

Report of the

**TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE COORDINATING WORKING PARTY
ON FISHERY STATISTICS**

Victoria, Seychelles, 21-24 January 2003



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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the report of the twentieth session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), held in Victoria, Seychelles, from 21 to 24 January 2003; it includes the report of the Second FIGIS–FIRMS Ad Hoc Meeting which took place at the same venue on 20 January 2003.

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Report of the twentieth session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics. Victoria, Seychelles, 21–24 January 2003.

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ABSTRACT

The report of the twentieth session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), Victoria, Seychelles, 21–24 January 2003, is presented. Topics discussed were: changes in membership of CWP; review of recommendations from CWP–19; reports of intersessional meetings; reports on intersessional developments in Agency programmes in fishery statistics; elasmobranch and bycatch statistics; national data collection methodologies and data quality; proposals for an advocacy role for CWP; catch and aquaculture terminology; vessel identifiers; proposed FAO strategy on improving information on status and trends of capture fisheries; a report on the Second FIGIS–FIRMS Ad Hoc Meeting, 20 January 2003, Victoria, Seychelles; STATLANT issues (statistical areas; International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV); socio-economic indicators; environmental sustainability indicators; fishery statistics for Southeast Asia); and the CWP Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards.

Distribution:

FAO Fisheries Department
FAO Regional and Subregional Fishery Officers
FAO Member Countries
CWP Members
Participants

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OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Agenda item 1)

1. The Twentieth Session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) was held at the International Conference Centre, Victoria, Seychelles, from 21 to 24 January 2003. It was hosted by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Sixteen experts representing the following member organizations participated in CWP–20:

- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);
- Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT);
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC);
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT);
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES);
- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO);
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); and
- Statistical Office of the European Communities (EU/Eurostat).

Two experts from the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) participated as nominees of FAO and two national experts from Ghana and Seychelles participated as nominees of FAO and IOTC respectively. An expert from Institut de Recherches pour le Développement (IRD), France also participated as an IOTC nominee. A consultant expert also participated at the invitation of FAO. The list of Participants is given in Appendix 1.

2. The Chairperson of the Nineteenth Session, Mr Tim Lawson of SPC, opened the Twentieth Session and invited Mr David Ardill, Secretary of IOTC, to make an opening statement to the meeting. Mr Ardill welcomed participants to the Seychelles. A particular welcome was extended to SEAFDEC. He outlined the broadening role of the CWP in facilitating and supporting the development of fisheries statistics activities and organizations on a global basis and across the world's oceans. He emphasized its fundamental role in terms of setting and agreeing standards, nomenclature and dataset harmonization. On invitation, Mr Randolph Payet, General Manager of the Seychelles Fisheries Authority welcomed the CWP to Seychelles and noted its particular importance in the development of common standards, especially for assisting in the sustainable management of fisheries and in enhancing the better management of national fisheries agencies.

3. Eurostat opened discussion of the proposed agenda and noted the importance of CWP in assisting member organizations to develop and maintain socio-economic, environmental and sustainability indicators, and to address the issue of aquaculture terminology. Along with these suggestions, other participants brought additional issues to the attention of the meeting and the agenda was appropriately modified and adopted (Appendix 2), and would include consideration of the results of the workshop addressing FIGIS–FIRMS progress and future which was held at the same venue on 20 January 2003. The documents provided to the session are listed in Appendix 3 and the acronyms used in this report are listed in Appendix 4.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

(Agenda item 2)

4. Mr David Ardill (IOTC) was unanimously elected Chairperson and Mr Hans Lassen (ICES) was unanimously elected Vice-Chairperson for the Twentieth Session of CWP and for the following intersessional period. Mr Ardill thanked Mr Tim Lawson and Mr David Cross for their contributions as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively, of the Nineteenth Session and intersessional period, and this was endorsed by the participants.
5. Mr David Evans was appointed as principal rapporteur, with various participants contributing drafts for individual agenda items.

CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE CWP

(Agenda item 3; Document CWP–20/3)

6. There have been no changes in membership during the INTERSESSIONAL period since CWP–19. In accordance with sentiments expressed at CWP–19, the South-East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) was invited by FAO to participate in CWP–20, as SEAFDEC had expressed interest at CWP–19 in joining the CWP.

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CWP–19

(Agenda item 4; Document CWP–20/4, CWP–19 Report Paragraphs identified)

7. The meeting reviewed progress concerning recommendations from CWP–19 and discussed the following key issues;
 - Trade Classifications (para 8) and the elimination of data discrepancies (para 9): Efforts have been made to develop a proposal for a more detailed fishery commodity classification for presentation to the World Customs Organization (WCO). Investigations of discrepancies among trade statistics compiled by Eurostat, FAO and OECD have taken place.
 - High Seas Vessel Authorization Record (paras 18, 150, 152): A database of vessels authorized to fish on the high seas containing 6443 records from 17 countries has been released by FAO under restricted access, including access to regional fishery bodies. Detailed proposals have been prepared to a) improve vessel identification and information exchange, b) provide topic trees for structuring and exchange of vessel records and c) for workflow scenarios.
 - FIGIS–FIRMS development (para 20): Extensive progress has been made in developing the FIRMS system and the FIRMS partnership framework, including that reported under agenda item 13 of CWP–20.
 - CWP Newsletter (para 108): Eurostat has continued to edit the Newsletter and it has been made available from the CWP website (www.cwpnet.org).
 - Intensification of elasmobranch reporting, species of special interest or non-target (paras 120, 121): There has been some recent improvement in reporting of elasmobranch catch statistics and new identification guides have been produced (see under agenda item 7 of CWP–20).
 - ISIC, ISSCFV, ISSCAAP and the ASFIS species list (paras 156, 159, 162, 165, 172, 173): The revisions to the ISSCAAP species classification recommended by CWP–19 have been implemented in the FAO databases, the ASFIS species

list and publications. Further proposals were developed for revision of the ISSCFV fishing vessel classification, which will be considered by FAO.

- Statistical methodologies distribution and FIGIS availability (para187): FAO has developed a template for recording methodological meta data for this purpose and it has been successfully tested with nine data sets. It is available on the web and FAO has requested that CWP agencies evaluate it in order that a standard with meta data definitions can be agreed.
- Advocacy and quality of fisheries statistics (para 190): A study of possible future advocacy roles for the CWP in relation to statistical development was undertaken and was presented to the CWP in document CWP–20/5.

8. CWP noted that considerable progress had been made in follow-up to most of its recommendations from CWP–19.

9. Details of the follow-up to recommendations and other items requiring action from CWP–19 are fully described in Appendix 5.

REPORTS OF INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS OF INTEREST TO CWP (Agenda item 5; Documents CWP–20/2(A–B))

Report of the CWP–ISM, 21–22 March 2002, Rome, Italy

10. An intersessional meeting of the secretariats of CWP agencies was held at FAO on 21–22 March 2002 and the report was published (see CWP–20/2(A)). The CWP–ISM meeting reviewed:

- the Partnership Agreements for participation in FIGIS–FIRMS,
- the Proposed IPOA on Status and Trends reporting,
- the advocacy role of the CWP,
- the recommendations of CWP–19, in particular important current and future statistical issues were generally discussed, including
 - trade discrepancies
 - Elasmobranch data
 - integrated catch data files
 - ISSCFV
 - ISSCAAP
 - description of national statistical methodologies
 - CWP Handbook of Fisheries Statistical Standards
 - status of catch discrepancy detection exercises
 - coordination of statistical programmes on socio-economic indicators
 - aquaculture
 - CWP newsletter
 - trade nomenclatures
 - vessel information and vessel identifiers
 - data collection standards
 - catch and trade certification

Report of the FIGIS–FIRMS Methodological Workshop, 1–5 July 2002, Rome Italy

11. CWP reviewed the Report of the Workshop (Document CWP–20/2(B)) which had agreed on the importance of:

- the international context of FIGIS–FIRMS;
- participation and strategic issues;
- definitions, conceptual design, and development of standards (including metadata); and
- the results of valuable working group sessions on standardized inventories and the harmonization of information structures.

12. Participants agreed the value of intersessional meetings to address issues relating to progress on recommendations and in preparing the agenda for principal CWP meetings.

13. In the ensuing discussion, FAO informed the meeting of further development of the metadata issue the results of which are now available on the web site, called the FIMES (Fisheries Metadata Element Set) (<http://www.fao.org/fi/figis/devcon/index.html>). The meeting also learned that the OECD has been working on the metadata standards issue.

14. SEAFDEC noted the high proportion of world catch attributable to developing country fisheries and, in particular, the importance and significance of small-scale fisheries, inland fisheries and aquaculture and stressed the importance of promoting the adoption of statistical standards in these countries through FIGIS.

15. CWP noted that working definitions of data standards which are utilized must take into account related standards already established (e.g. accepted standards for fishing vessels adopted by IMO).

INTERSESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AGENCY PROGRAMMES IN FISHERY STATISTICS (Agenda item 6; Documents CWP/20 Agency Reports)

16. The meeting reviewed and discussed comprehensive member agency reports and one observer agency report provided in agency papers (Appendix 3) and presented to the meeting. intersessional developments for each agency are summarized in Appendix 6.

ELASMOBRANCH AND BYCATCH SPECIES STATISTICS (Agenda item 7).

17. CWP noted that a number of its agencies had further developed their data collection for elasmobranchs and, in some cases, other bycatch species.

18. NAFO hosted a symposium on "Elasmobranch Fisheries: Managing for Sustainable Use and Biodiversity Conservation" in September 2002. The Symposium was attended by participants from 22 countries, and presentations highlighted the importance of elasmobranchs and their fisheries worldwide. A summary of the discussions is on the NAFO website and the proceedings will be published in the NAFO Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science (expected by early–2004). An identification chart was developed for use on board the vessels and is now also available on the web. In addition NAFO's Scientific Council had agreed that

improved catch statistics were required to monitor the wolffish catches and Contracting Parties were requested to report the catches of wolffish by species. An identification guide was issued for use on board vessels.

19. IOTC noted that the statistics of elasmobranches and other species usually making up the bycatch of tuna fisheries collated by the IOTC Secretariat are highly incomplete and inaccurate, mainly due to underreporting and aggregation. The collection of bycatch data through the IOTC Sampling Programmes continued during the intersessional period. The recent creation of a Working Party on Bycatch, resulting from a Recommendation by the Scientific Committee in 2002, with priority given to shark statistics, can help to assess this issue in the future. Predation of longline-caught fish by sharks and cetaceans was a common occurrence, and a working party is examining ways to improve the collection of such data.

20. FAO reported that recent initiatives and the growing awareness on the needs of better elasmobranch data, stimulated by the International Plan of Action on sharks, have yielded more detailed statistics. A greater number of countries has been reporting elasmobranch capture statistics with a good breakdown by species, some of which only reported aggregated data in the past.

21. FAO had published Volume II of the revised and expanded version of the catalogue “Sharks of the World”. Completion of the two other volumes is expected by the end of 2003 or early 2004. Overall, the new catalogue will contain 480 species, about 140 more than the previous version of the catalogue published in 1984. Volume II is available on the Internet (ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/document/sidp/x9293E_SharksVol2/X9293E00.pdf).

22. In addition, the “Field Guide of Elasmobranchs of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden” and the “Field Guide of Elasmobranchs of the Mediterranean and Black Sea” are also expected to be released by FAO in 2003. The preparatory work for a “Catalogue of batoids of the world” has started following a meeting with leading taxonomists in March 2002. This catalogue will include over 600 species and comprise five volumes, releases of which are expected between 2004 and 2009.

23. SPC reported that observer data that can be used to estimate elasmobranch catch rates have been compiled by the OFP for longline and purse seine; however, the coverage rates are less than 1 percent for longline and less than 3 percent for purse seine. This level of coverage is considered insufficient to reliably estimate annual catches of elasmobranchs in the WCPO. Further, most tuna fishery catch and effort logsheets that are currently used in the SPC region do not allow the collection of elasmobranch catch data by species due to lack of space. In order to better monitor the catches of major non-target species (such as sharks) and species of special interest (such as turtles, marine mammals and seabirds), the SPC/FFA Data Collection Committee has developed a longline logbook that will contain detailed information on pelagic sharks. The logbook will be tested in the near future.

24. CCAMLR has published a set of species identification sheets to assist scientific observers in making accurate identification of as many species as possible that appear in longline and trawl catches. In addition, a book ‘Identification of Seabirds of the Southern Ocean’ was published jointly by CCAMLR and New Zealand in 1999. In

both documents, the aim has been to compress as much information into a simple field guide that will allow observers to identify most species as quickly as possible.

25. Data on bycatch taken in fisheries in the Southern Ocean are collected by Flag States and scientific observers. These data are routinely assessed by CCAMLR, and further work is underway to improve the quality of these datasets.

26. ICCAT held a workshop in 2001 to evaluate the availability of data for shark species. On the basis of this workshop, assessments for two species – blue shark and shortfin mako shark – have been scheduled for 2004. Work on integrating shark data into the ICCAT database is still underway. In addition, ICCAT had recommended further coordination and collaboration with other international organizations, especially ICES and GFCM for the assessment of Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks of porbeagle, blue and shortfin mako sharks.

27. There is no consensus within CCSBT on reporting of bycatches by its Members. However, considerable discussion on bycatch reporting is likely to occur at the next meeting of CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species Working Group. The standards for the new SBT Scientific Observer program will include a listing of data collection priorities for non-SBT catches, but discussion of the actual priorities is still underway. In addition, CCSBT is currently developing education pamphlets for the SBT fleet, in relation to seabirds and seabird catch mitigation, and shark identification.

28. SEAFDEC reported that shark fins were an important commodity within ASEAN countries, and there was a need to develop fin identification techniques based on microscopic examination or DNA analysis. SEAFDEC has been promoting the implementation of national plans of action under the International Plan of Action on Sharks, especially to accommodate major shark species into the species classifications of member countries' national fisheries statistics through various means.

29. An EC funded project (DEASS) on the assessment of elasmobranch species has been coordinated through ICES and is near completion.

30. CWP welcomed the preparation of more field guides for the identification of elasmobranchs and agreed that further practical field guides were required to allow the at-sea identification of sharks based on fins and other body parts, which are often the only parts landed.

31. CCAMLR has approached some CWP Members for information on incidental catches of Southern Ocean seabirds and other species arising from fishing in areas adjacent to CCAMLR's Convention Area. CWP urged Members to provide such information. In addition, CWP Members were encouraged to consider ways of improving and standardising the reporting of bycatch of non-fish species (e.g. seabirds, turtles).

NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES AND DATA QUALITY CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

(Agenda item 8; Documents CWP–20/FAO)

32. Eurostat drew attention to methodological reports published by Eurostat on the methodologies used by EU Member States and Candidate Countries in collecting and compiling statistics on catches, landings and aquaculture production. These were submitted by the national authorities under the terms of the relevant EU legislation and are being revised as necessary. Eurostat has also compiled reports on the quality of fishery statistics. These resulted from assessments by Eurostat of the collection and compilation of the fishery data by the national authorities and of the methods of processing and dissemination of the data by Eurostat. They were presented to Eurostat's Working Group "Fishery Statistics" and it is Eurostat's intention that updated reports should be periodically reviewed by the Working Group.

33. FAO briefly illustrated the Agricultural Bulletin Board on Data Collection, Dissemination and Quality of Statistics (ABCDQ) project that is presently under development by the FAO Statistical Division. The web page of the project (<http://faostat.fao.org/abcdq/>) provides information on the sources and methods of national agriculture data collection and dissemination and on their quality. Quality is defined by the project as Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, Comparability, Coherence and Completeness, and sound Meta Information. FAO presented a sample of the FIGIS template designed to host the descriptions of the FAO fishery statistics databases.

34. In 2001, ICCAT distributed among contracting parties a questionnaire on data collection systems. Responses to this survey continue to be collected. A summary of the responses received was included in the ICCAT agency report. In the IOTC database, different sources are flagged for their quality although it is often not easy to rank them. The criteria used by IOTC in the assignment of the quality codes are shown in Appendix II of the agency report to CWP–20.

35. CWP recognized that methodological descriptions of national fishery statistics programmes provide very useful indications of statistical quality and recommended that such descriptions be collated and made available by CWP agencies as far as possible.

36. A beta version of the developing new FISHSTAT Plus (version 3.0) was presented by FAO. In this new version, data are imported from a XML format that allows compatibility and easier data exchange with other platform like FIGIS and with common formats such as Excel or CSV text files. The version presented still misses some of the functionalities included in the previous version. CWP recommended that once a more stable version is completed, it will be sent to those CWP members which are presently using FISHSTAT Plus as a medium to disseminate their statistics (i.e. ICCAT, ICES, IOTC, NAFO) to allow them to comment before the final version is released. It was further recommended that following the release of the new version, it be possible for a certain period to continue to support the data format used in the previous version, preferably through a conversion facility or at least retention of the old version of the software, in order to allow a smooth transition between the two versions.

37. CWP recommended that FAO should continue to support and maintain the development of FISHSTAT Plus and provide assistance, including the provision of simple data import procedures which can be used by CWP agencies to implement data updates or revisions.

