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Organisation  
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pour  
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Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
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Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

### Fifth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Tehran, 9-12 October 2011

### CONSIDERATION OF A RECOFI SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE COMMISSION ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT: ROLE, STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

#### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGF5) about the possibility to establish a RECOFI scientific expert group that would advise the Commission on fisheries and aquaculture issue including management and development recommendations.

#### BACKGROUND

2. 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* intersessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Members recognized the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth. In preparation of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that was held in Rome, Italy, from 12 to 14 May 2010, a Technical Performance Review (TPR) covered the period during the four last RECOFI Sessions (Second Session Muscat, 2003; Third Session, Doha 2005; Fourth Session, Jeddah, 2007; and Fifth Session, Dubai 2009).

3. The purpose of the technical performance review was first, to provide an overview of the organization, structure, and objectives of RECOFI and second, to consider the technical performance with regard to the organization's objectives. An International Consultant was recruited by the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat to carry out the review. The outcome and findings of the review were presented during the Sixth Session of RECOFI that was held from 10 to 12 May 2011 in Rome, Italy. One of the conclusions of the technical performance was that the Commission should consider the convenience to establish a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee (STEC) that would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development.

## ACTIVITES AND RESULTS

4. At its Sixth Session in May 2011 “The Commission considered the potential benefits of a scientific expert group that would review and analyze the fisheries situation in the region to provide advice to the Commission so that it would have a solid base for its decisions in fulfilment of RECOFI’s mandate” (paragraph 30 of the adopted session report refers).

5. Moreover, “The Commission agreed that many fisheries management and developmental challenges faced RECOFI. Members were calling upon the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and for this reason it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid. In addition, a RECOFI scientific working group was mentioned. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would communicate with the WGA and WGFM Chairpersons to prepare a paper for consideration by the Commission at their next sessions” (paragraph 40 of the RECOFI).

6. The existence of scientific, technical, and economic committees or similar subsidiary bodies is contemplated in many regional fisheries management organization (RFMOs), either established under the provisions of the FAO constitution or independent. The TPR of RECOFI emphasized that 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.

7. Technical and scientific advisory committees of other RFMOs may constitute suitable examples to consider. However, due consideration should be given to the current status of RECOFI, whose structure, financial viability and modus operandi could make difficult to justify and sustain the creation of another advisory body to the Commission in addition to the permanent WGFM and WGA.

## SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

8. The Working Group is invited to consider and advice the Commission on the convenience and feasibility to establish a multidisciplinary scientific expert group as subsidiary body of the Commission. The Working Group is also invited to formulate its recommendation on the basis of the current organization and financial viability of RECOFI.