

## **Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/10 “ON THE REGIONAL DATA ACCESS AND SHARING POLICIES”**

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16<sup>th</sup> session of WECAFC held in Guadeloupe, France, 20-24 June 2016, agreed to establish the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDSWG);

CONSIDERING the identified minimum steps needed to improve evidence-based decision-making regarding conservation, management and sustainable use of fisheries by WECAFC members and the sub-regional fisheries bodies, including ~~for decision-making regarding conservation and sustainable use of fisheries in the WECAFC region, including~~ efforts to: (i) Increase and improve fisheries data and statistics, (ii) Increase accuracy of data and statistics via utilizing agreed practices in data collection, (iii) Develop and implement agreed practices for data sharing and (iv) Identify feasible stock assessment models for the region

RECOGNISING the need for confidentiality in data submitted to the WECAFC;

**ADOPTS** in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes this RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Data and statistics submitted by WECAFC members are consistent with the principle of data confidentiality as defined in the WECAFC Regional Data Access and Sharing Policies.
2. The implementation of the regional database proceeds in line with the Regional Data Access and Sharing Policies endorsed by the FDS-WG with the aim that data access and sharing in the region is to *“facilitate regional fisheries data and information exchange to support evidence based fisheries policy making at national and regional levels, while ensuring non-disclosure of sensitive fisheries data and information.”*