38. For the collection and compilation of fisheries statistics in the South East Asia region, CWP recommended that FAO and SEAFDEC investigate the feasibility of harmonising their data collection inquiries in order to reduce the burden on countries submitting statistics to both organizations, taking note of the particular requirements of the SEAFDEC region concerning small scale fisheries.

39. IOTC presented the “WinTuna 2000” software which is intended for data entry and processing of fisheries-related information. WinTuna was designed following state-of-the-art modularization principles, making it a flexible tool, which can be easily extended and/or customized to fit the particular needs of different countries and agencies. It is language-independent and provides a robust security level in a distributed computing environment with an enterprise-level database engine. WinTuna is being used in a number of IOTC countries, notably in the context of the IOTC/OFCF statistical development project, as the core fisheries statistical data entry and processing system. It is the intention of IOTC to provide institutions with responsibility in fisheries statistics with the source code of the programme as well as a programmer’s guide in an “open source” context as a wide user base is more likely to ensure long-term support for the system. IOTC and FAO are collaborating in providing an Artfish module to cover sample survey situations.

40. Currently, WinTuna provides a set of core modules that allow data-entry, analysis and data-exchange for longline and purse-seine fisheries. Among these, are modules for maintaining a vessel registry and licensing, a trip registry, landing data, and logbooks for those fisheries. Additionally, WinTuna includes a sampling module that can be adapted to many different sampling schemes, as well as several other utility modules to perform other data-related and administration tasks and a report writer for output and analysis of data.

41. CWP congratulated the IOTC for the work carried out during the intersessional period and the quality of the software presented. Some CWP participant agencies expressed great interest in the software, noting that it could be adapted to serve different data entry and processing purposes.

42. CWP noted that several general purpose fishery data systems are used or under development by different RFBs or individual countries. CWP recommended that characteristics of such information systems should be compared and evaluated in a workshop organized by FAO that should be convened before CWP–21 which could consider the outcome.

PROPOSAL FOR AN ADVOCACY ROLE OF CWP

(Agenda item 9; Documents CWP–20/5)

43. CWP considered the “Review of the Requirements for Progress in Fishery Statistics: approaches to statistical development and a global advocacy role for the CWP for Fisheries Statistics” which was prepared by a consultant, D. Evans, on behalf of the Secretariat. The review focussed on two options as a basis for possible future advocacy by CWP for improving the quality of fishery statistics. This review had been prepared

following the CWP Intersessional Meeting (February 2002) when an earlier draft was reviewed.

44. There was considerable discussion concerning to what extent CWP should involve itself in advocacy for improved statistics and in support of statistical development. While all participants agreed that CWP should play a more active role in drawing attention to shortcomings in current fishery statistics and the need for improvements, opinions varied as to how far this should be taken. It was finally agreed that the first option presented in the Review paper, which involves taking advantage of opportunities as they arise to draw attention to shortcomings and the need for improvement, should be pursued for the foreseeable future. The second option, which would be much more pro-active, would probably require a change to the CWP Statutes and additional funds for a work programme. Although many CWP agencies have a mandate to pursue such initiatives, it is doubtful that CWP has under its current Statutes.

45. There was also considerable discussion concerning the lack of recognition by many governments of the need for reliable statistics as a basis for fisheries policy making and management. It was agreed that a 1–2 day workshop on this topic should be held prior to CWP–21. If the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries is adopted, the workshop could focus on implementation of the Strategy with a focus on the national level, and on the needs of developing countries in particular.

46. It was agreed that in future CWP should aim to promote its work for the improvement of fishery statistics more widely, as at the national level it was little known. In pursuing such wider recognition in future, it is better to avoid the term “advocacy” when considering CWP’s role, but rather to use alternative terms such as “advisory”.

CATCH AND TRADE CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

(Agenda item 10; Document CWP–20/FAO)

47. FAO reported that in response to one recommendation of the IPOA–IUU (adopted by COFI in March 2001), the FAO Secretariat has collaborated with the Chairperson of the Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies, to convene an Expert Consultation of Regional Fishery Management Bodies on the Harmonization of Catch Certification, which was held in La Jolla, California, 9–11 January 2002. The report of this Expert Consultation has been published as FAO Fisheries Report, No. 697.

48. FAO informed the meeting of the main outcomes of the Expert Consultation which reviewed the current status of catch certification and trade documentation, the types of documentation programmes already adopted by RFMOs and the impact of catch certification and trade documentation in the areas in which they have been introduced. The Consultation evaluated possible methods to harmonize catch certification and trade documentation schemes. Following one of the recommendations, FAO is currently designing the standard documents with inputs from custom officials who have had experience in handling such documents. The results will be presented to the third meeting of RFMOs that will be held in early March 2003.

49. The COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, held in Bremen on 12–16 February 2002, reviewed the Report of the Expert Consultation (FAO Fisheries Report No.697) and many delegations felt that its outcome was a step in the right direction for the harmonization of catch documentation for trade purposes, but there was a need for further work. It was decided that the matter of catch documentation for trade purposes be referred to the 25th Session of COFI on 24–28 February 2003 for further consideration.

50. FAO will soon publish the FAO Fisheries Circular No. 986: Recent developments in catch certification and trade documentation in Regional Fisheries Management Bodies prepared by Peter Miyake for FAO which reviews further developments in adopting similar schemes by any RFMO and examines efforts in harmonizing the systems. The paper also reviews the forms already in use, compares the forms with the recommendations made by the Expert Consultation, examines the difficulties experienced by various RFMOs and Contracting Parties in implementing the programs and suggests possible harmonized form and instructions.

51. CCSBT reported that its Trade Information Scheme (TIS) continues to operate, with a few changes made after the revision of the functionality of the scheme. The main problems experienced in the application of the scheme have been missing documents, uncertainty of the completeness of the data received, and the poor time-frame for data availability. Members are now required to submit an electronic record of their exports in association with the scheme on a six-monthly basis. The data from exporting member will be more up to date than the TIS documents that are returned from importers (which can be more than 9–12 months after export), thereby improving the time frame for data availability. Importantly, in the future, individual TIS documents from exporters will be reconciled with those from importers, which will identify any missing documents and other possible discrepancies. The CCSBT has decided to impose minimum standards on the quality or completeness of TIS documents for accepting SBT imports. However, the CCSBT has also noted that further discussion is required to determine the essential information that would be required as part of the minimum standard as well as potential problems when applying such minimum standards.

52. ICCAT informed the meeting that its bluefin tuna statistical document programme has been operational for several years. At the 2001 meeting, the ICCAT Commission decided to adopt similar programmes for swordfish and bigeye tuna that will probably be implemented in 2003. At present, some contracting parties also submit trade data relating to other species, data that are used to estimate unreported catches of tuna and tuna-like species. Main problems experienced in the application of the statistical document for bluefin relies in the conversion factors and on the difficulties in tracking the documentation especially for farmed bluefin, as several countries are involved in its farming and exporting. ICCAT is starting to undertake some studies to examine the problem of conversion factors which are currently applied to all bluefin tuna products as there is still some uncertainty involved in these conversion factors. Furthermore, there is a danger of double-counting, as various products from the same fish may be converted.

53. IOTC reported on its trade documentation scheme for bigeye tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence (Resolution 01/06), which is very similar to the one adopted by ICCAT. Two positive points can be seen in this kind of scheme: it can lead to an

improvement of the statistical reporting, as well in identifying IUU or flag of convenience vessels and tracking their level of activity. Nevertheless, the current requirement for twice-a-year summary information is not sufficient for the IOTC to identify IUU vessels for which the original trade documentation should be required. At present, the use of these documents to estimate the catches of non-reporting fleets is not considered effective as it covers only a part of the catches of the species, accounting only for frozen bigeye tuna exported to foreign markets. To date, IOTC is not receiving any trade documentation data from participating countries. Only Japan has an operating trade documentation scheme for bigeye.

54. CCAMLR reported that its Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for toothfish is a global scheme as it is open to all States which fish for, or trade in, *Dissostichus* spp., irrespective of whether they are Members of CCAMLR or not. All landings, transshipments and importations of toothfish into the territories of all Parties to CDS must be accompanied by a completed Catch Document specifying a range of information relating to the volume and location of catch and the name and Flag State of the vessel. The core element of the Scheme is a database where participating countries can access Catch Documents and related information through a secure Internet connection in order to verify Catch Documents. In addition, CCAMLR plans to develop a standard set of summary CDS data which would be published annually as part of CCAMLR's Statistical Bulletin. CCAMLR seeks inputs from CWP and other international organizations in order to determine what type of CDS-derived data might be required for their work.

55. ICES notified that at the organizational level this topic has not been considered, but there are member countries which are investigating it. NAFO also reported that this issue has not been examined at the organizational level.

56. The Chairperson suggested to further examine the extent to which these schemes can be used for statistical purposes and underlined the importance of the harmonization of such schemes, in particular that for trade, which may involve more than one the ocean, (e.g. the ICCAT document covers not only fish exported from the Atlantic Ocean but also those from the Pacific and Indian Oceans). It would be preferable to avoid the situation where importers and exporters report in multiple forms, especially if they use different formats.

57. CWP recommended that importing and exporting countries should transmit full trade document information to the RFBs and requested FAO to send the draft forms of the standard documents which FAO is designing to the RFBs concerned, prior to the next meeting of RFBs in March 2003. CWP recommended that the Agencies concerned should liaise on the aspects related to the conversion factors, and the exchange of catch certification and trade documentation information.

CATCH AND AQUACULTURE TERMINOLOGY

(Agenda item 11)

58. Eurostat drew attention to differing terminologies used to describe the practice of placing wild-caught fish in cages for a period prior to marketing. One term used for this practice was “fattening” and was applied particularly to the placing of tuna in cages for a relative short period (months) and feeding them to increase the fat content.

59. ICCAT reported that this topic had been discussed between GFCM, ICCAT and FAO and that it had been agreed that the preferred term was “tuna farming”.

60. CWP noted that there were two variants of this practice. In the first the fish were retained in cages for a relatively short period to increase the fat content prior to marketing, while the second involved placing the fish in cages for a longer period to increase the size of the fish.

61. Eurostat proposed that the term “on-growing” should be used to cover this practice. However, CWP considered that neither “fattening” nor “on-growing” covered both variants of the practice and proposed that the term “farming” would be more appropriate.

62. FAO noted that the collection of statistics to account for this practice posed problems. As already stated by CWP, ideally the mass of fish placed in the cage would be assigned to “catch”, while the difference between the final harvested mass and the catch taken from the wild would be assigned to “farming”. CCSBT reported some success in obtaining the information necessary to apply this principle. However, the CWP recognized that difficulties existed in applying it in all circumstances.

63. CWP noted that, while the terms “nominal catch”, “landings” and “product weight” have been defined in various publications of CWP agencies (including the Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards), some of them tended to be used rather loosely (for example “catch” being used when “nominal catch” was the more accurate term). Data collators were urged to avoid confusion for the data users by applying the terms in a more rigid manner. CWP recommended the use of the term “gross removals” to cover the nominal catch (the live weight equivalent of the landings) plus the quantities discarded (also expressed in live weight) and that this also be reflected in the text of the Handbook.

64. SEAFDEC commented that standardization of aquaculture terminology is important but can be very difficult because of the locally specific nature of the aquaculture industry.

65. FAO noted that there would be development under FIRMS of concepts to cover aquaculture, including the definition of farming practices, and that the definition applicable to tunas would likely include farming, fattening and on-growing.

VESSEL IDENTIFIERS

(Agenda item 12; Documents CWP–20/Inf.4 and Inf.5 and CWP–20/FAO)

66. The meeting recognized that the current trend with regard to vessel identifiers is toward a global inventory of high seas fishing vessels, in particular for the purpose of monitoring fishing capacity. FAO presented this issue as addressed in the three key documents noted above, which outlined FIGIS progress, Topic Trees and Work Flow Scenarios.

67. IOTC reported that so far 6,200 vessels are recorded in the IOTC Vessel Record database. The reporting standards of domestic and foreign vessels operating within the IOTC Area issue from IOTC Resolutions 98/04, 01/02, concerning the reporting of vessels operating in the IOTC Area in the year prior to that of the reporting, and Resolutions 02/05 and 02/06, concerning the reporting of domestic and foreign

vessels licensed to operate in the IOTC Area in the year of reporting. Several vessel identifiers, vessel dimensions and details on the activity of each vessel are recorded in the database. The completeness of reporting is uneven; better for countries reporting on domestic fleets than for those reporting on foreign vessels. A dedicated database is used to validate and verify all new vessel records submitted by countries.

68. CWP was informed that the FIGIS work programme could include fishing vessel information on two registers, i.e. those that are authorized and those that are not. Recognising that the HSVAR directory reflects the requirements of the FAO Compliance Agreement, it was stated that the global directory of vessels fishing on the high seas would go beyond this requirement and would be restricted to selected users. It was further noted that many countries may need legislative undertakings to implement the FAO Compliance Agreement.

69. CWP recommended that a common format and similar graphic user interface for sharing and presenting vessel records be agreed and adopted. Such a goal could be achieved through setting up a common system to share, manage and present data. In that respect, CWP further recommended that the documents prepared by FAO be reviewed by interested parties, with feedback provided by May 2003, and that close collaboration between FAO and interested regional fishery bodies take place, regarding both system design and layout.

70. FAO noted that it is obliged to support the FAO Compliance Agreement which is an FAO instrument and will likely come into force soon with 25 signatories.

PROPOSED FAO STRATEGY ON IMPROVING INFORMATION ON STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE FISHERIES

(Agenda item 15; Document CWP-20/FAO and CWP-20/Inf.3)

71. FAO outlined the history of the approaches and progress towards the development of FAO's draft strategy on improving information on the status and trends of capture fisheries. The process began with the consideration and recommendation on improved status and trends of fisheries by the FAO Advisory Committee of Fisheries Research in 1998. To follow up this recommendation, the ACFR established a Working Party on Status and Trends of Fisheries which then prepared a draft International Plan of Action (IPOA) which was largely modelled on other IPOAs (e.g. sharks, seabirds and fishing capacity, IUU). The Committee on Fisheries had asked FAO to establish a technical consultation which was held in March 2002, and which was able to agree on the full range of required actions (see Report of the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries, FAO Fisheries Report No.680). In further support of the issue, the technical consultation objected to calling the subject area an International Plan of Action, because IPOAs are usually time bound and concentrate on specific problems. The consultation also agreed that status and trends of fisheries and improvement to global understanding of them would be ongoing and broad, and hence it should be called a continuing Strategy.

72. The meeting noted that the CWP has participated according to its mandate in the meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and the above-mentioned technical consultation. The RFBs have also participated in the development of the proposed FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries. The

meeting agreed that CWP would be prepared to facilitate implementation of the Strategy within areas of its mandate.

73. SEAFDEC noted the recognition of the need for capacity building in developing countries that was primarily addressed in “Strategy Part 5: Required Actions”, and that CWP should promote the role of CWP in supporting such actions within the proposed Strategy.

74. Following considerable discussion on the position CWP could take in relation to the proposed Strategy at the forthcoming COFI meeting, it was agreed that the CWP position, which should be conveyed to COFI, is as follows:

- Many elements of the proposed Strategy fall within the remit of the CWP and CWP is striving towards the same objective as that specified in paragraph 12 of the Strategy document, albeit in the narrower context of statistics;
- In pursuit of its drive for improved fishery statistics at the national, regional and global levels, CWP supports the proposed Strategy as an overall framework within which its own aims clearly lie;
- CWP is prepared to actively facilitate implementation of the Strategy for those elements of the Strategy which fall under its mandate.

REPORT OF THE SECOND FIGIS–CWP MEETING ON 20 JANUARY 2003

(Agenda item 16)

75. CWP noted with great interest the report of the Second FIGIS–CWP Meeting of 20 January 2003 and the draft Partnership Agreement which are presented in Appendix 7. CWP agreed with the distinction made between the roles of CWP and FIGIS Steering Committee (FSC) as stated in paragraph 38 of the report in Appendix 7.

AGENCY DATA COLLECTION AND STATLANT ISSUES AND STATISTICAL AREA BOUNDARIES

(Agenda item 17)

Statistical area boundary changes

76. ICES informed its needs for catch and effort statistics in more detail than is presently collected. There are two prime movers for this initiative 1) for use in assessment of deep water fish stocks, and 2) NEAFC's need for statistics by its convention areas (outside 200 nautical mile EEZs). The assessment needs are related to certain fishing banks (e.g. Hatton Bank); this affects ICES divisions Va, VIb, X, XII and XIVb. There are three areas of international waters in FAO Area 27. Two of these areas fall within an ICES division (I and IIa) while the third: NEAFC area I (NE Atlantic proper) cuts across many ICES divisions (Vb, VIb, VIIc,d,j,k, VIIIe, IXa, X, XII and XIVb). At the moment this possible revision has not yet been concluded into a final proposal. Eurostat, ICES and NEAFC are working closely together in developing this proposal.

