

**Report of the**

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**THIRD MEETING OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS  
NETWORK**

**Rome, 7–8 February 2011**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the Third Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats held in Rome on 7 and 8 February 2011.

**FAO.**

Report of the Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network.  
Rome, 7–8 February 2011.

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### ABSTRACT

The Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN-3) was held in Rome, Italy, from 7 to 8 February 2011. It addressed many pressing issues relating to global and regional fisheries governance, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapacity, the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, small-scale and inland fisheries and the outcomes of the twenty-ninth Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome during the previous week. Twenty-eight Regional Fishery Body (RFB) Secretariats were represented at the meeting with varying responsibilities over inland, coastal and marine fisheries and aquaculture, as well as four intergovernmental organizations.

The meeting reached a number of conclusions regarding matters that merit the attention of RFBs, governments and FAO. The RSN also issued a Statement responding to unsubstantiated information that had been published about RFBs and elaborating the challenges and achievements of RFBs.



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## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The Chairperson, Mr Kjartan Hoydal, opened the meeting and welcomed Mr Árni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture. Being familiar with Icelandic fisheries he noted Mr Mathiesen's important role as a fisheries minister of Iceland in developing the well functioning Icelandic fisheries management system. He noted that the RSN, under Mr Mathiesen's predecessor Mr Nomura, had received full support throughout and expected that this would continue under Mr Mathiesen. A list of participants is in Appendix B.

2. Mr Árni M. Mathiesen made an opening statement. He described the unique role of RFBs for fisheries governance as reflected, *inter alia*, in the proceedings of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). He emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination among RFBs and expressed FAO's strong expectation and commitment to work with them. Mr Mathiesen expressed gratitude for the high level of cooperation lent by RFBs to FAO. The full text of Mr Mathiesen's opening statement is in Appendix D.

3. The Meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Mr Kjartan Hoydal, Secretary of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Adoption of Agenda**

4. The Meeting adopted the agenda in Appendix A. A list of documents provided to the Meeting is in Appendix C. Mr Hiromoto Watanabe coordinated meeting arrangements and Ms Judith Swan served as rapporteur.

### **Meeting arrangements**

5. The Chairperson reported that there had been no requests to repeat the arrangements of the Second Meeting of the RSN held in 2009, where thematic sessions had been held in parallel.

### **Observers**

6. The Chairperson referred to his decision to accord observer status to the Guinea Current Commission, which was accepted by the Meeting.

## **RSN INTERNAL MATTERS**

### **Round-table presentation, by member and by region, identifying main activities and challenges since RSN-2**

7. A round-table presentation was given by each participant, identifying main activities and/or challenges since the Second Meeting of the RSN (RSN-2) held in Rome, Italy, in March, 2009.

8. Mr Simon Funge-Smith, Secretary of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), reported that APFIC is an RFB with competence for fisheries and aquaculture in both marine and inland waters in the Asia-Pacific area. The Commission, which has 20 member countries, was constituted under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution in 1948. The Secretariat is provided by FAO and is based at its Bangkok Regional Office.

9. The function of APFIC is to act as a regional consultative forum to review the status of fisheries and aquaculture and raise awareness and build regional understanding and consensus on policy challenges and emerging issues in the region. The Commission has two principal subregions where it focuses its work in marine fisheries: the South China Sea and associated semi-enclosed seas and the Bay of Bengal.

10. The more recent work of APFIC has related to the issues of low value and trash fish, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and managing fishing capacity, ecolabelling and aquaculture certification and the promotion and institutionalization of co-management.

11. In its previous biennium, APFIC promoted the adoption of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture and focused on promoting support to small-scale fisheries both through the work of the Commission and, in close collaboration with the FAO consultative process, for an instrument in small-scale fisheries.

12. In its current biennium, APFIC was focusing on two areas. The first theme was reviving the interest in fisheries assessments, particularly as a tool for informing management. In this regard, a regional workshop was to be convened in 2011, regional training/scoping workshops with FAO had been convened and more were planned in the biennium. A major focus was providing support to the work of the eight country Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem project.

13. The second theme was assisting member countries in understanding the implications of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture in the region. A major thrust was to raise awareness of the importance of integrating fisheries and aquaculture in the national planning process for adaptation and mitigation, noting that currently this is extremely weak.

14. Referring to challenges, it was noted that the work of APFIC is conducted under resource constraints. In order to achieve a relatively ambitious work programme, the operational modality is one of partnership and leveraging of cash and co-finance from member countries, regional partners, bilateral donors and ongoing development programmes in the region.

15. In terms of the RSN, APFIC offers a potential mechanism by which RFBs can outreach to non-members in the Asia-Pacific region. APFIC sees this as being of increasing importance as it tries to strengthen cooperation in the areas of combating IUU fishing and the implementation of port State measures. Support to developing member countries to meet statistical and stock assessment challenges is another potential area of interest and APFIC can thus facilitate access to development projects in this regard, particularly through its close linkages with FAO.

16. Mr Raymon van Anrooy, Secretary of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFAC), reported the main activities of the Commission. He stated that the Agreement on the CACFAC was approved by the FAO Council at its Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Session on 1 October 2009 through Resolution No. 1/137 under Article XIV, paragraph 2 of the FAO Constitution. The approval was a major step forward in the establishment process of this new Commission, begun in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in November 2008. The Agreement entered into force on 3 December 2010 after the Governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia had deposited their instruments of acceptance with the Director-General of FAO. They were the current members of the Commission.

17. The inaugural meeting of the Commission was scheduled to be held in Turkey in the last trimester of 2011. The agenda of this meeting included the approval of the Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations, budget matters, the first Five-Year Regional Work Programme, the logo and the acronym. Technical documents to be put forward for regional endorsement by the Commission at the meeting included, among others, the following:

- Technical guidelines for sturgeon hatchery practices and management;
- Better Management Practices for carp production in Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia; and
- Recommendations for responsible restocking and development of culture-based fisheries in the Central Asian and Caucasus region.

18. Considering that the Commission was newly established, the main efforts of the FAO Secretariat were directed towards increasing membership and showing some immediate achievements and successes that will convince all potential members to become member in the near future.

19. Mr Andrew Wright, Executive Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), reported on major initiatives as follows:

- continued review and consideration of appropriate action to address the recommendations of the 2008 Performance Review;
- development of a strategy to build capacity in CCAMLR science processes, particularly among developing State CCAMLR members;
- ongoing efforts to further reduce IUU fishing which have included training initiatives in Africa and engagement with non-CCAMLR member flag States responsible for vessels that periodically operate in the CCAMLR Convention Area;
- further work on bio-regionalisation in the southern Ocean including the identification of 11 priority regions for protection, developing a road map for the declaration of a representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2012 and, in 2009, the declaration of a high seas MPA of 94,000 km<sup>2</sup> on the South Orkney southern shelf;
- work to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and assess risk to them associated with bottom fishing activities;
- continued application of precautionary catch limits;
- monitoring the status and trends of species associated or dependent on target marine stocks;
- a prioritized program of work for the Scientific Committee including feedback management mechanisms for the krill fishery, attention to exploratory fisheries for toothfish, supporting work associated with the development of a representative system of MPAs and work associated with climate change and ocean acidification; and
- work in 2011 associated with a review of the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, the commissioning of an independent review of the Secretariat's data management systems and re-development of the Commission's web site.

There are 25 members of CCAMLR and nine States Party that are not members.

20. Mr Robert Kennedy, Executive Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of southern bluefin tuna (CCSBT), referred to the global responsibility of the Commission for the management of Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT). He reported that rebuilding the stock was currently the major focus of the CCSBT, given that the spawning stock biomass of SBT was estimated to be below 10 percent of the unfished level. Since RSN-2, the CCSBT had implemented:

- a further 20 percent reduction in the global SBT total allowable catch (TAC) for 2010 and 2011;
- a comprehensive Catch Documentation System (CDS) that includes the individual tagging of all SBT; and
- with major assistance from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), a program for monitoring SBT transshipments at sea.

21. In addition, since RSN-2, the CCSBT has made significant progress and was close to implementing a:

- strategic plan for the CCSBT; and
- management procedure for setting future TACs for the SBT fishery.

22. It has become apparent that different CCSBT members apply different standards in relation to compliance with certain CCSBT conservation and management measures, particularly with respect to validation of the CDS. Work has started on developing a compliance plan for the fishery, including compliance policy statements on issues such as compliance obligations and standards, improved reporting against compliance obligations, independent audit of member's compliance systems, sanctions for non-compliance and sharing of compliance information. The CCSBT Extended Commission has six members and three cooperating non-members.

23. Mr Alhaji Jallow, Secretary of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), reported that CECAF continued to play a key role in the conservation and management of fisheries resources in its area of competence from Morocco to Angola. The Committee has a Scientific Sub-Committee that generates management information from its Small Pelagics, Demersal and Artisanal Fisheries Working Groups. These Working Groups and the Scientific Sub-Committee were funded by a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency that terminated two years ago. So there is a serious need for extra-budgetary support while FAO funds the Secretariat at its Regional Office in Accra, Ghana.

24. CECAF is constrained by low participation of its member countries to statutory meetings because of financial difficulties of most of its coastal members. Some support from the "richer" members can alleviate the problem. There is also a problem of collection of reliable data and their processing and reporting in the region, which can be improved with systematic capacity building.

25. The major challenge to CECAF is IUU fishing and an establishing functional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) deterrence in a region known for its high incidence of IUU fishing and weak MCS structures. CECAF has 34 members.

26. Mr John Moehl, Secretary of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) reported that the Committee, regrouping 38 African countries, aimed at the improved and sustainable management of the region's inland aquatic resources. The Committee has informal links to the African Union/New Partnership for African's

Development (AU/NEPAD) as well as working arrangements with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) including the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and the Lake Tanganyika Authority; both having started as CIFAA Sub-Committees.

27. The sixteenth Session of CIFAA, held in 2010, addressed: improved aquaculture governance, regional concerns regarding development and dissemination of improved fish seed, a regional strategy for inland fisheries and strategies for addressing climate change as it relates to inland fisheries and aquaculture.

