

The RAIS success story on the Kuwait extra budgetary contribution (USD 30 000) has to be considered as a possible solution to develop RECOFI capacity to address ToRs of WGs in the near future. On the other hand several difficulties persist in the implementation of shared financing. The execution of action plans suffers from the weakness of the resources in particular to guarantee a good participation and a strong implication of member countries in activities and meetings. Without a quick solution, the risks exist that might halt the progress and thus the utility of the Commission.

##### *Recommendations*

From a legal point of view the RECOFI agreement is in compliance with the RECOFI missions, objectives and stakes. Nevertheless it would be advisable to facilitate by means of operational measures and by evolutions of structure, a stronger implication of member countries seen by the empowerment of RECOFI; national contributions increased and the commitment diversified by member countries according to operating modes as those experimented by RAIS project.

The non-political nature of FAO regional fishery bodies has to be instrumental in providing a platform for dialogue and cooperation among their Members. RECOFI shall also make contacts with international organizations in this regard to establish a dialogue as appropriate.

There is a need to rethink the location and the funding of the Commission headquarters in one of the Member countries for reasons of proximity and physical appropriation by the Member countries.

There is a need to rebalance the implication of FAO and the Member countries through the nomination and the financial support of staff from Member countries. Regional staff could have ongoing functions or rotate within or at the head of the Secretariat and at the head of the WGs.

From a technical viewpoint, action plans, ToRs and the national resources generated should benefit from advice which is independent from the Secretariat and the session participants. Such advice should be more open and more structured and involve, if possible, public economic actors (Ministry of Finance, International Cooperation, budget, environment ...), and extend to the private sectors within the framework of consultative functions (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee). This aims to bring capacity into line with available resources and to concentrate efforts on priorities established by the Member countries that would then be in a stronger position to drive RECOFI's programming. This involves the creation of a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee more diversified in its composition than FAO structures and the public institutions in charge of the fisheries sector.

The RECOFI Agreement needs to be amended in order to incorporate modern fisheries management principles and new international conventions (Flag State duties, Port State measures, precautionary principle, ecosystem approach...)

#### **4.6 Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis**

##### *Assessment*

To date, the Commission has not issued recommendations to Member countries. This is due in part to its work plan since its creation which focuses on strengthening knowledge and exchanging data before embarking on the preparation of technical, economic, legal or environmental recommendations. This work on data has started and is still limited to fisheries data related to catches, fleet and the technical organization of activities (metiers, gear used ...). There is nothing substantial to date with regards to economic monitoring, data by fishery, work on management units although the foundations are beginning to be laid for some fisheries and the ToRs of the WGFM include a more economic approach to fisheries management.

The data available for RECOFI stock assessment limits the scientific advice that can be provided. The high level of artisanal catch makes the establishment of an accurate and comprehensive database on catch (target species and non target species), effort and size statistics very difficult. The establishment of a complete and comprehensive data set is also hampered by lack of cooperation. To improve the quality of dialogue and capacity to build cooperation between national institution is a challenge for the RECOFI future.

The current level of cooperation and appropriation of the Commission by the Member countries, as well as the financial and technical capacity available, means that it will be several years before any recommendations can be produced. In the case of recommendations for management, except for general recommendations in the application of new concepts (precautionary approach, ecosystem approach ...) or the adoption of international conventions specific to fisheries and aquaculture (FAO action plans for example), RECOFI, through its activities and working bodies, has not yet established an adequate plan of action leading to common scientific results which would support recommendations at a regional scale.

Cooperation efforts between scientific institutions should be strengthened through improved co-programming and this requires a certain amount of work on cooperation procedures and principles which strongly depends on greater involvement from national stakeholders. With stronger commitment from national public institutions and adequate resources, greater scope for support and

facilitation of RECOFI activities (human and financial resources) and especially through joint scientific programming based on good communication between Member countries, RECOFI could aim to provide scientific and economic advice to Member countries.

#### *Recommendations*

There is a need to strengthen the Commission through the creation of a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee that would have a consultative role and would participate in developing strategies. Such a committee should help to define priority actions and to identify new operationalisation modalities for the Commission action plans and working groups. Such a Committee could become a communication vector between the Commission and other international (GCC for example or others) and national (Ministry of Finance, of budget, of cooperation, of environment ...) institutions as it would be able to call on resource persons from the scientific, technical and economic fields to promote RECOFI's activities and contribute to improving capacity and resources. Such a Committee could gradually study the issue of coordination between research and statistics in order to reach conventional scientific recommendations.

In order to progress in the process of exchanging scientific capacity, a regional initiative, coordinated by RECOFI, could be organized such as a scientific, technical and economic conference which would clarify national capacity, create synergy between researchers, economists and technicians and launch actions towards co-programming within RECOFI. Such an initiative could also contribute to the visibility of RECOFI both for its achievements and its mandate and be used as a platform for potential donors wishing to submit common projects or actions.

RECOFI should consider 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). RECOFI should also consider developing a framework to take action in the face of uncertainty and weakness in scientific advice. This question could be addressed during the proposed scientific economic and technical conference.

RECOFI should take into account economic analysis (rent assessment) and fisheries management plans (target species and high value species) as modern principles for fisheries management including ecosystem based approach, biodiversity protection... to motivate the important decision makers in each country. RECOFI should also develop capacity to assess the state of governance in each national sector and capacity for managing fisheries and developing aquaculture sector.

RECOFI should address management questions at the regional level, not simply in the quest for harmonised technical measures but also to resolve at the appropriate geographical scale certain problems that face the sector (e.g. questions of fishing capacity or trade). This is because it is at this scale and with a strict cooperation framework between the countries that acceptable and sustainable solutions can be found.

#### **4.7 Decision making process to adopt Commissions recommendations and measures**

##### *Assessment*

The RECOFI agreement define precisely the decision making process to adopt Commissions recommendations and measures.

##### *Recommendations*

Given the fact that RECOFI does not yet produce recommendations based on recognised scientific work as regards fisheries management issues at a regional scale, efforts should target the dissemination of exchanges and of reports produced on issues addressed and work projects. So, there

is no need to modify the process except by developing more communication activities or papers and through a dissemination plan for the results and recommendations.

#### **4.8 Capacity-Building, Training and Technical Assistance**

##### *Assessment*

RECOFI has served as a platform for the transfer of knowledge and for strengthening the capacity of public operators from the fisheries sector through the many issues discussed concerning fisheries and aquaculture statistics and fisheries management as well as exchanges concerned with improving the knowledge of national contexts and with general issues such as international conventions and FAO initiatives (responsible fisheries, Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, IUU fishing, legislative harmonisation, technical measures, fisheries statistics, cage farming techniques, risks related to the introduction of new species, algae development ...). The numerous workshops and sessions since 2006 have shown that RECOFI is highly committed to training and exchanges of knowledge and experience. The response given to the request for a tripartite meeting to accelerate the cooperation process between the Gulf countries also testifies to this. (Tehran, Iran IR, July 2009).

RECOFI discharges its function of exchange platform and contributes to support and build the capacity of Member countries. The diversity of the themes addressed both in fisheries and in aquaculture and the national data-based approach (review of contexts in relation to key issues) also strengthens the bases for cooperation. This approach is coherent given the resources at RECOFI disposal which prevent a more significant participation of public and private national actors. Therefore, the method is adequate but it suffers from lack of resources. The general issues addressed would have benefited from discussions in more diversified workshops involving a larger panel of public actors (sectoral administration, research, financial administration, MCS services, local services and central administrations) and, if possible, private operators.

The involvement of resource persons designated by the Member countries under the functions of specialised or national focal points also shows that the aim of RECOFI to contribute to strengthening national capacity. The systematic review of national contexts, discussions during WGs or during sessions followed by initiative proposals is a useful approach in order to disseminate lessons from past experience and increase the Commission contribution to improving national technical capacities through training human capacity. But these focal points, in order to maximise their contribution to capacity building, should be supported by an ongoing and technical structure in RECOFI (Secretariat, established and represented subsidiary bodies (WGs) or other long-term bodies

The focal points should also have the necessary resources to serve as national relay in order to facilitate, disseminate and contribute through their actions to capacity building and maintain a technical dialogue with the national authorities in charge of the sector to inform RECOFI of the Member countries' demands, needs and priorities.

Given the context and the activities undertaken by RECOFI until now, and although structures and initiatives require further work, it is clear that what is lacking are resources and financial and human capacities to really maximise the initiatives already under way. Strengthening RECOFI internal capacity would improve the results of these initiatives, help identify the needs and expectations of Member countries, and contribute to support national requirements.

Currently and under the impetus of FAO, Member countries favour cooperation within the framework of mutual capacity building even though technical difficulties remain in implementing this cooperation. A wider partnership and extra-budgetary funds should strengthen RECOFI's efforts and build its capacity in this field.

## *Recommendations*

Seeking extra-budgetary funds will increase the output from, and impact of, capacity building initiatives. On the basis of these extra resources, widen the panel of stakeholders who could benefit from sessions, workshops and training sessions on the central themes of fisheries management and aquaculture development.

Strengthening the human and financial capacity of the Secretariat will support the focal points in the dissemination and the facilitation of national actor networks concerned with fisheries and aquaculture problems. These actors could then contribute to work undertaken by RECOFI and promote RECOFI capacity building resources.

Giving focal points the resources and an action plan will assist in the dissemination of RECOFI achievements as well as in the mobilisation of the technical human capacity required to execute the ToRs. Additionally, by giving focal points resources, through financial and technical support of the Secretariat, it will encourage and engineer the demand from Member countries consistent with RECOFI missions. Continuing with the comparative national thematic review work and prompting the more advanced countries will help to build capacity, to develop partnerships within RECOFI in order to disseminate their achievements and their technical skills.

It is also recommended that RECOFI prioritize the needs of the Member countries in a more operational way in order to prepare a plan to build national capacity that could, through dealing with some of the issues, provide support to the projects run by RECOFI; for example as regards the issue of ecosystemic indicators and stock assessment, the creation of a fisheries observatory, the development of an artisanal and industrial fishery registry, the fight against IUU fishing, the monitoring of markets in the area, the development of a management plan for a shared fishery (pelagics) or one of common economic interest (prawns)...

## **4.9 Communication and information**

### *RECOFI activities and experiences*

RECOFI activities, through WG technical workshops, sessions, ad hoc meetings and other initiatives (tripartite meeting), always give rise to reports published and available on RECOFI website, via FAO. Publication activities are supported by FAO through internal services and by RECOFI. The publications are mostly standardised following an FAO publication format, except for RAIS document.

Each session publishes the notes relating to the minutes of meetings, technical workshops, proposals, recommendations and RECOFI budget situation. All these FAO standard publication materials and the RECOFI website can be used as a basis for information with other institutions and partners. FAO (Rome) has just updated this site.

In 2003, during the second session, it was asked how the RECOFI Secretariat can play a part in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) fisheries activities, particularly demersal surveys. The Secretariat replied that ad hoc meetings were planned with both the GCC and the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME).

The Secretariat advised that some Red Sea countries had requested their own regional fisheries commission. It was suggested that cooperative projects, (including demersal surveys) with other countries, rather than full membership of RECOFI by other countries may be a way of establishing initial contacts in areas of common interest.

During the Session III, the delegate of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted the overlap of the issues addressed by RECOFI with those of other Regional/International Organizations

(UNEP, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment [ROPME], Regional Organization for Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden [PERSGA]) and recommended the coordination of efforts in this regard, including the development of a “Regional Action Programme”, or enhancing/utilizing existing ones, on the protection of marine environment/ecosystems and the sustainable management of marine resources.

During Session V, it was suggested that the two RECOFI Working Groups should consider planning a joint activity covering this issue in close cooperation with other regional organizations, such as the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME). Members also emphasized the significance of cooperating with other organizations concerned with fisheries management such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Members encouraged the Secretariat to seek cooperation and partnership with other organizations in the region, mainly the standing committee for fisheries of the GCC that were involved with fisheries and fisheries-related issues.

With regards to the GCC and other regional organizations likely to contribute to exchanges and work, RECOFI has taken the initiative to invite these partners to attend sessions but as to now, no specific action outside the sessions has been undertaken to strengthen exchanges and cooperation. Due to the limitation of resources and time, RECOFI Secretariat staff attend very few of the meetings held by other RFB.

#### *Assessment*

Efforts are still required as regards cooperation with other organizations likely to contribute to or act upon common issues.

Publications available via FAO standard documents are of satisfactory editorial and technical quality. However, the contributions from experts (national) working within the framework of these workshops are not published in the technical documents of these meetings. External contributions (i.e. international consultant) are usually published and available from the website; all national contributions presented at the Tehran Workshop in 2009 will be published. The listing of RECOFI internal literature is well managed and for the most part easily accessible on the internet (RECOFI website).

As a first approach to meet the above request the Secretariat invited INFOSAMAK to attend the 4th Session of RECOFI and provided member countries with information material and guidelines relating to INFOSAMAK’s role and functions in the region. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the valuable contribution of INFOSAMAK and noted the increasing importance of communications and information networks in the sector of fish marketing and trade. INFOSAMAK was invited and participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Session. Joint FAO RNE/INFOSAMAK initiatives also requested by the WGFN will take place this year, i.e. Fish trade, IUU and catch documentation schemes. Through the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee, better relationships and co-programming with other regional international organizations could be established and pursued.

#### *Recommendations*

RECOFI should prepare a communication and information plan to deal with relational aspects with Member countries and with non-member countries in the same area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops. This plan should clearly define the mandates and the role of each of the Commission’s bodies including the focal points (specialised or national) and define their means of action.