77. CCAMLR informed that the boundaries of Division 58.4.3 (FAO Area 58) had been changed to better align the statistical boundaries with known topographic and biological features associated with fisheries. Division 58.4.3 had also been divided into

58.4.3a (Elan Bank) and 58.4.3b (Banzare Bank). These changes have consequently affected the defined boundaries of Divisions 58.4.1, 58.4.2 and 58.5.2.

78. FAO informed that there had been consideration by the SEAFO process concerning the boundary line between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as to whether 30°E or 20°E would be more practical as a boundary for its convention area (see CWP–17 report, paragraph 131). Similarly, there are boundary concerns regarding CECAF and SEAFO areas (in a small area of the northern boundary of area 47). CWP recommended that in general ad hoc adjustments to statistical boundaries should be discouraged and that any statistical boundary changes, which inevitably require changes to statistical data reporting questionnaires, should only be implemented if historical data can be adjusted to retain consistent time series (see CWP–17 report, paragraph 130). CWP further recommended that the Secretariat once again inquire of SEAFO as to its intentions concerning the boundary between areas 47 and 51 and, if the 30°E boundary is to be retained. The development of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) will also require similar considerations of its western boundary.

79. FAO informed the meeting that the change in the statistical boundary between fishing areas 57 and 71 in the Australian–Indonesian region, is being implemented according to the borders shown in Appendix 5, figure 3, of the CWP–17 Report. The new border will match the present border between the IOTC and SPC areas of competence. Indonesia has provided a first release (back to 1975) of its catch statistics in areas 57 and 71, revised according to the new border.

ISSCFV

80. FAO announced the latest proposals for revisions to the fishing vessel type classification, noting this was after two rounds of discussion within CWP. The classification list included several levels of vessel categories with the top tier containing: drifters, gillnetters, etc.

81. CWP reviewed the proposed revision of the ISSCFV classification, noting that an earlier review was described in the report of CWP–19 (paragraphs 157–162). After extended discussions by CWP members, it was restated that the ISSCFV categories should be based on consideration of vessel structural characteristics, but agreed that some category terms should be revised to better reflect vessel types currently used in fisheries. Whilst FAO has had extensive consultations with fishery technologists, CWP recommended fisheries statisticians should also be consulted to develop suitable criteria and nomenclature. It was noted very few regional fishery bodies now use vessel types for statistical recording, and that most agencies now use gear types extensively, particularly in tuna fisheries. Thus, guidance was provided for improving the current proposal:

- Purse seiners: the sub-categories American seiner and European seiner should be reworded to ‘Purse Seiner: American type’, and ‘Purse Seiner: European type’. The introduction of a ‘Purse Seiner: Chinese type’ category should be considered. To that effect SEAFDEC will liaise with FAO;
- Multipurpose vessels: ‘Polyvalent’ should be renamed ‘Multipurpose’; the multipurpose category should be reduced as much as possible, in order to avoid facilitating reporting against this opened category; the ‘Pelagic trawler – purse seiner’ would be an obvious category under multipurpose vessels;

- ‘Platform for aquaculture’ and ‘Fishing vessels using pumps for fishing’ should be deleted;
- ‘Local vessel types’ (e.g. ‘bottom otter trawler’) may be added as required at the third level as examples of vessel types under either first level or second level of standard categories.

CWP recommended that after considering these inputs, the Secretariat revise the proposed revision and circulate it for comments.

Socio-economic indicators

82. Eurostat introduced the results of a programme known as “Concerted Action”, the results of which have been a recent report on economic indicators for 20 national fleets and that the data has been harmonized and compiled into time series with nine parameters. The parameters will be put into a database by Eurostat and will be a first attempt at the development of socio-economic indicators. This development, although preliminarily voluntary and subject to the Council Regulation, has now been delayed to 2004.

83. SEAFDEC reported that a 4-year pilot project in four ASEAN countries had started last year which involved the development of socio-economic indicators as a tool for fisheries management. There was strong interest in the region and SEAFDEC noted that perhaps the Eurostat programme would serve as a useful model for the project to study.

84. CWP hoped that communications among its members would help progress in developing socio-economic indicators.

Environmental sustainability indicators

85. Eurostat stated that the EU Commission has been under pressure to investigate these indicators. In addition, the European Environmental Agency (EEA) has addressed this issue and will be reviewing its proposals for fisheries environmental sustainability indicators.

HANDBOOK OF FISHERY STATISTICAL STANDARDS

(Agenda item 18, CWP-20/Inf.5)

86. FAO reported that the “Handbook of Fishery Statistics”, which was first published in 1990 with a focus on Atlantic fishery statistics, has been extensively revised and released as a web-based publication under a new title of the “CWP Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards”. Ten new chapters have been added, although some sections have not yet been completed, and information on areas other than the Atlantic has been extended. If printed, the hardcopy version consists of about 250 pages.

87. The primary medium for dissemination of the new version of the Handbook is the Internet, although it was suggested that dissemination of the Handbook on a CD ROM would also be useful, and CWP recommended that FAO consider this. The

content of the Handbook will be subject to ongoing revision and therefore CWP recommended that version control should be carefully maintained. It was also suggested that an appendix that lists the abbreviations of units of measurement would also be useful. The meeting congratulated FAO and Eurostat on their considerable efforts which have resulted in an extremely useful document.

88. Eurostat noted that its fisheries section has developed a CD with significant statistical information and fishery statistics in FISHSTAT Plus in addition to compiled fisheries legislation. The CD will be made available to CWP members upon request.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Agenda item 19)

89. All the participants of the meeting acknowledged the significant and high level contributions of Chairperson, David Ardill, former Chairperson David Cross, and FAO Senior Fishery Statistician, Adele Crispoldi who are due to retire before CWP-21.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CWP

(Agenda item 20)

90. CWP gratefully accepted an invitation from ICES to host CWP-21 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and that the timing would probably be best in January/February 2005 in order to complement the complex schedules of work programmes conducted by CWP participating agencies.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Agenda item 21)

91. This report was adopted on 24 January 2003.

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AGENDA

1. Opening of the session and adoption of agenda
2. Appointment of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson
3. Changes in membership of the CWP
4. Review of recommendations from CWP-19
5. Reports of Intersessional Meetings of interest to CWP
 - Report of CWP-ISM, 21-22 March 2002
 - Report of FIGIS-FIRMS Methodological Workshop, 1-5 July 2002
6. Intersessional developments in Agency programmes in fishery statistics
7. Elasmobranch and bycatch species statistics
8. National data collection methodologies and data quality criteria and indicators
9. Proposal for an advocacy role for CWP
10. Catch and trade certification schemes
11. Catch and aquaculture terminology
12. Vessel identifiers
13. (item cancelled, covered under Item 16)
14. (item cancelled, covered under Item 16)
15. Proposed FAO Strategy on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
16. Report of the Second FIGIS-CWP meeting on 20 January 2003
17. Agency data collection and STATLANT issues and statistical area boundaries
 - Statistical area boundary changes
 - ISSCFV
 - Socio-economic indicators
 - Environmental sustainability indicators
 - Fishery statistics for South East Asia
18. Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards
19. Any other business
20. Arrangements for the 21st Session of the CWP
21. Adoption of the Report

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document Number	Originator	Title
CWP-20/A	Secretariat	General Announcement
B	Secretariat	Provisional Agenda
C	Secretariat	Provisional Annotated Agenda and Timetable
D	Secretariat	Provisional List of Documents
E	Secretariat	Provisional List of Participants
F	Secretariat	CWP Sessions: Dates, venues, etc.
G	Secretariat	List of Acronyms

Documents from the Secretariat addressing agenda items 3–5

CWP-20/1	Secretariat	Report of the 19th Session of the CWP (Nouméa, New Caledonia, 10–13 July 2001)
2	Secretariat	Reports of Intersessional Meetings:
2(A)		Report of the CWP-ISM, 21–22 March 2002, Rome, Italy
2(B)		Report of the FIGIS-FIRMS Methodological Workshop (1–5 July 2002, Rome, Italy)
2(C)		Report of the Working Group on FIGIS-FIRMS
3	Secretariat	Changes in Membership of CWP
4	Secretariat	Review of Recommendations from CWP-19
5	Secretariat	Review of the Requirements for Progress in Fishery Statistics: Approaches to statistical development and a global advocacy for the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics

Documents from Participating Organizations addressing agenda items 6–20

CWP-20/CCAMLR	Paper from CCAMLR
CWP-20/CCSBT	Paper from CCSBT
CWP-20/Eurostat	Paper from Eurostat
CWP-20/FAO	Paper from FAO
CWP-20/ICCAT	Paper from ICCAT (inc. Survey Table)
CWP-20/ICES.A	Paper from ICES
CWP-20/ICES.B	Refining Statistical Divisions in FAO Area 27
CWP-20/IOTC	Paper from IOTC
CWP-20/NAFO	Paper from NAFO

CWP–20/OECD
 CWP–20/SPC
 CWP–20/SEAFDEC

Paper from OECD
 Paper from SPC
 Paper from SEAFDEC

CWP–20 Information Documents

CWP–20/Inf.1	FAO	ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes.
CWP–20/Inf.2	FAO	Draft Handbook of Statistical Standards
CWP–20/Inf.3	FAO	Report of the Technical Consultation on Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
CWP–20/Inf.4	FAO	Workflow scenarios for the exchange of Vessel Records between FAO and 1) parties to the FAO Compliance agreement; and 2) Regional Fishery Bodies
CWP–20/Inf.5	FAO	Topic Tree Elements Definitions

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

ACFR	Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (FAO)
AIDCP	Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (IATTC)
APFIC	Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission
ASFA	Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts
ASFIS	Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (FAO Regional Body)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPO	Eastern Pacific Ocean (IATTC)
EU	European Union
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency
FIDI	Fishery Information, Data and Statistics Unit (Fisheries Department, FAO)
FIGIS	Fisheries Global Information System
FISHDAB	Fishery Statistical Database (Fisheries Department, FAO)
FIRMS	Fishery Resources Monitoring System
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO Regional Body)
GRT	Gross Registered Tonnage
GT	Gross Tonnage
HSVAR	High Seas Vessel Authorization Record
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (FAO Regional Body)
ICSEAF	International Commission for the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries (ceased: 1990)
ISIC	International Standard Classification of All Economic Activities (UN)
ISSCAAP	International Standard Statistical Classification of Aquatic Animals and Plants
ISSCFV	International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
IWC	International Whaling Commission
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (previously ICNAF – International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries)
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
NewCronos	Eurostat Database (previously known as CRONOS)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFP	Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC)
RFB	Regional Fishery Body
SEAFDEC	South-East Asian Fisheries development Center

SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (currently being formed)
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STACREC	Standing Committee on Research Coordination (of Scientific Council of NAFO)
STATLANT	STATistical Programme for the ATLANTic Fisheries (previously STANA)
SWIOFC	South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TIS	Trade Information System (CCSBT)
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WCPO	Western and Central Pacific Ocean (SPC)

REVIEW OF FOLLOW-UP TO CWP-19 ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

Items in the CWP-19 Report requiring action are reproduced here in bold and paragraph numbers refer to that report. A description of follow-up action is given for each.

Para. 8. Despite trends in the opposite direction, CWP recommended that efforts should be pursued with classification maintenance agencies to make trade classifications for fishery commodities more detailed, especially for species of little volume of trade, but for which there are conservation concerns.

The FAO fishery commodities classification has been expanded to include about 20 new commodities.

This issue was discussed at the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT, Bremen, 12–16 February 2002) in para 27: “Several delegates underscored the importance of harmonization of customs classification codes for fish and fishery products and of improvement of specification, especially for products from the southern hemisphere. FAO was requested to offer technical advice and guidance in this field to the World Customs Organization (WCO), the competent authority in this area. The Sub-Committee was informed that the next revision of the customs classification by WCO is planned to take place in 2005–2006 and that any work carried out by FAO should be in preparation for that exercise.” The Secretary of COFI:FT formed a small technical working group on the issue including a FIDI staff member, and the following two scenarios were identified to be proposed to the WCO:

1. Prepare a complete list of species and product forms that should be added to the harmonized system. This list would be based on the obvious omissions (tilapia, catfish, Nile perch, other tropical freshwater fish, tropical demersal species), the EU full nomenclature for 03, 1604, 1605 plus the existing listing of trade names in the FAO International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishery Commodities (ISSCFC);
2. In view of the new trade rules (traceability, responsible fish trade) and new technology (bar codes, chips), the other option would be to propose a fully fledged traceability system which would track the fish from the vessel or from the fish pond to the consumer, with a bar code, which would be used for official certification by inspectors, in the processing plants, at the border points, and in the supermarket. The system would utilize country and product codes.

The first option might be the most acceptable for WCO, whereas the second takes technical and trade changes into account, and would be easier to apply in the long term. Probably the second option could receive some blessing from countries and the EU, and could be promoted by them, but implies substantial work to be done, including expertise (tracefish, EAN•UCC standards¹, bar codes etc.) not necessarily available inside FAO. The border control would be just one step more in the flowchart below (taken from TRACEABILITY OF FISH

¹ <http://www.ean-int.org/applications.html>

GUIDELINES – Application of EAN•UCC Standards in implementing EU legislation and business requirements regarding consumer information and traceability), depending whether the product passes the border or not.



Para. 9. Although some of the possible reasons for discrepancies among fishery trade data of CWP agencies were identified, CWP recommended that Eurostat, FAO and OECD should investigate the causes of discrepancies in published data and should attempt to eliminate these discrepancies or, where the differences were due to the use of differing concepts in the compilation of the data, provide adequate documentation in the publications explaining the concepts used.

The secretariats of OECD, FAO and Eurostat have reviewed the published trade statistics identifying several discrepancies between the three sets of data, with the largest differences for Denmark and the Netherlands. In many cases the OECD data are significantly different from those published by Eurostat and FAO, the latter two being generally similar. Since FAO obtains its foreign trade data for EU countries from Eurostat, major differences among statistics published by FAO and Eurostat are due to data obtained in a different time period and the addition to custom data by FAO of domestic fleet direct landings abroad (exports) and

foreign vessels direct landings in home ports (imports), data that are usually excluded from the official export/import data; for EU countries this is done systematically for Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The major reason for the discrepancies of the foreign trade data published by FAO, Eurostat and OECD was identified in the fact that OECD receives its foreign trade data directly from the national authorities that may use differing concepts when supplying the data to Eurostat. In fact, Eurostat also receives the data from the national authorities, but the transmission of the data is covered by EU legislation governing the format and concepts to be used in compiling the data. Thus, in principle, the data are harmonized. Other main sources of discrepancies identified are conceptual differences in the treatment of goods in transit, the trade system, the partner country and the use of revised figures. Subsequently, it was decided to compare the three datasets with UN Comtrade data and the result was that the OECD and Comtrade data are generally very similar, or identical, as they both obtain the data from the national authorities using different concepts from those used by the national authorities in meeting the EU legislation.

Eurostat proposed to supply OECD with Eurostat data. This follows a proposal of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics held in Vienna in March 2000, in which the topic of discrepancies in published trade data (not just fisheries trade data) was discussed. The outcome of the meeting was a proposal that the data submitted to Eurostat by the national authorities should be given priority. A meeting will be organized in Paris in the first quarter of 2003 to further review these issues.

Para. 18. According to the FAO Compliance Agreement, data diffusion would be restricted to Governments of Parties to the Agreements and Regional Fishery Bodies. FAO would, however, be interested in receiving listings of vessels from regional fishery bodies which could be included in a parallel database (accessible to whoever the data providers decide), both to verify the Record data, and to attempt to estimate global fishing capacity. CWP recommended that Vessel Name, National registration number, Flag, Fishing gear, Size, including LOA and capacity of hold, Party providing authorization to fish and Provider organization, where available, be exchanged among tuna agencies and programs.

In July 2002 FAO released its High Seas Vessel Authorization Record (HSVAR) web-based application, under restricted access. The Vessel Record now contains 6443 records from 17 countries. All CWP-19 recommended fields are part of this application, although "Party providing authorization" is not explicit but reflected through the "flag" value. Also, gear type is not specifically included, but somewhat reflected through Vessel type. This prototype application allows a "basic download" of selected vessel records. In the perspective of a generalization of requirements for the management of Vessel records, it should be noted that the field "Party providing authorization" would be fully useful if it were paired with the associated area of competence (or management unit). No real attempt to exchange vessel data has so far been made.

Para. 20. CWP reviewed the Report of the Meeting of Agencies Participating in FIGIS-FIRMS which was held on 9 July 2001 in Nouméa (Appendix 7) and agreed that FIGIS-FIRMS offers a good opportunity to facilitate improved reporting on fishery status and trends through cooperation amongst CWP agencies. It was agreed that progress on the development of FIGIS-FIRMS should be reviewed at CWP-20.

A report on progress on the development of FIGIS–FIRMS is presented in the document prepared for the working group meeting preceding CWP20.

Para. 108. CWP agreed that the agenda for the next CWP should include an item on agency data collection standards, with STATLANT as one sub-item.