28. The Committee has been in a process of transformation since 2006. This started in the form of changing CIFA to CIFAA, underscoring the growing importance of the aquaculture sub-sector. Other changes included modalities as to the period of service of the Chairperson as well as reinforcing the functionality of the intersessional period. This transformation has culminated in revisions of the Committee's Terms of Reference (TORs) and Statutes to make these more relevant to the needs of the region. This work started in 2008 with the new guidelines to have been approved in 2010 by the sixteenth Session. However, due to low participation in that Session, the approval of the revised TORs and Statutes is still outstanding.

29. The Committee has ad hoc Working Groups on Aquaculture Networking and Inland Fisheries, with a third Working Group on Governance having been proposed during the 16th Session. The Group on networking has been meeting since 2006 and resulted in the establishment of the Aquaculture Network of Africa (ANAF). It was anticipated that in the 2011/2012 period ANAF would formally begin the process to become a regional IGO.

30. Although the increasing visibility of the aquaculture has dictated that considerable effort of the Committee be directed to this sub-sector, the preeminent importance of inland fisheries to the livelihoods of the region's people mean that inland fisheries is of critical importance and this sub-sector is in need of significant support, not the least of which is needed to assist in the sustainable management of shared watersheds/basins.

31. Prevailing problems included low participation, low level of resources (human and financial) as well as the need for more formal and functional linkages and arrangements with regional and subregional economic and political bodies/communities.

32. Mr Jan Michael Vakily, Project Coordinator of the SubRegional Fisheries Commission (SRFC)/ Commission sous-régionale des Pêches (CSRP) reported that it is an intergovernmental body established by Convention in 1985. Its seven member States are: Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Senegal hosts the headquarters of the SRFC.

33. The objectives of the SRFC are primarily to advise its member States on the harmonization of their fisheries policies and to strengthen sub-regional cooperation in the areas of MCS, fisheries research and the development of common strategies at international level.

34. During the past three years, the SRFC underwent a major organisational reform of both its administrative and technical structures. This has led to the creation of three technical departments with a clear description of their objectives and mandate. The process was complemented by the formulation of a new policy on human resources development, the revision of all relevant statutory texts and the replacement of the existing technical staff by new personnel recruited according to the requirements of the newly created positions. A new manual of procedures was developed as well, which introduces internationally accepted standards in the financial administration of the projects jointly implemented by the SRFC and international donors.

35. In December 2010, a new Strategic Plan for the period 2011–2015 was submitted to, and approved by, the Conference of Ministers in charge of fisheries in the member States, the SRFC's highest decision-making body. This Strategic Plan was developed in a lengthy process involving the majority of the SRFC's stakeholders. It will be used to guide international donors in the conceptualisation of regional fisheries projects, and at the same time will serve as a monitoring tool of the SRFC's impact on the management of fisheries resources in the subregion.

36. There have been some significant achievements at SRFC. The restructuring of the SRFC has convinced an increasing number of international donors to implement projects in direct collaboration with the SRFC. This provides the SRFC with a much better opportunity to ensure that projects address the priorities set forth by the member States for the management of marine resources. Among the technical and financial partners currently working with the SRFC are the cooperation agencies of France, Germany, the Netherlands, FAO, the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the European Union (EU) as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The areas of intervention comprise:

- regional approaches to the management of small pelagics;
- support to the integration of marine protected areas (MPA) and of the principles of co-management in fisheries management;
- improved retention of the wealth generated from the marine resources in the sub-region;
- a regionally harmonised approach to the introduction of vessel monitoring systems (VMS);
- regional cooperation in the MCS of fishing activities; and
- national and regional action plans for the conservation of sharks and rays.

37. The SRFC is also currently finalizing a major revision of the Convention on the Determination of Conditions of Access and Exploitation of Fisheries Resources in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of the SRFC member States, which came into force in 1993. The main objective of the revision is the inclusion in the revised Convention of the principles of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Code of Conduct), the precautionary approach and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management (EAF). At the same time the scope of the Convention is extended to include, where appropriate, the artisanal fishery.

38. Challenges to SRFC were described. After 25 years in existence, the SRFC had felt the need to evolve from an organization tasked to advise member States on issues related to regionally harmonised fisheries policies towards a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO)<sup>1</sup> with a clearly defined mandate for an integrated approach to fisheries management in the region. Because of the political implications at national level of such a move, it is clear that there is still much work to be done to convince all Member States of the advantages of such a move. The newly established strategic plan is meant to be a first step in this direction.

39. Core funding of the SRFC is provided by the annual contributions of the seven African member States, some of those figuring on the list of the least developed countries and/or just emerging from long periods of political instability. Even though the restructuring of the SRFC and thus the services provided to international donors in the joint implementation of projects has created some additional sources of funding, it remains a major challenge for the SRFC to secure sufficient funding from its member States to ensure its economic survival.

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<sup>1</sup> The term regional fisheries management organization as used in this document includes arrangements.

40. Mr Gerd Marmulla, Secretary of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), reviewed recent developments and processes in restructuring and modernizing the Commission, which has 34 members including EU. He noted that the twenty-sixth session of EIFAC held in 2010 agreed to restructure EIFAC to a project-based organization while abolishing all Sub-Commissions and Working Parties with the aim to make the Commission's work more efficient. That session also agreed to a modernized Statute, mission statement and objectives. The functioning of the Commission has further been strengthened by setting up a Technical and Scientific Committee. A Management Committee which will replace the Executive Committee, once the new Rules of Procedures are adopted, will have more competences and decision power. A review process was underway with the aim of converting the Working Parties that had performed well into projects.

41. "Aquaculture" has formally been added to the name of the Commission for which the acronym is now EIFAAC, although the Commission has been addressing aquaculture issues, through one of its four Sub-Commissions, even prior to the change of name. The change of name and the revised Statute of EIFAAC was approved by the FAO Council at its Hundred and Fortieth session on 3 December 2010 through Resolution No. 3/140 under Article VI paragraph 1 of the FAO Constitution. A Special Session of EIFAC was planned in April, 2011 to consider adoption of the new Rules of Procedure.

42. Mr Fabio Massa, Aquaculture Officer of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and Technical Secretary of GFCM Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) reported on GFCM activities since RSN-2. They have increased considerably largely as a result of the two annual statutory sessions: the thirty-third (2009, Tunisia) and the thirty-fourth (2010, Greece). During the intersessional period, technical activities were carried out by its scientific bodies, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the CAQ, the related main subsidiary bodies and the Committee on Compliance (COC). During the thirty-third session, GFCM decided to establish a new Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) and the 1st session of the CAF was held during the thirty-fourth session.

43. Following up the results and achievements of its subsidiary bodies, GFCM adopted a series binding management decisions in the last two sessions relating to fisheries management and MCS, as well as on fisheries and aquaculture data reporting.

44. The main recommendations adopted during the thirty-third session focused on the establishment of a new Fisheries Restricted Area in the Gulf of Lions and the implementation of a 40 mm minimum mesh size in the cod end of demersal trawl nets. Furthermore, GFCM agreed to put into force a VMS by the end of 2012, as well as to establish a fleet register by the end of 2010 regarding all vessels, boats, ships, or other crafts that are equipped and used for commercial fishing activity in GFCM area.

45. To this extent, the Commission also amended its Recommendation on the record of fishing vessels over 15 meters authorized to operate in GFCM area, and on the establishment of a regional list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Regarding the data and information reporting requirements, the Commission adopted new binding Recommendations for data reporting on aquaculture production statistics and the implementation of GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix, a multi-disciplinary data submission framework for fisheries management purposes.

46. During the thirty-fourth Session, a further achievement in the establishment of a GFCM logbook in the Mediterranean and Black Sea was reached through a Recommendation requiring members to gradually implement the collection of a minimum standard of information regarding fishing operations for vessels over 15 meters prior to 1 January 2013.

The Commission also adopted a Recommendation on the identification of non-compliance related to the obligations under GFCM Agreement in respect of GFCM conservation and management measures.

47. During 2010, a series of activities and meetings were carried out by SAC and CAQ and subsidiary bodies related to the capture fisheries and aquaculture and considered priority issues by the Commission, such as the management of red coral, the status of elasmobranchs, fishing capacity, data collection, recreational fisheries, the algal and jelly fish blooms, selectivity of fishing gear, demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources, market issues on aquaculture, an allocation zone for aquaculture, an environmental quality standard for monitoring aquaculture activities and indicators for sustainable finfish marine aquaculture.

48. In an effort to facilitate the work of the members in fulfilling the data submission tasks mentioned above, the Secretariat is focusing consistent efforts in providing several reporting formats and Information Technology-based means allowing guided and consistent data submission processes.

49. The Commission also strengthened cooperation with the institutions, including national research institutions, in members, thanks to the project-based support given to the activities of the subsidiary bodies of GFCM. Furthermore, since the establishment of its autonomous budget, GFCM has increasingly accelerated the achievement of several milestones directly related to its mandate. However, further steps were still required in order that the Commission may have the necessary instruments concerning financial and management flexibility. In addition, one of the main constraints was the need for continuity and permanency of staff positions to improve the efficiency of the Commission's activities.

50. The GFCM performance review was launched in 2009 and continued in 2010. The result of performance review will be presented and discussed during the next sessions of SAC and CAQ and during the thirty-fifth session of GFCM. There are 24 members in GFCM.

51. Mr Guillermo Compean, Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), reported that a key development for the IATTC since RSN-2 was the entry into force of the Antigua Convention, on 27 August 2010. This Convention replaces and strengthens the 1949 Convention establishing the IATTC. The first meeting of IATTC under the Antigua Convention took place in September 2010. The Commission now has 20 members and three cooperating non-members.

52. IATTC has continued its efforts to manage and conserve the marine species under its purview, and has in place a comprehensive conservation program for yellowfin and bigeye tuna, which is proving to have beneficial impact on the stocks of those species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). Other conservation programs continue for albacore tuna, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, and seabirds.

53. IATTC will be challenged in coming years to continue its conservation efforts, ensure compliance with agreed measures, and address the issue of limiting fishing capacity in the EPO.

54. Mr Brian Hallman, Assistant Director of IATTC, referred to the joint meetings of the tuna RFMOs in the Kobe process. He advised that IATTC would serve as the host/secretariat for Kobe III in July 2011 and invited all the non-tuna RFB Secretariats to attend as observers.

55. Mr Driss Meski, Executive Secretary of ICCAT, noted that the number of ICCAT Contracting Parties reached a total of 48 in 2008, and four non-Contracting Parties, entities and fishing entities have also been granted cooperating status.