This plan could contain a training section in order to consider all the resources, products and strategic elements that could strengthen the Commission visibility and hence its capacity to promote initiatives in the area. This Information Communication Training (ICT) plan could lead to a more autonomous

Commission and to the dissemination of achievements, which is more direct and in a more appropriate format for public and private operators involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

## 5. RECOFI WEAKNESSES AND SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

- **Procedure**

### *Weaknesses*

The Rules and Procedures adopted in RECOFI and the Agreement entered into force in February 2001. Since then many external factors have changed. The statute is a little “antique”. Several international instruments have been developed concerning the management of world fishery resources. In addition, there has been an increase in attention paid to the effectiveness of fisheries management (i.e. Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and High Seas, IPOA-IUU, IPOA-Seabirds, IPOA-Sharks, IPOA-Capacity...). The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for some years addressed fisheries in specific resolutions on sustainable fisheries, including calling upon regional fisheries arrangements and in particular regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to address specific topics in order to achieve sustainable fisheries within their areas of competence. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002 undertook, *inter alia*, to bring fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) within a defined time period, and also defined a Plan of Implementation for that purpose. The UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Compliance Agreement entail legally-binding obligations on parties, which are highly relevant to countries that are members of RFMOs or regional fisheries arrangement, including RECOFI Members that have ratified or acceded to the UN fish Stocks Agreement and/or the FAO Compliance Agreement. Another form of change in the international fisheries landscape concerns the number of issues relating to the sustainability of world fisheries. The most important issues or challenges include: overfishing, over capacity and overcapitalization of the sector, high rates of discarding, emergence of environmental values in fishery resource use, globalization in particular in trade and IUU, challenges in consumption patterns and perceptions...

### *Proposed solutions*

Adapt the Rules and Procedure to the current circumstances, with more ownership among the members and more flexibility.

- **Actors**

### *Weaknesses*

Actor participation does not always lead to sufficiently prepared and written contributions. In the past and continuing presently, RECOFI’s weakness in facilitation capacity has prevented progress in international work programmes within the Commission. Insufficient participation by scientists has slowed work progress and made it dependent on external consultants (FAO and international experts).

Overly-limited delegation diversity prevents progress on some thematic work programmes and may hinder the analysis of complex situations in relation to bioeconomic, ecosystemic and/or international issues. Additionally, the monitoring of work programmes started by RECOFI is not very effective due to inadequate financial resources and to the weakness of some national administrations

### *Proposed solutions*

One solution would be to pursue facilitation efforts and national capacity building through thematic working groups, another would be to support regular meetings between national expert groups. RECOFI should also ensure participants’ interest in working groups through international programmes

based on common resources and capacity strengthened by external participants and seek funding in order to increase technical capacity, meetings and publications involving national actors. It is possible to support this strategy by setting up a Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee that could contribute to scheduling programming actions and workshops and that could maximize the dissemination of achievements at international level via a communication, information and training plan. Allow workgroup participants to draw from the participation of external experts and to participate themselves in meetings outside RECOFI (FAO workshops, meetings with other thematic groups from other regions ...). Try, through an initiative aimed at the general public, to broaden actor participation to private operators involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

- **Legal matters (Mandate)**

*Weaknesses*

Lack of Member country involvement and contribution is one mandate weakness, along with an unbalanced ownership between FAO and Member countries.

*Proposed solutions*

RECOFI needs to achieve the increased involvement of Member countries through the level of contribution and pro-active and more user-friendly working processes.

- **Strategy**

*Weaknesses*

Concerns exist that the RECOFI strategies are focused on the FAO instruments and the national level except for the Gulf recent initiative. Criteria to define regional and common strategies are not in place for effective operation. Priorities are not sufficiently discussed within the Commission. The programming methodology is weakened by the lack of a consultative Committee (scientific, economic and technical). The identification of priorities and needs does not emerge from a process with sufficient implication of States and the public authorities (economy, environment, and market) and the actors of the fishery and aquaculture sector.

*Proposed solutions*

RECOFI needs to more clearly define its strategy and priorities through a wider panel of national actors from the productive sectors and the administrations of the fishing and aquaculture sectors, and from the economic and environmental departments. Common criteria must be developed to define strategies and select priorities. A Consultative council (scientific, economic and technical) should be instituted to validate the definition of RECOFI strategies and priorities.

- **Financial and time inputs**

*Weaknesses*

The RECOFI agreement is poor on co-financing. The FAO contribution depends on the budget of the FAO, which restricts the strategy for future actions and visibility. The future risks of inadequate financial resources are great with consequences in term of activities and planning. The Procedure does not facilitate external funding. RECOFI and FAO financial resources are insufficient for the RECOFI secretariat as such. Insufficient external funding resources are available to support international initiatives in term of working groups, conferences, meetings. Funding limits the time contribution from FAO and Member countries.

### *Proposed solutions*

The RECOFI agreement must be revised concerning Member countries economic contributions in order to ensure the capacity to implement and develop RECOFI activities within a sustainable strategy. The Secretariat needs to be co-funded by the Member countries. RECOFI should facilitate the collection of funds. Members' control and facilitation for funding has to be developed along with more external financing possibilities (i.e. GCC or other national and international donors).

- **Structure**

#### *Weaknesses*

The structure is somewhat limited by the absence of a consultative council. The Secretariat is limited in time and financial resources by the FAO and Member countries' strategy. National and thematic focal points is not the best solution to develop countries' involvement because being members of national administrations, they do not have sufficient autonomy to contribute adequately to RECOFI initiatives.

### *Proposed solutions*

Creating a consultative council and reform the Secretariat structure could strengthen human capacity and countries' involvement by integrating national actors within the Secretariat and increasing financial and technical capacities. Focal points provide a link between the national administrations and the sectors. But without increased capacity to communicate and develop autonomy, they cannot play a real role for national activities.

- **Culture**

#### *Weaknesses*

RECOFI has an essentially FAO culture but it should be more a Member country culture. The culture is not sufficiently regional or output driven. The particularities of the sectors in the regional area are not sufficiently included in the strategy for sustainable and autonomous action.

### *Proposed solutions*

The current open culture needs to be and can be combined with a more regional and outcome oriented attitude.

- **People**

#### *Weaknesses*

The motivation and profiles of correspondents and delegations in some countries are too weak to allow for the proper management of RECOFI affairs.

### *Proposed solutions*

Improve people's motivation by more communication, information and training. Move towards a more pro-active style to develop a regional strategy to respond to the challenges facing the fishing and aquaculture sectors. Develop more opportunities for national scientific and technical contributions in meetings, conferences and working groups with more flexibility in panel selection.

- **Style of RECOFI management**

*Weaknesses*

The style is at present too dominated by FAO supervision of the Secretariat and the working groups. There is insufficient country involvement in the agenda and decision-making processes under the control of a consultative council.

*Proposed solutions*

Develop the more pro-active involvement of countries in Secretariat activities and move working group agendas towards more open discussion with larger panels of actors.

## **6. CHALLENGES AND STRATEGY, SCENARIO FOR THE FUTURE**

### **6.1 Challenges and strategy**

In order to strengthen its strategy towards an improved contribution to the development and the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, RECOFI should:

- Integrate the new international instruments that have emerged since its creation and in particular the International Plans of Action and recommendations for precautionary and ecosystem approaches.
- Increase the level of member country contributions to allow for greater financial autonomy and hence greater programme flexibility for the Commission.
- Improve its operating structure through the creation of a consultative body (Council or Committee) of a scientific, economic and technical nature.
- Seek ways and means to open the Secretariat to resource persons from the Member countries and consider whether the Secretariat should be located closer to the RECOFI Member countries.
- Develop a strategy to strengthen RECOFI's internal capacity to take into account the new fisheries and aquaculture challenges concerning both the economic and the environmental aspects of the activities. There is also the need to integrate globalization issues facing the sectors.
- Bring to the fore a culture and strategy for the prioritisation of regional actions to reinforce national actions and strategies. In order to achieve this, develop a range of indicators and a method to define priorities involving the consultative body in the process.
- Build capacity to prepare projects and programmes aimed at strengthening financial and technical resources and capacity to address some of the constraints to the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Develop a proactive strategy for training, communication and information which would make it possible to increase the Commission capacity whilst ensuring a progressive transfer of FAO responsibilities towards Member countries.
- Contribute to better information on fisheries and aquaculture through the publication of reliable and standardized statistics and through the creation and the facilitation of regular thematic forums.
- Constitute an expert roster that could address countries' emergencies in terms of resource risks, exploitation areas or products.
- Develop a network of external contributors to support thematic or promotional actions for the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture (via a regular forum open to partners every other year based on a range of actions in support of national actions).
- Prepare project concept notes to support the strategic plan covering immediately the following priority themes:
- Diagnosis of natural potential and economic value of fish resource rents;

- Identification of regional fisheries management units;
- Building technical capacity to prepare and implement management plans for common, shared or common interest fisheries (pelagics, shrimps...);
- Develop a management plan for fishing capacity within the RECOFI region;
- Harmonization of fisheries and aquaculture legislation and conventions on minimum access conditions and international access agreements;
- Plan for training and scientific exchange in order to build capacity for stock monitoring and exploitation dynamics.
- Development of a fisheries and aquaculture observatory to promote private investment and increase public investment efficiency;

This strategic strengthening should address the following challenges first:

- Better scientific and technical knowledge to improve stock assessment and provide a better evaluation of active fleets in the region.
- Consolidated diagnoses of fishing potentials through the evaluation of the economic stakes related to these stocks (rent) in order to prepare strategies and recommendations for the regional coherence of fisheries and aquaculture public policies.
- Sustained and organized exchanges between national administrations in a strong and active commission in order to harmonize legislations concerning common or shared stocks.
- Monitoring control and surveillance resources optimized and operational at the level of shared territories and stocks.
- Regulated and secured trade flows in order to supply markets through activities that are controlled (quality) and monitored (creation of economic value).
- Strengthened national and regional governance capacity through the application of the subsidiarity principle and the active contribution to regional issues such as: The control of access to the resources (harmonization of minimum access conditions), mobility of fishing capacity (development of a Regional Capacity Plan), professional status of the sector actors (professionalization and control of access to the profession), monitoring, control and surveillance of product flows, quality control in the context of new international trading standards for human consumption products.
- Stakeholder participation in monitoring, control and surveillance processes is rationalized and formalized in order to improve sectoral governance.
- Visibility of the Commission's role and issues which encourages its support and the participation of partners to support these action plans and initiatives.
- A flexibility that can counteract the risks associated with inter-sectoral conflict management (oil/fishing, tourism/fishing, environment/fishing, navigation/fishing ...).

## **6.2 Risk analysis**

Several risks or limits are linked to the status and its implications according to Article XIV (Box 1).

**Box 1: Certain concerns about an Article XIV body were raised as follows**

- The difficulty in explaining to the Government, and particularly to Finance Ministries, that specific payments should be made to a FAO Article XIV body, whilst they are already paying their normal membership contribution to FAO.
- The body could be seen as part of FAO or a tool of FAO and not as a body of the members themselves, which may dampen members' commitment to the body and create hesitation among some donors to support it.
- The body would be bound by certain administrative regulations and processes of FAO, which could impact on (e.g. cause delays to) its operations and restrict independent actions.
- FAO would decide on the level of inputs to the secretariat, which may result in a part-time/inadequate secretarial support.
- A body under FAO could take a longer time to establish if the immediate biennial FAO Conference was missed.
- Part of the members' contributions could be used for FAO secretariat functions; and that the secretariat and other staff should be contracted internationally under FAO procedures and payment schemes, further reducing flexibility of staffing and likely increasing staff costs.
- It may be difficult to ensure visibility and raise the image of the body as its achievements would be likely attributed to FAO.
- FAO is an agency focused on rural development and food security so that research issues may not have much priority from the body.

The FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, in considering the initiative, reported to FAO Council that, while it was expected that FAO would be able to support the Commission and facilitate the above-mentioned synergies, prospective Members expressed their awareness of the FAO Immediate Programme of Action, (action 3.17) which implied expectancy that bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution should achieve a greater degree of self-funding. ( Report of the 88<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, 23-25 September 2009).

Source: Judith Swan "Review of the functioning of EIFAC and options for long-term improvement, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department / FAO / 14 January 2010.

However other risks are more specifically related to the current RECOFI context. Among these might be mentioned that without institutional development (updating, creation of a consultative body), and without strengthening the process of identification of priority regional actions (more involvement from Member countries in programming according to an agreed methodological framework based on a shared vision) and finally without adjustment and strengthening of its operating mode (from working groups to thematic work programmes supported by own secure funds and expert panels other than focal points), RECOFI would run the risk of:

- A decrease in financial resources (those depending on FAO and external funding then internal funding)
- Loss of human capacity through uncontrolled FAO staff rotation, of human capacity within its Secretariat, working group leaders, demotivated delegation members.
- Loss of Member countries' interest and motivation concerning the regional dimension.
- Emergence of new competition from other regional organisations' initiatives.
- Loss of skill qualities through not accumulating and exchanging achievements and technical knowledge.
- Loss of institutional capacity at sectoral issue level because recommendations and their implementation meet with difficulties.
- Increasing conflicts in the RECOFI sectoral space.

- Stock depletion and fish resource rent dissipation
- An increase in IUU fishing and increase in surveillance costs
- Disorganization of markets and local economies
- Health and food risks
- Degradation of natural environments
- Introduction of new species and related environmental risks
- Private and public financial losses due to unprofitable investments.

#### **6.4 Organization and financing: scenarios for the future**

##### *Status of the contributions to the RECOFI*

In May 2007, the Commission adopted a budget for the 2007-08 biennium amounting to USD 160 000. This did not include the estimate of the FAO Regular Programme contribution to RECOFI<sup>11</sup> (example of FAO contribution to RECOFI is given in Table 6).

