



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

TWENTY-NINTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Caracas, Venezuela, 24 to 28 April 2006

REPORT OF THE XII WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

I. Introduction

1. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established by Resolution 4/61 of the FAO Council at its Sixty-first Session held in Rome in November 1973 under Article VI (1) of the FAO Constitution. The Commission has competence to deal with all living marine resources.
2. The membership of the WECAFC is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO which notify the Director-General of their desire to be considered as members. The present members of the Commission are: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, European Community, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of), Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.
3. The goal of the Commission is to promote international cooperation for the conservation, development and sustainable utilisation of the living marine resources of the Western Central Atlantic region (Wider Caribbean region). The main objectives of the Commission are to facilitate the coordination of research, to encourage education and training, to assist Member Governments in establishing rational policies and to promote the rational management of resources that are of interest for two or more countries.

Twelfth Session of WECAFC

4. The Twelfth Session of the WECAFC and the Ninth Session of the Committee for Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles were held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from 25 to 28 October 2005.
5. Delegates from 16 WECAFC member countries and the European Community, and observers from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme Regional Coordinating Unit, the Centre for Resource Management and

Environmental Studies (CERMES) and the IOC¹/Unesco Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE), attended the Sessions.

6. Given the social and economic importance of fisheries to the WECAFC member countries, the role fisheries play in their national food security, and the keen interest in regional cooperation for the conservation and management of these fisheries resources facilitated through the unique and neutral forum, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, it was considered necessary to inform the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean on the outcome of the Twelfth Session of the Commission.

II. Main Decisions of the Twelfth Session of the Commission

The Commission:

The status of fisheries resources in the WECAFC region

7. Discussed the poor quality of data and the problems being experienced by countries. One cause of the problem was that most fisheries agencies did not have sufficient capacity to collect good quality data and addressing this would require policy-makers to give a higher priority to fisheries agencies and to providing the resources necessary for them to fulfil their tasks effectively.

8. Requested FAO to consider holding a workshop on turtle-fishery interactions in the region.

Status and trends of fisheries and aquaculture in the WECAFC region

9. Noted that the formulation of sound national fisheries policies were required, in light of the need for countries to address the requirements posed by the evolving international normative fisheries framework in relation to their national and sectoral economic and social objectives.

10. Recognized that the issue of fish quality and safety could have significant impacts on the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and on the livelihoods of fishers in the short term and that it must be considered at policy and technical assistance levels.

11. Noted that FAO, in accordance with the programme of work, which was approved by COFI² at its Twenty-sixth Session, will undertake studies and assessments to determine the impact of subsidies on fishing capacity, IUU³ fishing and on fisheries management in general.

12. Agreed on the need to work effectively towards reducing subsidies that affect the sustainability of fishery resources, in particular, through the generation of excess fishing capacity and IUU fishing.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAs) AND FISHERIES IN THE WECAFC REGION

13. Emphasized the importance of consultation with affected fishers and other stakeholders to avoid the dangers of conflicts between fishers and other users.

14. Recognised that while, in general, larger sized MPAs were more effective, enforcement became more difficult with increasing size of the MPA. VMS⁴ offered one means of improving enforcement in relation to vessels.

¹ Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

² Committee on Fisheries

³ Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported

⁴ Vessel Monitoring System

15. Suggested that national fisheries agencies monitor the process within the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) to examine the scientific, legal and institutional aspects of MPAs on the high seas.

INCREASING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY – INTRODUCTION TO FAO TECHNICAL GUIDELINES No. 10

16. Emphasized the importance of ensuring significant improvement in the small-scale fisheries sector's contribution to food security and poverty alleviation, by addressing the following aspects :

- gaining a better understanding of the nature, extent, and causes of vulnerability and poverty in small-scale fisheries and improved information on and indicators for monitoring the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation;
- improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration and development of effective strategies and policies to address poverty and food security issues, and, where appropriate, inclusion of small-scale fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies and policies;
- better management through the allocation of secure fishing rights backed by appropriate legislation to small-scale fishers in coastal and inland zones and their effective protection from industrial fishing activity or activities that degrade aquatic resources and habitats;
- implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and its accompanying Technical Guidelines on Increasing the Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Food security and Poverty Alleviation; and
- the encouragement of the formation of fisher's organizations at community level and the facilitation of their representation at local, regional and national levels, thereby creating a sense of ownership and accountability by the small-scale stakeholders in the decision-making process.

17. Stressed the social and economic importance of small-scale fisheries to coastal communities. It was also noted that the contribution of small-scale fisheries to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and in particular, to food security and poverty alleviation, was generally overlooked and underestimated.

