



**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Second Session of the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF)

Thirty-fifth Session of the Commission

Rome, Italy, 9-14 May 2011

**REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
Athens, Greece, 12-17 April 2010**

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its first session in Athens, Greece, on 12 to 13 April 2010. The session was attended by the delegates of 15 GFCM Members as well as Observers from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

2. In the absence of Mr Mohamed Fathy Osman, Chairperson of CAF, the session was called to order by Mr Mohamed Haj Ali Salem, Chairperson of the Commission, who welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Greece for hosting the session and the excellent organization.

Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the session

3. The Chairperson referred to the Statements of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Community and its Member States as provided in GFCM: XXXIV/2010/Inf.12.

4. The agenda was adopted without changes and is attached in Appendix A.

REPORT FROM THE SECRETARIAT ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

Administrative issues

5. Mr Abdellah Srour, Acting Executive Secretary, introduced this point of the agenda on the basis of document CAF:I/2010/2 “Report of the Secretariat on Administrative and Financial Issues”. He started by providing a summary of actions taken in relation to the administration of the Secretariat (Administrative Report), including issues such as staffing, the GFCM Performance Review (PR), the new headquarters, meetings, publications and the status of ratification of the GFCM Agreement as amended in 1997. He also addressed issues related to the status of payment of contributions to the autonomous budget and the statement of expenditures for 2009 (Financial Report).

Recommendations adopted under Article V of the GFCM Agreement

6. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat had officially transmitted to Members and Observers the text of recommendations and resolutions adopted at the Thirty-Third Session of the Commission (March 2009). After the “grace period”, the decisions entered into force on 9 September 2009.

GFCM Performance Review

7. The Acting Executive Secretary reported briefly on the selection and nomination process of external experts for the GFCM Performance Review. The Committee was informed that these experts were chosen by the Selection Panel from a list of potential candidates identified by the Secretariat. The Performance Review started on January 2010 and was in progress. It is expected that a preliminary report be circulated in June 2010.

8. He also informed the CAF that Ms Judith Swan, the coordinator of the team of experts in charge of the Performance Review, is attending the different sessions of GFCM in her capacity of external expert and kindly invited the delegates to complete the questionnaire sent by the Performance Review team in order to contribute to the evaluation process.

Activities and functioning of the Secretariat

9. The Committee was informed that the intersessional activities of the Secretariat included organizing and coordinating several meetings such as the annual session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Subsidiary Bodies of the SAC and of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) including the Coordinating Meeting of the Working Groups. The Secretariat produced several technical and administrative documents, available on the GFCM Web site and some of which are published as “Studies and Reviews”.

10. The Committee was informed on the progress made in filling the vacant posts within the Secretariat. The bilingual secretary, Ms Claudia Escutia and the administrative assistant/typist, Ms Raffaella Dirat have been selected between September and December 2009. The delegates were further informed that the recruitment of the Information Management Officer will be made in due course. In relation to the urgent need to strengthen the Secretariat in terms of technical staff, a proposal for three additional posts within the course of the next two years was brought to the attention of the Committee: Stock Assessment/Population Dynamics expert, Editor/Translator of technical documents and publications, Manager of Information on Compliance and Aquaculture.

Headquarters of the Commission

11. With regards to the question of the new headquarters of the Commission, the acting Executive Secretary reported briefly on the present situation. He informed on the issue of the running costs (estimated at € 146 000.00 per year) to be covered by a voluntary contribution from FAO to cover specific expenses (estimated € 46 000.00) as well as by a contribution from Italy (the remainder) in relation to which no formal indication had been received yet by the Secretariat. The representative of Italy confirmed Italy’s interest in supporting GFCM activities within the Mediterranean as demonstrated by the financial contributions towards AdriaMed, MedSudMed and EastMed regional as well as the disposal of the new GFCM Headquarters. He also informed the Commission that the constraints encountered in supporting the running costs related to the new Headquarters were only related to internal administrative issues that have been solved and that additional information would be given by the Italian delegation during the GFCM Session.