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2008, the income from contributions for 2008–09<sup>12</sup> amounted to USD 29, 995 (equivalent to 75% of the expected annual total contribution).

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009, the income from contributions for 2009-2010 amounted to USD 20, 000 (equivalent to 50% of the expected annual total contribution).

The status of contributions can be summarized as follows:

- Three Members (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) deposited their instruments of acceptance and have paid their contribution in full;
- Five Members (Bahrain, Iran, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates) deposited their instruments of acceptance but have not yet fully paid their contribution.

During the fifth session, the Secretariat informed the Commission that the total balance of accumulated pending contributions amounted to USD 70 187.83. This represented a 17 percent increase in comparison to the previous biennium. The Commission took note of its budget from 2003 to 31 December 2008. The Commission also noted the financial delivery by main activity during the period from 2007 to May 2009. The Commission was advised that as of the 31 December 2008 the actual contribution from RECOFI Members to the annual 2008–09 budget amounted to USD 29 995 or 75 percent of the expected annual total contribution. Only four Members had paid their annual contributions in full. Four other Members' contributions remained outstanding. In this regard the Commission invited all Members to settle overdue payments in a timely manner.

As shown in Table 2, the balance of accumulated pending contributions against the 2007–08 and 2008–09 RECOFI fiscal years, as of the 31 of December 2009, amounted to USD 90 187.83. This represents a 50 percent increase compared to the previous biennium (outstanding 31/12/2007).

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<sup>11</sup> The FAO sent, through diplomatic channels, the “Call for fund letter” on the 18 April 2008. A reminder, followed by individual recalls, was sent by the Secretariat on the 23 of July 2008 to concerned Parties.

<sup>12</sup> RECOFI fiscal year is from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Table2: Status of contributions on 31 December 2008**

Members	Outstanding 31/12/07	Due for 2008- 2009*	Received up to 31/12/08	Outstanding 31/12/2008	Due for 2009- 2010*	Received up to 31/12/2009	Outstanding 31/12/2009
<b>BAHRAIN</b>	5,000.00	5,000.00		10,000	5,000.00		15,000
<b>IRAQ</b>		5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
<b>IRAN, Islamic Republic of</b>	15,076.57	5,000.00		20,076.57	5,000.00		25,076.57
<b>KUWAIT</b>	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
<b>OMAN, Sultanate of</b>	15.00	5,000.00	4,995.00**	20.00	5,000.00		5 020.00
<b>QATAR</b>	25,035.22	5,000.00	5,000.00	25,035.22	5,000.00		30,035.22
<b>SAUDI ARABIA, Kingdom of</b>	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
<b>UNITED ARAB EMIRATES</b>	15,056.04	5,000.00	5,000.00	15,056.04	5,000.00	5,000.00	15,056.04
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>60,182.83</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>	<b>29, 995.00</b>	<b>70,187.83</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>	<b>20, 000.00</b>	<b>90,187.83</b>

Source: Doc. RECOFI Fifth session, May 2009 and Trust Fund n° 119814 – MTF/REM/001/MUL (RECOFI)

\* RECOFI fiscal year is from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.

\*\* A minimal negative balance can be noted for Oman probably due to bank transfer charges

Table 3 provides an overview of the financial statement of the Commission's budget since 2003 and as of December 31, 2008<sup>13</sup>, and the liquidation of total expenses as of December 31, 2008. Total expenses (USD 260 958) include expenses settled up to the end of December 2008 (USD 168 283), existing commitments (USD 60 357) made until the end of April 2009 and a provision of USD 32 318 earmarked as a forecast for the cost of the fifth RECOFI session (interpretation, in-session translation of draft report, travel, printing and miscellaneous).

**Table 3: Financial Status in US Dollars (2003- May 2009)**

<b>Income (contributions)</b>	<b>303,822</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>260,958</b>
Expenses ( <i>up to end December 2008</i> )	168,283
Commitments ( <i>2009</i> )	60,357
Forecast ( <i>2009 5<sup>th</sup> session</i> )	32,318
<b>Balance</b>	<b>42,864</b>

Source : Doc. RECOFI Fifth session, May 2009

The financial delivery by main activity during the period from 2007 to May 2009 is provided in Table 4. Expenditures can be divided in three broad categories:

- i) expenses related to the functioning of the Secretariat (51% of total expenses, 52% of which are related to the Commission's plenary sessions in 2007 and 2009);
- ii) activities in support of the Working Group Aquaculture (30%);
- iii) activities in support of the Working Group Fisheries Management (19%).

The main expenditure chapters, based on the FAO/Oracle trust funds standard budget line allocations, are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 4: Financial delivery by activity during the intersessional period (US Dollars)**

	2007	2008	2009 (provisional)	Total
<b>Aquaculture Working Group</b>	18 574	22 234	16 342	57 150
<b>Fisheries Management Working Group</b>		8 765	26 623	35 388
<b>Secretariat</b>	24 493	23 391	49 710	97 594
<b>Total</b>	<b>43 067</b>	<b>54 390</b>	<b>92 675</b>	<b>190 132</b>

Source : Doc. RECOFI Fifth session, May 2009

<sup>13</sup> Funds deposited for the implementation of the Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project are not included.

**Table 5: Expenditures met during the inter-sessional biennium (US Dollars) including 2009 commitments and forecast up to May (inclusive)**

Expenditures	2007-2009
Staff costs (General Services)	23,821
Consultancies	54,824
Travel	75,329
Contracts	3,713
General Operating Expenses	5,084
Charge backs ( <i>interpretation &amp; reporting</i> )	19,585
Other Miscellaneous	7,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,132</b>

Source : Doc. RECOFI Fifth session, May 2009

During the fifth session, the Secretariat provided a statement of the financial situation for extra-budgetary resources provided by Members to support projects executed by the Secretariat. These projects included, for example, a Kuwait-supported information system for the development of regional aquaculture. With respect to the aquaculture legal and policy framework project, RECOFI was informed that the Secretariat was unable to proceed further. This project was intended to be funded by RECOFI Members on an equal-share contribution basis. Four Members had confirmed their commitment to FAO to fund the project. However, contributions were deposited by only two Members.

**Table 6: FAO Staff Members time activity and costs 2008/2009 (US Dollars)**

Name FAO Members	Nbr/days	Travel costs	Total
David Doulman	72	13 351.00	59 935.00
Gaëlle Hermanus	44	13 761.00	26 081.00
Heba Fahmy / Mona	180	2 000.00	18 380.00
Judit Swan	21	4 459.00	12 628.00
Lucas Garibaldi	61	280.00	37 204.00
Piero Mannini	180	5 000.00	93 380.00
Alessandro Lovatelli	71	14 739.78	54 783.00
Florence Poulain	60	3 000.00	43 200.00
Pilar Arocena	1,5		420.00
Raschad Al-Kafaji	9	3 024.00	7 155.00
Sachiko Tsuji	21	9 215.00	22 802.00
Valerio Crespi	45	7 140.91	24 285.91
Yimin Ye	3	8 200.00	10 141.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>768.5</b>	<b>84 170.69</b>	<b>410 394.91</b>

Source : FAO Data March 2010

Following extensive discussions and taking account of its current financial situation, the Commission agreed to support the activities in Table 7. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Secretariat should seek to organize additional activities if arrears in contributions became available.

**Table 7: Table of RECOFI activities to be undertaken in the 2009–2010 inter-sessional period.**

Working Group	Activity	Date	Location	Duration	Indicative cost (USD)	Status
Fish. Man.	Workshop on stock status reporting	Jul 2009	Iran	3–4 days	30 000	Approved
Fish. Man.	Integration of catch and effort data in the RECOFI area	2009/2010	RECOFI countries	TBD	30 000	Approved
Fish. Man.	3 <sup>rd</sup> WGFMM Meeting	Oct 2009	Qatar	3 days		Approved
Aquaculture	Risk analysis (Training)	TBD	Oman	3–4 days	30 000	Approved
Aquaculture	Environmental monitoring (Training)	TBD	TBD	10–14 days	20 000	Approved
Joint	Red tides: Impacts on capture fisheries and aquaculture and counter measures (Technical workshop)	2010	Kuwait	3–4 days	20 000	Approved
Joint	Geographical Information System (GIS) and spatial tools applications for capture fishery and aquaculture	2010	Qatar	3–4 days	30 000	Approved
Fish. Man. (4)	Review of national fisheries programmes	2009	RECOFI countries	TBD	40 000	Postponed
Fish. Man. (7)	Workshop on the utilization of fishery dependent data	2010	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Fish. Man. (8)	Workshop on RECOFI fisheries economics	2010	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Fish. Man. (9)	Training workshop on fishery resources appraisal	2010/2011	TBD	4 days	40 000	Postponed
Fish Man. (10)	Pilot joint assessment of shared stocks	2011	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Aquaculture (4)	Development of a national strategy on aquatic animal health (Planning workshop)	TBD	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Aquaculture (6)	Aquaculture recirculation technologies (Technical workshop)	TBD	TBD	2–3 days	20 000	Postponed
Aquaculture	Regional Aquaculture Information System (development and consolidation)	TBD	TBD	5 days	5 000	Ongoing

**Note:** Numbers in brackets refer to original ranking of activities.

### Status of RECOFI extra-budgetary resources

At its Third session (Doha, Qatar, 9–11 May 2005) the Commission had requested the Secretariat prepare and circulate periodical budget reviews and financial statements with the view of keeping Member countries informed of the financial status of RECOFI and providing comprehensive information and data to be used during future presentations of the Commission's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

Specifically, the Member countries had requested that the Secretary prepare full and comprehensive financial reports including statements from the previous biennium. This request was fulfilled for the Third Session. A second request had asked the Secretary to distribute updated budget reports on a quarterly basis. However, due to the absence of major inter-sessional activities and related expenditures during 2006 a single financial statement was issued in February 2007 and incorporated into the document presented.

The overall budget adopted by the Commission at its Fourth session included the funds made available as extra budgetary resources (i.e. from voluntary contributions by some members). Utilization of these funds is summarized below.

- *Kuwait support to the Development of the Regional Aquaculture Information System:* Following the kind offer made by Kuwait at the Third session of the Commission (Doha, Qatar, May 2005) in support of the initiative, the amount of USD 30 000 was received in a single instalment in 2007. These funds were used to cover the costs related to the design, development and testing of RAIS, including on-the-job training of the RAIS Regional Centre staff. The detailed description of RAIS activities is given in RECOFI/V/2009/Inf.5)
- *Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project:* The project proposal was developed by the WGA, approved in principle by the Commission at the Third session (2005) and further endorsed at the Fourth session (2007). It was expected that each RECOFI member would contribute on an equal share basis, consisting of USD 22, 500 each. As of December 2008, only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had deposited their contribution, which amounts to 29% of the planned total funds required to implement the project. While awaiting the fulfilment of contributions to the budget, the Secretariat did not proceed further with the finalization of the administrative and operational framework of this activity.

### *Assessment*

Several questions directly related to the financial commitment of Member countries and of contributors need to be considered. As we saw in several recommendations, the resources required for the satisfactory execution of RECOFI's workplans often seem insufficient and lead to the involvement of a minimum number of actors (cf. Tab.7) or to important delays (i.e. *Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project*). It is therefore necessary to match expectations of the Commission, its workplans and commitments and its autonomisation with the financial resources at its disposal.

Examining 2008 and 2009 (last biennium), the working costs related to RECOFI activities were USD 557 459.91, including the costs of FAO Staff members supporting the Commission. This is 5.6 times more than the total national contributions from Member countries over the same period (USD 80 000). The FAO contribution over the period represents indirectly 73.61% of financial commitments. The autonomisation of the Commission would mean a contribution level of around USD 35,000 per annum per country<sup>14</sup>.

In the forecast budget of the activities to be undertaken between 2009 and 2010 (cf. RECOFI Fifth session, RNE/FIEL/R915, p 11), the indicative costs were USD 385 000, not including the cost of a workshop on "Fisheries Management" in Qatar and other operating costs for the Secretariat and the financial support of external participants. And this outcome occurs assuming that current working arrangements are continued, in particular with sessions and workshops that do not include non-conventional RECOFI partners. It seems fair to say that in a strategy to broaden activities to other themes and other actors, this evaluation is only a guide to the minimum budget and that this will require a substantial upwards revision. It is important, therefore, to consider the ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity in order to develop adequately its contribution to achieving its objectives and its influence within the region for good governance and the development of the sectors for which it is partly responsible. Its dynamism and future are at stake in this necessary adaptation of its financial operating capacity. The commitment of partners is also certainly related to its self-financing capacity. The hypothesis of a status quo in the contributions as they stand would mean the end of the Commission as one of the active and recognised organizations working on regional issues.

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<sup>14</sup> For comparison purposes, the level of annual contributions established within the framework of the SRFC is of USD 50 129 for the poorest countries of the sub-region (Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone) and of USD 100 258 for the more important countries (Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea). However it is true that the contributions also cover the financial cost of national experts invited to working groups. Moreover, the arrears are more than one million USD.

## Scenarios for the future

Seek ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity. In order to achieve this various hypotheses are possible which include:

- i) Maintain an equal payment (excluding any other criterion than the fact of being a RECOFI Member country) with an upward readjustment of annual national contributions,
- ii) Maintain the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions decided by Member countries according to their involvement in work programmes where they take on the leadership; this was successfully the case on the RAIS supported by Kuwait. On the other hand, the equal and imposed extra-budgetary co-funding of Member countries proved to be inappropriate and did not lead to the work that was planned for aquaculture. This process should therefore be abandoned.
- iii) The ending of an equal payment for all via indexed contributions based on an indicator calculation taking into account the level of wealth of the country, the shares of fisheries and aquaculture in the economic growth or the contribution indices of the sector to food requirements, to the trade balance, to employment or other physical parameters related to marine or inland activities (coastal length, EEZ size, surface available for aquaculture, etc.). This solution should then be studied with a view to achieving a target total budget which would not lead to more resources but would introduce a differential which would only work on the basis of a strong and secure agreement written into the RECOFI Agreement. More than the process, it is this commitment which would illustrate a political change in the RECOFI working context.