This is taken under item 17 of the CWP–20 agenda. National data collection methodologies and data quality criteria and indicators are addressed under item 8.

Para. 109. CWP agreed that the CWP Newsletter (formerly the STATLANT Newsletter) should be continued and gratefully accepted Eurostat’s offer to continue the editing of the Newsletter. It was further agreed that:

- the Newsletter should be placed on the CWP website;
- the Newsletter should have links to the agency websites in order to reduce the risk of inclusion of outdated information;
- a list of meetings relevant to fishery statisticians should be maintained in the Newsletter on the website;
- the CWP member agencies are encouraged to submit contributions to the Newsletter editor.

Eurostat has continued to edit the CWP Newsletter during the intersessional period. It is available for consultation at <http://cwp.cross.lu> and is ready for loading on the CWP website. The Newsletter includes links to all the CWP agency websites and information on meetings of interest to fishery statisticians. Very few spontaneous contributions to the Newsletter have been received from the CWP agencies.

Para. 120. CWP recommended that the efforts made by regional fishery bodies and FAO and FAO to improve elasmobranch reporting and statistics should be intensified.

See sections of agency papers dealing with CWP–20 agenda item 7.

Para. 121. CWP agreed that collection of species-specific statistics should be included in the agenda of future meetings, taking in broader aspects including species of special interest such as aquatic reptiles, marine mammals and seabirds as well as observer programmes and methods for estimating catches of non-target species.

Where relevant, this item can be addressed under item 17 of the CWP–20 agenda.

Para. 139. The problem of inconsistent usage of terms of catch, discards, landings and bycatch among different bodies was noted and CWP agreed that this problem should be on the agenda for discussion at its next session.

See sections of agency papers dealing with CWP–20 agenda item 11.

Para. 142. CWP congratulated Eurostat for the work in compiling the Integrated Catch Statistics for the Atlantic, recognizing that, while the principles were clear, the integration of the data from the various sources was not straightforward. CWP agreed that the file should be updated, though ICCAT pointed out that, while it would collaborate to the limit of its resources, the essential restructuring of its database was the secretariat’s first priority. It was agreed that, while the maximum of data from ICCAT would be included in

the updated file, where these were not available tuna data from the regional agencies or FAO would be used, with the mention of the appropriate source.

With the assistance of the relevant CWP agencies Eurostat has updated the Integrated Atlantic catch file with the data for 1950–1999. Due to the continuing work on restructuring of the ICCAT database, FAO was used as the source of data on tuna catches for the latest year. The updating of the file to include data for 2000 is planned but has yet to be completed.

Para. 150. CWP considered the addition of further fields in the HSVAR database could be useful. CWP agreed that for the purpose of inter-agency exchanges of vessel records, a unique vessel identifier should be assigned to each vessel, since current vessel identifiers (such as vessel name, flag state and registration number in the flag state, radio call sign, etc.) are unstable. CWP also agreed that a field indicating whether the vessel is actively fishing should be added, where possible, recognizing that it may be difficult for national governments to provide this information. It was recognized that because the purpose of HSVAR is to identify vessels, only those fields which can be used for that purpose should be included and that the inclusion of other fields might overly burden the providers of the data.

See under Para. 152 recommendation.

Para. 152. CWP recommended that FAO draft a list of essential and desirable vessel identifiers for vessel registries (keeping them to a minimum) for the consideration of CWP agencies and that FAO consult with them regarding the use of unique vessel identifiers in HSVAR and CWP agency vessel registries.

In order to promote the exchange of vessel data among agencies, FAO elaborated three documents: 1) proposals to improve vessel identification and information exchange flows in the HSVAR context (“Proposals for standardization_final.doc”), 2) topic tree for the structuring and exchange of High Seas Fishing Vessel records (“Topic tree and element definition–3.1.doc”), and 3) “proposed workflow scenarios for regular exchange of vessel records” (“Workflow_scenarios.doc”). These documents are now published on the recently advertised FIMES electronic forum to trigger a discussion with the expected result being a consolidation of the proposal for standard exchange formats, including a procedure for the continuous allocation of a unique identifier, as well as a general agreement on exchange workflows. An essential part of the proposal is the inclusion of a unique HSVAR_ID (and its non HSVAR_ID complement) identifier. An electronic discussion among RFB agencies took place on this matter and seems to have reached the required level of start-up agreement. In an attempt to strengthen the HSVAR Identifier, it should be stressed that the agencies involved in the exchange of vessel records should make every effort to include in parallel the IMO number (derived from the Lloyds identifier) where it exists, as the IMO number appears to be available for 60% of the vessels included in the HSVAR database.

Para. 156. Since the current cycle of changes to ISIC (and to the Central Product Classification) will be completed by 2007, there may still be time for further agency proposals to flow to the Technical Subgroup reviewing the proposals for changes to ISIC Rev. 3. CWP recommended that relevant agencies keep track of these developments and see to it that any sub-classes for fishing and fish farming agreed upon at regional level are in harmony with ISIC Rev. 3.

No developments were noted since the splitting of fishing and fish farming which was discussed at CWP-19.

Para. 159. Eurostat reported that its fleet statistics are derived from European Commission's administrative file of fishing vessels. EU member countries' contributions to this file were submitted using national classifications of vessel type. At the EU level, these were processed into a simplified classification of three items. Thus Eurostat would be unable to supply statistics using the proposed ISSCFV classification and it is unlikely that the European Commission would have the resources to reprocess the data. Eurostat would initiate a discussion of the proposed classification at the next meeting of its Working Group "Fishery Statistics" in February 2002 and FAO would be invited to present the proposal to the national representatives.

Eurostat also informed that eleven countries have now agreed to the exchange of the encrypted fishing fleet data files from the Statistical Register of EEA fishing vessels together with the supporting software. One country had refused this exchange and the reply from the remaining three countries was awaited. Important advances were made concerning the fleet data. Eurostat noted that there was a great demand for fleet statistics for the Candidate Countries, particularly for information on the impact of these fleets on the EU fleet after accession to the EU. Pending a formal agreement with DG-FISH, and noting that the best method of providing the required data flexibility was by the development of registers of the fishing fleet, countries indicated that they have registers, in some cases not complete and in other cases in more than one file. Although some of them noted that they may have to seek the approval of their fisheries administrations for final approval, countries present declared their willingness to send to Eurostat the records currently existing on the national registers, albeit accepting that the files may not have a complete coverage of the fleet. The information to be provided would include for each vessel the length, the tonnage, the power of the main engine and the year of construction. No information permitting the identification of individual vessels was required and the submitted files would be subject to the same rules on confidentiality as are the files obtained from EU Member States.

Para. 162. CWP recommended that the proposal for revision be accepted as a revision to ISSCFV. Discussions are still required on certain details of the proposal, particularly on the Longliner breakdown. Both Eurostat and IOTC proposed promoting the freezer and wetfish longliner classification above that of midwater and bottom longliners. FAO will follow up on this aspect by sending fact sheets to the CWP participants of the proposed categories to trigger further discussion.

Follow-up discussions held during the 2001 CWP intersessional meeting in Rome 21-22 March 2002 agreed on the Longliner breakdown. However, the same meeting requested that guidance be given by vessel architect specialists on a possible breakdown of the category "multipurpose vessels". Subsequent discussions with staff of the Fishery Technology Service in FAO elicited the following points:

- The larger the vessel, the more specialized it is likely to be. Most vessels less than 20m in length are multipurpose.
- Fishing with "pumps" is very rare (probably less than 20 vessels in the world) and should probably be deleted on grounds of insignificance.
- "Platforms for molluscs" should also be deleted as it is not a fishing practice.
- "Polyvalent vessels" should be renamed "Multipurpose vessels" in the English language version.

- “Pelagic trawler / purse seiner” should be added as a well established “dual purpose design” category.
- “Lift netters” should be moved to the top category.

CWP–20 was provided with copies of revised classifications taking account of these points.

Para. 165. Two possible options were presented to CWP to redistribute these newly classified species items into ISSCAAP groups. CWP expressed its preference for the following option and recommended that FAO should follow it for the revision of the ISSCAAP groups.

Code	Present ISSCAAP group	Proposed revision	Demersal /Pelagic	Species items to be added	Species items to be removed
31	Flounders, halibuts, soles	Flounders, halibuts, soles	D		
32	Cods, hakes, haddocks	Cods, hakes, haddocks	D		
33	Redfishes, basses, congers	<u>Miscellaneous coastal fishes</u>	D	Mulletts & threadfins	Demersal species from group 33
34	Jacks, mullets, sauries	<u>Miscellaneous demersal fishes</u>	D	Demersal species from group 33; snoeks & cutlassfishes	All species from group 34 except lanternfishes
35	Herrings, sardines, anchovies	Herrings, sardines, anchovies	P		
36	Tunas, bonitos, billfishes	Tunas, bonitos, billfishes	P		
37	Mackerels, snoeks, cutlassfishes	<u>Miscellaneous pelagic fishes</u>	P	All species from group 34 except mulletts & threadfins	Snoeks & cutlassfishes
38	Sharks, rays, chimaeras	Sharks, rays, chimaeras			
39	Miscellaneous marine fishes	<u>Marine fishes not identified</u>			

The revision of the ISSCAAP groups, in accordance with the option preferred by CWP–19, was implemented in the first release (March 2002) of the FAO capture and aquaculture production databases following CWP–19.

The option agreed by CWP–19 is summarized in a table at para. 165 of the CWP–19 Report; a previously discarded version of the ISSCAAP revision was erroneously included in “Appendix 10 – Items requiring action in CWP–19 Report” of the same Report. The table presented here above is the correct version of the table as presented in the main body of the CWP–19 Report.

Para. 172. It was noted that in certain instances, particularly for highly migratory species, it is desirable to look at specific criteria (e.g. aggregation of species) for issuing code groupings. CWP recommended that FAO look into such possibilities as new codes are being issued.

See under recommendation for para. 173.

Para. 173. For the year 2002, a printed version of the ASFIS list of species has been planned in collaboration with ASFA. This printed version, at request of CWP, will also contain explanations on the methodologies adopted and on criteria followed in the compilation and continuous updating of the list, and on the treatment of particular cases.

The hard copy version of the “ASFIS list of species for fishery statistics purposes” was published by FAO in October 2002 and copies distributed to CWP members, national correspondents and

various institutions. As recommended by CWP–19, this publication includes a trilingual introductory section describing methodologies and criteria adopted in the compilation of the list, and on the treatment of particular cases such as aggregation of species.

As envisaged by FAO and informed at the intersessional CWP meeting in March 2002, ISSCAAP codes have been assigned to all species items included in the list and published in the hard copy publication of the ASFIS list.

Para. 187. CWP agreed that details concerning statistical methodologies used in the provision of information by countries are very useful and recommended that regional agencies should distribute this information amongst CWP agencies and make this information available to FIGIS.

Following-up on the proposal made by FAO at CWP–19 for a standard template documenting statistical dataset and related methodologies, and taking into account the recommendations made in 2002 on this subject by the “Statistical Methodologies and Data Management” working group advising on the upgrade of the FAO corporate statistical system (FAOSTAT2 project), FIGIS refined the template and tested it applying it to the seven FIDI and two Tuna global statistical data sets. A preliminary web-based dissemination prototype was implemented and can be consulted at <http://www.fao.org/fi/figis/cams/> (then FIMES–HSVAR). Although a reference to the data source is part of this template designed according to a fractal approach, the data sources (from national offices and from regional fishery bodies) are not yet documented *per se*. FAO thus recommends that this product be evaluated by the CWP agencies for possible amendments, the final objective being to set-up a standard with agreed metadata definitions for the purpose of quality assuring statistical collections.

Para. 190. As a basis for possible future advocacy by CWP for improving the quality of fishery statistics, CWP recommended that the following areas should be investigated by the Secretariat during the intersessional period and presented to CWP–20 as a proposal:

- **collate, summarize and prioritize reports from recent technical and management meetings where specific statistical data needs were identified and calls made in support of data collection activities;**
- **identify examples and reasons for success of successful projects and programmes where an improvement in the quality of statistical data has led to improved science and better fishery management. Demonstrate the cost effectiveness of collecting higher quality data. Identify examples of unsuccessful projects and programmes and the reasons for failure and demonstrate the cost of not collecting data; and**
- **identify specific problems which require immediate attention and action needed to improve these situations.**

A study was undertaken and a document prepared which was reviewed by the intersessional meeting of the CWP in March 2002 and the document subsequently revised. It is provided as document CWP–20/5 and was presented under agenda item 9 of CWP–20.

SUMMARY REPORT OF INTERSESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AGENCY PROGRAMMES

CCAMLR

1. Developments in fishery statistics and related information which have been undertaken by CCAMLR since CWP-19 (July 2001) have included the further development of the Catch Documentation Scheme for Patagonian toothfish, the publication of a set of species identification sheets for scientific observers and the development of a vessel registry (CWP-20/CCAMLR).
2. In addition, CCAMLR's reporting policy in relation to the nationality of catches has been revised. CCAMLR has agreed that, whilst acknowledging that joint ventures may occur, joint ventures should not allow non-CCAMLR flagged vessels to fish inside the Convention Area. Any sort of devolution of the responsibilities of Flag States should be avoided and only vessels under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR Flag States should be issued with licences to fish in the Convention Area (Conservation Measure 10-02).
3. With regard to vessel monitoring system, Conservation Measure 10-04 (Automated Satellite-Linked VMS) has been revised. Contracting Parties are now required to notify the Secretariat of the movement of flagged fishing vessels in to, and out of, statistical subareas and divisions within the CCAMLR Convention Area. Notifications are required within two working days of the vessels' movements.

CCSBT

4. A database manager commenced duties with the Secretariat in September 2001. Prior to this date, the CCSBT had no centralized statistical or data management role, except for management of the CCSBT Trade Information Scheme (TIS). Progress in data and statistical related issues since CWP-19 has included:
 - Implementation of a new computer system in the Secretariat;
 - Implementation of an SBT tagging program;
 - Identification of deficiencies in Members' data collection systems and recommendations for improvements in a number of areas;
 - Tentative agreement from CCSBT Members on the required fields of information (with respect to catch effort, total catch by fleet and catch at size data) to be submitted to the CCSBT central database;
 - Design and implementation of the table structures for the new relational database, including structures for catch and effort, total catch by fleet, catch at size, TIS, tag recapture, and reference data;
 - Development of data entry and project management interfaces for the tag recapture, TIS, and reference data modules of the database;
 - Cleaning and transfer of the historic TIS data to the new TIS database module;
 - Review and enhancement of the TIS scheme;
 - Limited progress towards populating the database with historic catch effort data, total catch by fleet data and catch at size data;
 - Development of a new CCSBT web site, including a private document and data exchange area for CCSBT Members;

- Development of draft standards for a CCSBT scientific observer program. It is planned that the standards be finalized during 2003, after which, scientific observer data will become another important component of the CCSBT central database

5. Despite considerable progress on technical data issues, difficulties have been experienced in reaching agreement on issues such as: the resolution of data that should be provided; whether data for catches of species other than southern bluefin tuna should be provided; what data sets should be provided in raised form; and confidentiality of the data (which has now been resolved). In addition, provision of historic data for the database is taking longer than initially expected. There are many reasons for the delays, including other commitments of Members, and enhancement of some national data sets prior to providing the data.

EUROSTAT

6. Since CWP-19, Eurostat has modified the EU catch legislation to increase the coverage of Elasmobranch species. A proposal is being developed for a modification to the legislation for the NE Atlantic incorporating NEAFC's request for a finer breakdown of ICES divisions X and XII.

7. A proposal for a modification to the legislation on landing statistics is also being developed, to include the reporting of the data by the flag of the vessels making the landings.

8. Studies have been undertaken on the availability of employment data in the fisheries sector of both EU Member States and the Candidate Countries and a trial questionnaire has been introduced.

9. A study is near completion on socio-economic indicators for fisheries and Eurostat is assisting in EU work on the development of indicators of sustainability in fisheries.

10. Close contacts with EEA national authorities is maintained through the annual meetings of the Working Group "Fishery Statistics", through bilateral contacts and by means of a twice-yearly e-mailed Newsletter. The development of contacts with the EU Candidate Countries continues and the NewCronos database includes much data for these countries.

11. The publications programme of a Yearbook of Fishery Statistics, an annual CD-ROM copy of the contents of the NewCronos FISH database and short reports in the Eurostat series "Statistics in Focus" has been maintained.

12. Eurostat has made a major contribution to the compilation of the CWP integrated data-file for Atlantic catch statistics and has aided the ICES and NAFO secretariats in updating their FISHSTAT Plus data files.

13. The development and implementation of the statistical programme depends heavily on the good relationship and collaboration developed with the Commission's Directorate-General for Fisheries, the main customer for Eurostat's data. At the same time a central point in the programme is the collaboration with the CWP and its member agencies.

FAO

14. The FAO databases on capture, aquaculture, commodities production and trade of fishery products have been updated with 2000 data and work is under way to complete the 2001

statistics, which are expected to be released at about March 2003. Regional capture databases (i.e. CECAF, GFCM, and ex-ICSEAF area) follow this by a few months.