Status of ratification of the amendments to the GFCM agreement

12. The Committee was informed on the status of acceptance of 1997 amendments to the GFCM agreement. The situation remained unchanged, i.e. 21 Members had deposited their instruments of acceptance while Egypt and Israel have not yet done so. Regarding the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretariat received a letter on 17 September from the Syrian Embassy in Rome notifying that Syria ratified the agreement on 12 July 2009. However, according to FAO Legal Office,

this letter could not be considered as a formal ratification since the specific standard model for the ratification process had not been used.

Financial issues

Member contributions to the autonomous budget

13. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the “Call for funds” letter was sent in June 2009. By December 2009 most Members had settled their contribution. In total eighteen Members deposited their instruments of acceptance and remitted their contributions; three Members (Bulgaria, Italy and Malta) deposited their instruments of acceptance but have not paid their contribution for 2009; two Members (Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic) have not yet deposited their formal instruments of acceptance; the Syrian Arab Republic has not paid its contribution; one Member (Israel) has not deposited its instrument of acceptance (nor participated in the vote for the selection of Executive Secretary), nor paid its contribution.

Mr Srour informed the Committee that the 2009 contribution of Egypt was recently paid.

14. The representative of Italy informed that the contribution of its country to the GFCM had been paid and that it would be available to the Commission shortly.

15. The representative of Malta informed the Committee that all the necessary actions had already been initiated so that due payments in respect of contributions for 2008 and 2009 will be affected as soon as possible

2009 financial situation: autonomous budget, arrears and trust funds

16. The Committee was informed on the main elements of the budget for the intersessional period, during which the Secretariat managed the expenditure according to the priorities and work plan adopted by the Commission.

17. Information on the status of GFCM extrabudgetary resources (i.e. voluntary contribution from Members) received from EU and Spain in support of the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the CAQ was given.

18. The Committee thanked the Secretariat for the detailed and clear presentation made on administrative and financial issues. The discussion of the Committee focused on the additional future

costs which have been anticipated by the Secretariat through the presentation.

19. Some delegations stated that the request of additional personnel was motivated by the amount of additional activities requested to the Secretariat to perform the activities and the workplan made by the Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission.

20. The EU delegate, supported by the EU Member States and some other delegations, proposed that the strengthening of human resources of the Secretariat should be considered and carried out only after the election and appointment of the new Executive Secretary and in consideration of the outcome of the Performance Review. He pointed out that a clear definition of the role of the Secretariat was needed and the increase of staff should focus more on the administrative issues rather than specific technical topics.

21. With reference to the proposal to the recruitment of an expert of stock assessment, the delegate of Tunisia requested to consider the hire of an expert with different areas of field of expertise in fisheries sciences, including expertise on population dynamics.

22. Some delegates mentioned also that many of the activities requested to the Secretariat could be carried out by consultants and that this should be reflected in the revised version of the budget.

23. The chairman thanked the Secretariat for the presentation made and thanked the donors, namely EU and Spain, for the support provided which made some activities on aquaculture possible.

24. The Committee agreed that a final decision should be adopted according to the discussions on other issues such as the election of the Executive Secretary and the review of the workplan for 2010.

PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE GFCM EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

25. In relation to the issue of the procedure of selection and appointment of the GFCM Executive Secretary, a proposal was put forward by the Secretariat (ref. CAF:I/2010/3 - GFCM:XXXIV/2010/Inf.7). The proposed procedure draws upon the ad hoc procedure adopted at the extraordinary session of the Commission held in Malta in 2004 and applied subsequently at the twenty-ninth Session of the Commission in February 2005, with certain amendments. The Committee was also invited to decide on the duration of the Executive Secretary's mandate, a matter that had not been addressed in the past.

