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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Third meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009

REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIPARTITE MEETING “FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF THE RECOFI” (TEHRAN, IRAN, 29 JULY 2009)

INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-eighth Near East Regional Conference (NERC – March 2006) called on FAO to encourage Members to promote measures to rebuild and rehabilitate the fisheries infrastructure and institutions in Iraq. At the fourth RECOFI Session, the Commission expressed the hope that Iraq would resume its concern by participating in future Commission sessions and stressed that it would welcome further information from Iraq on the most immediate needs concerning efforts needed to rebuild and rehabilitate its fisheries institutions.

2. At the fifth session of RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009) the delegate of Iraq, with the support from the delegates of Iran and Kuwait requested the Secretariat to facilitate sub-regional cooperation among the three countries on fisheries issues of common concern, including IUU fishing. After considerable discussion on the matter, the Commission agreed that the Secretariat should support, on an *ad hoc* basis, a sub-regional meeting among the three Members, with the view to promote enhanced cooperation. The Commission agreed further that the Secretariat should liaise directly with the three Members on arrangements for the meeting.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING

3. The RECOFI Secretariat convened the preliminary meeting on the *Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI* at the time of the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting” (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26-29 July 2009).

4. The meeting was held on 29 July 2009 and attended by participants from Iran, Iraq and Kuwait headed respectively by the following officials:

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- Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi, Director General, Fishing and Fisher Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization
 - Mr Mehdi Shirazi, Deputy Director General, Public and International Relations, Iran Fisheries Organization
 - Mr Ali Musaddak, Director General, General Board for Fish Resources Development
 - Mr Haider Murad, Under Secretary, Deputy Director General, Fisheries Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources of Kuwait

5. Mr Piero Mannini, with the assistance of Ms Tara Mirfenderesk (FAO Representation, Tehran) participated in the meeting. Mr Mannini was present in his dual capacity as Secretary of RECOFI and Senior Fisheries Officer, Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, FAO, Cairo.

6. Mr Mannini chaired the meeting using the Agenda proposed by the Secretariat (Annex 1). Due to a lack of time and limited relevance in the immediate future, discussion on Agenda Item 7 was postponed to the next meeting (October 2009). Participants expressed satisfaction for the prompt and timely response of the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat, which enabled the meeting to be held only two months after it had been raised at the fifth RECOFI session.

7. The meeting agreed that current and future discussions should pertain exclusively to fisheries issues appropriate and coherent with the RECOFI and the FAO mandate, with no reference to legal status of territories and boundaries.

8. Furthermore, the meeting agreed to name the current undertaking as the FAO/RECOFI “Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI”. Discussion focused on the identification of the priority topics, as listed below, to be included in the agenda of this initiative aimed at fostering sub-regional cooperation to support sustainable fisheries:

- 1) fisheries management in the northern area of RECOFI including the review of effectiveness of current conservation and management measures to preserve the resources and aquaculture;
- 2) subregional trade (dynamics, constraints, opportunities);
- 3) promotion of sustainable inland, brackish and marine waters aquaculture, including stock enhancement; and
- 4) establishment of scientific cooperation and implementation of joint activities.

9. With reference to topic 3 the meeting was advised that the mandate of RECOFI did not include inland waters. In the sub-region, however, inland waters are an essential component of the northern RECOFI’s ecosystem much affecting marine fisheries production. The meeting concurred on the need to pursue an integrated and holistic approach in accordance with FAO’s mandate concerning freshwater fisheries and aquaculture.

10. The meeting deemed it necessary to substantiate the selected topics with quantitative information. This would create a solid base for discussion and analysis. Mr Haider Murad (Kuwait) offered to coordinate the preparation of a survey questionnaire to gather and compile the available and relevant data and information on the fisheries and aquaculture of the three in countries in the area under discussion.

11. The roadmap to follow to implement the initiative was outlined including the basic steps to be undertaken jointly by the three countries. The short-term workplan accepted by the meeting consists of five actions to be carried out during the next eight to ten months:

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- a) formulation of a questionnaire to acquire the relevant fisheries and aquaculture data in the sub-region concerned;
 - b) review of the questionnaire and preliminary data at a side meeting to be held during the planned “Third Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management”, Qatar, October 2009;
 - c) completion of the survey questionnaire and data analysis;
 - d) discussion of results of the survey questionnaire at the meeting of the “FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI” that will take place back to back, at the envisaged *ad hoc* intersessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance the RECOFI’s role to be held in the Islamic Republic of Iran during the first semester of 2010; and
 - e) identification of the resources necessary for the implementation, within the established cooperation framework, of the multiyear work plan for the promotion and support of fisheries management in the northern area of the RECOFI.

12. The meeting designated a temporary Secretariat to support and coordinate the initiative. Members of the Secretariat are Messrs Ali Asghar Mojahedi (Iran, I.R.), Ali Musaddak (Iraq), Haider Murad (Kuwait). The FAO/RECOFI Secretariat will assist in coordination and will provide backstopping as necessary and feasible.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

13. The Working Group is invited to:
- consider the outcome of the preliminary meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI and comment on it, as appropriate;
 - propose ways and means to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken at the national and regional levels; and
 - provide guidance to the Secretariat on further steps for implementation.