Depending on the budgetary forecast and expectations from other recommendations, a budget of around USD 450 000 to 500 000 per biennium (i.e. USD 30 000 to 35 000 / year / Member country) would be a significant step towards the Commission's autonomy and would signal its long-term commitment to regional work programmes which support good fisheries governance and aquaculture development. This budget could constitute a working capital and would hence be a guarantee for national or international donors (stakeholders in the area's marine and inland interests) given that partners pay increasing attention to the self-financing capacity of Member countries, regional organizations and to their own capacity regardless of their access to extra-budgetary funds.

The Commission, whilst maintaining the current *modus operandi* concerning the recovery of FAO and Member country staff expenses could progressively prepare projects covering some thematic work programmes that could be submitted to external donors or partners (GCC funding, Member country or donor unilateral funding to support development, environmental protection, public investment concerning research, monitoring, control, surveillance, etc) .

As the situation stands now, a wider panel of national actors could be involved with national financial support, but in practice this makes the choice of resource persons somewhat haphazard and affects their medium and long-term thematic commitment. The best option is always for the Commission to meet the cost of inviting the resource persons required to develop activities and build its human capacity.

A more operational and narrower cooperation with the GCC should be considered on the basis of an agreement between the RECOFI Member countries of this organization and in parallel with other possibilities.

From an organizational and transparency viewpoint, during several sessions, the Member countries have expressed the need for the regular monitoring of RECOFI financial commitments through the initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat and the working groups. In the current context of a strong and significant financial relationship with FAO, and given the weakness of the Secretariat permanent staff, it seems that this request has yet to meet with a satisfactory response.

**Annex 1: Number of participants by country during RECOFI Meetings and sessions**

Meeting		Barhain	Iran	Iraq	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	United Arab Emirates	FAO	Others	RECOFI Sec.	Place
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session	2003	3	2		3	7	2	2	2	3	4	2	Oman
3 <sup>rd</sup> Session	2005	3 + (1)	2	1	2	3	5	3 + (1)	2	6	1	2	Qatar
4 <sup>th</sup> Session	2007	2 + (1)	2		2	3	3	7 + (6)	2	7	2		Saudi Arabia
5 <sup>th</sup> Session	2009	3 + (1)	2	1	2	6	2	3	7	10	3		UAE
2 <sup>nd</sup> WGFM	2008	1		1	1	3	2	2	1	6			Egypte
3 <sup>rd</sup> WGFM	2009	1	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	4			Qatar
1 <sup>st</sup> WGS													
2 <sup>nd</sup> WGS													
Works. IUU	2009	1			2	7	1	2			1	4	Oman
2 <sup>nd</sup> WGA	2005	3 + (4)	1	3	1	1	1	1 + (1)	1	4	1	1	Oman
3 <sup>rd</sup> WGA													
4 <sup>th</sup> WGA	2009	2		1	1	3	1	3	2	4			Oman
Works. Aquatic A H	2008	1				2	2	6	2	4	1		Saudi Arabia
Works. Cage	2009	2		1	1	18	1	3	2	2	2		Oman
Total		22 + (7)	10	10	16	54	23	34 + (8)	22	50	15	9	

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## **Annex 2: A compendium of the recommendations by issues**

### **Knowledge regarding the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing**

- Create a Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee (SETC).
- Organize a regional conference on common bio-economic potentials and on the ecosystem indicators to be measured).
- Work on the issue of management units for regional and strictly national stocks should be undertaken from a RECOFI perspective.
- Support to national technical capacity related to the harmonisation work already completed.
- Wider set of ecosystem data and de facto be completed as soon as possible with economic data specific to the fisheries sector.
- Launch a regional technical work programme in order to structure information bases and develop further, through common, standardised and comparable statistical protocols, the cooperation between Member countries by integrating all the ecosystem parameters.

### **Knowledge regarding the status of Aquaculture**

- Pursue and consolidate RAIS
- Promote a strategy for the development of aquaculture programmes according to environmental standards, risk prevention and the strengthening of economic, commercial and food interests in the area.

### **Regional dimensions of the fishing sectors**

- Integrate measures to control IUU fishing with its other basic missions.
- Develop flexibility in the experts invited to technical workshops according to the skills required.
- Define criteria and set protocols to identify common issues and prioritize actions.
- 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...)
- Emphasise the regional dimension of issues related to fisheries whilst offering practical and functional solutions to address them.

### **Regional dimensions of the aquaculture sector**

- Use RECOFI as a platform to exchange lessons learnt from past experience, knowledge and operational capacity.
- Open a dialogue with commissions that have investment resources and with private economic operators
- 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.

### **Decision making, transparency, participation and method to define the Commission Strategy, enforce the strategy, and assess the results**

- Facilitate by means of operational measures and by evolutions of structure, a stronger implication of member countries seen by the empowerment of RECOFI.
- Provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation among their Members.

- Rethink the location and the funding of the Commission headquarters in one of the Member countries for reasons of proximity and physical appropriation by the Member countries.
- Rebalance the implication of FAO and the Member countries through the nomination and the financial support of staff from Member countries.
- Implement external and independent advice from the Secretariat and session participants for action plans, ToRs and the national resources generated.
- The RECOFI Agreement needs to be amended in order to incorporate modern fisheries management principles and new international conventions (Flag State duties, Port State measures, precautionary principle, ecosystem approach...)

### **Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis**

- Strengthen the Commission through the creation of a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee.
- Organize a scientific, technical and economic conference.
- Develop 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).
- Develop a framework to take action in the face of uncertainty and weakness in scientific advice.
- Take into account economic analysis (rent assessment) and fisheries management plans (target species and high value species) as modern principles for fisheries management including ecosystem based approach, biodiversity protection...
- Develop capacity to assess the state of governance in each national sector and capacity for managing fisheries and developing aquaculture sector.
- Address management questions at the regional level, not simply in the quest for harmonised technical measures but also to resolve at the appropriate geographical scale certain problems that face the sector (e.g. questions of fishing capacity or trade).

### **Decision making process to adopt Commissions recommendations and measures**

- Target the dissemination of exchanges and of reports produced on issues addressed and work projects.

### **Capacity-Building, Training and Technical Assistance**

- Seek extra-budgetary funds to increase the output from, and impact of, capacity building initiatives.
- Strengthen 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.
- Give focal points the resources and an action plan to disseminate RECOFI achievements as well as to mobilise the technical human capacity required to execute the ToRs.
- Give focal points the resources, through financial and technical support of the Secretariat, to encourage and engineer the demand from Member countries consistent with RECOFI missions.
- Continue with the comparative national thematic review work and prompt the more advanced countries to build capacity, to develop partnerships within RECOFI in order to disseminate their achievements and their technical skills.

- Prioritize the needs of the Member countries in a more operational way in order to prepare a plan to build national capacity that could.

### **Communication and information**

- RECOFI should prepare a communication and information plan to deal with relational aspects with Member countries and with non-member countries in the same area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops.

### **Organization and financing: scenarios for the future**

- Seek ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity.
- Target a budget of around USD 400 000 to 500 000 per biennium (i.e. USD 25 000 to 30 000/year/Member country) as a significant step towards the Commission's autonomy and long-term commitment to regional work programmes which support good fisheries governance and aquaculture development.
- Prepare projects covering some thematic work programmes that could be submitted to external donors or partners (GCC funding, Member country or donor unilateral funding to support development, environmental protection, public investment concerning research, monitoring, control, surveillance ...).
- A more operational and narrower cooperation with the GCC should be considered on the basis of an agreement between the RECOFI Member countries of this organization and in parallel with other possibilities.
- Guarantee a regular monitoring of RECOFI financial commitments through the initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat and the working groups.

### **Annex 3: Recommendations, endorsed by the Director General, concerning Article VI commissions and Article XIV bodies (all bodies established under FAO, not only fishery bodies)**

The policy guidance provided by the FAO Conference in Resolution 13/97, which recognized the importance of moving towards increased self-financing for Statutory bodies that have a regional focus and of enhancing the responsiveness of those bodies to the needs of their Members, and which decided that in future Statutory Bodies should be established only where strictly necessary and where the work to be undertaken cannot be carried out by ad *hoc* groups, is still in vigour.

In the context of the reform process under way in FAO, on 21 September 2005, the Director General of FAO established an Inter departmental working group (IDWG) on regional commissions to make suggestions for improvement, including strengthening, of regional statutory bodies.

Recommendations, endorsed by the Director General, concerning Article VI commissions and Article XIV bodies (all bodies established under FAO, not only fishery bodies) are as follows:

- To review the policies, mandates and statutes and consider whether there are alternative mechanisms.
- To ensure that the officers are fully involved in agenda setting, that bodies are meeting members' needs and ensure the highest regional priorities are being addressed.
- To ensure that secretariats are adequately funded and have full-time secretaries.
- To encourage members to participate at own expenses of participating in sessions and encourage the soliciting of extra-budgetary funding.
- To encourage members to evaluate the strategic direction, goals, outcomes and overall performance of each commission or body.
- To enhance the participation of members in the work of commission and bodies, considering their capacity to participate.

Concerning Article XIV bodies in particular:

- To maintain consistent administrative approaches in support of these bodies, including through ensuring transparent budgetary allocations from FAO.
- To monitor and report on the extent to which the decisions of bodies are implemented and to report to sessions of the body and to FAO Governing Bodies on progress achieved.

The report of the IDWG reads that a decision to upgrade Article VI body or to create Article VI body should be functionally-based, taking into account the particular problems to be addressed by the body. This is also in the line with the above mentioned argument presented to the Second Intergovernmental Consultation for an assessment of possible options regarding the establishment of a Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission.<sup>15</sup> The paper presented to the Consultation argues that where fisheries are under national jurisdiction, the management of stocks is a matter for individual coastal States. In so far as individual stocks are shared between neighbouring coastal States, management measures may need to be coordinated with the neighbouring States concerned. For coastal state fisheries there is no need and no room for the establishment of a regional fisheries management machinery under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution that has the power to take binding decisions on management issues. This argument follows closely the provisions of the UN Convention and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

The FAO Director General has also convened an Interdepartmental Working Group on International Treaties and Agreements (which therefore includes Article XIV bodies). The Director General did not

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<sup>15</sup> SWIOFCT/TC/III/2003/...:

endorse all the conclusions of the working group. For the purpose of this document, it is interesting however to note some of the Working Group reflections regarding budget. Participants to the Working Group noted that no general policy had been agreed for how the budgets of Article XIV bodies are to be funded. They also noted that FAO has rarely attempted to quantify its in-kind or “hidden” support to treaties and agreements. These include legal support, technical backstopping, administrative costs, exemption from rent, heating costs, maintenance, free use of conference facilities, *etc.* The fact that these are not quantified has, on occasion, led to FAO Members not wishing to cover project servicing costs, on the assumption that the costs to FAO were low or that they should be incorporated in the FAO contribution.

Importantly at the Twenty-Seventh session of COFI, 18-22 June 2007, Rome, the Secretariat highlighted the management role of RFMOs and the advisory role of RFBs highlighting the importance of both bodies in the conservation and management of resources. The awareness of the need to strengthen and increase the efficacy of these organizations was noted.

## Annex 4: Background international instruments

### Primary instruments

#### UNCLOS

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 10 December 1982, entered into force on 16 November 1994. To date a total of 155 States and the European Community have ratified or acceded to UNCLOS<sup>16</sup>.

UNCLOS creates a legal framework for the governance of the world's oceans based on a sectoral approach to their management which covers, *inter alia*: fishing, navigation, mining, oil and gas. For the purpose of fisheries management UNCLOS divides the oceans in two basic areas: the areas under jurisdiction of Coastal States and the High Seas. It defines various internationally recognised maritime zones including Internal Waters, Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Coastal States have sovereignty over their territorial sea subject to the right of innocent passage and have authority to prescribe legislation with regard to "conservation of the living resources of the sea"<sup>17</sup>.

On fisheries the most significant contribution was the establishment of a legal regime for the EEZ within which Coastal States have "sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources whether living or non- living"<sup>18</sup>. At the same time Coastal States are under the obligation of determining the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and granting foreign vessels access to the surplus in the TAC, based in the principle of optimum utilization of the living resources in the EEZ<sup>19</sup>.

As fisheries occur within and outside national borders, UNCLOS defines a specific regime for shared fishing stocks: trans-boundary (shared with neighbouring countries) as well as straddling and highly migratory (shared with distant water fishing States operating in the high seas adjacent to the EEZs)<sup>20</sup>. The Convention requires States to "either directly or through appropriate sub regional or regional organisations agree upon measures necessary for the conservation of these stocks in the adjacent area"<sup>21</sup>. The duty of cooperation is also enshrined in Arts 117 and 118 requiring States to cooperate with other States in the conservation and management of living resources in the high seas, either by direct cooperation or through the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs).