56. ICCAT has been busy during the last two years following the Performance Review published in 2009. A meeting of the Working Group on the future of ICCAT was scheduled in May 2011 to further consider actions which need to be taken to improve the performance of ICCAT as an RFMO. Steps have already been taken in this regard with improved compliance review processes, leading to the identification of several Contracting Parties as carrying out activities which may undermine the effectiveness of ICCAT conservation and management measures. Failure to correct compliance deficiencies may lead to sanctions being imposed on such Parties.

57. A series of measures have been taken to address the increasing concern about the state of some of major tuna species under the ICCAT mandate. Following the proposal to list bluefin tuna (BFT) on Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the conservation and management measures for BFT have been further strengthened with additional MCS measures and the full implementation in 2010 of the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin. The Atlantic-wide Bluefin Tuna Research Programme (GBYP) commenced activities with the hiring of a GBYP coordinator in 2010. This programme is a comprehensive research programme including aerial surveys, data mining and tagging. The aim of this programme is to improve understanding of key biological and ecological processes and improve assessment models and the provision of scientific advice.

58. The bluefin tuna catch document programme, which was initiated in 2007, has undergone several modifications to enhance its efficiency. The Commission is currently working on the implementation of an electronic system which is expected to be operative by 2012. The Commission is also studying the possibility of extending the scheme to other tuna and tuna-like species.

59. In the last two years, measures have been introduced for Mediterranean swordfish and several measures have also been adopted to protect shark species taken in association with ICCAT fisheries, as well as further measures relating turtles. Atlantic swordfish, albacore, bigeye and marlins continue to be regulated, with increasing success in meeting the objective of maintaining these populations at levels which permit maximum sustainable yield (MSY).

60. ICCAT continues to be heavily involved in the joint tuna RFMO activities and is taking an active part in the process of harmonization of vessel records, both among RFMOs and at global level. ICCAT also cooperates with other RFMOs on the regional observer programme for transshipment, to ensure the most efficient use of resources.

61. Mr Jean-Jacques Maguire, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), reported that ICES, which has 24 members, is a scientific and advisory intergovernmental organization that provides advice for the management of fisheries and of the environment. In 2010, ICES provided advice on more than 160 fish and invertebrate stocks as well as advice to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Helsinki Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). One of the main challenges was the introduction of an MSY framework for the provision of advice consistent with the precautionary approach. There were a few minor problems but overall, this has been reasonably successful. In 2011, no big changes were expected in the framework but ICES hoped to make progress on the provision of integrated advice in the context of the EAF in the next few years.

62. Mr Simon Brockington, Secretary of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), reported that the IWC was established under the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. The purpose of the Convention was to “provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry”.
63. The Commission has met every year since 1949 and the meeting in 2011 will be the Commission’s sixty-third Annual Meeting. Over this time, the membership of the Commission has grown substantially and totalled 88 contracting governments.
64. Whale stocks were over exploited before and after the Second World War. The Commission exerted some control, but ultimately increasing pressure led the Commission to agree to a ten year ‘moratorium’ on commercial whaling in 1986 which is still in operation today.
65. The contracting governments to the IWC remain deeply divided on the necessity and appropriateness of the moratorium. These deep divisions overshadow present day discussions.
66. Some whaling continues despite the moratorium. Norway and Iceland undertake commercial whaling pursuant to lodging either an objection or a reservation to the Convention. Japan (and in the recent past Iceland) have undertaken ‘special permit’ whaling programmes under Article VIII of the Convention which allows countries to authorise their own catches for scientific purposes.
67. The Commission recently embarked on the “Future of the IWC” process to discuss whaling under objection, reservation or special permit (these being effectively outside of control the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling). The “Future” process also identified and around 30 other issues that had been prioritised by contracting governments.
68. In 2010, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission presented their “Proposed Consensus Decision” which addressed the ongoing scientific, reservation and objection whaling. The Proposed Consensus Decision also contained many other proposals on the 30 issues.
69. There was extensive debate on the Proposed Consensus Decision but no real support developed despite an extensive collaborative process beforehand. The Meeting decided to make a year-long pause in negotiations on the “Future” process. During that time no further negotiations have taken place.
70. However the “Future” process and dialogue led to an improved working atmosphere and trust within the Commission. This improved trust must be maintained, and the Secretariat is looking at ways to develop communication and transparency so as to increase the level of trust still further.
71. One of the next priorities for the Commission will be to establish new quotas for indigenous whaling communities in USA, Greenland, Russia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These quotas are set in five year blocks and are due for renewal in 2012.
72. A wide range of other work is taking place, primarily through the Commission’s Scientific Committee, on endangered whale populations, causes of mortality including ship strikes and entanglements in fishing gear and other factors which affect whale populations such as pollution and sound.

73. Mr Kaitira Ibrahim Katonda, Director of the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA), stated that it is an intergovernmental organization with four member countries. Its main priorities include the development of stakeholders' capacity in the sustainable management of fisheries resources, the environment, the establishment of an integrated regional monitoring system, climate change adaptations and poverty reduction through increased food security. The Lake Tanganyika Regional Integrated Management Programme started its first implementation phase in 2008 and has two immediate objectives: to achieve sustainable management of the natural resources of Lake Tanganyika and to improve livelihoods through physical and social infrastructure development. Mr Katonda described plans for a joint frame survey and the establishment of a co-management system to collect data. The harmonization of fisheries management systems on Lake Tanganyika will be an important outcome of the work of the Authority.

74. The LTA coordinates the implementation of the Convention on the Sustainable Management of Lake Tanganyika, which was signed on 12 June 2003 by the riparian countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Zambia. The Convention unites the countries in recognizing that Lake Tanganyika is a shared heritage with unique biological and other diversity. The Convention also recognizes the significance of Lake Tanganyika for the development of the riparian states, and the necessity of establishing a sustainable legal and institutional framework for cooperative management of the lake.

75. The Conference of Ministers is the supreme organ of the LTA and consists of four Ministers, one from each of the Lake Tanganyika riparian countries. The major function of the Conference of Ministers is to evaluate the implementation of the Convention on the Sustainable Management of Lake Tanganyika. The second organ of the LTA is the Management Committee, which supports, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat oversees implementation of programme and project activities in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

76. The overall objective of the Convention is to ensure the protection and conservation of the biological diversity and sustainable use of the natural resources of Lake Tanganyika and its basin. To achieve the Convention's overall objective, a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) was developed and endorsed by the four riparian countries. SAP priorities include effective operations of the LTA organs, improvement of community infrastructure and improvement in water treatment, development of stakeholders' capacity in sustainable management of fisheries resources, reduction of water pollution and sedimentation flows into the lake and establishment of an integrated regional monitoring system.

77. To enable effective implementation of SAP priority activities, a Regional Integrated Management Programme was established for Lake Tanganyika, which focuses on establishment of sustainable fisheries, catchment management, pollution control, climate change adaptations, and monitoring programs.

78. The programme is supported by all member States, with support from a range of partner organizations including the African Development Bank, Nordic Development Fund, FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GEF, IUCN and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

79. Mr Dick Nyeko, Executive Secretary of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), thanked the Chairperson of the RSN for his continued interaction during the intersession period as his Deputy. He recalled that the LVFO was established by Convention in 1994 with FAO as its Depositary and was duly registered under Article 102 of the UN Charter as an IGO. The Convention Area is the Lake Victoria basin of the three contracting States, the Republics of Kenya and Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

80. Since RSN-2, the LVFO had achieved the following:

- the supreme organ, the Council of Ministers, gave direction on the management measures towards the recovery of the Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*) stocks and committed USD 1.8 million for this purpose;
- the LVFO Council further recommitted towards the implementation of regional plans of action (RPOAs) on Illegalities and Capacity Reduction, especially regarding the Nile perch stocks;
- two new research vessels were commissioned for the Republics of Kenya and Uganda;
- a lake-wide hydro-acoustic survey was undertaken in March 2010 to establish stock biomass status and Frame surveys were undertaken in November 2010 to quantify fishing factors for advise to management;
- representatives of industry (East African Fishing and Fish Processors Association ) and the Regional Beach Management Unit Network were admitted to the advisory organs of the LVFO by its Executive Committee, which furthered co-management;
- the Naturland eco-label was achieved for the Nile perch fishery of the Bukoba area in Tanzania and plans are underway to roll it out with industry as the driver; and
- third party pre-assessment of the Lake Victoria Nile perch fisheries found it was not a data limited fisheries but needed harvest decision rules and reference limits now incorporated in the species specific management plan.

81. The LVFO continued to play its role as a center for excellence and had developed a number of tools to support fisheries management applicable outside its remits. These include Standard Operating Procedures for data collection (stock assessment/catch assessment/frame surveys) as well for co-management. It is hosting portal for ANAF with the long term view of sharing experience with other networks in the RSN.

82. In order to valorize the post harvest sector, the LVFO conducted a Value Chain Analysis that found current trade in fish and fisheries products originating as largely fair, with fishers realizing at least 22 percent of the value.

83. The LVFO continues to participate and advise at continental level under the AU with programmes like NEPAD Partnership for African Fisheries (PAF), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the East African Community.

84. Lastly, the LVFO conducted an institutional and functional analysis that formed the basis for its restructuring to meet and respond better to challenges as expected by the Contracting Parties.

85. Mr Vladimir Shibanov, Executive Secretary of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), reported a number of new results and challenges. He described the process of ratification by NAFO Contracting Parties (CPs) of the amended NAFO Convention. Three CPs had ratified the Convention and all other CPs were performing internal procedures, and it was hoped that there would be a new Convention in the very near future.

86. A NAFO performance review process was planned for 2011. The independent Review Panel was established and the TORs and work plan were adopted.