15. After a two-year intermission, a new issue of the FAO Fisheries Circular No. 821 ("Fish and fishery products: World apparent consumption statistics based on food balance sheets"), covering the 1961–1999 period, has been published.

16. The last issue of the Bulletin of fishery fleet statistics was published in 1998 with data coverage up to 1995. FAO subsequently changed the basis of its fleet statistics from GRT (or GT) to length overall (LOA) and changed the ISSCFV classification used as a basis for the inquiry; changes endorsed by CWP–18 and CWP–19, respectively. These changes caused disruptions in the time series and delays in country reporting using the new system and in processing the statistics at FAO. Even with the simplified questionnaire, returns of the questionnaires by countries remain poor. However, although the coverage of data is partial and some of them are still under scrutiny, the fishing fleet database from 1996 to 1998 has been finalized both for decked and undecked vessels and these will be published in 2003, albeit with a revised structure due to the breaks in the time series, as a consequence of the changes mentioned above.

17. The backward separation of the aquaculture and capture production has now been accomplished for the 1950–69 period. From the next releases, both the aquaculture and capture production databases will be disseminated completely separated for the whole 1950–2001 period.

18. The revision of the ISSCAAP groups has been implemented in the first release (March 2002) of the FAO capture and aquaculture production databases following CWP–19 and, on the occasion of the publication of the ASFIS list, ISSCAAP codes have been assigned to all species items included in the list. The FAO fishery commodities classification has been modified in order to re-align it to the revised ISSCAAP groups and it has also been expanded to include about 20 new commodities.

19. Indexes of FAO English, French, Spanish and scientific names have been added to the capture and aquaculture yearbooks to facilitate access to the species items in the publications given the continuously increasing number of species items included (1,255 and 380 respectively in the capture and aquaculture yearbooks).

20. The FAO yearbook of fishery commodities has been also upgraded. A new table on "The relative importance of trade of fishery products in 2000" has been added, the Appendix II "Fishery production: estimated value by groups of species" modified, and the section "Fishery commodities: production, imports and exports by countries" revised with the addition of 12 new tables following the changes made to the FAO fishery commodities classification.

21. During the intersessional period, the number of national correspondents utilizing electronic questionnaires to return fishery statistics to FAO has greatly improved, with all the questionnaires of the FIDI fishery statistics inquiries (i.e. AQ, IW, FC1, DNC, FTR, FF, FM) and the STATLANTs 34A and 37A now available in electronic format and made available at a dedicated ftp site (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/STAT/e-questionnaires/>).

22. Several regional meetings were held in support of capacity building for fishery statistical development:

- The Regional Workshop to improve coastal fishery statistics for the Small Pacific Island States (Nouméa, New Caledonia, 16–18 July 2001) which was organized by the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands under a Japanese Trust Fund Project and hosted by SPC.
- The “Regional Workshop on Improvement of Fishery Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries” in Bangkok, 6–10 August 2001, funded by a Japanese regional project.
- The FAO–SEAFDEC Workshop "Regional Training on the Use of Statistics and Other Information for Stock Assessment", Bangkok, Thailand, 9–12 September 2002, which was attended by representatives of 13 countries from South and Southeast Asia.
- The FAO/MRC/Government of Thailand/Government of the Netherlands “Ad Hoc Expert Consultation on New Approaches for the Improvement of Inland Capture Fishery Statistics in the Mekong Basin”, 2–5 September 2002, Udon Thani, Thailand, at which strong evidence was presented that small-scale and subsistence inland fishery catches and numbers of fishers in Southeast Asia are significantly greater than officially reported.
- The Expert Consultation on Land and Water Use in Aquaculture (Rome, Italy, 7–10 October 2002), with a view to generate primary baseline information and expert advice on trends, patterns, opportunities and challenges of land and water use in the various forms of aquaculture farming systems and practices.

23. FIDI participated in the 19th Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agriculture Statistics (APCAS) in Seoul, from 21 to 25 October 2002 and presented a paper on shortcomings in fishery statistics in the region and on the proposed Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries. FIDI prepared a paper on the regional programme for fishery statistical development for Africa for the African Commission for Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS) in Pretoria 27–29 November 2002.

24. FIDI was directly involved in project identification, formulation, implementation, backstopping and follow-up in the following countries: Ghana, Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Gabon, Angola, Madagascar, Congo DR, Congo RP and Burundi. FIDI also contributed to a regional workshop in Djibouti organized by the PERSGA project.

25. During 2000–2001 FIDI developed a number of technical documents and computer software geared towards design and implementation of national fishery statistical programmes. These include:

- A training and planning handbook on sample-based fishery surveys (FAO Fishery Technical Paper No. 425).
- Operations manuals for the consolidated Artfish package for the storage and analysis of basic fishery data resulting from sample-based fishery surveys (Artbasic, Artser modules of the Artfish 2000 for Windows, suite of statistical approaches and software).
- Planning for and initial development of linkages between Artfish and WinTuna was undertaken.

26. Other outputs during the intersessional period included:

- Development of a new version of the FISHSTAT software that is expected to be released in 2003.

- Work on the re-assignment of FAO capture statistics by Large Marine Ecosystems was finalized and results analyzed clustering LMEs; a study on trends in oceanic captures (either epipelagic or deep waters) funded by the World Resources Institutes was also completed. FAO has published Fisheries Technical Paper No.435 “Trends in oceanic captures and clustering of large marine ecosystems” which includes these two complementary studies.
- Preparation of medium and long term fish supply and demand projections for all countries taking FIDI’s food balance sheets as a reference base which are expected to be finalized and published during 2003.
- A study commissioned by FIDI which utilized some FAO capture fishery production statistics was published as FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 410 entitled “Climate change and long-term fluctuations of commercial catches: The possibility of forecasting”.
- A chapter entitled “Gathering data for resource monitoring and fisheries management” authored by Richard Grainger (Chief, FIDI) and David Evans (consultant) published in the Handbook of Fish Biology and Fisheries by Blackwell Publishing in 2002.

27. The FAO Evaluation Service undertook a review of the statistics programmes for agriculture, fisheries and forestry utilizing several consultants and an external Review Panel. The report will be presented to the FAO Programme Committee in 2003.

ICCAT

28. The processes of Task I (nominal annual catch) data are now operative in the new relational database (ICCAT–RDB). Outputs of tables and figures generated by this new procedure are almost fully automatic. Progress has also been made on the historical updates tracking process.

29. The Secretariat will propose formalizing the process through an ICCAT data exchange protocol, the main objective of which is to govern efficiently data submissions and information requested. ICCAT continues to collaborate with other regional fisheries agencies in the integrated data base. At the time of writing, CATDIS (catch distribution by 5° x 5° area), adapted to FAO area, is being updated to 2000.

30. A workshop was held in Canada in September 2001 to evaluate the availability of data for shark species. On the basis of this workshop, assessments for two species – blue shark and shortfin mako shark – have been scheduled for 2004. The SCRS recommended further coordination and collaboration with other international organizations, especially ICES and GFCM, for the assessment of Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks of porbeagle, blue and shortfin mako sharks. Work on integrating shark data into the ICCAT RDB is still underway.

31. The ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program continues to be in operation. At the 2001 Commission meeting, the Commission also adopted similar programs for bigeye tuna and swordfish. Some Contracting Parties also submit trade data relating to other species. These data are used to estimate unreported catches of tuna and tuna-like species.

32. Conversion factors are currently applied to all bluefin tuna products, converting product weight to round weight, although there is still some uncertainty involved in these conversion factors. Furthermore, there is a danger of double-counting, as various products from the same fish may be converted.

33. The new ICCAT–RDB now incorporates identifiers for the type of data reported (landings, discards, catch). FISHSTAT Plus should be improved to incorporate these fields

34. The Commission, at its 2002 meeting recommended that farming statistics be reported, and that this information include :

- the number of cages used by each party,
- the estimated quantity (in kg) of the catches which enter and leave the cages, both in weight and size.

It is hoped that this will help to eliminate possible double reporting from trade data, and also improve knowledge about the implications of this technique.

35. At its 2002 Commission Meeting, ICCAT also adopted Recommendations regarding the listing of vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species in the Convention Area. A list of vessels targeting northern albacore continues to be maintained.

36. ICCAT together with other regional fisheries organizations has collaborated with FAO in the development of a prototype of FIRMS. The SCRS endorsed the Secretariat's proposal that ICCAT put the Executive Summaries of the SCRS in FIRMS.

ICES

37. ICES has continued with its parts of the STATLANT programme as in previous years. This includes collection of data submitted on STATLANT form 27A, compiling and publishing these data. This is done in close cooperation with Eurostat as most countries fishing the Northeast Atlantic are EU or European Economic Area (EEA) Member countries. The scope of the statistics includes all fisheries with the exception of tunas that are the remit of ICCAT. Eurostat and ICES in February 2002 held a joint meeting with the national statistical offices. This meeting reviewed progress of the statistical programmes.

38. ICES published its fisheries statistics on CD – the data are presented under the FISHSTAT Plus system – the most recent CD was published in February 2002 and was for the period 1973–2000. It is expected that the next CD will be published in February 2003 holding data for 1973–2001. The ICES Statistics CD includes the "Integrated fisheries catch statistics for the Atlantic". ICES is very thankful to Eurostat for producing this data file.

39. The database system used to handle the STATLANT data in the ICES Secretariat was replaced at the end of 2002. The new system is based on a relational database programmed in MS SQL SERVER. Furthermore, in 2003 the database system will be expanded with tools to handle the NEAFC data (monthly statistics for selected species by NEAFC regulatory areas and by EEZs) and the so-called rec. 12 catch data. These data are preliminary annual catch statistics by ICES divisions for selected species submitted by 1 February the following year. These two sets of statistics provide the assessment group with catch information for their work at a time in the year when the final catch statistics have not yet been submitted.

40. NEAFC, Eurostat and ICES have worked on defining refinements of the ICES divisions used for fisheries statistics discussed under Agenda item 8.

41. Eurostat and ICES have discussed a more efficient split of the work. EU member countries have legal obligations to supply Eurostat with fisheries statistics following the STATLANT manual. Among the 19 ICES member countries only 5 are not a member of or

are expected shortly to become a member of EU (Canada, Iceland, Norway, Russia and USA). Of these Iceland and Norway under the EEA arrangements are obliged to supply data to Eurostat and at present Canada and USA are not fishing in the Northeast Atlantic (FAO Area 27). Furthermore, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands have sovereign fisheries management rights for areas in the Northeast Atlantic and provide their own statistics. Thus, there is a significant overlap, and Eurostat and ICES are discussing how best to arrange the work in the future. It is expected that a revised arrangement between Eurostat and ICES will release some resources mainly in the ICES Secretariat. It is the intention to use these resources to initiate a project to extend the electronic database holding catch-data back in time; there are published statistics for some species and for certain areas back to the beginning of the 1900s.

IOTC

42. IOTC reported intersessional progress in data acquisition, gathering, processing and dissemination. The mandatory reporting standards for contracting and collaborating parties were updated to include the reporting of sample sizes and effort data related with fishing on fish aggregating devices by industrial purse seiners (Resolution 01/05). The improved vessel record provided useful information on the number of Distant Water Fishing Nations involved in fishing for tunas and related species in the IOTC Area of Competence, allowing an increase in the list of countries to which to address data requests. The estimation of both current and historical catches of non-reporting longliners and purse seiners benefit also from this improved vessel record. The IOTC extended the sampling of landed catches of fresh-tuna longliners to ports in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. This sampling allowed a better estimation of nominal catches of all fresh-tuna longline fleets operating in the IOTC Area. The catches of artisanal fleets operating from several Indian Ocean coastal countries were estimated from several sources, mainly from the FAO FISHSTAT database. The IOTC and the FAO have been exchanging their capture datasets since 2001 so as to avoid as much as possible the dissemination of different catch statistics.

43. IOTC reported on the ongoing cooperation between the IOTC Secretariat and the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation of Japan with the objective of implementing different projects in developing countries of the region to address their main needs regarding data collection and statistics. The Project will extend over the period of one year (April 2002–March 2003) at a level of funding of about US\$500 000, extending to up to five years at a similar level of funding upon mutual agreement. IOTC reported several areas of improvement since the inception of the Project, such as the implementation of a multilateral catch monitoring programme in Indonesia, the inception of a sampling program in Oman, the organization of a training workshop on WinTuna 2000, the software developed by the Secretariat to collect and process fisheries information, and the transferring of technology and technical assistance to several countries in the region. WinTuna is used as reference software in all IOTC sampling programmes as well as fisheries data entry and processing software in other countries of the region. Future priorities include the description of data collection and processing systems of several developing countries of the region, as well as a workshop on data collection and processing systems with the participation of the countries concerned, together with direct assistance as required in each participating country.

44. IOTC informed that its database structure had been changed to include fields to allow recording of several catch, effort and size data sets for different fleets of individual countries and to record the quality of the data in each stratum. Thorough reviews were carried out consequently to record the quality of all records in the IOTC databases. The creation of

several standard validation and verification processes at the Secretariat help in the conduct of these reviews and will be used to validate all new data submitted.

45. IOTC further reported on the creation of several processes to extract and format the data from the IOTC databases before dissemination. Catch-at-size matrices and standard reports and catalogues summarizing the situation of the data gathered at the Secretariat for species managed by IOTC were also created during the intersessional period.

NAFO

46. NAFO continues the acquisition of fishery statistics for the Northwest Atlantic (FAO Fishing Area 21) through the STATLANT system. Timely submission of data appear to have improved, however, individual incidents (such as a major reorganization of the USA database) have resulted in significant delays and restructuring of the NAFO Statistical Bulletin. Data reports for 2000 to 2001 have been received from most countries, however these publications are significantly delayed due to the absence of a few submissions.

47. NAFO 21A data, in a standard ASCII file format, is now placed on the NAFO website and updated data are uploaded as they are received. Data is now available for 1960–2002 (www.nafo.ca). Data are also available on request from the Secretariat as electronic or hard copies. In 2001 the NAFO 21A files were converted to the format necessary to run under the FAO FISHSTAT Plus program. The data file and links to the FAO Software were published on the NAFO Website. Subsequently, technical problems emerged and there were some problems with the user support provided by FAO for this Software. NAFO data files have not been updated since January 2002.

48. The Scientific Council (SC) noted that some clarification was required between the officially reported STATLANT catch statistics and the data used in SC stock assessments and recommended that catch statistics used in SC's Scientific Advice to management and produced in SC tables and in the Scientific Council Summary Sheets should include both catch data used by the stock assessment (STACFIS estimates) as well as the officially reported STATLANT 21A data.

49. The SC hosted a major Symposium on "Elasmobranch Fisheries: Managing for Sustainable Use and Biodiversity Conservation" on 11–13 September 2002, during the NAFO Annual Meeting held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The Keynote address summarized the current state of shark management issues worldwide. Fifty three (53) oral presentations and 30 posters were presented in the proceedings divided into four sessions: Life History and Demographic Analysis; Stock Identity; Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies and Biodiversity Maintenance. The Symposium discussions are summarized in the September Scientific Council Report (www.nafo.ca/scicoun/2002/2002index.htm on NAFO website) and the proceedings will be published in the NAFO Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science (expected by early-2004).

50. The comprehensive Vessel Monitoring System to be used by NAFO Contracting Parties was installed at the NAFO Secretariat, and has been operational since July 2001. The system provides uninterrupted reports to the NAFO Computer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from vessels themselves, and also from VMS of the Contracting Party conducting fishing activities in the NAFO area. Types of information recorded on this system include: entry reports, departure reports, movement reports, zonal reports, transshipment reports and position reports. The North Atlantic code format is used for digitized records. There is a proposal to include additional

reports, e.g. catch reports from vessel captains, observer reports (both of these will be used in a pilot project when finally approved by NAFO Fisheries Commission).

51. The NAFO SC was informed of the progress made over the last 2 years on FIGIS–FIRMS. The Scientific Council observed several areas of concern regarding the Fisheries Global Information System and its development, including workload issues for the NAFO Secretariat as well as Scientific Council, questions on maintenance of data and preserving the wording of scientific advice provided by the Scientific Council and its advice to NAFO managers, possible involvement of some national agencies and level of support provided by FAO. The Scientific Council noted further discussion will be required in the Scientific Council Standing Committees as well as in other Committees within NAFO before specific recommendations concerning this project can be made. The SC will review the outcome of CWP–20 and other FIGIS related meetings, at its meeting of June 2003.

OECD

SPC

52. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is responsible for compiling and disseminating data on tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. In addition to annual catch estimates and catch and effort data and length data grouped by time-area strata, the OFP also compiles operational-level catch and effort data (longline and purse-seine sets; pole-and-line and troll days fished), unloadings data, port sampling data, observer data and other types of data.