#### UNFSA

In the early 1990 it was recognised that the legal framework of UNCLOS was not sufficient to prevent depletion of the world's fish stocks. After three years of intense negotiations the United Nations Agreement for the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) was adopted in 1995 and entered into force on 11 December 2001. To date a total of 70 States and the European Community have ratified or acceded to UNFSA<sup>22</sup>. The UNFSA broad objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm) (last update 04.06.2008)

<sup>17</sup> Art. 21/1 (d)

<sup>18</sup> Art. 56/1 a)

<sup>19</sup> Art. 61 and 62

<sup>20</sup> Art. 63 and 64

<sup>21</sup> Art. 63/2

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm) (last update 04.06.2008)

<sup>23</sup> Art. 2.

The general management principles established under Article 5 apply both within and beyond areas under national jurisdiction and require States to ensure the long-term sustainability of these fish stocks and their effective utilisation. These principles require Coastal States and States fishing in the high seas to *inter alia*: minimize pollution; protect biodiversity in the marine environment; take measures to prevent or eliminate overfishing and excess fishing capacity; collect and share data relating to vessels position, fishing effort and catches of target and non-target species; and implement conservation and management measures through effective Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS). The application of the precautionary approach is established under Article 6, and Article 7 emphasises the need to ensure compatibility between conservation measures established for the high seas and those adopted in areas under national jurisdiction.

Furthermore, in defining the mechanisms for international cooperation, the UNFSA strengthens the role played by RFBs in the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. They are set out as the preferred means through which States should cooperate to achieve and enforce conservation objectives both in the high seas and in areas under national jurisdiction, defining under Article 9 legally binding arrangements upon which States are expected to agree in order to achieve sustainable management of fisheries. The functions of an effective RFB are established under Article 10.

Where no RFB exists for an existing or emerging fishery, States must cooperate to establish one, where an RFB exists States that wish to fish for that resource must join the RFB or, at the very least, conduct themselves in accordance with its rules. Transparency in the activities developed within the RFBs is required under Article 12.

Another important development for international law is the increased emphasis on the responsibilities of Flag States for their fishing vessels which include, *inter alia*, the following obligations<sup>24</sup>: to take measures to ensure that vessels flying its flag comply with conservation measures; to establish a national record of fishing vessels authorised to fish on the high seas; to monitor, control and exercise surveillance over such vessels.

### **FAO Compliance Agreement**

The FAO Conference at its Twenty-seventh Session (November 1993), through Resolution 15/93, approved the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas for submission to Governments for acceptance. The Agreement entered into force on 24 April 2003 and today has a total of 35 Parties including the European Community. The Agreement was developed by FAO as an urgent response to the Declaration of Cancun in 1991<sup>25</sup> which called upon States to: “take effective action consistent with international law, to deter reflagging of fishing vessels as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management rules for fishing activities on the high seas”. As noted in its Preamble “the Agreement will form an integral part of the International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing”.

The Agreement elaborates upon the provisions of Art. 94 of UNCLOS on the duties of the Flag State and aims at making them applicable to fishing vessels in the high seas requiring, on the one hand, States whose vessels fish in the high seas to take steps to prevent their vessels from undermining measures to the conservation and management of the living resources of the high seas and, on the other hand, to increase transparency of high seas fishing through the collection and dissemination of data.

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<sup>24</sup> Art. 18.

<sup>25</sup> Declaration of Cancun, 1991- <http://www.intfish.net/treaties/cancun.htm>.

Both the UNFSA and the FAO Compliance Agreement aim to tackle the problem of overfishing in the high seas. There is however a number of distinguishing features that should be noted to facilitate the overview of the national fisheries legislation provided under Section 4:

- The scope of the FAO Compliance Agreement is not restricted to straddling stocks and highly migratory fish stocks as the UNFSA, but rather applies to all species;
- The requirements to maintain records are more developed under the FAO system than under the UN system;
- The FAO Compliance Agreement allows Parties to exempt fishing vessels of less than 24 meters in length entitled to fly its flag from the application of the Agreement whereas these vessels may not normally be exempted from the operation of the UNFSA;
- The Flag State is the main target of the FAO Compliance Agreement whereas the UNFSA involves other actors and emphasises the role of the RFBs.

## **Secondary instruments**

### **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was adopted unanimously in 31.10.1995. Consistently with the primary instruments above, it establishes non-mandatory principles and standards applicable to the conservation, management and development of all modern fisheries. This repository of principles provides a framework for national and international efforts to ensure the sustainable exploitation of aquatic living resources.

The CCRF covers all aspects of fisheries, including capture, processing and trade in fish and fishery products, fishing operations, aquaculture, fisheries research and the integration of fisheries into coastal area management. Article 2 defines its broad objectives which include: to establish international standards of behaviour for responsible fishing and fisheries activities; to serve as guidance for States in establishing or improving the legal and institutional framework for fisheries; to promote cooperation in research, conservation and management.

The overall purpose of the CCRF is to facilitate structural change within the fisheries sector so that stocks are exploited in a long-term, rational and sustainable manner. Although aimed particularly at governments and their national fisheries administrations, it is also recognized that RFBs have a special role to play in implementing the CCRF where fish stocks are shared.

Special requirements of developing countries are defined under Article 5 which include “the adoption of measures to address the needs of developing countries specially with regard to financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation and in enhancing their ability to develop their own fisheries as well as to participate in High seas fisheries, including access to such fisheries”.

Fisheries management principles and objectives are defined under Article 7 and include management framework and procedures, data gathering and the precautionary approach. Article 8 defines fishing operations and distinguishes the duties of all states from those of the Flag States and Port States.

The CCRF is voluntary in nature. It is not static and has been complemented by other instruments elaborated by FAO, namely the FAO Compliance Agreement and the International Plans of Action. The provisions of the CCRF have also been further detailed by technical guidelines issued by FAO on fisheries management, fishing operations, the application of the precautionary approach, aquaculture development and inland fisheries.

As will be assessed below it remains the fundamental framework for international fisheries management and is widely referred at national and regional levels.

### **International Plans of Action**

Since the CCRF was adopted, FAO has been progressively adopting a number of International Plans of Action (IPOAs) on various fisheries-related issues of concern. These IPOAs are voluntary instruments, adopted within the framework of the CCRF, which are designed to reflect an international consensus among FAO members on the implementation of specific measures referred to in the CCRF. The IPOA for reducing incidental catch of Seabirds in longline fisheries (IPOA Seabirds), the IPOA for the conservation and management of Sharks (IPOA Sharks) and the IPOA for the management of fishing Capacity (IPOA Capacity) were developed in 1999 when COFI members agreed on the need for some form of international agreement in order to facilitate compliance with the CCRF. These three soft law instruments were adopted by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in February 1999 and endorsed by the FAO Council at the session held in June 1999.

The IPOA to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IPOA IUU) was developed in response to a call from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of COFI, in February 1999, and was adopted by consensus at the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI on March 2001. The **IPOA IUU** is one of the most comprehensive IPOA. It aims to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing requiring States to give full effect to relevant international instruments, to not act inconsistently with relevant international instruments, even when they have not ratified them, and to fully and effectively implement the CCRF<sup>26</sup>. To be fully effective, the IPOA should be implemented by all States, either directly, in cooperation with other States, or indirectly through relevant RFBs or through FAO and other appropriate international organisations.

Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing should be based on the earliest possible phased implementation of national and regional plans of action. These measures should be comprehensive, addressing factors affecting all capture fisheries, and be implemented in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

The **NPOA-Capacity** requires States and RFBs to apply its principles consistently with international law and within the framework of the concerned organisation's competencies. Its main objective is to achieve an efficient, equitable and transparent management of fishing capacity world-wide preferably by 2003 but no later than 2005. The above objective may be achieved through a series of actions related to four major strategies: (i) the conduct of national, regional and global assessments of capacity and improvement of the capability for monitoring fishing capacity; (ii) the preparation and implementation of national plans to effectively manage fishing capacity and of immediate actions for coastal fisheries requiring urgent measures; (iii) the strengthening of RFBs and related mechanisms for improved management of fishing capacity at regional and global levels; and (iv) immediate actions for major trans-boundary, straddling, highly migratory and high seas fisheries requiring urgent measures.

Urgent actions are defined under Part III which include assessment and monitoring of fishing capacity and preparation and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs).

The **IPOA Sharks** aims at ensuring the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use. It applies to waters in which sharks are caught by their own or foreign vessels and to States whose vessels catch sharks on the high seas. The term "shark" includes all the species of sharks, skates rays and chimaeras, and the term "shark catch" includes directed, by-catch, commercial, recreational and other forms of taking sharks. Each State is responsible for developing, implementing

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<sup>26</sup> Art. IV (10-15).

and monitoring its NPOA-Sharks. When developing a Shark-Plan, experience of sub-regional and regional management organisations should take into account, as appropriate. The NPOA Sharks should aim to ensure that *inter alia*: (i) shark catches from directed and non-directed fisheries are sustainable; (ii) assess threats to sharks populations; (iii) identify and provide special attention, in particular to vulnerable or threatened shark stocks; (iv) improve and develop frameworks for establishing and coordinating effective consultation involving all stakeholders in research, management and educational initiative within and between States; (v) minimize unutilized incidental catches of sharks.

The **IPOA-Seabirds** applies to States in the waters of which longline fisheries are being conducted by their own or foreign vessels and to States that conduct longline fisheries on the high seas and in the EEZ of other States. The text sets out a set of activities which implementing States should develop, including an assessment of whether a problem exists with respect to the incidental catch of seabirds in its longline fisheries. The IPOA Seabirds also provides a summary description of appropriate mitigation measures which States should consider for inclusion in their respective NPOA Seabirds.

### **UN Resolutions and Declarations**

There are several UN General Assembly Resolutions relevant to international fisheries namely with regard to large-scale pelagic driftnets, ocean affairs and law of the sea and sustainable fisheries.

The recent Resolution 62/177 from 28 February 2008 on sustainable fisheries calls upon States, directly or through RFBs, to apply widely the precautionary approach in accordance with the CCRF and to collect and report to FAO required catch and effort data, and fishery related information, in a complete accurate and timely manner, including for straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. It also calls upon States to urgently adopt measures to fully implement the IPOA on Sharks for directed and non-directed shark fisheries and requests FAO to prepare a comprehensive report of its implementation to be presented to next COFI.

Under the same Resolution the UN General Assembly emphasises that IUU remains one of the greatest threats to marine ecosystem and calls upon States to comply fully with all existing obligations and take all necessary steps to implement the IPOA-IUU. It further calls upon States to urgently reduce the capacity of the world's fishing fleets to levels commensurate with the sustainability of the fish stocks and to recognise the legitimate rights of developing countries to develop their fisheries for straddling and highly migratory fish stocks consistent with Art. 25 of UNFSA, Art. 5 of the CCRF and the IPOA on capacity

Several relevant ministerial declarations adopted under FAO's convening function of relevance to the matters covered under this report include: the Rome Declaration on IUU (2005)<sup>27</sup>; the Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem (2002)<sup>28</sup>; and the Rome Declaration on the implementation of the CCRF (1999)<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> <ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/DOCUMENT/ministerial/2005/iuu/declaration.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> [ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/DOCUMENT/reykjavik/y2198t00\\_dec.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/DOCUMENT/reykjavik/y2198t00_dec.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/X2220E/X2220E00.HTM>

## **Annex 5: Results of the RECOFI questionnaire**

### **Plan**

- A. Importance of regional issues in RECOFI countries
  - Main regional issues as identified by RECOFI countries*
  - Importance of regional issues for RECOFI country*
  - Process of identification of regional issues*
  
- B. RECOFI: an instrument to face regional issues and challenge?
  - General Opinion on RECOFI as regional instrument*
  - Expectations towards RECOFI*
  
- C. RECOFI activities
  - Priority setting*
  - Participation in RECOFI activities*
  - Quality of RECOFI activities*
  - Use of regional expertise in RECOFI activities*
  
- D. Governance, Visibility & Communication of RECOFI
  - Visibility and communication of RECOFI*
  - Governance, accountability and efficiency of RECOFI*
  
- E. Strengths and weakness of RECOFI
  - Strengths*
  - Weaknesses*

## A. Importance of regional issues in RECOFI countries

### *Main regional issues as identified by RECOFI member countries<sup>30</sup>*

Among the three main regional issues identified by countries, 15 are directly related to fisheries and three directly related to aquaculture. Six concern both fishery and/or aquaculture.

RECOFI countries all raised the overall issue of conservation/sustainable exploitation of fish stocks but underlined different aspects of it.

Only few specific issues have been identified by more than one country: prevention of IUU, reduction of by-catch, conservation/restoration of sensitive and critical habitat and biodiversity/reduction of man made pollution, need for more co-operation and co-ordination among countries (policies/research).

However no one specific issue has been identified by all the countries.

Depending on the country, shared stocks, stocks supporting a high level of fishing effort, highly migratory & straddling fish stocks are designated as priority targets.

### *Importance of regional issues for RECOFI member countries<sup>31</sup>*

The overall impact of regional issues on sustainability & development of country's fisheries and aquaculture is considered to be of medium to high importance.

Fishery is perceived as being more impacted by regional issues than aquaculture (Table 1). When asking how countries are concerned by the three main regional issues they identified, the impact is judged to be by a strong majority.

**Table. 1: Have regional issues an impact on the development and sustainability of....?**

	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Medium importance</b>	<b>High importance</b>
<b>Fisheries</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Aquaculture*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

\* One "no answer"

### *Process of identification of regional issues<sup>32</sup>*

Despite the perceived importance, **regional issues are not considered to be fully well identified by all countries, neither at country, region or RECOFI levels.** RECOFI member country' answers are almost equally shared between "fairly" and "completely" well identified. The mixed opinion is also reflected identification process of regional issues is completely satisfactory; this opinion is however more significantly shared at country than at RECOFI level.