87. A process of recovery of some demersal fish stocks allowed a directed fishery to be reopened for cod on Flemish Bank and redfish on Grand Bank. Due to poor stock conditions, the shrimp fishery on Flemish Cap was closed in 2011. NAFO had developed and introduced new approach to the management of Greenland halibut fishery – a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).
88. A Working Group of scientists and managers was established by the Commission with a mandate to develop rebuilding plans for all depleted fish stocks in addition to existing rebuilding plans. NAFO believed that the joint work of scientists and managers together was very profitable for the purposes of the Organization.
89. NAFO scientists were working on the assessment of VMEs within NAFO Regulatory Area. Two species identifications guides for corals and sponges were published to assist fishers and scientists to collect at sea data on species VME indicators distribution.
90. The closure of seamounts, reviewed during the 2010 Annual meeting, has been continued. In total, 18 areas are closed for bottom trawl fisheries within the NAFO Regulatory Area.
91. NAFO had implemented VMS in its Conservation and Enforcement Measures. All fishing vessels of CPs operating within the NAFO Regulatory Area send their electronic reports every hour. The VMS database hosted by the Secretariat may serve both compliance and scientific purposes. Positive results included a footprint of existing fishing grounds and effort assessment for some fisheries. There were some political/confidential limitations on wider use of VMS data sets for research purposes.
92. There is a well developed NAFO Web site ([www.nafo.int](http://www.nafo.int)) where most of the NAFO documentation may be found. Work was being carried out to prepare some datasets to be uploaded. Documentation adopted by NAFO over the past 30 years was expected to be accessible by the end of 2011. NAFO has 12 members.
93. Ms Charlotte Winsnes, Deputy Secretary of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), referred to its establishment in 1992 by Agreement concerning the conservation and rational management of marine mammal resources (cetaceans, pinnipeds including walrus) in the North Atlantic among the current four member countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway.
94. NAMMCO bases its decisions on the best available scientific results. Its Scientific Committee has a budget whereby they can invite experts outside NAMMCO member countries. Recurrent activities include the development of abundance estimates. Recent stock assessments on fin, minke and, humpback whales were undertaken in 2010, based on the estimates from the Trans Atlantic Cetaceans Sighting Survey conducted in 2007. A stock assessment planned for 2011 will be on pilot whales in the NAMMCO Area. The next regular sighting survey, to take place in 2013 to 2015, was under preparation.
95. Ecosystem-based management has always been imbedded in the NAMMCO Agreement. NAMMCO is now committed to an extensive modelling programme involving experts from countries both within and outside NAMMCO including Canada, Japan, Russia and South Africa. The programme will run over two to three years and comprises four different models being applied in two geographical regions; the Barents Sea and the waters around Iceland.

96. Bycatch is an important issue and in 2010 a workshop was held on monitoring marine mammals and seabirds in cooperation with ICES. One result from the workshop is a manual that specifies guidelines and best practices of how to monitor by-catch of marine mammals and seabirds in fisheries.

97. NAMMCO publishes an internationally reviewed Scientific Publishing Series. Volume 8 on Harbour Seals was in press and Volume 9 on walrus was under preparation.

98. NAMMCO has always worked to ensure that hunting activities are carried out in the best possible manner, mindful of scientific and technical finding and traditional knowledge, with considerations of efficiency of the hunt and animal welfare. In 2010, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was held to assess and review killing data for large whales and another is planned for November 2011 on the review and assessment of hunting methods and killing data for small whales. The EGM recommends possible improvements in this regard. A user manual on the hunting and killing of whales is being developed for placement on all vessels in member countries to give information, *inter alia*, on weapons, killing techniques and animal welfare. NAMMCO also has an international observation scheme which annually monitors the hunt in the member countries on a random basis.

99. Mr Malcom Windsor, Secretary of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), thanked the Chairperson for his intersessional work. He reported that regulatory measures had continued to restrict the distant-water fisheries to no harvest or subsistence-only harvests of Atlantic salmon and there continued to be major reductions in fishing effort in homewaters and increasing use of catch and release fishing. Efforts to minimise unreported catches continued and fishing for salmon in international waters had been eliminated. There were gains in available habitat in freshwater as rivers were restored and progress was made in addressing the impacts of aquaculture and of poorly planned introductions and transfers. NASCO had adopted a precautionary approach to salmon management and developed agreements relating to all of these issues. However, despite this progress, abundance remained low and a major factor is increased mortality of salmon at sea, despite major reductions in marine fisheries.

100. Following its 2005 performance review, NASCO was seeking to improve commitment to its agreements, increase its transparency and accountability and increase awareness of its work. There was now much greater scrutiny of the measures being taken not only in relation to management of fisheries but also regarding habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. Despite the progress made, the situation facing the salmon in some areas remained critical and reviews have highlighted the need for additional actions in all jurisdictions to ensure consistency with NASCO's agreements.

101. New guidance had been developed to assist jurisdictions make further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and to assist in the identification of the additional actions needed.

102. Recently, an innovative international research project, funded through a public/private sector partnership, had been implemented to better understand the causes of increased salmon mortality at sea using state of the art genetic stock identification, tagging and scale analysis methods. The results were to be presented at a major international symposium to be held in October 2011.

103. Major changes had been introduced to increase NASCO's transparency so their 33 accredited NGOs can participate in all meetings and contribute on all agenda items. The Organization's web site have been redeveloped as part of a new public relations strategy and a database of salmon rivers, highlighting the status of the stocks, is almost complete and will be made publicly available. NASCO has seven members.

104. Mr Kjartan Hoydal, Secretary of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), referred to amendments to the NEAFC Convention adopted in 2004 and 2006 and noted that both the 1982 Convention and the 2006 Convention texts were on the NEAFC web site. The 2004 and 2006 amendments had not gone through the full process of ratification in all Contracting Parties, but it had been agreed in the 2006 "London Declaration" to apply the amendments on a voluntary basis until ratification is finalised.

105. The 2006 amendments included a new Article with the following language: "*The objective of this Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and optimum utilisation of the fishery resources in the Convention Area, providing sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits.*"

106. This means that NEAFC has to find the correct balance between conservation and utilisation and in a holistic, integrated process, based on precautionary and ecosystem approaches and secure the participation of those stakeholders that are affected by adopted measures — in short to ensure responsible fisheries in the NEAFC Area.

107. The most important fisheries are in the Norwegian Sea and are termed the "Pelagic Complex". They constitute three major species of herring, mackerel and blue whiting which in 2007 yielded over 3 million tonnes with a value of USD 0.7 billion.

108. The recruitment in both blue whiting and herring has gone down recently and, according to management plans agreed by the coastal States, the TACs for 2011 have been cut dramatically. The mackerel has changed distribution and this has led to a breakdown of the agreement on allocations.

109. A study published by the Nordic Council of Ministers last year concludes that the pelagic fisheries are well managed, allowing the fleets to recuperate up to 40–50 percent of the resource rent.

110. The deep sea fisheries are controlled by effort regulations, closed areas and bottom fishing regulations. Fifty-four per cent of the fishable area has been closed and most of the rest of the area has been defined as "new fishing area" requiring special authorisations to undertake exploratory fishing. Participation in these fisheries has been declining the last ten years and is not of great significance economically.

111. NEAFC has Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with ICES and its environmental counterpart in the North East Atlantic, OSPAR. It has an agreement of cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and seeks an MoU with the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

112. A network of agreements of cooperation between existing organizations with a mandate to regulate human activities in the ocean is seen in the short and medium term to offer the best opportunity to achieve the correct balance between optimum utilisation and conservation in the North East Atlantic.

113. NEAFC at its twenty-ninth Annual Meeting decided to play an active role in supporting and organising a regional workshop for the North East Atlantic, as foreseen in the tenth Convention on Biodiversity Conference of Parties decision on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity.

114. The NEAFC/IUU vessel lists and port State measures have in practical terms eradicated IUU fishing by vessels flying flags of non-compliance and reduced the amount of black frozen fish landed in foreign harbours most significantly.

115. NEAFC publishes all relevant documents in the NEAFC web site ([www.neafc.org](http://www.neafc.org)), and its Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) factsheets are almost finalised. NEAFC participates in the D4-science project with a particular interest in making use of VMS data in the scientific process. NEAFC has five members and five cooperating Non-Contracting Parties.

116. Mr Tanielu Su'a, Director-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), reported on the following main activities of FFA, which has 17 members:

- completion of an independent Performance Review and implementation of review recommendations;
- improving frameworks for fisheries management;
- adoption of a regional fisheries management and development strategy and implementation;
- formulation and improvements to arrangements relating to purse-seine fishery and the longline fishery;
- strengthening MCS arrangements;
- adoption of regional MCS Strategy and implementation at the regional and national levels;
- review and amendments to legislation;
- enhancement of assistance to members promoting domestic development; and
- support for national development initiatives including domestic infrastructure development, and joint venture arrangements.

Challenges for FFA have included:

- resource constraints in support of national capacity building activities;
- growing number of fisheries instruments and implementation challenge on Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
- ensuring that appropriate regional and subregional management framework compatible with international framework is in place; and
- addressing constraints that prevent members from enjoying increased economic benefits from fisheries resources.

117. Mr Piero Mannini, Secretary of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), reported that the Agreement for the Establishment of the RECOFI was concluded under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. It was approved by the FAO Council in November 1999 and came into force on 26 February 2001. There are eight members of the Commission: Bahrain, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. RECOFI's core budget is funded by the contributions of the members of the Commission. The practice has been for members to pay annually their share of the budget on an equal basis.



118. The purpose of RECOFI is to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of marine aquaculture within its area of agreement. The Commission carries out its functions and responsibilities in the region bounded in the south by the following rhumb lines: from Ras Dhabat Ali in (16° 39'N, 53° 3'30"E) then to a position in (16° 00'N, 53° 25'E) then to a position in (17° 00'N, 56° 30'E) then to a position in (20° 30'N, 60° 00'E) then to Ras Al-Fasteh in (25° 04'N, 61° 25'E).

119. The headquarters of the Commission is at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. FAO provides the Secretariat that includes the Secretary of the Commission and the Technical Secretaries of the Working Group on Fisheries Management and the Working Group on Aquaculture.

120. The characteristics of the geographical area covered by the Commission means that many of the stocks are shared by the coastal countries. Consequently, and in line with the principles and guidelines of the Code of Conduct, the promotion of regional cooperation for fisheries research and management is an essential requisite that is actively pursued by RECOFI. The Commission is also fostering and implementing a regional and cooperative approach to the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region.

121. At its plenary session, the Commission discusses and approves a work plan for the intersessional period including technical meetings and capacity development workshops.

122. The Commission had been rather ineffective during its initial phase and no recommendations were elaborated and discussed. Since 2007, the Commission with the support of FAO has significantly increased its activities and the services delivered to its members. In 2009, RECOFI adopted a regional strategy for fisheries management including an EAF. Actions are being taken to address the issues of regional stock status reporting and to combat IUU fishing. Regarding aquaculture, a proposal for a regional programme for aquatic animal health has been endorsed by the Commission, and guidelines for the sustainable development of marine cage culture in the RECOFI region have been formulated.