26. Delegates underlined the urgent need for the election of the Executive Secretary and suggested to hold an extraordinary session possibly during the current year, assuming that related budget implications be covered by the 2010 budget. They agreed on the general principles of the selection criteria proposed by the Secretariat. Nonetheless, making reference to the composition of the Selection Committee, delegates underlined that representatives of two Members should be included in that committee:

- a representative from EU Member States
- a representative from a non EU Member State

27. Concerning the length of the mandate, delegates agreed on a time span of five years, with the possibility of extension for a second term, as proposed by the Secretariat.

AMENDED GFCM RULES OF PROCEDURE

28. Based on the document CAF:I/2010/4 the Committee was informed on the proposed amendments the GFCM Rules of Procedure which intended to reflect the terms of reference of the new Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) established at the thirty-third Session of the Commission (March 2009). The Committee also suggested that the procedure of selection and nomination of the Executive Secretary be included as annex to the Rules of Procedure.

Provisional GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2010–2011

29. The Executive Secretary, introduced this Agenda item based on document GFCM Budget and Member Contributions for 2010–2011 (CAF:I/2010/5 – GFCM:XXXIV/2010/Inf.5).

30. The document presents an estimate of forecasted expenditures under the autonomous budget and includes a breakdown of the main budget chapters for 2010 and 2011 financial years. The share of the autonomous budget to be financed by each Member is calculated on the scale featured in the GFCM Financial Regulations. The document should be read in conjunction with the draft programme of work of the Commission for 2010 (documents GFCM:XXXIV/2010/6 and 7) to assess the budgetary implications.

31. The forecasted budget included in the document is based on the proposed programme of work of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for 2010, as adopted at its Twelfth Session and the Programme of Work of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) for 2010, as adopted at its Sixth Session and adjusted at the Third Session of the Coordinating Meeting of the Working Groups

(CMWG). The budget is also adjusted according to an update of the Secretariat administrative and operational costs and does not include any new activity proposed by the Commission, CAF or CAQ. Additional activities would need to be added to this estimate. As requested by the Commission, the budget of cooperative projects financed from extrabudgetary resources and executed by the Secretariat is dealt with separately from the GFCM global budget.

32. The budget was estimated assuming that voting for the selection of the Executive Secretary would take place at the 35th Session; that the subsidiary bodies of the Committees would be adequately supported in order to address in a timely manner the logistics of the organisation of a similar number of meetings in 2011; that the Members would provide effective support to the work of national scientists, experts, administrators and focal points; that FAO would maintain its technical support and that the Commission would not disburse any funds for the functioning of the new GFCM headquarters.

33. With reference to the GFCM Autonomous Budget, Mr Abdellah Srouf presented also the GFCM Member contributions for 2010–2011. The draft budget for the next financial year was presented in accordance with the provisions of Article X of the Financial Regulations and the decision taken by the Commission at its 32nd Session.

34. On the basis of the information and data available to the Secretariat and assuming the Commission approves all proposed expenditures, the total sum of the autonomous budget for 2010 is estimated at 1 691 665 US dollars, while that for 2011 is estimated at 1 920 944 US dollars. This would represent a 14.38 percent increase in 2010 in relation to the initial budget adopted for 2009 and a 13.55 percent increase in 2011 in relation to the budget proposed for the previous financial year.

35. The document also addressed the extrabudgetary resources (i.e. those from voluntary contributions of certain Members) that are essentially allocated to supporting the Committee on Aquaculture and its working groups, as well as funds provided to support the SIPAM Regional Centre. Specifically, these incomes come from Tunisia for the cooperative project in support of the SIPAM Regional Centre; Spain for the cooperative project in support of the working group on marketing of the Committee on Aquaculture (MedAquaMarket); European Union for the cooperative project in support of the working groups of the Committee on Aquaculture, namely on sustainable aquaculture development (InDAM) and on site selection and carrying capacity (SHoCMed); and finally Italy for the cooperative project for strengthening cooperation on fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