## B. RECOFI: an instrument to face regional issues and challenges?

### *General Opinion on RECOFI as a regional instrument for fisheries and aquaculture*

Member countries are manifesting some reservation as far as whether RECOFI can be the right answer to address regional challenges and issues related to regional aquaculture and fisheries. However there is an overall agreement on the fact that RECOFI can, partly or completely, be a right and useful

<sup>30</sup> Questions 3.1.3 & 3.1.4

<sup>31</sup> Questions 3.1.1 & 3.1.4

<sup>32</sup> Questions 3.1.2 & 3.1.5

instrument if some improvements are achieved and all countries agree that the current geographical coverage of RECOFI is appropriate to address the main regional issues. **In fact a majority of country consider that RECOFI still need to be strengthened to fulfil its functions.**<sup>33</sup> Five of the eight member countries have identified other organizations that could potentially address regional challenges and issues in particular the Gulf Cooperation Council (identified by 4 countries), but also the Indian Ocean Commission and the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries & Aquaculture Commission. RECOFI members in majority support encouraging and developing a cooperation between RECOFI and these other organization.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Expectations towards RECOFI*<sup>35</sup>

In coherence with the few reservations expressed in RECOFI as **the** right answer to regional issues, the level of member countries expectations ranged, almost equally, from medium to high. Only One country expressed a low expectation of RECOFI.

Specific areas where RECOFI is perceived as being the most useful to address regional issues are<sup>36</sup>:

1. Regional and international cooperation,
2. Human capacity building and institutional strengthening & dissemination and exchange of information and experience (equality),
3. Scientific advice and recommendations related to aquaculture and fisheries management.

#### **C. RECOFI activities**

##### *Priority setting*

Overall the establishment of priorities for RECOFI activities is not well marked by Member countries. **If a majority (Table 2) considers that procedures for priorities setting is adequate, their relevance for countries are judged to be “poor” by 5 of the 8 countries, that would suggest that right decision procedures do not lead to the right outputs.** However this result is partly contradictory with answers to another question (Q 4.1.6). Respectively five and three countries consider that RECOFI priority activities address country needs fairly or completely<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Questions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 & 3.2.1

<sup>34</sup> Questions 3.2.3 & 3.2.4

<sup>35</sup> Questions 2.7 & 2.5

<sup>36</sup> Ranked by order number of countries that answer “completely”

<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately the question 4.1.7 that explores the reasons explaining that priorities doesn't match country needs is not exploitable by lack of sufficient responses from countries (only 3 answers).

**Table. 2 Setting priorities**

<b>10.2.1 Satisfaction with Establishment of Priorities</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
10.2.1 Overall satisfaction with establishment of priorities and scores for :			
a) Procedures for setting priorities	2	4	2
b) Communication of priorities	4	2	2
c) Relevance of the priorities for your country	5	1	2
d) Flexibility in response to emerging needs	5	2	1
<b>4.1.6 Do RECOFI priority activities address countries priority needs?</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Complete ly</b>
		5	3

Priorities communication and flexibility in response to emerging needs<sup>38</sup> could also be improved as respectively four to five of eight countries consider them poor.

*Participation in RECOFI activities<sup>39</sup>*

Despite some reservation expressed by countries through the questioner, a large majority of countries rank all RECOFI activities ‘important’ to ‘very important’ to their country. Overall, they are also satisfied with their own level of participation.

Their participation in the preparation and progress of meetings & sessions are ‘satisfactory’ to ‘very satisfactory’. Only two countries do not participate in RECOFI-related activities to their desired extent for mixed reasons.

This high level of satisfaction shall be shaded; among main weaknesses identified by countries, several are pointed out the lack of human investment of some countries in RECOFI activities (see section on strengths and weaknesses).

Considering countries’ future needs, five of the eight members consider that their participation should be ‘slightly’ to ‘significantly’ more than now and the three remaining do not see any reason to change their level of participation.

Considering the involvement of different groups of stakeholders in RECOFI activities, the satisfaction is rather low regardless of the group concerned: intergovernmental organizations, non-intergovernmental organizations, industry, consumers, environmental agencies, non-governmental organizations.

The majority of countries consider that the private sector should be more involved in certain RECOFI activities, in particular the provision of technical experts for the WGS and human capacity building.

NGOs should be more involved in the identification and prioritization of regional issues, and the provision of technical experts and technical assistance.

<sup>38</sup> This might be explained by the luck of financial funding underlined

<sup>39</sup> Questions 4.1.1, 4.1.3 & 4.1.4, 4.1.8, 10.2.8, 11.3.3 & 11.3.4

### *Quality of RECOFI activities*

Working groups: Past and current activities of working groups on aquaculture (WGA) and fisheries management (WGFM) are well known by most countries (except one). Global participation of members, quality of expertise, objectivity, impartiality and meeting management are almost equally judged as satisfactory to very satisfactory.

The work of the WGA is well ranked (satisfactory to very satisfactory) in terms of level of activities, quality of work, and outputs. However two countries out of the seven think that outputs are not satisfactory and only six out of the seven think that the quality of work is very satisfactory. Two countries out of the seven think that outputs are not satisfactory and only six out of the seven think that the quality of work is very satisfactory.

The quality of the WGFM work is very satisfactory for a majority of countries. The level of activities and outputs are judged only satisfactory by most countries and two countries are not satisfied by the WGFM outputs. Suggestions have been made to improve WG quality and efficiency of work. Several are related to WG participants:

- 1) More active and continuous participation of country representatives participating to WG meetings,
- 2) Choice of representatives with expertise field coherent with the WG work.

Other suggestions are related to institutional organization:

- 1) Strengthen relationship between head of WG and national focal points;
- 2) Joint-meeting of the two WG,
- 3) Improve following-up of WG conclusions and recommendations.

Capacity-Building, training and technical assistance: Members' rating on RECOFI performance as mixed. It is judged satisfactory by four countries, very poor for two countries and very good by three countries. Further, five countries think that human capacity building is very poor and only three of the eight countries answered the question on institutional strengthening (as a consequence, results are not usable).

However capacity-building and training is generally considered to be of medium to high importance, with the most important element being provision of training, provision of handbooks, manual and provision of direct technical assistance to countries. Where the expectations are the highest, countries' opinions on performance is also the lowest.

Countries made a number of suggestions to improve capacity-building and training

### **Box 1. Member countries' suggestions to improve capacity building and training**

#### Process

- Avoid limitation of training/capacity building activities because to overdue country funding
- Increase budgetary funding and member contribution that would allow to built a human capacity building program
- Specify areas of needs to build appropriate programs
- Making better of resources, capacities and available expertise in member countries to provide training at reduced cost
- Exchange of training outcomes among participation countries
- Establishment of direct communication channel between scientific bodies to share available information

#### Target

- Training of cadre in members countries

#### Topics

- Training and workshop program on fish stocks assessment, uniform statistical reporting and aquaculture techniques

### *Use of regional expertise in RECOFI activities*

A large majority of countries believes that RECOFI should make more use of regional expertise. They also are favourable to developing a list of regional experts available to RECOFI and Member countries. Concerning international expertise, opinions are more balanced. On average, it is considered to be fairly used, except in the production of recommendation & scientific advice where the use of international expertise is consider to high by three countries (as much as the answer “fairly”). In coherence with this general feeling, all countries advocate in favour of developing joint-research programs in the region.

### **D. Visibility, Communication and Governance of RECOFI**

#### *Visibility and communication of RECOFI<sup>40</sup>*

For a majority of countries, the visibility of RECOFI at national, regional and international levels could and should be increased; even so the overall level of satisfaction with RECOFI communication strategy is good. In details, communication strategy at national level is better marked than at international level. Reporting (Commission session, WK meeting) is very satisfying while communication through website could be improved. In particular countries in majority give a high importance to develop an autonomous website and a web portal where they could exchange data and information.

#### *Governance, accountability, efficiency of RECOFI*

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<sup>40</sup> Questions 5.6, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 7.1.

Overall, governance is well marked, but even so the responses are showing room for improvement: responsiveness to contracting parties, relevance of decisions, clarity and consistency of decision, organizations and running of meetings, document produced (timeliness, clarity, etc.). Inclusiveness and transparency are also globally satisfying, in particular “allowing all to have a voice in decision-making”, “transparency of decision-making by the Commission” and “thoroughness of discussion before decision-making”.

At the opposite, effectiveness (achievement of objectives) is globally perceived as poor to adequate. Better marks were given to scientific advices, exchange and dissemination of information; worse marks were given to promotion of regional cooperation and human capacity building and institutional strengthening. This is coherent with the feeling that seems to arise from the questionnaire that priorities are not so well defined and that the level of activities is not coherent with the objectives. Six of seven<sup>41</sup> countries consider that the current level of activity is not or only partly satisfactory. Five of the seven think that the current level of financing doesn't allow to implement RECOFI work program.

A large majority consider that RECOFI functioning and appropriation by countries would be improved if the secretariat was located within RECOFI geographical area; even so they agree that the RECOFI secretariat is well functioning considering the current level of funding. Five of the seven countries consider that the level of activities should be much more in the future. However it can be noted that only a small majority (4/7) considers that the level of funding should also be increased in the future. It is partly contradictory when considered that countries are globally dissatisfied with the level of funding provided by FAO, other donors (donor countries, international funds) and in-kind contribution by contracting parties (medium satisfaction). This might be partly explained by the very mixed feelings about the overall efficiency of RECOFI (economic and effective use of resource.) No strong trends arose from countries responses, except on the efficiency of capacity building and efficiency of RECOFI secretariat which are respectively considered “poor” and “good” by a majority of five. It also arises from the countries responses that accountability to the memberships could be improved (transparency of financial information, deployment of staff, etc).

#### **E. Main Strengths and weaknesses<sup>42</sup>**

Countries freely identified main RECOFI strengths and weaknesses in their opinions. The responses are gathered in Table 3. They are organized by topics raised by Member countries to highlight the most recurrent ones.

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<sup>41</sup> One country did not answer questions of the section 8

<sup>42</sup> Question 10.1.1

**Table 3: Main Strengths and weaknesses identified by Members countries**

Main Strengths	Main Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a reliable scientific body of the FAO under UN</li> <li>• Well qualified and knowledgeable personnel managing the RECOFI activities</li> <li>• It provides excellent scientific guidance and advise on fishery issues to the member countries</li> <li>• It provides the good platform for the member countries to discuss and resolve issues arise on conservation and management fishery resources in the RECOFI area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of legal command to compel the member countries for implementing the conservation measures in a more effective manner</li> <li>• Less financial input to RECOFI from the funding sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings and workshops</li> <li>• Two working groups</li> <li>• RAIS website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Low interactions between Focal points in the groups and between secretariat and NFP</li> <li>• Low level of importance given by some members to the meetings and workshops.</li> <li>• Low level of awareness about RECOFI and its role in the region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing technical backstop by FAO compare to last years</li> <li>• Existing diversity in technical issues which address in working groups meetings</li> <li>• RECOFI is a good space to address all fisheries issues in Persian Gulf and Oman sea Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RECOFI has not strong relations with other RFMOs &amp; International Agencies</li> <li>• RECOFI has not used from member countries expertise potentialities to address the technical needs of commission</li> <li>• RECOFI member countries have not supported the commission financially for execution of joint projects (generally )</li> <li>• RECOFI has not full power and role in the region for protection and management of fisheries resources as a effective execution mean under article 14 of FAO constitution</li> <li>• There is no sustain relations between national focal points of member countries for exchange of views</li> <li>• RECOFI has not enough role for improvement and strengthening of fisheries cooperation between member countries</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face meetings and exchange of information amongst member countries</li> <li>• Efficient and fast preparation of meetings and facilitation of missions</li> <li>• Direct meetings with Commission members and with other international players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict of interests and policies of member countries on the one hand, and the primary objectives of the Commission on the other</li> <li>• Lack of legal procedures to enforce decisions of the Commission</li> <li>• Lack of scientific and practical instruments to implement and follow up of the Commission's decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of experts</li> <li>• Availability of capabilities</li> <li>• Good communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dearth of training workshops</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an international organization supported by commitments within the framework of the UN</li> <li>• It provides a single umbrella to joins the countries of the region</li> <li>• Presence of some good regional expertise that is committed to membership of the Commission and its committees</li> <li>• Presence of high level technical expertise with firm commitment to the Secretariat, the technical secretariat and the committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient commitment by member countries</li> <li>• feeble budget</li> <li>• Insufficient support from the FAO at a high level</li> <li>• Lack of appropriate representation by some member countries at Commission or Committee meetings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A realistic assessment of fisheries resources in the area through the suggested programs</li> <li>• Formation of specialized working groups and the holding of regular meeting for these groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomplete implementation of projects and development programs that had been agreed upon</li> <li>• Lack of adequate funding</li> <li>• Work program in the past was not organized</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effective role in technical matters and scientific advice</li> <li>• Awareness of member countries' lack of capabilities in scientific research</li> <li>• Consulting member countries' experts in the analysis of collected data</li> <li>• The organizational role it plays and the development of generally sound scientific recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sufficient training targeting member countries</li> <li>• Lack of remitting of assessed contributions by some member countries</li> <li>• Lack of agreement by member countries on unified measures to study fish stocks and the collection of data</li> </ul>

## **Annex 6: Synthesis of response to the RECOFI questionnaire**

**The questionnaire is divided into the following sections:**

- Part 1: General Information
- Part 2: General opinion on RECOFI
- Part 3: Regional dimensions of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors
- Part 4: Participation in RECOFI
- Part 5: Quality and provision of scientific advice
- Part 6: Capacity-Building, Training and Technical Assistance
- Part 7: Communication and Information Exchange
- Part 8: Organization and Source of financing
- Part 9: Dispute Settlement
- Part 10: Strengths and weaknesses of RECOFI
- Part 12: Possible Changes in RECOFI

This questionnaire is intended for completion by the relevant Ministry and scientific/technical institutions with the coordination of the RECOFI National Focal Point. The questionnaire also offers the opportunity for written explanations and elaboration of responses and to convey other concerns. Questions are answered by placing an "x" in only one box.