123. A technical performance review was carried out in 2010. In May 2010, the Commission held a special meeting to consider ways and means for its consolidation and further development. The main outcome and findings of both the technical performance review and the special meeting were scheduled to be discussed by the Commission at its Sixth Session in May, 2011. In addition, at that session, the Commission planned to discuss for the first time a binding recommendation on minimum data collection and reporting.

124. Mr. Chumnarn Pongsri, Secretary-General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), reported that it is an IGO established in December 1967 for the purpose of promoting sustainable fisheries development in the region. Its 11 member countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Representing the member countries is the Council of Directors, the policy-making body of SEAFDEC. The Chief Administrator of SEAFDEC is the Secretary-General and the Secretariat is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Since 2009, the approved SEAFDEC Programme Framework, based on SEAFDEC's competence, has comprised the following five major thrusts:

- Developing and promoting responsible fisheries for poverty alleviation and food security: This thrust involves research and development in relevant technologies and best practices, as well as capacity building for efficient and sustainable use,

management and development in capture fisheries, aquaculture and post-harvest in responsible manners.

- Enhancing capacity and competitiveness to facilitate international and intra-regional trade: This thrust aims to assist the member countries in enhancing capacity and competitiveness to facilitate international and intra-regional fish trade including through consultations, demonstration and dissemination of techniques, testing methods, standards and/or other relevant approaches and systems.
- Improving management concepts and approaches for sustainable fisheries: This trust focuses on the need to enhance national fisheries management frameworks through the incorporation of various requirements for sustainable fisheries development in the region, in particular for fishing communities and rural aquaculture.
- Providing policy and advisory services for planning and executing management of fisheries: To facilitate better planning and implementing management of fisheries, this thrust would cover improvement of fisheries statistics through capacity building of both human resources and statistical institutions, and the promotion of unified statistical systems to facilitate data and information sharing among member countries and other regional and international fisheries agencies.
- Addressing international fisheries related issues from a regional perspective: This thrust is developed with the aim of generalizing the regionally common/coordinated approaches by providing a platform for member countries and other relevant organizations to discuss important international related issues and recommend necessary actions that could be adopted regionally and subregionally.

125. In line with the SEAFDEC framework to ensure the sustainable contribution of fisheries to food security in the Southeast Asian Region, and in collaboration with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Department of Fisheries of Thailand, SEAFDEC will organize an ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security towards 2020: “Adaptation to a Changing Environment” from 13 to 17 June 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand. The aim is to develop the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Resolution and Plan of Action for Sustainable Fisheries For Food Security for the next Decade. Information is at [www.seafdec.org](http://www.seafdec.org) or [www.ffp2020.org](http://www.ffp2020.org).

126. Mr Ben Van Zyl, Executive Secretary of the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), described SEAFO as an intergovernmental body established in 2004, modelled on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), with six members. The objective of the Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area. Contracting Parties to the Convention are Angola, EU, Japan, Namibia, Norway and South Africa. SEAFO has good working relations with NAFO, NEAFC, CCAMLR and the Benguela Current Commission (BCC).

127. SEAFO finalized the Performance Review of the organization last year. The Commission took note of the Review Panel’s observations that SEAFO as an organization is consistent with the setup of other RFMOs and the recommendations from the panel are basically the same as for other RFMOs. The Commission is in the process of addressing the recommendations made by the Review Panel.

128. Conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission address issues such as:

- bottom fishing activities and the protection of VMEs (a total of 11 VMEs are closed for fishing and the use of gillnets are prohibited);
- reducing incidental by-catch of seabirds;

- reducing sea turtle mortality in fishing operations; and
- the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by SEAFO.

129. Identification guides for turtles as well as sponges and corals were compiled. FAO is in the process of mapping the fishing foot print of the Convention Area based on fishing data acquired from Contracting Parties and Non-Contracting Parties. This effort is also assisted by FAO by providing historical fishing data.

130. Working papers pertaining to the recommendations made by UNFSA 2010 Resumed Review Conference and the FAO 2009 Agreement on Port State Measure to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing are being compiled and will be discussed by the Commission this year.

131. SEAFO does recognize the importance of assisting Contracting Parties from developing countries with regard to capacity building in fisheries management. A Special Requirements Fund was established in 2009 to fund capacity building activities in developing countries.

132. Two major constraints were described:

- the lack of scientific information that limited proper stock assessment;
- the lack of catch information made by other RFMOs with competence over species in the SEAFO area. All catch information is needed for the implementation of the ecosystem approach.

133. Mr Aubrey Harris, Secretary of the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC), recalled that it is a FAO Article VI body established in 2004 to promote the sustainable utilisation of living marine resources by their proper management and development within the EEZs of its member countries. Its 12 member countries are Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania and Yemen.

134. The Commission provides a high-level forum for countries to address common problems, to exchange lessons learned and to collaboratively engage in fisheries research, management and development at the regional level. Its Scientific Committee provides a means of monitoring the status of fish stocks and advising on measures to rehabilitate depleted stocks and to prevent overexploitation. It has a rotating presidency and a bureau that takes intersessional decisions. Countries host sessions of the Commission and the Scientific Committee as part of their contribution to the fisheries body. Currently the Commission provides the steering committees of two regional fisheries projects (the World Bank/GEF, South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) EAF-Nansen Project).

135. Apart from its sessional meetings the Commission has organised numerous workshops and training courses on the EAF, bycatch, fishing impact on vulnerable species such as turtles, on safety at sea for small scale fishers, on the management of prawn fisheries, on combating IUU fishing, and on analysis of fisheries data and statistics.

136. Since the last RSN, SWIOFC held its fourth Session, two steering committee meetings, a working group on demersal and small pelagic fishes, and its fourth Scientific Committee meeting. The fifth session of the Commission was due to take place in Maldives 13 to 16 March 2011 where, *inter alia*, it would be considering the process of its review, requested by the members. With the support of the EAF Nansen project, the Commission is in the

process of developing a baseline of the extent to which countries are currently implementing the EAF so as to be able to monitor their progress over time.

137. Challenges/opportunities in the region include preventing duplication between the activities of numerous regional projects, forging stronger links with regional economic communities and adapting the Commission to respond to the changing needs of its membership. To date, FAO decentralization has made it more difficult to secure regular funds to hold mandatory sessional meetings, and the time devoted by the Secretariat to the Commission has had to decrease because of other responsibilities.

138. Mr Peter Flewwelling, Compliance Manager of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) reported that the Commission has the 25 members, seven participating territories and nine cooperating non-members and noted the following key issues and challenges:

- obtaining complete, accurate and consistent data for science and management purposes from member countries including data from research cruises and initiatives, log books, regional observer programme, etc;
- assuring that the best available science is provided to underpin management decisions with regular peer checking of models and outputs;
- the ongoing costs in terms of real costs and time away from the office of the RFB in general, mindful that numerous meetings, including with other RFBs further erode the available time of small island fisheries agencies and that a smaller number of more effective RFBs could meet the needs of poorer developing countries;
- a growing need, particularly where a significant proportion of the Convention Area is comprised of EEZs of small island developing States (SIDS), for more in-depth knowledge of the markets, products and trade issues so that management decisions recognize the financial situation for the industry and its capacity to implement management changes;
- the challenges of capping the fishing capacity/effort in such a manner as to create a balance between the fishing nations and the hosts of the resources (particularly where they are SIDS) for a more equitable partnership that promotes sustainability of the resources and clarifying the socio-economic benefits to both parties and identifying how they can be achieved;
- the idea of freedom of the high seas is a disappearing concept for large, highly migratory fisheries as pressures on the stocks increase;
- RFMOs are increasingly being charged with management of the resources in the high seas, and this is linked with the issue of how penalties can be developed and harmonized for IUU fishing in RFMO waters outside EEZs; and
- society is evolving with expectations for RFMOs to manage not only target species, but also those species that are caught incidentally and have potential financial or ecological value. This is seen in the growing number of NGOs with species specific interests and the challenge of addressing these NGO inputs to RFMOs will be a growing issue.

139. Mr Warren Papworth, Executive Secretary of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), reported that significant progress had been made with research on seabird bycatch mitigation measures for pelagic longline operations since the last RSN meeting. Of particular note is research being conducted by the USA and Japan on the weighting on branch-lines. It was expected that this research will be successfully concluded within the coming year and that, once completed, there will be a suite of effective bycatch mitigation measures for all types of fishing operations. The challenge remains to see the adoption of these mitigation measures in the areas where they are required. To assist in

identifying high priority areas for bycatch mitigation two RFMOs, ICCAT and WCPFC, have completed seabird ecological risk assessments (ERAs). Observer data is required to validate these ERAs and to verify the effectiveness of the mitigation measures being used.

140. Mr Hashali Hamukuaya, Executive Secretary of the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), reported that the Commission was established in 2008 as an outcome of the GEF LME programme, and its members are Angola, Namibia and South Africa. The mandate of the Commission includes sectors other than fisheries, such as oil, gas and mining. A Convention was concluded in December to focus on fisheries, and is expected to be signed in the next few months. The main activities and challenges of the BCC are described below.

141. Main activities:

- transboundary fish stock monitoring and assessment surveys, with a focus on hake and small pelagic resources;
- seal and sea bird monitoring programme;
- small pelagic resources research programme;
- annual state of stocks (SOS) assessment reports;
- marine coastal monitoring programme;
- Continuous Underwater Fish Egg Sampler (CUFES) and Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) programmes;
- ecosystem health and conservation activities;
- ecosystem- based management activities;
- State of the ecosystem information system;
- linkages and partnerships with other regional and international programmes;
- Training and capacity-building programme; and
- development of the Convention.

142. Challenges since RSN-2 have included:

- inadequate resources to assess and monitor fisheries and the environment; and
- inadequate and often unreliable data on some sectors.

143. Mr Yugraj Yadava, Director of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), reported its establishment in April 2003 by the Governments of Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The BOBP-IGO replaced the Bay of Bengal Programme, which was a field project of FAO operating in the Bay of Bengal region since January 1979. Myanmar also participates in the BOBP-IGO in the capacity of observer.