36. Upon request of the CAF, the Acting Executive Secretary presented a proposal of a revised budget on the basis of the first version and on the basis of the necessity for the implementation of the

workplan as indicated by the subsidiary bodies of the GFCM. He informed the participants that the changes made concerned the deletion of the stock assessment and scientific editor posts previously proposed and the consequent increase in the consultancy budget line, together with the introduction of the budget line for the extraordinary session including the cost of the Selection Panel Members (the Secretariat's proposed budget is in Appendix D)

37. The representative of the EU, supported by other EU Member states and other delegations expressed some concern on the proposed revised budget and stressed that this does not reflect the discussions. Furthermore he requested some clarification concerning the use of the arrears of 2009, the costs of the official travel and those related to the extraordinary session.

38. The Acting Executive Secretary gave additional information about the arrears and informed the Committee that, as indicated by the Commission and according to the administrative procedures, contributions paid after 31 December of each year will be part of the capital fund to cover unforeseen expenses occurred during the first four months of 2010. He added that it is very difficult to manage the activities of the Secretariat including the organization of a meeting such the CAF, CoC and GFCM session, without the availability of funds. The costs indicated for the official travel are the direct results of the scheduled meetings as reported in the workplan of the subsidiary bodies. The cost related to the organization of the Extraordinary Session (about 52.000 US dollars) reflects the request made by the CAF on a two days meeting in which are considered the costs of: the costs of the travel and board and lodging for the different members of the selection committee and of the selected applicants, the costs of translation and of reporting and the other relevant costs

39. The representative of Tunisia recalled that the discussion should not concentrate only on the costs of the Extraordinary Session but the proposal of the revised budget should reflect the deletion of the costs of additional staff proposed by the Secretariat. He also proposed that firstly an extraordinary session should be organized for the election of the Executive Secretary.

40. The discussion which followed focused on the estimated cost for the extraordinary session as well as the global budget proposal for 2010–2011.

41. The representative of the EU proposed the bringing together of a small informal group (composed of 3 Members) within the CAF to work on a budget proposal, in collaboration with the Secretariat.

42. After in-depth discussion, the CAF agreed on this proposal. It was also stressed that this group

would serve to facilitate the understanding of decisions on budget related issues, whilst taking into consideration the workplan priorities of SAC and CAQ.

Agenda

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the session
3. Reports from the Secretariat on administrative and financial issues
 - 3.1 Activities and functioning of the Secretariat and needs for the future
 - 3.2 Progress on the issue of the new Headquarters of the Commission
 - 3.3 Status of ratification of the Amendments to the GFCM Agreement
 - 3.4 Contributions by Members to the autonomous budget
 - 3.5 2009 financial situation: autonomous budget, arrears and trust funds
4. Procedures for the selection of the GFCM Executive Secretary
5. Amended GFCM rules of procedure
6. Provisional GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2010–2011
7. Any others matters
8. Date and venue of the second session
9. Adoption of the report

List of documents

CAF:I/2010/1	Provisional Agenda and Timetable
CAF:I/2010/2	Report of the Secretariat on administrative and financial issues
CAF:I/2010/3	Procedure for the selection and appointment of the GFCM Executive Secretary
CAF:I/2010/4	Amended GFCM Rules of Procedure
CAF:I/2010/5	GFCM budget and Members contribution for 2010–2011
CAF:I/2010/Inf.1	Provisional List of Documents
CAF:I/2010/Inf.2	Agreement for the Establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, Financial Rules and Rules of Procedure
CAF:I/2010/Inf.3	Terms of reference of the Committee on Administration and Finance
CAF:I/2010/Inf.4	Duties and responsibilities of an expert in stock assessment/ population dynamics within the GFCM Secretariat
CAF:I/2010/Inf.5	Duties and responsibilities of a scientific editor within the GFCM Secretariat