53. Compilation of annual catch estimates from Indonesia and the Philippines, which represent about 20 percent of the catch of pelagic tuna in the WCPO, have been problematic. Although Indonesia and the Philippines recently provided estimates of total catches of tuna for recent years, up to 2000 and 2001 respectively, the estimates have not been provided by gear type and catches of bigeye and yellowfin have been reported as combined catches. Both of these problems can be resolved through port sampling. In the Philippines, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has recently established the National Stock Assessment Project of which the largest component is port sampling; at the end of 2001, there were more than 200 ports covered by sampling. Regarding Indonesia, the OFP, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) of Australia and the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries of Indonesia are developing a proposal for a joint port sampling programme.

54. In the past, the compilation of logsheet data covering the domestic fleets of certain SPC member countries has been difficult. The coverage of logsheet data held at SPC for the longline fleets of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga improved considerably in 2001 and 2002 in response to measures taken by those governments.

55. The OFP provides both financial and technical support for sampling programmes in member countries and territories. The OFP has recently recruited a Port Sampling and Observer Manager (Mr Peter Sharples, New Zealand), a Fisheries Monitoring Supervisor (Ms Deirdre Brogan, Ireland) and a Port Sampler and Observer Trainer (Mr Siosifa Fukofuka, Tonga).

56. The Fifth Meeting of the SPC/FFA Tuna Fishery Data Collection Committee was held on 2–6 December 2002 in Brisbane, Australia. The meeting reviewed data collection forms, the status of sampling programmes, and sampling protocols.

57. The 'SPC Regional Tuna Bulletin', which presents monthly catch rates for certain fleets, was recently modified to monitor fishing activities in the WCPO, rather than just the EEZs of SPC members and adjacent waters; it has therefore been renamed the 'WCPO Tuna Bulletin'. It is now available semi-annually, rather than quarterly, and only on the website; the Tuna Bulletin will no longer be printed and distributed.

58. The Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean was adopted at Honolulu on 5 September 2000. Simultaneous with the adoption of the Convention, a resolution was adopted establishing a Preparatory Conference for the Establishment of the Commission. Three sessions of the Preparatory Conference have been convened: PrepCon1 was held from 23 to 28 April 2001 in Christchurch, New Zealand; PrepCon2 was held from 25 February to 1 March 2002 in Madang, Papua New Guinea; and PrepCon3 was held from 18 to 22 November 2002 in Manila, Philippines. Three working groups have been established by the Preparatory Conference: (I) Organizational Structure, Budget and Financial Contributions; (II) Scientific Structure and Provision of Interim Scientific Advice; and (III) Monitoring, Control and Surveillance. Working Group II is concerned with the data requirements and the research needs of the Commission. Working Group II further established a Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) to assist in carrying out those terms of reference which require special scientific and technical consideration. The first meeting of the Scientific Coordinating Group was held from 29 to 31 July 2002, immediately following the Fifteenth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB). The SCG recognized that the existing regional arrangements for the compilation and dissemination of data coordinated by the SCTB are suitable in the interim period (prior to the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Commission). These existing arrangements are (a) the provision of fisheries data by flag states and coastal states to the OFP; (b) processing and management of these and other data by the OFP; and (c) the dissemination of data according to procedures established by the SCTB Statistics Working Group, including the dissemination of public-domain catch and effort data on the OFP website and the regular publication of statistical bulletins by the OFP. At PrepCon3, Working Group II accepted this and other elements of the report of the SCG. It also agreed that the detailed technical work in relation to the Commission's data requirements (as opposed to the interim requirements) should be handled by the next meeting of the SCG, which is scheduled for 17 to 19 July 2003 in Mooloolaba, Australia, immediately following SCTB16. The issue of scientific structures to address scientific functions on the Commission was also discussed by Working Group II at PrepCon3. Delegates reinforced the requirement in the Convention to make use of existing regional organizations, to the greatest extent possible, and suggested that data functions and stock assessment should be closely linked, due to the dependency of the stock assessments on access to data.

SEAFDEC

59. The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) had initiated a fishery statistics program in 1976 with the first SEAFDEC Technical Workshop on Fishery Statistics convened in Singapore. SEAFDEC then began to organize the Technical Workshop on Fishery Statistics for the South China Sea Area at an interval of two or three years and to issue the Annual Fishery Statistical Bulletin for the South China Sea Area. The Bulletin has been published annually by SEAFDEC since 1978 starting with the statistics for 1976 with the aim to provide reliable and comparable fishery statistics with standardized definitions and classifications to facilitate the exchange of information for the management of fishery

resources and the planning of various fishery development programs for countries bordering the South China Sea Area.

60. Due to an increasing concern about the quality of fishery statistics in support of sustainable development and management of fisheries, it is necessary to review and improve the current development and management plans and policy in response to the current regional fisheries situation, which will only be possible when it can be based on timely, reliable and sound fisheries statistics and information. This calls for a need not only for national efforts but regional attempts to tackle this problem. To assist the ASEAN Member Countries in the implementation of the Resolution and Plan of Action through the outcomes through the Regional Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security in the New Millennium: “Fish for the People”, SEAFDEC in close collaboration with the Member countries has developed a 5-year follow-up program on Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security in the ASEAN Region. Fishery statistics was highlighted as a priority issue, and incorporated as an integral part of the follow-up program to ensure sustainable development of fisheries and food security in the ASEAN region.

61. In response to the regional fisheries policy framework to improve fishery statistics in support of sustainable development and management of fisheries, four major directions were identified to pursue this policy requirement: Fishery Statistics in Support of Fisheries Management Purposes; Comparable Fishery Statistical Systems, Capacity Building for Fishery Statistics at all Levels; and Improve Usage of Fishery Statistics through Better Presentation and User-friendly.

62. In line with the above-identified priorities, SEAFDEC in collaboration with the ASEAN Member countries is promoting activities to improve fishery statistics in the region. SEAFDEC is currently promoting capacity building, particularly human resource aspects of national fishery statistics which give priority to the least developing countries in the region, particularly Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam, to reduce technical disparity among the ASEAN Member countries and mobilize existing expertise and experience developed in the region, especially in the countries where fishery statistical systems have been well developed.

63. As part of the attempts to promote statistical data sharing for regional and global monitoring of fisheries as well as management purposes at the regional level, the existing SEAFDEC Fishery Statistical Bulletin in the Southeast Asia will be upgraded and improved. There is a need to review the current data reporting needs and tools and where possible they should be harmonized and integrated with FAO to reduce burden of the Member countries and eventually improve the quality of the fishery statistics. In addition, use of databases or electronic form or even web-based technology could be considered as a possible tool for this purpose.

64. SEAFDEC is also promoting the Fishery Statistics based Activities for the Improvement of Regional Fisheries that require attention in their statistical components which should be taken into consideration when improving fishery statistics as a whole. These activities should be developed with close linkages to the improvement of other national statistics. These include the detailed fishery statistics in support of the conservation and management of shark fisheries and sea turtles, as these two major groups of resources have direct linkages with the regional trade of fish and fishery products. Other areas of development which address fishery statistics support are: the use of indicators in management and development of fisheries;

promoting a map-based information program entitled “Digitized Atlas”; developing the best scientific evidence including fishery statistics to support effective implementation of responsible fisheries in the region to assisting the Member Countries in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF); the Improvement of Inland Fishery Statistics; and promotion on Information Collection for Sustainable Pelagic Fisheries in the South China Sea.

65. Based on the above-identified activities for the improvement of fishery statistics in the ASEAN region, SEAFDEC has exerted its efforts in the promotion of activities and mobilizing expertise and experience both within and outside the region. Many areas are proposed for collaboration with FAO and other related organizations to achieve the goal of improvement of fishery statistics in the region.

REPORT OF THE SECOND FIGIS–FIRMS AD HOC MEETING
Conference Center, Victoria, Seychelles, 20 January 2003

Preamble: in order to facilitate the reading of this report, the acronyms FIGIS, FIRMS, and FIGIS–FIRMS are hereby defined:

- **FIGIS**: the **Fisheries Global Information System**, is a web-based information management tool that integrates fisheries information and interconnects groups of institutional partnerships to build up a network of subsystems
 - **FIRMS**: The **Fishery Resources Monitoring System** is a partnership drawing together international organizations, regional fishery bodies and national scientific institutes, collaborating within a formal agreement, who are willing to report and share information on status and trends of fishery resources.
 - **FIGIS–FIRMS**: this describes the **FIGIS sub-system** taking care of the management and dissemination of information shared within the FIRMS partnership. Core modules for this sub-system comprise resources, stocks, fisheries and fisheries management systems, whereas peripheral modules include species, fishing techniques.
1. A meeting of the agencies involved in the FIRMS initiative was held in the International Conference Centre in Victoria, Seychelles on 20 January 2003, to review the progress of FIGIS and FIRMS and to discuss standards and mechanisms for future progress in relation to international participation in the supply of appropriate information. The meeting was attended by most of the participants to the subsequent CWP–20 meeting (21–24 January 2003).
 2. Mr David Cross (Eurostat) was appointed Chair of the meeting with M. Taconet and D. Evans as Rapporteurs. The participants are listed in Annex 1.
 3. The agenda was approved (Annex 2). The documents referred to by the meeting were:
 - ✓ the FIGIS–FIRMS January 2003 progress report
 - ✓ Documentation relevant to FIRMS from the CWP Intersessional March 2002 meeting (paragraphs 3 to 10)
 - ✓ FIGIS–FIRMS methodological Workshop (July 2002) report
 - ✓ FIRMS draft Partnership Agreement (third version)

I. Review of the Progress status on the FIGIS and the FIRMS developments, and workplan

4. Referring to the progress report, and summarising developments in the last 2.5 years, the FIRMS Secretariat highlighted what was expected from the meeting on technical and on institutional aspects. After this introduction, the Chairman oriented the debate towards defining the initial partners to establish FIRMS, a critical point that needed clarification before the FIRMS partnership agreement could be launched. The questions raised were:
 - ✓ Which international and national bodies have requested participation in FIRMS?
 - ✓ What criteria should be adopted governing the participation of organizations other than the RFBs?
 - ✓ Should information that contradicts information provided by RFBs be accepted?
 - ✓ If diverging information is to be accepted, how should it be treated within the system?
 - ✓ Given the particularly heavy burden of setting up FIRMS, should the initial number of participants be limited?
 - ✓ Does an increasing number of non-RFB participants pose a risk to the functioning of the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC)?
5. The Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) are not covering all stocks, and FIRMS is a global monitoring system. Therefore national institutions should be able to become partners wherever they can contribute information to complement (but not overlap with) RFBs' information on the status of fishery resources. However, FIRMS should not be a forum for confronting alternative views. This should be done within the RFBs or through a multilateral mechanism established for this purpose.
6. A fundamental aspect of the FIRMS Information Management Policy (IMP) to be developed by the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) should be that data ownership is established on resource units according to the institution's mandate, and that a data owner has full control over the information being disseminated on the

resource units it owns. FIGIS–FIRMS should be configured so that the system prevents any national partner from reporting on resource units which fall under the mandate of a RFB partner.

7. The FIRMS secretariat will not be in a position to respond to a sudden and strong demand in managing information from many partners. To limit this workload on the Secretariat, the meeting agreed that national organizations should not be part of the partnership agreement during the launching phase. The meeting also agreed that national organizations matching agreed criteria (to be established by the FSC) should be eligible to become members of FIRMS as soon as possible. On its establishment the FSC should give a high priority to developing such criteria in order to ensure that the institutional framework is set up in such a way that FIRMS is not distracted/diverted from its initial purpose, which is to provide as complete a global information source as possible.
8. The existence within various RFBs of differences between officially reported data and the data used in stock assessments was noted and this underlined the need for FIRMS to include documentation on the data used in particular contexts.
9. The meeting noted FAO's intention of compiling inventories of, for example, resource units or fisheries at national level, but proposed that until the FSC has established clear guidelines on the criteria for including Resource or Fishery units in the inventory, this information remains under restricted access.
10. To facilitate the internal process of acceptance of the Partnership Agreements by the RFBs, the FIRMS Secretariat was requested to make available a fully functional demonstration of the FIGIS tool.
11. A fundamental concept in the draft Partnership Agreement (see Article 2) states that "*information contributions remain within the full control and ownership of the Institutional Party, including control of what and when information is made available, and how it is processed*". The Information Management Policy, and the Rules of Procedures of the FSC will constitute two fundamental tools and will require careful formulation by the FSC.
12. Following discussion on these fundamental points, the technical aspects of agenda item 1 were reviewed. The FIRMS Secretariat proposed that the meeting considered the FIGIS–FIRMS development in relation to the following aspects:
 - ✓ Dissemination of the current prototype on the internet, with the consent of data owners
 - ✓ Progress in setting the baseline standards
 - ✓ Identifying potential partners which are ready to start testing contributions
 - ✓ Identifying potential partners which are willing to participate in the further inventories of stocks, resources or fishery units
13. Referring to the indicative workplan developed by the FIGIS–FIRMS methodological workshop in July 2002 (end of Annex A), the FIRMS Secretariat stressed that the FIGIS team had accomplished most of the planned tasks and that actions / feedback was now expected from partners on the validation of the prototype for the data they own, on the feedback needed to consolidate revised metadata standards, and on test contributions that should allow tailoring the system functionality.
14. ICCAT would be prepared to validate the prototype, provided there is no distortion of the SCRS report. However ICCAT would require training, in order to start test contributions. Early April would be a good period for a training session.
15. ICES said that it has set aside resources in its 2003 workplan, and that information would be forthcoming by June 2003. Early April would be a good period for a training session.
16. IOTC said it would be in a position to report very soon on two main species and has the technical expertise to submit in XML format.
17. SPC affirmed that it was familiar with XML tools and would hope to contribute using the most recent assessments of bigeye, skipjack, yellowfin and albacore in WCPO.
18. The meeting was further informed of the recent "inventory of fisheries" action which the FAO Fisheries Department decided to launch and of the validation role which was expected from the regional organizations. In response to the doubts expressed by some participants as to the usefulness of an inventory

of fisheries, the Secretariat insisted that the inventory's emphasis is on monitoring, and not on fisheries management. The participants are unable to fully validate the lists provided by FAO. On the other hand, SPC and CCAMLR have provided FAO with their lists of fisheries, and ICCAT intends to do so by the start of 2004.

II. Revision of the fourth version of the proposed FIRMS Partnership Agreement

19. The objective of agenda item II was to agree on a final draft of the FIRMS Partnership Agreement document for presentation to a special ad hoc meeting of potential FIRMS partners (a forerunner of the FSC) at the time of the COFI meeting. The previous draft had been elaborated after the March 2002 CWP intersessional meeting, and comments received had been either reflected in the text when clarifying content, or elsewhere left aside for discussion during the present meeting. These latest comments were split into those likely to be resolved through bilateral talks outside the meeting, and those requiring plenary session debate due to their raising fundamental questions of system governance and costs (operation of the FSC, and Information Management Policy).
20. The ICCAT representative added four comments to the previously compiled list:
 - ✓ who will be in the initial partnership
 - ✓ what are the voting procedures
 - ✓ ICCAT owning various statistical data sets, what kind of statistics are referred to under article 4 / par.6
 - ✓ ICCAT human resources are quite limited

Partnership Agreement document and package

21. The meeting addressed these comments one by one and decided either
 - 1) to modify the draft Partnership document,
or
 - 2) to provide the answer in the information management policy document. It was also decided that the footnotes should be removed from the version that the partners will sign.
22. It was agreed that the initial partnership should be limited to the Regional Fishery Body agencies which have expressed an interest in joining. In addition to its role in holding the FIRMS Secretariat, FAO should be considered a partner with same entitlements and position as other partners.
23. In order to prevent FIRMS from deviating from its original purpose, the FIRMS framework (Partnership Agreement, Rules of Procedures, Information Management Policy) should be in place before participation is opened to additional partners.
24. The Partnership Agreement package should comprise:
 - ✓ The Partnership Agreement document for signature, free of footnotes, to which an annex is attached containing detailed agencies-specific provisions. For those agencies (e.g. ICES) already having MOUs with FAO, the preamble will specify that this is a specific instance of partnership as part of the more general MOU.
 - ✓ The Partnership Agreement guidelines, composed of the Partnership Agreement document with footnotes, the guidelines for the detailed arrangements (plus possibly 1 or 2 real examples of detailed arrangements), the guidelines for the Rules of Procedures of the FSC, the guidelines for the Information Management Policy, and one page informing which were partners at a particular point in time.
25. Referring to the third question from ICCAT (see above) about the kind of statistical data sets to include, the FIRMS Secretariat reminded the participants that Article 3 par.4 sets the scope of the partnership, with modules certainly at the core of Partnership's concerns (stocks, resources, management units, fisheries, management systems), and others less central (species, fishing techniques). Statistics would be considered relevant as long as they support the assessments.