144. The mandate of BOBP-IGO is to enhance cooperation among member countries as well as other countries and organizations in the Bay of Bengal region and provide technical and management advisory services for sustainable coastal fisheries development and management. Towards this goal, the core functions of the BOBP-IGO are to:

- implement programmes and activities for the sustainable development and management of coastal fisheries;
- enable shared learning, information exchange, and increased awareness on the needs, benefits, and practices of coastal fisheries management;
- train key personnel for coastal fisheries planning, research, training, extension, and development;
- transfer between countries knowledge and solutions related to technologies, techniques, processes and livelihood opportunities, and lessons learned and insights from the field;

- develop interventions and programmes for women in fisheries; and
- initiate feasibility studies, project formulation, human resources planning, and awareness campaigns.

145. The 2010–2015 Programmes/activities of the BOBP-IGO include:

- implementation of the provisions of the Code of Conduct, which includes translations and adaptation of the Code, the International Plans of Action (IPOAs) and Technical Guidelines (TGs) into languages spoken in the member countries and an annual Training Course for junior and middle-level fisheries operatives on improving their understanding of the Code, the IPOAs and the TGs;
- preparation of National and Regional Plans of Action on important fisheries such as sharks and hilsa (*Ilisha tenualosa*);
- preparation of National and Regional Plans of Action on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance;
- improving understanding of the food safety and hygiene requirements and preparation of manuals and guidelines to enable member countries to implement the requirements;
- improving safety at sea regime in the member-countries through interventions that include support to policy reforms; training of government staff and fishers; awareness creation through extensive use of multi media; developing mechanisms for surveillance and monitoring of fishing-related accidents at sea and data compilation on such incidents; and
- networking and building linkages with stakeholders at different levels.

146. Some of the key constraints/challenges were described are as follows:

- fast turnover of key government staff;
- large area and equally large number of stakeholders;
- overcoming the shortage of qualified manpower; and
- improving budgetary resources;

147. Mr Mohamed Seisay, Fisheries Expert of the Interim Guinea Current Commission (IGCC) reported that the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project (IGCC/GCLME) is a GEF funded, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) executed project which has as implementing agencies the UNDP and UNEP. The project has collaborating partnerships with FAO, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the IMO, NEPAD and others.

148. The GCLME has rich endowment of natural resources but underlined by numerous challenges. In recognition of these natural assets and the urgent need for integrated action for “unlocking the potential wealth” for the benefit of the citizens of the 16 countries adjacent to these challenges, the GCLME project has undergone transformation during the last five years.

149. The project objectives are set within the framework of the concept of LME and the assessment methodologies guided by ecosystem based approach. The project has completed a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) which provides policy and operational solutions identified in the TDA.

150. The key issues are recovery of depleted fisheries, rehabilitation of coastal and marine habitats and reduction of land based pollution into the marine environment. To implement the SAP, the sixteen member countries of the GCLME are in the process of completing National Action Plans (NAPs) which analyses country situations and identifies country priority interventions in form of Inter-sectoral and, interdisciplinary national and sub-national investments projects/programmes.

151. These programs/projects when implemented will contribute to solving the key issues identified in the SAP which is a negotiated document and signed by all 16 states. The sixteen states are Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo.

152. The RSN meeting presents an opportunity to inform other regional bodies the organizational structure and functions of the IGCC/GCLME. This is also an opportunity to brief other RFBs of the nature of interventions and indications of outcome in the assessment of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem, including insight into current activities and plans.

153. It was intended to initiate discussions on collaboration with RSN Members with interest in the Guinea Current Region to ensure synergies in planning and execution of activities especially in the fisheries sector.

154. Challenges since RSN-2 have included inadequate resources to assess and monitor fisheries and the environment and inadequate and often unreliable data on some sectors.

#### **Sharing of information electronically intersessionally**

155. The Chairperson urged RSN Members to exchange information between sessions and make use of the Discussion Forum web site.

#### **The future of the RSN**

156. The future of the RSN was discussed under agenda item 5.d.

### **FAO, IGOS AND UN FAMILY INITIATIVES**

#### **Review of decisions from the twenty-ninth Session of COFI (COFI 29) relating to RFBs/RFMOs**

157. Mr Hiromoto Watanabe, Secretary of COFI and Secretary of the RSN, referred to five explicit references to RFBs in the draft report of COFI 29, namely in the contexts of:

- MPAs (paragraph 8 (1));
- regional aquaculture networks (paragraph 25);
- the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) (paragraph 36);
- climate change (paragraph 39 (e)); and
- a specific reference to NACA in relation to a meeting proposed by Sri Lanka (paragraph 66).

158. Mr Watanabe noted that the number of references did not reflect adequately the significance of the role of RFBs because they are already and almost automatically expected to take the leading role to implement the decisions and recommendations by COFI. In particular, the important role of RFBs was repeatedly underscored under Item 4 on the implementation of the Code of Conduct and Item 7 on IUU fishing.

159. He recognized that frequent reference to RFBs in COFI could be seen as reflecting the high recognition of the value of RFBs by the international community, but expressed concern about the potential overload this could mean for RFBs. In many cases, their human and financial resources have already been stretched to discharge the duties under their respective mandates, and in addition many non-fisheries international organizations were also seeking collaboration with and involvement of RFBs into their work.

160. Mr. Watanabe suggested that this matter could also be taken up under the Agenda item on the role of RFBs.

161. The Chairperson referred to the mandate of COFI over fisheries and aquaculture, and noted that the RSN had not yet decided whether to address aquaculture. He suggested that it may wish to decide that at this meeting.

162. In discussion, it was suggested that reference to RFBs in COFI is decreasing while their importance is increasing; on the other hand, there were more interventions by RFBs this year than at any previous time. It was noted that RFBs do not have a policy on many issues addressed by COFI, so they do not normally speak.

163. The draft COFI report referred to the Global Record and recognized that it could be developed as a voluntary initiative (paragraph 36). However, ICCAT had requested FAO to facilitate contact with IMO for the tuna organizations in order to have access to its data base and the dialogue was unsuccessful.

164. Regarding paragraph 45 of the draft COFI report relating to CITES, it was observed that there had been significant pressure from NGOs and other non-contracting parties to list one of the ICCAT species in Appendix I of CITES. FAO has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CITES, but it was felt that this was not sufficient to protect RFMOs. An important issue is whether each RFMO must deal directly with this situation or whether the existing MoU between FAO and CITES needs strengthening.

165. There was discussion on whether paragraph 41 of the draft COFI report referred to the serious concern within FAO that the social and economic importance of fisheries and aquaculture is being underestimated in discussions focused on issues such as economic crises or climate change. There was a need for decision-makers in regional and international fora to take these factors into consideration when making decisions and adopting policies. It was also thought that paragraph 41 calling for greater communication by RFBs to the international community about their work to raise awareness on developments in fisheries and aquaculture.

166. The issue discussed in COFI relating to ecolabelling and its impact on fish trade was addressed. It was recognized that ecolabelling is done by special agencies which make audits. It would be important to audit these ecolabelling decisions and processes to ensure they are in conformity with FAO decisions. It was noted that FAO did that two years ago covering the various certification schemes in existence at the time. It concluded that the Marine Stewardship Council was compliant with relevant FAO Guidelines, but some others were less so. It could be time to evaluate the performance of these organizations with respect to what they set out to do.

167. It was concluded that this issue should be kept under observation, mindful that ecolabelling can have a strong force on trade in some markets.



## **Other FAO related activities**

### ***Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)***

168. Mr Marc Taconet, Senior Fishery Information Officer, Statistics and Information Service, FAO, introduced document RSN/III/2011/10, Implementation of the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partnership Agreement: Status and Prospects. He invited RSN participants to join the FIRMS partnership.

169. In discussion, it was observed that there could be value in contributing to the FIRMS process, but the currency of information on the FIRMS fact sheets needed to be improved as some information was considerably outdated. Another issue was the cost of participation in FIRMS meetings at a time when RFBs were facing budgetary constraints. Mr Taconet expressed his willingness to identify the best ways to lower such costs and elaborate reviews jointly.

### ***Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP)***

170. Ms Sachiko Tsuji, Senior Fishery Statistician Officer, Statistics and Information Service, FAO, informed the Meeting that the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) is a coordinating mechanism among organizations that have relevance in data collection and statistics. Its main objectives include:

- a continuous review of data and information needs, especially for decision making;
- setting up standard concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies for fishery statistics; and
- coordinating and facilitating collaboration among relevant institutes.

171. The twenty third session (CWP-23) held in February 2010 in Hobart, Australia, decided to establish a Fishery Group and an Aquaculture Group to enhance the effectiveness of the CWP to address issues during an intersessional period. Both groups are currently working toward updates and revisions of the CWP Handbook and active participation in the process through review and feedbacks was requested of the participating organizations at the meeting.

172. In related developments, participants were informed that the new Harmonized System of the World Customs Organization, effective from 2012 (HS2012), contains substantial changes in fish and fishery commodities (Appendix 8 of the Report of CWP-23). In addition, the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics was adopted by the United Nations Statistics Division in February 2010. The Strategy was considered to be effective in enhancing national capacity to evaluate the contribution, especially by small-scale operators, of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to social, economic and food security aspects in a way that was comparable to evaluations carried out in the agriculture and other sectors.

173. In discussion, RFB participation in the CWP meetings was encouraged, but constraints included general budgetary levels and the difficulty in finding funds for such activities. The preference for sharing discussions through electronic exchange was expressed. Ms. Tsuji noted that participation was needed at meetings to take decisions, but expressed openness to considering other options.

***Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)***

174. Ms Michele Kuruc, Service Coordinator, and Mr Shaun Driscoll, Project Manager (Global Record), both of the Fishing Operations and Technology Service, FAO, explained the development process for the proposed Global Record. Mr Driscoll outlined the proposed structure of the Global Record, noting that most of the proposed development would be in the future.

175. The first step would be to create the core vessel identification module and establish the unique vessel identifier (UVI) process. The UVI application process was explained and a list of the key data fields was provided. The importance of the Global UVI scheme provided by IHS-Fairplay was explained as was the ongoing verification process that they provide to ensure the integrity of the UVI number. It was explained that FAO had been unable to proceed with a pilot project for the Global Record with the tuna RFMOs because of the timing adopted by the tuna bodies in moving forward and the timing of the FAO Technical Consultation on the Global Record. A desire and willingness to work with any RFB to further this work was expressed.