**The response should reflect the views from the Ministry responsible for  
RECOFI and not individual views or opinion**

Part 2 - General opinion concerning RECOFI

<b>Rate the following statements about RECOFI</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Completely</b>
<b>2.1. Is or can RECOFI be the right answer to regional challenges and issues related to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors?</b>		4	4
<b>2.2 Through RECOFI, do you have the right instruments and means to address regional issues and challenges?</b>			
a) Currently	2	4	2
b) Potentially if some changes and improvements are done?		2	4
<b>2.3 Is RECOFI is currently strong enough to address regional issues and challenges?</b>	1	5	1
<b>2.4 Are the national concerns related to fisheries and aquaculture along the lines of RECOFI working agenda?</b>			
a) Overall	1	4	3
b) Working group on aquaculture	1	2	4
c) Working group on fishery statistics (before 2007)	3	5	0
d) Working group on fisheries management		5	3
<b>2.5 Can RECOFI become a useful regional arena for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in terms of...?</b>			
a) Human capacity building and institutional strengthening		2	6
b) Scientific advice and recommendations related to aquaculture and fisheries management		4	4
c) Dissemination and exchange of information and experiences		1	6
d) Regional and international cooperation		1	7
<b>2.6 Is the visibility of RECOFI is sufficient:</b>			
a) at national level, for concerned institutions and organizations in your country	2	3	3
b) at regional level, for other fishery or economic organizations and institutions in your region	2	3	3
c) at international level, for other international and regional organizations	2	4	2

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>2.7 What is the level of expectations of your country towards RECOFI?</b>	1	4	3

Part 3 - Regional Dimensions  
**3.1 Importance and Identification of Regional Issues**

<b>3.1.1 Have regional issues had an impact on ...?</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Medium Importance</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	
a) the development and sustainability of your country's fishery sector		3	5	
b) the development and sustainability of your country's aquaculture sector	1	2	4	
<b>3.1.2 Have regional issues impacting fishery and aquaculture economic sectors been well identified?</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Completely</b>	
a) In the case of the fishery sector		3	5	
b) In the case of the aquaculture sector		2	5	
c) At your Country level		3	4	
d) In your region		4	3	
e) At RECOFI level		3	4	
<b>3.1.3 What are the three main regional issues to be addressed?</b>				
1)				
2)				
3)				
<b>3.1.4 How is your country concerned by these regional issues?</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Medium importance</b>	<b>High Importance</b>	
1) 1 <sup>st</sup> main regional issue identified		1	5	
2) 2 <sup>nd</sup> main regional issue identified			6	
3) 3 <sup>rd</sup> main regional issue identified		1	6	
<b>3.1.5 Is the process of identification of regional issues satisfactory?</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Completely</b>	
a) At your country level		2	4	
b) At RECOFI level		3	3	
<b>3.2 Coherence of RECOFI regional coverage</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>3.2.1 Is the current geographical coverage of RECOFI is appropriate to address main identified regional issues?</b>			8	
<b>3.2.3 Does another organism for regional cooperation exist that could potentially address regional challenges and issues related to the fishery and aquaculture sector ?</b>			5	3
<b>3.2.4 If yes, specify which one</b>				

Part 4 - RECOFI activities  
4.1 Participation in RECOFI activities

<b>4.1.1 Rate the importance of the meetings to your country regardless of your participation:</b>	Not Important for Country	Medium Importance for Country	Very Important for Country
Mark with an x if Ministry staff or country experts attended a meeting of this group			
a) Commission sessions	2		6
b) Working Group on Fisheries Management meetings			8
c) Working group on aquaculture meetings	1		2
d) Tripartite meeting "Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI	2		6
e) FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	1		6
f) Regional Workshop on Fisheries Statistics			8
g) Regional Workshop on stock indicators and stock status reporting			8
g) Regional technical workshop on sustainable marine cage aquaculture development			7
h) Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health			6
i) Technical Meeting on the Regional Aquaculture Information System			6

<b>4.1.2 Even if you or your colleagues have not attended a RECOFI meeting/session of your interest, have you or other colleagues been involved in the preparation of your country participation to the meeting?</b>	Yes	No
a) Not at all	2	3
b) Through the preparation of meeting documents or data	5	1
c) Preparatory meetings at country level	4	1

<b>4.1.3 Overall, do you consider that Ministry staff and/or country experts are sufficiently involved in the preparation of your country participation in RECOFI meetings and sessions?</b>	Not satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory
			3

<b>4.1.4 Overall, does your country participate in RECOFI-related activities to the extent you consider desirable?</b>	Yes	6	No	2
<b>4.1.5 If no, to what extent does each of the following prevent your country's participation in RECOFI-related activities to the extent considered desirable?</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Medium Importance</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	
a) Financial resources	1	1		
b) Time constraints for senior staff	1	1		
c) Shortage of qualified personnel	1		1	
d) Language difficulties	2			
e) Difficulties in electronic communication for discussion and receipt of papers	1	1		
f) Visa problems in attending meetings		2		
g) Late notice of meeting schedule	1		1	
<b>Priority Setting in RECOFI Agenda</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Completely</b>	
<b>4.1.6 Do RECOFI priority activities address countries priority needs?</b>		5	3	
<b>4.1.7 If not completely, what are the main reasons?</b>			Yes	No
a) Wrong identification of issues/challenges and related country needs			1	1
b) Problem in the prioritization of activities			2	
c) Lack of preparation of Commission sessions at national and working group levels			2	
d) Lack of country investments in RECOFI priority setting and activities			2	
e) Lack of funding to develop activities in line with countries needs even so topics have been rightly identified			2	1
f) Mandate missing for national participants to involve national decision makers			2	1
g) Lack of criteria and methodology to identified regional issues and priority			3	
<b>4.1.8 Considering your country's future needs, do you think your country participation should</b>	<b>Less than it is now</b>	<b>The same</b>	<b>Slightly more</b>	<b>Significantly more</b>
		3	1	4

## 4.2 Activity of RECOFI Working Groups

<b>4.2.1 Are you aware of the activities of the working group of fisheries management (previously WG on fisheries statistics)?</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Completely</b>
a) Nature of past activities	1	1	6
b) Outputs of past activities	1		7
c) Current Agenda and activities			8
<b>4.2.2 Are you aware of the activities of the working group of aquaculture?</b>			
a) Nature of past activities	1		6
b) Outputs of past activities	1		6
c) Current Agenda and activities			6
<b>4.2.3 Please appraise the work of the working group on fisheries management</b>	<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very satisfactory</b>
a) in terms of level of activity (nb of thematic areas, reports or material produced, etc.)		6	2
b) in terms of quality of work (sound science, objectivity, impartiality, etc)	1	3	4
c) in terms of outputs (clarity and usefulness of results, user friendliness of manual/training	2	4	2
<b>4.2.4 Please appraise the work of the working group on aquaculture</b>			
a) in terms of level of activity (nb of thematic areas, reports or material produced, etc.)		2	5
b) in terms of quality of work (sound science, objectivity, impartiality, etc)	1	3	3
c) in terms of outputs (clarity and usefulness of results, user friendliness of manual/training	2		5
<b>Only if you have been participating to working group meetings</b>			<b>Yes</b>
			<b>No</b>
<b>4.2.5 Are meetings announced with sufficient notice to organise your country attendance and to nominate the participants ?</b>			6

<b>4.2.6 Please rate the working group in terms of:</b>	<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very satisfactory</b>
a) Participation of all members	1	4	2
b) Quality of expertise	1	4	2
c) Objectivity	1	4	3
d) Impartiality	1	4	3
e) Management of the process / meeting	1	4	3

Part 5 - Quality and provision of scientific advice and recommendations  
5.1 Priority and importance of areas for advice and recommendations

<b>5.1.1 Does current advice and recommendations provided by RECOFI address your country's needs?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.1.2 If no &amp; considering that proper analyses need to be conducted in order to provide advice, what are the priority areas for advice to be provided by RECOFI to address Your country's needs:</b>	<b>Not important for country</b>	<b>Medium importance for country</b>	<b>Very important for country</b>	
<b>5.1.3 Rate the importance of the following issues</b>				
a) Scientific advice on management measures		2		4
b) Scientific advice on the level of exploitation of shared stocks		2		4
c) Post harvest	1			6
d) Monitoring, control & surveillance system		1		5
e) Statistics on fisheries activities		4		3
f) Data collection and sharing		1		5
g) Bioeconomic modelling for fisheries management plan				6
h) Valuation of fisheries in term of economic rent		3		5
i) Evaluation of fleet capacity		3		3
j) IUU plan		2		4
k) Strategy for developing aquaculture				5
l) Analysis of aquaculture potential and opportunities		1		4
<b>5.1.4 Request for advice</b>	<b>Yes</b>	4	<b>No</b>	2
<b>5.1.4 Did Your Country address a request for advice to RECOFI?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	3	<b>No</b>	3
<b>5.1.5 Does current advice and recommendations provided by RECOFI address your country's needs?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	4	<b>No</b>	2
<b>5.1.6 If yes, did RECOFI respond to the request for advice</b>	<b>Yes</b>	2	<b>No</b>	2

## 5.2 Scientific advice and recommendations

	<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very satisfactory</b>
<b>5.2.1 Regardless of the fact that your country addressed or not a specific request to RECOFI, how would you assess the quality of advice</b>	1	1	1
<b>5.2.2 Scientific Advice process meets the expectations and needs of the country</b>	1		1
<b>5.2.3 Does the advice take sufficiently into consideration economic issues?</b>	1		1
<b>5.2.4 Does the advice take sufficiently into consideration governance issues?</b>	1		1
<b>5.2.5 Does the advice take sufficiently into consideration ecosystem approach?</b>	1		1

Part 6 - Capacity-Building, Training and Technical assistance  
6.1 Importance of Capacity-Building and Training

<b>Importance of the different types of capacity-building, training and technical assistance provided by RECOFI to your country</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>6.1.1 Conduct of meetings/workshops for exchange of experience and learning</b>		1	2
<b>6.1.2 Provision of handbooks, operations manuals, teaching materials, etc.</b>	1	2	6
<b>6.1.3 Provision of training</b>	3	1	5
<b>6.1.4 Provision of direct technical assistance to countries</b>	1	3	5
<b>6.1.5 Assistance to attend International meetings</b>	1	3	2
<b>6.1.6 Other - specify:</b>			

**6.2 RECOFI Performance in Capacity-Building and Training**

<b>Judgement on the performance of capacity-building work of RECOFI</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>6.2.1 RECOFI overall performance</b>	2	4	3
<b>6.2.2 Overall performance in human capacity building</b>	5	3	1
<b>6.2.3 Overall performance in institutional strengthening</b>	2	1	1
<b>and specific performance in:</b>			
<b>6.2.4 Conduct of meetings for exchange of experience and learning</b>		5	3
<b>6.2.5 Provision of handbooks, operations manuals, teaching materials, etc.</b>	3	4	1
<b>6.2.6 Provision of training</b>	6	2	
<b>6.2.7 Provision of technical assistance to countries</b>	4	3	1
<b>6.2.8 Assistance to attend international meetings</b>	4	2	1

## 6.3 Use of regional and international expertise

	Yes	No	Do not Know	
<b>6.3.1 Does RECOFI make available to countries an updated list of experts by area of expertise?</b>	2	3	1	
<b>6.3.2 Would such a list would be useful?</b>	5	1		
<b>6.3.3 Is the regional expertise sufficiently used?</b>		<b>Not enough</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Too much</b>
a) For human capacity building		7		1
b) Institutional strengthening		6	1	1
c) Production of recommendations and scientific advice		5	1	1
d) Other RECOFI activities		3	2	1
<b>6.3.4 Is the international expertise sufficiently used?</b>				
a) For human capacity building		3	4	1
b) Institutional strengthening		4	3	1
c) Production of recommendations and scientific advice		2	3	3
d) Other RECOFI activities		2	3	1
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>6.3.5 Does a "joint-research programme" between research institutions of the region exist?</b>	2	6		
<b>6.3.6 Should a "joint research programme" between research institutions of the region be more developed?</b>	8			
<b>6.3.7 If Yes, please specify the priorities areas for a joint-research programme</b>				
<b>1. breeding of local species for aquaculture and stock enhancement.</b>				
<b>2. management of shared stock</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
<b>6.3.10 Is RECOFI is well adapted to encourage the development of a regional "joint-research programme"</b>	5	1	2	

Part 7 - Communication and Information Exchange  
7.1 Communication, exchange of information strategy and reporting

<b>Rate the following statement on RECOFI communication and exchange of information</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>7.1.1 Overall satisfaction with RECOFI Communication</b>			
a) At your country level		4	4
b) At international level	1	3	4
<b>7.1.2 Satisfaction with Commission sessions reporting</b>	1	1	6
<b>7.1.3 Satisfaction with WG meetings reporting</b>	1		7
<b>7.1.4 Satisfaction with other RECOFI documents</b>	1		5
And specifically for:			
a) Quality of documents and reports (clarity, user friendliness, etc)		2	6
b) Availability of documents & reports (accessibility and time to produce)	1	3	4
c) Availability of data and reports on RECOFI web site	1	5	2
d) Importance to develop an autonomous RECOFI website?		2	6
e) Importance to develop a web portal for data and information exchange reserved to Member countries	1	2	5
<b>7.1.5 Are RECOFI documents and reports (comprising teaching material, manuals, etc) sufficiently</b>	<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very satisfactory</b>
	3	3	2
<b>7.1.6 What could be done to improve dissemination of documents and reports?</b>			