Partnership Agreement document: Financial aspects

26. Concerning the costs for the partner agencies, there were varying opinions. Some of the agencies considered that participation in FIRMS could give added value to their data. However, in some cases FIRMS could be seen as duplicating existing dissemination methods. The FIRMS Secretariat insisted that the FIRMS module design was very scalable and allows for a range of contribution types, from simple links, to pdf documents, to in-depth tagging of documents. NAFO suggested that a demonstration of FIRMS to its Standing Committee on Research Coordination would be useful in providing a better understanding of the merits of participation in FIRMS.
27. The FIRMS Secretariat also reported from a meeting held with the EU Commission's DG FISH International Direction, that this Direction will support the FIRMS development in the Commissions of which it is a member. ICES, which sees this contribution as one of its core activities with the objective of presenting general information on the status of stocks to general public, would be looking for funding through the regular contributions of its member countries.
28. Some agencies are not in a position to accept under the agreement something that would financially bind them, requiring provisions for an annual budget. Funds would either be coming from donations for specific projects (in which case the donor agency will have to see the benefits), or occasionally from FAO inputs (Regular Programme or Trust Funds), a percentage of which being allocated under the guidance of the FSC. The institutional party will have to cover the costs of its contribution to FIRMS, as mutually agreed, including submission of information to FIRMS, attendance to the FSC meetings, and additional services requested by the party.
29. The participants were requested to give an indication of the process and time-scale for the consideration of the Partnership Agreement by their agencies.
 - ✓ ICES will present the final draft to its Executive Bureau in June 2003, and to its Council in October 2003.
 - ✓ NAFO will present it to its Scientific Council meeting in June 2003 and subject to the outcome of that discussion, it may be submitted to the NAFO Annual Meeting in September 2003. A demonstration of FIRMS at the June 2003 NAFO Scientific Council meeting could be a useful contribution to its deliberations.
 - ✓ ICCAT, CCSBT, and IOTC hope to have the Agreement cleared by their Commissions respectively in October, October and December 2003. CCSBT requested that a presentation version (or demo) be made available.
 - ✓ SPC and Eurostat hope to have the Partnership Agreement approved within a few months. The Partnership Agreement with SPC may eventually be superseded by an agreement with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, when it becomes operational.

Information Management Policy:

30. The elements relevant to the information management policy compiled in Annex D of the FIGIS–FIRMS progress status report were presented for consideration by the FSC. This document varies in its level of detail, and sometimes confuses what should be under the responsibility of the Party and what is of Information Management Policy nature. The meeting agreed that the document requires much editorial work before being considered as firm guidelines. The participants will receive a revised version of the guidelines for their comments.

III. Preparation of the first session of the FIRMS Steering Committee

Rules of Procedures of the FIRMS Steering Committee

31. The meeting proposed that the FSC establish at its first sessions its Rules of Procedures, and its Information Management Policy. Hence the present discussion focussed on how to help the FSC in this process, by presenting sound guidelines and/or start-up documents. The following aspects of the Rules of Procedures were discussed:
32. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 23 and 24, new participating institutions will be welcomed to join the FIRMS partnership, subject to certain criteria, the most salient of which being that their reporting

complements what FIRMS already covers, and that they should respect certain standards according to the Information Management Policy. In order to ensure the former, the meeting proposed to modify the current draft Rules of Procedure's wordings in order to guarantee that the candidate institution has received a FIRMS compatible mandate from an intergovernmental body or a national government. For the national level, a suitable wording was deemed to be "institutions mandated by a Government".

33. It was agreed that for the purpose of electing a national institution as a FIRMS partner, a 2/3 majority of votes would be appropriate. The alternative, a consensus, might be too constraining. Points to be considered by the FSC prior to the decision being taken would be whether or not the organization has the required mandate for the stocks and an assessment of the quality of the work of the institute (including the existence of peer-review processes). The Information Management Policy should mention a set of quality criteria that would inform users on the level of quality of the institution's report.
34. It was also agreed that voting rules for decisions relevant to standards, and decisions relevant to use of budget at disposal should be taken by majority, should no consensus be reached. The FSC will have to consider carefully the level at which an institutional party is defined. In other words, the FSC should decide whether the institutional party is defined at the level of contributing programmes (possibly more than one programme would contribute to FIRMS within one institution), institutions (possibly more than one institution within one country) or country.
35. Secret voting, if necessary, should be reserved for the election of Chairperson and Vice-chairperson. Weighting of votes (for example, according to criteria such as number of programmes contributing information on behalf of the institutional party) is not recommended.
36. As far as budget implementation is concerned, the FSC should have an advisory role to review and comment upon the budget. Should funds be secured, the FSC should recommend particular procedures for handling this fund. This aspect could be part of a specific topic in the Rules of Procedures entitled "management of financial inputs", or could be developed as part of meetings' agenda.

Respective roles of CWP and FIRMS Steering Committee in the management of standards

37. Referring to various paragraphs of the FIGIS–FIRMS 2002 methodological workshop, indicating that a possible confusion on the respective roles of CWP and FSC in the management of standards could exist. The FIRMS Secretariat proposed that the meeting should provide guidance on this issue. It was recalled that FIGIS develops its metadata standards using, as far as possible, existing standards (ISO, CWP fishery statistical standards, Dublin Core, Agricultural Metadata Element Set), but extending these where necessary. The following dimensions should be taken into account in this respect:
 - ✓ are standards for statistical data, or for non-statistical data?
 - ✓ are standards international, or local ones?
 - ✓ are we considering concepts, lists of topics, classifications, or Metadata?
38. The meeting agreed that CWP and FSC are two distinct mechanisms which should however remain in close collaboration. There is a necessity to distinguish between standards which are at the core of CWP work, and formats which primarily concern FIRMS. It was recognized that the new dimension introduced by FIGIS–FIRMS was the metadata (or formats, i.e. ways to package data), both for statistics and non-statistics. Most metadata elements refer to concepts and terms either already covered by one of the above mentioned standard sources, or for which definitions are already applied within agencies. What FIRMS needs is to internally organize the definitions from external sources, in order to structure and present in a harmonized way the presentation of data received from these sources. The notion of "working definition" was proposed and deemed appropriate. Working definitions should help users to supply data in a consistent and harmonized way.
39. It had been proposed that an ad hoc meeting be held in Rome during the time of the COFI meeting (24–28 February 2003) to plan the establishment of the FIRMS Partnership with participants invited from CWP member organizations or other regional fishery bodies which have expressed an interest in participating in FIRMS.
40. The meeting proposed that the report of this session should be presented to the CWP for their consideration, as well as the information to be included in the package of documents. The participants will receive the last

version of the FIRMS Partnership Agreement and will have two weeks to reply after which it will be considered as the final draft form.

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Annex 2: Meeting agenda

Second FIGIS–FIRMS ad hoc meeting

20 January 2003, Mahé, Seychelles

Agenda

Objective: to come up with a proposal of partnership agreement to be considered by the first ad hoc Steering Committee meeting (planned for the 1st March 2003 in Rome)

Agenda items

1. Review of FIGIS–FIRMS progress status

2. Revision of the fourth version of the proposed FIRMS partnership agreement
 - Main document
 - Annex: Detailed arrangement
 - Annex: Information management policy

3. Preparation of the first session of the FIRMS Steering Committee
 - Guidelines for the annex to the partnership agreement: rules of procedures, and statutes of the Steering Committee
 - Respective roles of CWP and FIRMS Steering Committee on the management of standards

Annex 3

DRAFT
Partnership Agreement
providing for international cooperation
in the development and maintenance of the
Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (*FIRMS*)

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries¹:

- provides guidance which may be used where appropriate in the formulation of international agreements and other legal instruments, both binding and voluntary ;
- calls for the promotion of international cooperation and coordination in all matters related to fisheries, including information gathering and data exchange, and fisheries research, management and development; and
- recognizes that the special requirements of developing countries in implementing the Code need to be taken into account.

RECOGNIZING that partnerships between international and national institutions will assist in meeting the objectives of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, including the implementation of International Plans of Action.

RECOGNIZING ALSO that such partnerships may occur at many levels, including

- global and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements;
- national agencies and research institutions;
- global and regional network partners providing complementary information; and
- programmes and projects through which the objectives of this Agreement may be promoted².

NOTING that international and national fisheries institutions have a wide variety of mandates and responsibilities, which may change over time, and that partnership arrangements should reflect such mandates and responsibilities and adapt to new and changing institutional circumstances, as appropriate. Also noting that the Regional Fishery Bodies have an obligation to disseminate information on the status of fisheries and fish stocks.

NOW THEREFORE the (...institution name...) (the ‘Institutional Party’) and the FAO, hereinafter referred to together as ‘the Parties’, have agreed as follows:

Article 1. **OBJECTIVES**

1. The objective of this Agreement is to establish a framework between the Parties that, together with similar agreements between the FAO and other parties, will:
 - build a community of responsible institutions that are willing to report in an objective way on fisheries status and trends, thus contributing to the promotion of responsible fisheries management;
 - promote progressive development and extension of fisheries status and trends reporting to all fishery resources;
 - develop, share and maintain services for the collection, management and dissemination of information through a system for fisheries resources monitoring³.

¹ The partnership agreement takes as its principal source the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries concerning agreements, cooperation and developing countries.

² The partnership agreement recognizes that many different types of institution may wish to become FIRMS partners because of their mandates to develop or disseminate fisheries information. These may range from regional fishery bodies and international organizations, to government ministries and their research institutions or agencies (including privatized research and academic institutions) or international programmes or projects (with perhaps a limited period, e.g. a GEF programme).

Article 2. PRINCIPLES⁴

2. The principles of this Agreement are based on cooperation between the Parties that will ensure that:
- agreed information on fisheries resources, is shared and appropriately disseminated;
 - information contributions remain within the full control and ownership of the Institutional Party which has primary monitoring or management responsibility over Resource or Fishery units, including control of what and when information is made available, and how it is processed; and
 - documentation on information sources, ownership, data origins and collection methodologies, rules on dissemination and publication, and other matters specified by the Institutional Party, is maintained.

Article 3. GENERAL PURPOSES AND BENEFITS⁵

3. The general purposes of this Agreement are:
- to establish a partnership for the development and implementation of the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System;
 - to establish the entitlements, responsibilities and obligations of the Parties; and
 - to specify in Annex 1 the detailed arrangements on the nature, scope and conditions under which information is made available to the Parties and, where applicable, to non-Parties.
4. The general benefits of this Agreement are to enable the Parties:
- to make available, through direct access to their systems and/or through agreed dissemination channels, information on fisheries status and trends in ways that provide background for, and facilitate interpretation of, fishery resources assessments and fishery management advisory reports.
 - to offer the Parties and the general public direct access to general overviews⁶ on fishery resources, including on, *inter alia*:
 1. the distribution and population dynamics of a fishery resource;
 2. the techniques, nature and conduct of the fishery for that resource; and
 3. the fishery management systems in place or being developed.
 - to contribute to the fulfilment of commitments to improving transparency and accuracy of information of fishery resources status, while respecting confidentiality and security under which the information has been submitted, in ways that satisfy the owners of information concerned.

³ These objectives establish current and future objectives that enable participation by institutions at all levels of will and capacity, i.e. to progressively build institutional linkages and to cover all resources, from the largest to the smallest.

⁴ The principles in the agreement establish the general policies under which dissemination, maintenance and metadata developments are to be established, and the full recognition of a direct relationship between a partner's mandates, the information objects they are reporting on, and the subsequent ownership over these objects contained within FIGIS.

⁵ This article summarizes the purposes of this agreement, including the content of Annex 1, which will be decided on an individual basis between FAO and the institution. This allows for flexibility in the nature and scope of the information to be supplied so that an institutional party with limited capacity to provide information at the beginning of the agreement can define what (limited) information it is prepared to contribute. As the term of the agreement progresses the Annex can be developed further: further details may be possible as statistical systems improve and the Annex to the agreement can be amended mutually by the parties. It also explains the benefits of providing and obtaining general access to fisheries information in a coordinated way through the FIRMS. This responds to Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries demands for cooperation and transparency.

⁶ The thematic scope of these overviews provides a reference for future Institutional Parties in what sort of information is expected, and hence their potential eligibility for partnership.

Article 4. RESPONSIBILITIES⁷

5. FAO will establish a FIRMS Secretariat with the following responsibilities:
- to establish and maintain a FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) with roles and responsibilities as described in Article 6;
 - to implement decisions of the FSC, and represent it in legal matters, in accordance with the policy established by the FSC;
 - to coordinate and administer financial inputs to the development of FIRMS and for the conduct of this partnership;
 - to maintain databases for the presentation of fishery information, or to establish databases jointly with the Institutional Party or with others when cooperative action is agreed;
 - supervise the implementation of FIRMS services, including
 1. the application of systems of information quality control;
 2. the development and implementation of software and information methodologies;
 3. the development and implementation of training tools and methods, and the conduct of training, as appropriate.
 - where required, to receive and process information inputs from the Institutional Party, in particular for developing country institutions;
 - where required, to collate, control and process information on the status and trends of fisheries;
 - to administer requests from non-partners for FIRMS-related information; and
 - to provide the FIRMS with global level information on the status of resources and stocks in accordance with partnership agreed policies.
6. The responsibilities of the Institutional Party are to share within FIRMS information according to its mandate, or which is relevant to this partnership, including responsibilities, *inter alia*:
- to present for inclusion in FIRMS databases fishery assessment and management reports, statistics and other related information in a timely manner and according to its own policies on ownership, transparency and quality assurance;
 - to maintain databases for the presentation of fishery information, and/or to establish databases jointly with FAO or with others when cooperative action is agreed;
 - in general to ensure collaboration with the work of the FSC, including in the identification of information that will complement each Party's information sources and prevent duplication, and in attending meetings of the FSC;
 - to provide assistance to developing countries, where this is compatible with their mandate and area of competence.

Article 5. ENTITLEMENTS⁸

7. The entitlement of FAO shall be to make available to general public access the information that has been agreed for this purpose, together with information on the nature, origins and quality of the information.
8. The entitlements of the Institutional Party shall include:

⁷ This article provides for each party's responsibilities; FAO in its central role in the partnership as Secretariat and in management of the FIRMS, the institutional party in its contribution of information and influence on the conduct and development of FIRMS and its participation in decision-making processes.

⁸ This article establishes FAO's right to publish information agreed under this agreement, unless otherwise specified, such as in the timing of publication or further appropriate data aggregation. The Institutional Party also has specified rights, particularly to the control of its own information contributions, and access to general and special products that may be developed under FIRMS. It may also give additional entitlements, specified in Annex, and this is designed to offer further facilities (to be defined on an individual basis) for developing countries, as appropriate.

- full access to FIRMS system tools for the control and dissemination of proprietary information and the maintenance of applicable confidentiality;
 - access to FIRMS information and databases beyond the restrictions normally applied under FAO dissemination policy, e.g. to geographic information system (GIS) layers or other value-added products;
 - access to FIRMS services for training in the use of information tools and standards, for use of the shared software library and other information products.
 - requests to FIRMS on specific analyses or presentations.
9. Additional entitlements may be specified in Annex 1, which shall be amended as needed by mutual agreement of the Parties.

Article 6. GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC)

10. The FSC is constituted of one member of FAO in its capacity of FIRMS partner, and one member from each institutional Party. FAO will in addition provide the Secretariat.
11. The Institutional Party shall participate fully in the work of the FSC, which will:
- makes decisions by consensus, wherever possible, including on the adoption and amendment of its own Rules of Procedure⁹, the current version of which is part of the Partnership Agreement guidelines; and
 - meet at regular intervals, as appropriate or required.
12. The Institutional Party shall contribute to the FSC decision-making and monitoring mechanism, which will:
- monitor the development and performance of FIRMS and advise on improvements;
 - discuss, advise and take decisions on further system developments;
 - review the information management policy, including data capture, processing, publication, dissemination and quality assurance, of all Institutional Party members with a view to harmonization as appropriate;
 - review, advise and recommend formats and other standards that may be used by Institutional Parties;
 - review, advise and recommend changes to the databases presented on FIRMS with a view to the identification and elimination of information duplication and data inconsistencies;
 - review and comment upon the budget made available to the FSC, advise the FIRMS secretariat on the allocation of funds and recommend any particular procedures for handling this fund;
 - discuss and advise on any other matters pertaining to FIRMS;
 - decide on the criteria for eligibility of new partners.

Cost sharing

13. FAO will cover the costs of FIRMS development, FSC administration and the provision of Institutional Party entitlements under this Agreement through regular and trust fund arrangements.

⁹ The establishment of the FSC within FAO in pursuit of partnerships will be relatively simple. The FSC will develop its own Rules of Procedure perhaps based on the draft included in Annex 2, which shall be developed at the first FSC meeting (although subject to amendment). The eligibility of new partners is included but this largely means that the new partner shall have the capacity and mandate (from the national authority or commission or board) to provide information.

14. The Institutional Party will cover the costs of information contributions to FIRMS, attendance at FSC meetings and additional FIRMS services, as agreed.¹⁰

Entry into force, amendment and termination of this Agreement¹¹

15. This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature by the Parties.

16. The Parties shall review this Agreement every 6 years, or at lesser intervals if this is recommended by the FSC.

17. The Institutional Party may withdraw from this Agreement in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the FSC, and the Information Management Policy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties affix their signatures:

Signature: _____ *Name:* _____

Position: _____ *Date:* _____

For and on behalf of: **The (Institutional Party – name):** _____

Signature: _____ *Name:* _____

Position: _____ *Date:* _____

For and on behalf of: **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations:** _____

¹⁰Those FIRMS services would cover in particular system functionality or customization for the specific use of the Party .