18. Recommended that a study be carried out by FAO to determine the contribution of small-scale fisheries to the development of coastal communities, with special reference to the SIDS⁵, and its contribution to the GDP of WECAFC Members.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF WECAFC AND MATTERS REFERRED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSION

Intersessional activities and follow-up actions

19. Recommended that the consultation on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation be accorded high priority in the Commission's programme of work for the next biennium.

⁵ Small Island Developing States

Report of the activities of the WECAFC ad-hoc working groups

20. Congratulated the WECAFC working groups on their achievements.
21. Supported collaboration with UNEP-CEP⁶.
22. Welcomed the “Manual for the Monitoring and Management of Queen conch” and the proposed workshops on the monitoring and management of Queen conch fisheries to assist in meeting CITES⁷ requirements.

Working Group on the Sustainable Development of Moored FAD⁸ Fishing in the Lesser Antilles

23. Endorsed the proposed project, MAGDELESA (Moored Fish Aggregating Device in the Lesser Antilles) and commended IFREMER⁹ for its contributions and leadership of the Working Group.

Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

24. Stressed the usefulness of reporting on progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and suggested that Members should make an extra effort to provide information to FAO on the implementation of the Code bearing in mind the usefulness of the progress reports.

REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP (SAG) OF WECAFC

25. Endorsed the recommendations that WECAFC should participate actively in the PDF-B stage of the CLME¹⁰ project and the subsequent implementation of the whole project as well as encourage the CLME project to use and reinforce the existing WECAFC Working Groups.

REPORT OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP (IWG) ON THE STRENGTHENING OF WECAFC

26. Endorsed the “Elements of a plan to strengthen WECAFC”, prepared by the IWG.
27. Approved the draft statutes for WECAFC, prepared by the IWG.
28. Endorsed the recommendation from the second IWG meeting that a full-time Secretary would be required to fulfil the requirements of the revised statutes.
29. Took note of the fact that WECAFC members could second staff to the WECAFC Secretariat to assist it to fulfil its functions.
30. Agreed to submit the revised statutes to the next session of the FAO Council in March 2006. Once the Council had approved the statutes.
31. Agreed that the IWG should develop the Rules of Procedure of WECAFC, once the statutes are approved by the FAO Council.

WORK PROGRAMME OF WECAFC, 2006-07

32. Noted that the consultation on the Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Food security and Poverty Alleviation was not held in the last biennium, recommended that this activity be accorded high priority in the Commission’s programme of work for the next biennium.

⁶ United Nations Environment Programme – Caribbean Environment Programme

⁷ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna

⁸ Fish Aggregating Device

⁹ French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea

¹⁰ Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem

33. Suggested that this activity should be combined with the proposed study on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to the development of coastal fishing communities and the contribution of this sector to the GDP and be included in the proposed work programme.
34. Noted the interest of UNEP-CEP in collaborating with WECAFC on the implementation of the proposed capacity building workshops on the monitoring and management of Queen conch and in the proposed assessment and management workshops on Caribbean spiny lobster fisheries.
35. Noted that UNEP-CEP would like to collaborate with WECAFC in identifying joint activities under this project that would support the implementation of the SPAW¹¹ Protocol.
36. Accepted the suggestion by some delegates that CITES and the CRFM¹² be included in Activity I, "Coordination and Liaison", of the proposed work programme.
37. Agreed to include the proposed meeting of the working group on FADs to prepare the project proposal on promoting subregional Cooperation in Developing Sustainable Moored Fish Attracting Device Fishing in the Lesser Antilles in the proposed work programme.
38. Noted the offer of IFREMER-French Guiana to support the convening of the meeting of the working group on shrimp and groundfish resources in the Brazil-Guianas shelf and requested that this offer be included in the proposed work programme.
39. Noted the proposal of IFREMER-French Guiana to convene a working group on snapper involving Brazil, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Venezuela.
40. Agreed that the existing intersessional working group (IWG) should be given the task of preparing the draft Rules of Procedure and that it should follow the same procedures it adopted during its first term.
41. Noted the offer of the United States to look favourably towards providing support for the next meeting of the IWG soon after March 2006.
42. Approved the draft Work Programme for 2006-07.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

43. Noted the information provided by Venezuela on the First Latin America and Caribbean Meeting on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, March 2006.
44. Noted that inter-institutional interaction at the national level was a prerequisite to ensure that fisheries issues were adequately addressed in the GEF¹³/IOCARIBE CLME project.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

45. Elected Colombia as Chairperson and St Vincent and the Grenadines as Vice-Chairperson respectively.

DATE AND PLACE OF THIRTEENTH SESSION

46. Noted the offer made by Colombia to host the thirteenth session of WECAFC in October 2007.

¹¹ Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

¹² Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

¹³ Global Environment Facility