176. The intention was to provide capacity development assistance and software capability to States where there is a need. Joint development efforts in this respect might be very valuable. An information briefing document on the Global Record was being prepared for distribution to all RFBs and FAO regional fisheries officers and for forwarding to member States.

177. In discussion, it was considered a step forward to have a mechanism that can be used by all RFMOs, that would have access to the relevant data. It was hoped that this initiative would lead to a useful system. It was recalled, however, that when tuna RFMOs presented requirements to their members for a unique vessel identifier (UVI) some members were reluctant to commit to providing all of the required information and preferred other ways of going about this initiative. This could be a significant constraint in the development of the Global Record, with possible alternatives being individual vessel applications or the development of subsets of a global record, for example, a global record of tuna vessels organized by the tuna RFMOs.

178. Mr Driscoll agreed that it would definitely be a problem for States and RFMOs to find a way to collect the information, but it is important for this to occur. Because the information given to IHS-FairPlay produces a permanent fingerprint of the vessel, it is highly useful for fisheries management and MCS. The challenge is to work with States and RFMOs to find ways to collect the information, recognizing that changes to resolutions, legislation or regulations may be required.

179. The public availability of the vessel identification information in the Global Record was an important issue because it would be key to building a transparent and publicly available system for data. It had been the preference of the FAO Technical Consultation on the Global Record that such information would be publicly available.

180. An opinion was expressed that it should be up to the vessel owners to provide the data. National controls would be important. It was explained that until the Global Record is up and running, individual vessel owners can submit their applications for a UVI directly to IHS-Fairplay. This is the current process and it will continue for the immediate future. However, a concern was whether IHS-Fairplay would issue a number if the data were incomplete or slightly incomplete, and it was explained that the fields are all mandatory, to the extent they are applicable, but there is some discretion. However IHS-Fairplay would generally be looking for complete information.

181. It was noted that tuna RFMOs have discussed the issue at length but have not progressed very far. It is recognized that RFMOs are the only regional mechanism that can legally require a UVI as a condition of fishing, and it should not be voluntary. The approach being taken by the tuna bodies, based on the fact that members want quick action to establish a global tuna register, is to examine the development of a less than perfect system that can be quickly implemented and later strengthened.

182. There are a large number of vessels between 10 and 15 meters in length and it was suggested that incentives would need to be provided to include them in the Global Record.

183. Ms Tsuji pointed out that FAO has another initiative to gather current and historical vessel information, which is available through web searches, for the purpose of making it available in one place. In this respect, participants expressed the hope that this initiative is collaborating with the Global Record.

184. It was noted that, in the recommendations of the FAO Technical Consultation on the Global Record, fishing entities were mentioned, but that it is still unclear how, in practice, FAO will manage them. Further, a big issue was the very high estimated cost to develop and maintain the Global Record, and where did FAO hope to raise funds to develop and maintain it?

185. Regarding incentives for fishing vessels to be included on a Global Record, attention was drawn to the members of the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation which have decided that, by May 2011, if vessels have not yet obtained a UVI their product will not be purchased. It was acknowledged that data collection must be simplified, and FAO will offer a software package to this end. FAO also expressed hope that the costs of maintaining the Global Record could be brought down, mindful of the great cost of labour.

186. It was recalled by Mr Driscoll that the aim is to combat IUU fishing. Smaller vessels in many States are not necessarily well managed, and this is an opportunity to help States manage their own vessels. The Chairperson noted the potential of this initiative, including for other areas such as security at sea.

### ***RSN Web site***

187. Mr Marc Taconet, Senior Fishery Information Officer, Statistics and Information Service, FAO, made a presentation on elaborating the RSN web site as a platform for dialogue through the RSN. He reported that this activity is supported by project GCP/INT/069/JPN "Promotion of sustainable fisheries: support for strengthening functions of and coordination among RFBs/RFMOs". A number of developments were reported under this objective, as follows.

- The page dedicated to the RSN ([www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en)) is part of the RFB web site (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/en>). This page contains links to the meetings document and other information related to the RSN Network.
- The RFB web site now includes a RFB maps viewer which enables users to dynamically explore RFBs areas of competence and membership. Web services are available to RFBs who want to include such dynamic maps in their own web sites. RFB Secretaries will be requested to provide their feedback on the elaborated maps. [www.fao.org/figis/geoserver/factsheets/rfbs.html](http://www.fao.org/figis/geoserver/factsheets/rfbs.html)
- The RFB summary descriptions fact sheets have been upgraded with on-line editing functions which now enable RFBs to take full editing ownership over their own institutional description. More dissemination enhancements will be made available according to requests made by RFBs, in particular the FAO RFBs.

- RSN-2 provided guidance indicating that further development of the RSN page should focus on main issues of concern to RSN Members, and related best practices. No follow-up has yet been made to this recommendation.
- A RSN Network Discussion group (Dgroup) has been launched in order to facilitate and ease communication between RSN Members and allow for the exchange of views and information. This Dgroup, only open to RSN Members, is administered by the current Chairperson of the RSN Network.  
<http://dgroups.org/Community.aspx?c=709a0221-b6e0-4f54-b17d-1467be0fa954>
- A similar Dgroup on Deep-sea fisheries in the High Seas has been initiated in order to provide an avenue in which those working on or interested in these issues can easily share information, relevant events and start discussions. This Dgroup is opened to stakeholders beyond the concerned RFBs.  
<http://dgroups.org/Community.aspx?c=4e5f440c-9ac2-4b51-895f-2e9f62f2a05c>.

188. In discussion, the Chairperson reported that all RSN Members were invited in November 2010 to participate in the Discussion Forum web site, and 14 RFBs reacted to the communication. There hasn't been much activity, and he recommended that RFBs use this tool for information on intersessional activities.

189. Some suggestions were given to improve the site, including ensuring that the number and names of the contracting parties were correct and that the RFB was shown in the proper geographical area.

#### ***D4-Science project and other information sharing platforms***

190. Mr Marc Taconet made a presentation on the D4-Science project and other information sharing platform, which is at [www.d4science.eu](http://www.d4science.eu)

191. He stated that FAO is member of the EU funded D4Science project which aims at developing a distributed data infrastructure enabling scientific communities to cooperate within a coherent framework, regardless of the location of their research facilities. D4Science is the example of a leading edge IT platform which in the coming decade will support initiatives with cross-disciplinary data requirements such as climate change or EAF by enabling smooth/seamless/instant exchange of data sources across communities of practices such as fisheries, biodiversity, earth observation, agriculture and oceanography.

192. As leader of the user community, FAO orientates the development of the platform through concrete application scenarios.

- the Integrated Catch Information System (ICIS) aims at integration and harmonization of catch statistics across global and regional levels, for concurrent usage;
- the Fishery Country Profile Production System (FCPPS) aims at distributed authoring and validation of collections of reports such as fishery country profiles, with dynamic access to underlying databases;
- the Aquamaps species prediction modelling implements in a more modular and distributed way the current [Aquamaps.org](http://Aquamaps.org) model.

193. Other scenarios include saPhonelite image data processing, bibliometrics data processing, which both have very intensive data computing requirements.

194. The D4Science platform also enables to capitalize on and pool together applications and services which exist or are being developed by agencies. In this respect, FAO currently develops in collaboration with Eurostat and D4Science the Statistical Data and Metadata

eXchange, which will eventually automate the exchange of Time series and be made available as a service to regional organizations and countries.

195. FAO has also started to work on the scientific use of VMS data (or Vessel Transmitted Information -VTI- as per CWP recommendations) with NEAFC and ICES, mutualizing experience and tools, and is confident that the D4Science infrastructure can take due account of security and confidentiality policies. Likewise, other tools on the management of vessel records data are being developed by FAO with leveraging prospects on the D4Science platform.

196. Access to the infrastructure resources is granted to users through Virtual Research Environments (VREs). These VREs can be set-up and configured on demand in a matter of few minutes.

### ***Legally-binding agreement on port State measures***

197. The Chairperson urged RSN Members to take note of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. He observed that port State measures have been very effective where they have been applied.

### ***Climate change***

198. Climate change was discussed under the next agenda item on other matters and under item 5.g. on the Ecosystem Approach.

### ***Any other matters***

199. Mr Warren Papworth, Executive Secretary of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), reported that the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS) had transmitted a request to the RSN to note that CMS has established a MoU for the Conservation of Sharks. It welcomes the participation of RSN Members in the work of the MoU.

200. Mr Devin Bartley, Senior Fishery Resources Officer, Marine and Inland Fisheries Service, FAO, presented information on the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's (FI) work on aquatic genetic resources (AqGR) in fisheries and aquaculture. A large part of this work is in collaboration with and supported by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) as part of its Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and will lead to the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources. Key aspects of the MYPOW and FI's work included:

- review of the information base for aquatic genetic resources, and key issues for The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resource;
- presentation of the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources (for CGRFA-14);
- development of elements related to the Code of Conduct aimed to maintain a broad genetic basis to ensure sustainable use and conservation of aquatic genetic resources;
- consideration of future work on aquatic genetic resources;<sup>2</sup>
- development of a regime for access and benefit sharing of AqGR; and
- review of the role AqGR can play in assisting members mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

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<sup>2</sup> CGRFA-12/09/Report/Appendix G page 18, paragraph 17 and pages 19-20, Indicative Timetable.

201. Responsible use and control of alien (introduced) species represented further FI-AqGR-related work. A format for guidelines had been developed and following from recommendations of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, an expert consultation will be organized to finalize guidelines.

202. FI will take a regional approach to many of the above issues and it will be important to collaborate with and link to RFBs.

### **UN family initiatives, CITES, OECD**

#### ***The 2010 Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement***

203. The Chairperson drew the attention of the Meeting to the written Statement of Mr Serguei Tarassenko, Director, United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN/DOALOS), on the 2010 Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement shown in Appendix E, at the request of UN/DOALOS who were unable to participate in RSN-3.

#### ***Listing of fisheries managed or dealt with by RFBs/RFMOs and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)***

204. Ms Johanne Fischer, Senior Fishery Resources Officer, Marine and Inland Fisheries Service, FAO, provided a briefing on the relations of FI with CITES. She stated that the CITES Convention is an international agreement established with the objective to protect and conserve endangered species by ensuring that their survival is not threatened by international trade. Species can be listed in one of three Appendices, and international trade in these species is controlled according to the degree of protection they require.