¹¹ These clauses are simple standards used in these forms of voluntary agreement.

Annex 4: Detailed arrangements on the nature, scope and conditions under which information is made available to the Parties and, where applicable, to non-Parties.

1. Data types and standards

The Parties shall cooperate for the definition and adoption of data types and standards appropriate for the required inputs to FIRMS, in accordance with applicable international standards and practices, or through the development of such standards and practices, and in sufficient detail to allow sound statistical analysis and presentation through FIRMS.

Where the Institutional Party has adopted data types and standards that are not completely consistent with international standards and practices, the Institutional Party shall provide an explanation and sufficient description of the ways in which its standards depart from international or adopted practices and, where possible, provide a means for conversion of the information supplied to the standards adopted by the Parties for use in FIRMS.

The data supplied to FIRMS shall consist of the following:

Report ... (report name/series)..... published from time to time¹. AND/OR

resources (species/stocks), and shall include related details as described, together with aggregation information and according to an update schedule².

Resource	Stock estimate	Fishery details	Vessel Details	Technology details	Aggregation Details	Update schedule

2. Collection, authentication, processing and transmission

The Parties shall, where possible, provide supporting detail on a regular basis, or as necessary, on the information they supply to FIRMS, including:

- (i) data collection methodologies and data precision used;
- (ii) authentication of information sources, data verification undertaken and evaluation of the accuracy of the data supplied;
- (iii) the level of primary processing prior to transmission, including the manner of data conversion and aggregation;
- (iv) the data transmission format; and
- (v) the transmission schedule expected, taking into account data processing and applicable confidentiality requirements, which shall not be unduly delayed from the events that the data describes.

The Parties shall cooperate and coordinate the provision of this supporting information where they have adopted regional standards and common data collection and processing methodologies³.

¹ This section is the individual operating conditions of the particular agreement with an institutional party. It may simply consist of reference to a particular report of the party, which contains the relevant information on the resources required for contribution to FIRMS, e.g. the report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management. This reference effectively allows for simple republishing the fisheries monitoring components of such reports into the FIRMS module.

² Agreed information to be provided may consist of defined information on species, or fisheries, or other matters, as described in the table, or by using some other general template, which might be specifically designed for each agreement.

³ This series of clauses can be modified for each Partnership Agreement, for example where information is unavailable or uncertain.

3. Security, confidentiality, transparency and feedback⁴

FIRMS Partnership Agreement guidelines Guidelines for the elaboration of Annex 1 on detailed arrangement

FAO shall develop and maintain the FIRMS database and application systems according to security standards commensurate with its standing as the global primary information source on the status and trends of fisheries.

The Parties may agree on the applicable confidentiality requirements (including, inter alia, access by non-Parties) that the Institutional Party may require for the information supplied to FIRMS, and on the agreed method that shall be used to aggregate, or remove identification from, such data to comply with such confidentiality requirements.

The Institutional Party shall not withhold the data required for the maintenance of FIRMS, where it is available, except in so far as to protect agreed confidentiality requirements, the basis of which shall be communicated to FAO.

The Institutional Party may inform FAO of any changes to its applicable confidentiality requirements. FAO shall undertake its best efforts to apply such changed requirements in a manner and time agreed.

4. Additional Entitlements⁵

In addition to the entitlements established in the Agreement, this Annex provides for the provision of information or FIRMS services for the purposes of:

-
-
- etc.

Provision of these services is made on the basis of (full cost recovery; partial cost recovery according to an agreed formula; agreed contributions from the regular programme and trust fund arrangements; other donor or international agency contributions⁶).

⁴ Parties may have particular requirements for confidentiality, including the limits on the timing of publication.

⁵ These additional entitlements will also depend on the requirements of the institutional party. These may involve specific analyses and information presentations, or it may involve further assistance, particularly to developing countries in fulfilling this Partnership Agreement. Lastly, it would define the ways in which the additional entitlements would be paid for, including the possibility of donor contributions for the conduct of a partnership.

⁶ The source of the finance for the conduct of the agreement may change over time, from donor funding of particular FIRMS service entitlements to full cost recovery by the Secretariat from the requesting Institutional Party.

Annex 5: (DRAFT) Rules of Procedure of the FIRMS Steering Committee¹**RULES OF PROCEDURE****1. SESSIONS**

Unless contrary to the views of the majority of participating institutions, the interval between successive sessions of the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) shall not exceed three years. The FSC shall meet on announcement by the FSC Secretariat, which shall respect the wishes of the majority of participating institution. The announcement shall generally be made at least six months before the session starts.

2. AGENDA

A provisional agenda for each session shall be prepared by the FSC Secretary in collaboration with the participating institutions. The first item on the provisional agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda. If funds are made available to the FIRMS partnership, the agenda will comprise an element entitled "handling of financial inputs". The agenda shall be distributed with the announcement of the session.

3. NOMINATION OF EXPERTS

Participating institutions should, where possible, notify the FSC Secretary of the names and affiliations of their nominated experts at least four months before the session.

4. DOCUMENTATION

Documents for each session should, if possible, be distributed to all participating organizations and nominated experts at least two months before the session. Each participating institution shall be responsible for the timely distribution of its documents in accordance with the mailing list supplied by the FSC Secretary.

5. OFFICERS

At the start of the Session, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman appointed at the previous session shall call the session to order. In their absence, the FSC Secretary will call the session to order. Following adoption of the agenda, the FSC shall elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its members; they shall remain in office until the election of the new Chairman and new Vice-Chairman at the next session. The outgoing Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be eligible for re-election.

6. EXPENSES

The expenses incurred by experts attending sessions of the FSC shall be borne by the nominating institution or as otherwise arranged between the experts and the respective nominating institution.

7. WORKING LANGUAGE

English shall be the working language of the FSC.

8. VOTING

A majority of the participating institutions shall constitute a quorum. Decisions of the FSC shall be taken by consensus. If all attempts to achieve consensus fail then decisions shall be made by a simple majority of votes cast by those present at the session. Each participating institution is entitled to one vote. When necessary, the Chairman may exercise a casting vote.

9. REPORTS

At each session the FSC shall adopt a report of the session, which will include inter alia all decisions and recommendations. The report shall be distributed by the FSC Secretary to the participating institutions and nominated experts, and to other individuals or organizations as requested by the FSC. FAO should make the report available as widely as possible.

¹ This draft needs to be discussed and agreed in detail on first convening the FSC. The following is based on the rules of procedure of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics, an FAO body established under Article VII of the FAO constitution.

FIRMS Partnership Agreement guidelines
Guidelines for the elaboration of Annex 1 on detailed arrangement

10. MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Although recommendations and decisions of the FSC are not binding on participating institutions, the FSC shall monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations and decisions.

11. INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

The FSC may arrange such intersessional activities as are required for its effective functioning, including inter alia holding informal preparatory meetings, holding meetings of regional or subject groups, preparation of working papers, and communication by correspondence.

12. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Suspension of the Rules of Procedure may be adopted by the FSC by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension had been given to the FSC.

13. AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure may be adopted by the FSC by a two-thirds majority of the participating organizations provided that three months notice of the proposal for the amendment had been given to all participating institutions. An amendment shall come into force unless any objection is received by the FSC Secretary from any participating institution within three months of being adopted.

14. NEW PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

An institution mandated by a Government or intergovernmental body to hold responsibilities for the preparation or publication of fisheries information relevant to the framework of the partnership may become a participating institution of the FSC if it is so decided by a *(two-thirds)*² majority of the participating organizations provided that three months notice of the proposed admission had been given to all participating organizations.

15. WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Any participating Institutions may withdraw from the FSC after giving three months' notice to the FSC Secretary who will inform other participating institutions. If a participating institution does not provide any experts for three consecutive sessions without notification, it will be deemed to have withdrawn.

² This should be in brackets because such a majority needs to be decided on by the original partners of when the FSC comes into being.

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION IN CWP-20 REPORT

Para. 30. CWP welcomed the preparation of more field guides for the identification of elasmobranchs and agreed that further practical field guides were required to allow the at-sea identification of sharks based on fins and other body parts, which are often the only parts landed.

Para. 35. CWP recognized that methodological descriptions of national fishery statistics programmes provide very useful indications of statistical quality and recommended that such descriptions be collated and made available by CWP agencies as far as possible.

Para. 36. A beta version of the developing new FISHSTAT Plus (version 3.0) was presented by FAO. In this new version, data are imported from a XML format that allows compatibility and easier data exchange with other platform like FIGIS and with common formats such as Excel or CSV text files. The version presented still misses some of the functionalities included in the previous version. CWP recommended that once a more stable version is completed, it will be sent to those CWP members which are presently using FISHSTAT Plus as a medium to disseminate their statistics (i.e. ICCAT, ICES, IOTC, NAFO) to allow them to comment before the final version is released. It was further recommended that following the release of the new version, it be possible for a certain period to continue to support the data format used in the previous version, preferably through a conversion facility or at least retention of the old version of the software, in order to allow a smooth transition between the two versions.

Para. 37. CWP recommended that FAO should continue to support and maintain the development of FISHSTAT Plus and provide assistance, including the provision of simple data import procedures which can be used by CWP agencies to implement data updates or revisions.

Para. 38. For the collection and compilation of fisheries statistics in the South East Asia region, CWP recommended that FAO and SEAFDEC investigate the feasibility of harmonising their data collection inquiries in order to reduce the burden on countries submitting statistics to both organizations, taking note of the particular requirements of the SEAFDEC region concerning small scale fisheries.

Para. 42. CWP noted that several general purpose fishery data systems are used or under development by different RFBs or individual countries. The CWP recommended that characteristics of such information systems should be compared and evaluated in a workshop organized by FAO that should be convened before CWP-21 which could consider the outcome.

Para. 44. There was considerable discussion concerning to what extent CWP should involve itself in advocacy for improved statistics and in support of statistical development. While all participants agreed that CWP should play a more active role in drawing attention to shortcomings in current fishery statistics and the need for improvements, opinions varied as to how far this should be taken. It was finally agreed that the first option presented in the Review paper, which involves taking advantage of opportunities as they arise to draw attention to shortcomings and the need for improvement, should be pursued for the foreseeable future. The second option, which would be much more proactive, would probably require a change to the CWP Statutes and additional funds for a work programme. Although many CWP agencies have a mandate to pursue such initiatives, it is doubtful that CWP has under its current Statutes.

Para. 45. There was also considerable discussion concerning the lack of recognition by many governments of the need for reliable statistics as a basis for fisheries policy making and management. It was agreed that a 1–2 day workshop on this topic should be held prior to CWP-21. If the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries is adopted, the workshop could focus on implementation of the Strategy with a focus on the national level, and on the needs of developing countries in particular.

Para. 46. It was agreed that in future CWP should aim to promote its work for the improvement of fishery statistics more widely, as at the national level it was little known. In pursuing such wider recognition in future, it is better to avoid the term “advocacy” when considering CWP’s role, but rather to use alternative terms such as “advisory”.

Para. 57. CWP recommended that importing and exporting countries should transmit full trade document information to the RFBs and requested FAO to send the draft forms of the standard documents which FAO is designing to the RFBs concerned, prior to the next meeting of RFBs in March 2003. CWP recommended that the Agencies concerned should liaise on the aspects related to the conversion factors, and the exchange of catch certification and trade documentation information.

Para. 63. CWP noted that, while the terms “nominal catch”, “landings” and “product weight” have been defined in various publications of CWP agencies (including the Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards), some of them tended to be used rather loosely (for example “catch” being used when “nominal catch” was the more accurate term). Data collators were urged to avoid confusion for the data users by applying the terms in a more rigid manner. CWP recommended the use of the term “gross removals” to cover the nominal catch (the live weight equivalent of the landings) plus the quantities discarded (also expressed in live weight) and that this also be reflected in the text of the Handbook.

Para. 69. CWP recommended that a common format and similar graphic user interface for sharing and presenting vessel records be agreed and adopted. Such a goal could be achieved through setting up a common system to share, manage and present data. In that respect, CWP further recommended that the documents prepared by FAO be reviewed by interested parties, with feedback provided by May 2003, and that close collaboration between FAO and interested regional fishery bodies take place, regarding both system design and layout.

Para. 72. The meeting noted that the CWP has participated according to its mandate in the meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and the above-mentioned technical consultation. The RFBs have also participated in the development of the proposed FAO Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries. The meeting agreed that CWP would be prepared to facilitate implementation of the Strategy within areas of its mandate.

Para. 74. Following considerable discussion on the position CWP could take in relation to the proposed Strategy at the forthcoming COFI meeting, it was agreed that the CWP position, which should be conveyed to COFI, is as follows:

- Many elements of the proposed Strategy fall within the remit of the CWP and CWP is striving towards the same objective as that specified in paragraph 12 of the Strategy document, albeit in the narrower context of statistics;
- In pursuit of its drive for improved fishery statistics at the national, regional and global levels, CWP supports the proposed Strategy as an overall framework within which its own aims clearly lie;

CWP is prepared to actively facilitate implementation of the Strategy for those elements of the Strategy which fall under its mandate.

Para. 75. CWP noted with great interest the report of the Second FIGIS–CWP Meeting of 20 January 2003 and the draft Partnership Agreement which are presented in Appendix 7. CWP agreed with the distinction made between the roles of CWP and FIGIS Steering Committee (FSC) as stated in paragraph 38 of the report in Appendix 7.

Para. 78. FAO informed that there had been consideration by the SEAFO process concerning the boundary line between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as to whether 30°E or 20°E would be more practical as a boundary for its convention area (see CWP–17 report, paragraph 131). Similarly, there are boundary concerns regarding CECAF and SEAFO areas (in a small area of the northern boundary of area 47). CWP recommended that in general ad hoc adjustments to statistical boundaries should be discouraged and that any statistical boundary changes, which inevitably require changes to statistical data reporting questionnaires, should only be implemented if historical data can be adjusted to retain consistent time series (see CWP–17 report, paragraph 130). CWP further recommended that the Secretariat once again inquire of SEAFO as to its intentions concerning the boundary between areas 47 and 51 and, if the 30°E boundary is to be retained. The development of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) will also require similar considerations of its western boundary.

Para. 81. CWP reviewed the proposed revision of the ISSCFV classification, noting that an earlier review was described in the report of CWP–19 (paragraphs 157–162). After extended discussions by CWP members, it was restated that the ISSCFV categories should be based on consideration of vessel structural characteristics, but agreed that some category terms should be revised to better reflect vessel types currently used in fisheries. Whilst FAO has had extensive consultations with fishery technologists, CWP recommended fisheries statisticians should also be consulted to develop suitable criteria and nomenclature. It was noted very few

regional fishery bodies now use vessel types for statistical recording, and that most agencies now use gear types extensively, particularly in tuna fisheries. Thus, guidance was provided for improving the current proposal:

- Purse seiners: the sub-categories American seiner and European seiner should be reworded to 'Purse Seiner: American type', and 'Purse Seiner: European type'. The introduction of a 'Purse Seiner: Chinese type' category should be considered. To that effect SEAFDEC will liaise with FAO;
- Multipurpose vessels: 'Polyvalent' should be renamed 'Multipurpose'; the multipurpose category should be reduced as much as possible, in order to avoid facilitating reporting against this opened category; the 'Pelagic trawler – purse seiner' would be an obvious category under multipurpose vessels;
- 'Platform for aquaculture' and 'Fishing vessels using pumps for fishing' should be deleted;
- 'Local vessel types' (e.g. 'bottom otter trawler') may be added as required at the third level as examples of vessel types under either first level or second level of standard categories.

CWP recommended that after considering these inputs, the Secretariat revise the proposed revision and circulate it for comments.

Para. 87. The primary medium for dissemination of the new version of the Handbook is the Internet, although it was suggested that dissemination of the Handbook on a CD ROM would also be useful, and CWP recommended that FAO consider this. The content of the Handbook will be subject to ongoing revision and therefore CWP recommended that version control should be carefully maintained. It was also suggested that an appendix that lists the abbreviations of units of measurement would also be useful. The meeting congratulated FAO and Eurostat on their considerable efforts which have resulted in an extremely useful document.

The report of the twentieth session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), Victoria, Seychelles, 21–24 January 2003, is presented. Topics discussed were: changes in membership of CWP; review of recommendations from CWP–19; reports of intersessional meetings; reports on intersessional developments in Agency programmes in fishery statistics; elasmobranch and bycatch statistics; national data collection methodologies and data quality; proposals for an advocacy role for CWP; catch and aquaculture terminology; vessel identifiers; proposed FAO strategy on improving information on status and trends of capture fisheries; a report on the Second FIGIS–FIRMS Ad Hoc Meeting, 20 January 2003, Victoria, Seychelles; STATLANT issues (statistical areas; International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV); socio-economic indicators; environmental sustainability indicators; fishery statistics for Southeast Asia); and the CWP Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards.

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