Part 8 - Organization and source of funding  
8.1 Internal Organization

<b>Rate the following statement about RECOFI internal organization</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Completely</b>	
<b>8.1.1 Given the level of funding<sup>1</sup> available to the Secretariat and the part time Secretary, is the functioning of RECOFI satisfactory?</b>	1	1	6	
<b>8.1.2 Any suggestions to improve the work and organization of the RECOFI secretariat?</b>				
<b>8.1.3 Would locating the RECOFI Secretariat in its geographical area of competence improve its functioning and its appropriation by Member Countries?</b>			Yes	No
			6	
<b>8.1.4 Would it be necessary to have more personnel at RECOFI Secretariat in the future?</b>			4	4
<b>8.1.5 If yes, how this could be funded?</b>				
	<b>Not</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Completely</b>	
<b>8.1.5 Is the functioning of the National Focal Points satisfactory?</b>	1	2	5	
<b>8.1.6 If not completely, why and what are the suggestions to improve the links between RECOFI Secretariat and Member Countries?</b>				

<sup>1</sup>Current funding is 5,000 USD per year per Member

## 8.2 Source and level of financing

Rate the following statement about RECOFI	Not	Partly	Completely
<b>8.2.1 Is the current level of activities in the RECOFI work program satisfactory?</b>	2	4	1
<b>8.2.2 Is the current level of financing<sup>2</sup> appropriate to implement the RECOFI work program?</b>	2	3	2
<b>8.2.3 Is the current level of financing appropriate to fulfil RECOFI functions and objectives?</b>	2	2	2
	<b>Much less</b>	<b>As now</b>	<b>Much more</b>
<b>8.2.4 In the future, the level of RECOFI activities should be...?</b>		2	5
<b>8.2.5 In the future, the level of funding should be...?</b>		3	4
	<b>Not</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Completely</b>
<b>8.2.6 What could be the most appropriate source of financing to ensure that RECOFI fulfil its functions and objectives?</b>			
a) Members contribution to FAO except the participation of members in meetings		4	2
b) Establishment of cooperative projects financed by members	1	1	4
c) Autonomous budget.		2	3

<sup>2</sup> Current funding in 5000 USD per year per member

	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>9.1 Has RECOFI developed a dispute settlement system?</b>	1	6	1	
<b>9.2 If No, do you consider useful that RECOFI develop a dispute settlement system?</b>	6			
<b>9.3 Would your country consider using the RECOFI dispute settlement system in the future?</b>	6		2	
<b>9.4 Does the dispute settlement system need to be further developed before it can be used?</b>	6		1	
<b>9.5 Usefulness to develop a Dispute Settlement Manual</b>	Low	Medium	High	Don't know
			7	1

**10.1.1 What are the main strengths of RECOFI?**

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**10.1.2 What are the major obstacles and drawbacks for RECOFI to fulfil its functions and achieve its objectives?**

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10.2 List of potential strengths and weaknesses

Below are listed potential strengths and/or weaknesses of RECOFI. How satisfied are you with the following?

<b>Satisfaction with Establishment of Priorities</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>10.2.1 Overall satisfaction with establishment of priorities</b>			
<b>and scores for:</b>			
a) Procedures for setting priorities	2	4	2
b) Communication of priorities	4	2	2
c) Relevance of the priorities for your country	5	1	2
d) Flexibility in response to emerging needs	5	2	1
<b>Satisfaction with Efficiency</b> (economic and effective use of resources)	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>10.2.2 Overall satisfaction with efficiency</b>			
<b>And scores for:</b>			
a) Efficiency of resource use	3	1	4
b) Efficiency of the Secretariat		3	5
c) Efficiency of the Commission	3	3	2
d) Efficiency of working groups	1	4	3
e) Efficiency of capacity building & work	5	2	
f) Efficiency of the information exchange work	4	2	2
<b>Satisfaction with Accountability of the RECOFI Secretariat</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>10.2.3 Overall satisfaction with accountability of the RECOFI Secretariat</b>			
<b>and scores for:</b>			
a) Responsiveness to country wishes	2	3	3
b) Accountability to the membership (transparency of financial information, deployment of staff, reporting, etc.)	2	4	2

c) Satisfaction with institutional and legal arrangements between RECOFI and FAO		4	4
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<b>Satisfaction with Governance by RECOFI</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>10.2.4 Overall satisfaction with governance by RECOFI and its subsidiary bodies</b>			
<b>And scores for:</b>			
a) Responsiveness to contracting parties wishes (are all views considered in the Commission decision making?)	1	3	4
b) Relevance of RECOFI decisions for your country	1	3	4
c) Clarity and consistency of decisions	2	2	4
d) Organization and running of RECOFI Meetings		5	3
e) Production of RECOFI papers (timeliness, clarity, length and number)		4	4

<b>Satisfaction with Effectiveness of the work of RECOFI (achievement of</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>10.2.5 Overall satisfaction with effectiveness of the work of RECOFI and scores for:</b>			
a) Scientific Advice & recommendation	3	2	3
b) Exchange and dissemination of information and experiences	3	4	1
c) Human capacity building and institutional strengthening	6	1	1
d) Promotion of regional cooperation	4	1	1
e) Dispute settlement work	3	2	1
<b>10.2.6 Satisfaction with the Inclusiveness and Transparency of RECOFI operations</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Overall score for inclusiveness</b>			
<b>And scores for:</b>			
a) Thoroughness of discussion before decision-making	2	1	5
b) Capacity for broad-based international consensus	3	2	3
c) Ease with which information is available to all	1	3	4
d) Transparency of decision-making by the Commission	1	2	5
e) Allowing all to have a voice in decision-making		2	6

<b>10.2.8 Satisfaction with involvement and influence of the following groups of stakeholders:</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>
a) Intergovernmental organizations	4	2	2
b) Non-intergovernmental organizations	6	1	1
c) Industry	6		1
d) Consumers	5	2	1
e) Environmental agencies	4	2	1
f) Non-governmental organizations	5	2	1
g) Other - specify: .....			

<b>10.2.9 Satisfaction with level of funding for RECOFI and its work programme</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
a) Satisfaction with level of funding provided by FAO	4	2	1
b) Satisfaction with level of funding provided by others (donor countries, international funds, etc.)	6	1	
c) Satisfaction with level of in-kind contributions by Contracting Parties (e.g. members of groups and committees providing their own funding to participate in meetings, hosting of meetings, paying for staff in the Secretariat, etc.)	1	6	1
d) Other- specify: .....			

Part 11 - Possible Changes in RECOFI  
**11.1 Changes in Scope and Priorities in RECOFI**

<b>11.1.1 Should RECOFI be more focus on...?</b>	<b>Much less</b>	<b>As now</b>	<b>Much more</b>
a) Scientific advices and recommendations		2	6
b) Fisheries Management		1	7
c) Human Capacity building & institutional strengthening			8
d) Regional and international cooperation			8
e) Other, specify.....			
<b>Possible Changes in Scope</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
<b>1.1.2 Should the scope and work of RECOFI be extended to cover functions not handled at all within RECOFI at the present time?</b>	4	4	
<b>11.1.3 If yes, please specify:</b>			

**11.2 RECOFI Institutional arrangements**

<b>11.2.2 Is there value added having the Secretariat at FAO?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	5	1

<b>11.2.3 Do you consider important to create formal link between RECOFI and regional economic organizations?</b>	<b>Much less</b>	<b>As now</b>	<b>Much more</b>
a) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)			7
b) Other economic organizations, please specify: ROPME Islamic bank of development			1

### 11.3 Possible Changes in Priority setting & development of work programmes

<b>11.3.1 Priority setting: Should the role be greater or less than at present for each of the following in analysing and making proposals for priorities and proposing a programme of work?</b>	<b>Reduced Role</b>	<b>As Now</b>	<b>Increased Role</b>
<i>a)</i> RECOFI Secretariat		3	5
<i>b)</i> The Commission		3	5
<i>c)</i> Working Groups		2	6
<i>d)</i> Technical consultation of Member parties			8
<i>e)</i> Member Parties themselves		1	7
<i>f)</i> Other specify: <b>NGO</b>			5
<b>11.3.2 Organizational and Management Changes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
<i>a)</i> Should there be organizational and management changes?	1	1	4

<b>Role of Private sector</b>	<b>Much Less Involved 1= No Role</b>		<b>As Now/Little Change</b>	<b>Much More Involved</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>11.3.3 Should the private sector (eg. industries) be more or less involved in RECOFI activities?</b>				
<b>And score for:</b>				
<i>a)</i> Advice and recommendations	3		1	4
<i>b)</i> Provision of technical experts for working groups	1		2	5
<i>c)</i> Human capacity building	1		1	6

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations	Much Less Involved 1= No Role		As Now/Little Change	Much More Involved
	1	2		
<b>11.3.4 Should non-governmental organizations be more or less involved in RECOFI activities?</b>	1			2
<b>And score for:</b>				
<i>a)</i> Regional issue identification and prioritization		1	2	5
<i>b)</i> provision of technical experts for working groups		1	1	5
<i>c)</i> technical assistance			3	5

#### 11.4 Possible Changes in funding of RECOFI

If the funding basis of the RECOFI was to be changed, what priority would you give to the following funding options?	No priority	Medium priority	High priority
11.4.1 Contracting Party mandatory assessed contributions		2	3
11.4.2 Contracting Party voluntary assessed contributions	1	2	3
11.4.3 Service fees and charges (e.g. request of advice, specific training, etc.)		4	3
11.4.4 Expansion of voluntary contributions for specific purposes (e.g. trust funds)	1	1	5
11.4.5 In-kind contributions (in particular sponsorship of meetings including travel for delegates, meeting rooms and document production)		2	4

## **Annex 7. Interviews to national delegations attending the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (11-12 May 2010, Rome, Italy)**

The special meeting on consolidation and development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010.

The objective of the meeting was to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization. The meeting participants reviewed the preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission. In addition, comparative information was provided on the statutes, budgets and structures of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI). The meeting considered the financial status of RECOFI and future scenarios for the consolidation and development of the Commission with particular focus on the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. The history and present structure of the GFCM was presented to the participants who agreed that the future strengthening of their own Commission would certainly benefit from the experience of the GFCM. The meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. The meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs. The proposals and recommendations from the meeting will be for consideration by the Commission at its fifth Session in 2011.

Mr Elie Moussalli and Mr Joseph Catanzano took the opportunity offered by this special meeting to conduct interviews with the national delegations in order to consolidate some aspects of the review and to consider in more depth some of the proposals related to the recommendations made by the consultant (Mr Catanzano). These interviews took place after the delegates had been informed of the results of the review and had heard the resulting recommendations (Cf. The final report of the special meeting on consolidation and development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), FAO Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010).

Several points raised by the delegations concerned the diagnosis and the Commission's capacities. Several delegations regretted the lack of available human capacity and the limited panel of national expertise that could be mobilised on account of the Commission's financial capacity together with its rather exclusive operating mode.

Some countries also regretted the fact that they could not benefit more from training and the updating of capacity through the Commission and through expert exchanges that would progressively strengthen their own capacities. This was especially the case as some countries possess skills in the fields that are necessary for the diagnosis, monitoring and improvement of regulatory conditions in the sectors covered by RECOFI (such as research for example).

Most countries agreed that there was a need to redefine common priorities for RECOFI on the basis of updated national diagnoses as regards both available capacities and the priorities in order to improve governance and development in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

National priorities must be expressed more clearly in order to facilitate discussions concerning the development of regional projects. This motivational aspect is closely related to approval to increase the States' financial contributions.

Most countries recognised the major role played by RECOFI as a platform for exchanging experiences and addressing issues having a multinational dimension. These issues should be prioritised according to the self-interests of the countries and according to partnerships which do not necessarily include all of the countries but may be limited to the leader countries for specific themes. Such combinations of countries should lead to stronger synergies as they target the direct interests of the relevant countries.

Therefore work on needs identification emerged as essential and goes hand in hand with a need to strengthen exchanges in order to define, before undertaking new initiatives (projects or programmes), criteria defining regional issues and/or prioritisation. The initiative on the tripartite conference was cited as an example that could be followed.

Some delegations indicated a marked interest and had high expectations concerning a greater implication of countries in attendance at RECOFI meetings and workshops. Such attendance should involve the systematic preparation of papers and national communications to be published within the framework of RECOFI reports. This should be the basis for consolidating exchanges, and should give more weight to RECOFI outputs and gradually open the Commission towards external co-operation outside of the Commission's framework.

Some delegations also noted that the National Focal Points suffered from inadequate operational resources and were isolated and that there was a need to review the system through a modification of the bodies of the Commission (possible supervisory and advisory role assigned to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee).

The other issue highlighted was the difficulty of retaining human capacities within RECOFI's area of competence because of the institutional mobility of people.

Overall, it was agreed that the Secretariat, when the issue was mentioned by the delegations, had shown a marked improvement in recent years, even though some countries' expectations exceeded current capacities and sometimes suggested institutional change towards the greater appropriation of RECOFI's operational bodies by Member Countries' staff. Some countries also raised the issue of relocating the Secretariat but not as a priority.

As regards RECOFI's financial capacities, the countries, except for one that prefers a wait and see approach, acknowledged that contributions were weak but recognised that these could only be increased if a more relevant and justified set of priorities were identified, accompanied by substantial communication efforts based on achievements.

Several countries agreed that operational resources should not depend only on national contributions but should be based on closer institutional links in particular with the GCC or other partners that finance environmental, sectoral or economic issues.