

Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/12 “ON IMPROVED COMPLIANCE WITH TRADE MEASURES FOR QUEEN CONCH”

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, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

RECALLING the establishment of the WECAFC Working Group on Queen Conch by WECAFC 14 in 2012;

REAFFIRMING the commitments made by Queen Conch range States at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16, Bangkok, 3 – 14 March 2013) to implement the Decisions on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)” agreed at CoP16;

FURTHER REAFFIRMING Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1 and the Decisions 17.285 – 17.290 related to queen conch adopted at 17th Conference of the Parties to CITES(CoP17, Johannesburg, 24 September – 4 October 2016),¹ calling upon WECAFC members to implement the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*;

COGNIZANT of the fact that National CITES Management Authorities are required to make a “Legal Acquisition Finding” before issuing an export permit for queen conch and noting that there will be a proposal to adopt a resolution that will provide guidance to CITES Parties on making Legal Acquisition Findings considered at CoP18 (Geneva, Switzerland 17-28 August 2019).

RECALLING the outcomes of the Third meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch, held in Panama, 30th October- 1st November 2018 supported by the European Union, NOAA Fisheries and FAO;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the RWG-IUU;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the **RECOMMENDATION** that:

1. WECAFC members should adopt the January 2017 Harmonized System Codes² and provide suitable training to customs officers to facilitate a greater control of trade in conch and identification of the conch product.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7818e.pdf>

² Harmonized System (Chapter 3) on Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates (English): http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/nomenclature/instruments-and-tools/hs-nomenclature-2017/2017/0103_2017e.pdf?la=en; also available in French at: http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/fr/pdf/topics/nomenclature/instruments-and-tools/hs-nomenclature-2017/2017/0103_2017f.pdf?la=fr

2. Countries are encouraged to incorporate suitable technology (such as custom related technology that will focus attention to importation/exportation of specific products) to enable the detection and enhance control of trade in conch products.
 3. Member States be cognizant that CITES Management Authorities are required to make a “Legal Acquisition Finding” before issuing an export permit for queen conch and note that there will be a proposal to adopt a resolution that will provide guidance to CITES Parties on making Legal Acquisition Findings considered at CoP18 (Geneva, Switzerland 17-28 August 2019).
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