205. Since 2004, a FAO Expert Advisory Panel had been providing scientific advice on proposals to list commercially-exploited aquatic species on the Appendices of CITES. The CITES Appendices currently included close to 100 commercially-exploited aquatic species of fish, molluscs and echinoderms but listing of such species remains a controversial issue, with very different views among countries on the value of a CITES listing.

206. In 2006, an MOU between FAO and CITES was signed to formalize the intentions of the two organizations in strengthening cooperation on issues related to commercially-exploited aquatic species listed in CITES Appendices. It has been considered an important achievement by many FAO Member Countries and Parties to CITES.

207. FAO had made some major contributions to CITES. In 2004, CITES revised its criteria for listing species on Appendices I and II, with significant input by FAO on science-based criteria appropriate for the listing of commercially-exploited aquatic species. Since 2004, FAO had organized three meetings of an “Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of CITES Concerning Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species” and submitted the Panel’s advice to the CITES Conference of Parties. FAO had also given input on the interpretation and application of the so-called “Introduction from the Sea” (concerning the import of aquatic organisms from the high seas) and had been playing an active role in promoting capacity building of Members on issues related to commercially-exploited aquatic species listed in CITES Appendices such as sharks, queen conch, sea cucumbers, humphead wrasse and sea horses.

208. A number of FAO Members have expressed deep concerns over the listing of commercially-exploited aquatic species by CITES and would rather see that such species are exclusively regulated by RFMOs or under the auspices of FAO. Other FAO Members have expressed the opinion that CITES should be regarded as a supplementary tool to regional

fisheries management, a view that was also expressed by the new CITES Secretary-General, Mr John Scanlon, at a 2010 FAO/CITES Workshop on Sharks.

209. During the last CITES Conference of the Parties none of the six proposals to list commercially-exploited aquatic species achieved the required two-thirds majority of votes. The FAO Expert Advisory Panel had concluded that four out of six proposals to list commercially-exploited aquatic fishes fulfilled the listing criteria.

210. In discussion, the relationship between FAO and CITES was addressed, and it was explained that FAO's role is to advise against the agreed criteria, given that CITES is a different legal entity. It is a Convention with 175 members and rules for listing species. The RSN was assured that FAO has made a very strong effort in trying to get scientifically based criteria. Once a species meets the criteria, FAO must affirm this. The best defence for RFBs to avoid the listing of species under their purview is not to allow the species to meet the listing criteria.

211. It was explained that the selection of experts for the Panel is based on technical expertise and a fair geographic distribution, especially with respect to the species under consideration. Experts are invited in their personal capacity. There is a core of people that have participated in several/most evaluations, independent scientists with extensive background in assessments and advice.

212. Some participants believed that more clarity might be introduced in the process. For example, relevant RFMOs could have input to the Panel and greater care should be taken to identify stocks of fish that are threatened, and not just species, where appropriate.

213. It was noted that there are issues other than science that must be addressed in the CITES process, including a high degree of politicization. FAO has tried to focus on the best available science and ensure that the panel is objective and qualified. It was thought that the way in which CITES was dealing with marine related issues had improved subsequent to conclusion of the MOU with FAO. In addition, relevant RFMOs are invited to make a presentation to the Panel on its conservation and management measures over the species, as well as scientific data.

214. The relationship between CITES and the IUCN Red List was also addressed, noting that the latter was not formally incorporated in an FAO process, but that panel members are expected to know about it and use the evaluations as appropriate.

#### ***OECD report on RFMOs***

215. The Chairperson called the attention of RSN Members to the independent review of the performance of several RFMOs, including CCSBT, ICCAT, NAFO and NEAFC, as interesting case studies, published by OECD. He noted that it can be purchased from OECD and downloaded.

#### **Other projects**

##### ***Technical Experts Overseeing Third Countries Expertise (TXOTX )***

216. There was no presentation and no discussion took place.

***Global Environment Facility and Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (GEF ABNJ) Project***

217. Mr Kevern Cochrane, Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division, FAO, recalled that many RSN Members were involved in two informal discussions on the GEF ABNJ Project. GEF had requested FAO to coordinate the development of a programme on ABNJ to be funded by GEF. It was to be cooperative among different agencies, have a strong emphasis on involvement of the private sector and industry and try to achieve results on the ground, making a difference to sustainable use and biodiversity conservation. There were two themes, tuna fisheries and related issues and deep sea sustainable use and biodiversity with an emphasis on fisheries as well. Mr Cochrane reported that FAO had been in consultation with many of RSN Members, and welcomed further expressions of interest.

218. In discussion, it was considered that it would not be vital for the ABNJ project to concentrate on fisheries or management issues where the fisheries are already well documented and formulated, but it could be useful to consider the assessment of other related activities. This was considered to be consistent with the intention of GEF that the project should be multisectoral.

219. FFA expressed interest in being involved directly with this initiative, and noted that its members have played a crucial role in developing conservation and management measures for consideration by the WCPFC, including those relating to high seas pockets in the region.

220. Mr Cochrane undertook to follow up the matter with FFA, and reiterated the aim to ensure that FAO is serving member countries. He affirmed that GEF had approached FAO *inter alia* because of links to fisheries organizations.

***UNIDO Guinea Current Commission (GCC)***

221. Mr Hiromoto Watanabe referred to the common platform proposed by the GCC as a basis for coordinating approaches to fisheries in the region.

222. Mr Mohamed Seisay noted that the aim of GCC was to set up an ecosystem-based management body which does not address issues of boundaries, but fish stocks without boundaries in the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem. The Fisheries Platform envisaged in the Guinea Current Commission is an organ of the GCC but not a fisheries commission. The purpose of establishing a platform on fisheries management issues is to provide a framework for coordination, information exchange and experience sharing amongst existing fisheries bodies and member countries adjacent to the Guinea Current. Thus it is a platform for annual discussions, and it is expected to generate synergies so that issues of particular interest to the 200 to 300 million people in the region may be discussed regularly.

***Other discussions in the UN***

223. The Chairperson described the following UN meetings of relevance to fisheries that will take place in 2011. He noted that these discussions are taking place in fora in which the RSN has little influence.

- A regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (Regular Process);
- Ad hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction;
- United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea; and



- Review by the General Assembly of actions taken by States and RFMOs to address the impacts of bottom fishing on VMEs.

224. With regard to the last, the Chairperson referred to the written Statement of Mr Serguei Tarassenko on the review by the General Assembly of actions taken by States and RFMOs to address the impacts of bottom fishing on VMEs, shown in Appendix E.

### *Johannesburg fisheries-related commitments*

225. There was no presentation and no discussion took place.

## **THEMATIC APPROACH TO IMPORTANT ISSUES**

### **IUU fishing**

226. The Chairperson advised that many participants had expressed an interest in addressing IUU fishing in the RSN forum. He referred to some of the tools that have been used successfully to combat IUU fishing, including IUU Vessel Lists and port State measures, and those that are under development such as the Global Record. He invited discussion on the challenges in combatting IUU fishing and on the outlook for improving the situation.

227. The Chairperson recounted the situation in the North Atlantic, where there had been successful cooperation among NEAFC, its members and non-members and NAFO in the use of various tools. In particular, he referred to the use of port State measures and noted a case where significant economic hardship had been imposed on a refrigerated vessel through the denial of landing of transhipped IUU caught fish by port States on four continents over almost year, and emphasized the importance of including such vessels on IUU vessel lists. He also stated that vessels that had appeared on the NEAFC IUU vessel list were no longer operating in the North Atlantic.

228. Mr Wright reported that, at CCAMLR, the IUU catch had decreased significantly in past five years compared to the 1990s, when it was almost equivalent to the legal catch. The IUU catch currently accounted for around six per cent of toothfish fishery. The southern ocean is hostile for at-sea MCS operations, so a suite of MSC tools such as VMS, at sea inspections and IUU Vessel Lists are important. He noted that it appears much of the IUU catch is offloaded in southern Asia, with vessels apparently re-victualling and re-crewing in Singapore. CCAMLR, together with its members, are approaching ports in that region to dissuade them from allowing fish caught in contravention of CCAMLR conservation measures to be transhipped or offloaded

229. Mr Jallow explained that CECAF had been confronted with several issues. Obsolete fisheries legislation was a problem, because countries may arrest vessels but do not have adequate grounds for prosecution. Most of the catch, if not all, is landed in the non-coastal countries, including in Las Palmas, where Spain has endeavoured to cooperate by obtaining information on landings. Most of the catch is exported to Asia and other distant places. It was hoped that port State measures would assist in addressing IUU fishing. Interest had been expressed in the region in establishing a register of vessels, and Mr Jallow noted that a global record could improve existing information, and CECAF could assist countries by disseminating such information.

230. Mr Su'a elaborated a number of ways in which FFA is combating IUU fishing. Since the early 1980s, it has maintained a regional register of foreign fishing vessels, a positive list of vessels that have good standing and are therefore allowed to fish in the waters of FFA members. If a vessel has its good standing withdrawn according to agreed processes and criteria, including IUU fishing, no FFA member will issue a licence or otherwise allow it to

fish. In addition, where the WCPFC has included a vessel on its IUU Vessel List, the vessel automatically loses good standing on the Regional Register. There is ongoing work on port State measures and development of national plans of action (NPOAs) to combat IUU fishing. FFA is assisting its members to update their national legislation to ensure successful fisheries prosecutions. It also hosts subregional MCS operations periodically, with the collaboration of Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States. The results of this collaboration have yet to be analyzed but generally it has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the level of IUU fishing vessels.

231. Mr Vakily reported that SRFC had begun an MCS project with the support of the EU. IUU fishing is a big problem in the area, particularly in the south. The possibilities of having a regional or subregional approach to the problem will be examined. At the same time the SRFC is working with FAO on a harmonized approach to vessel control systems, and is looking at the possibility of establishing something along the lines of a regional vessel register/database on fishing vessels operating in the region.

232. Mr Flewwelling flagged the general collaboration between WCPFC and other RFBs, and particularly noted the cooperation with the regional MCS centre at FFA. He identified some problems that RFBs may share, including the scope of the authority of the Secretariat, how it deals with the discovery of an incident, how it is reported, how it take the matter forward and whether RFBs automatically accept and implement the IUU Vessel Lists of other RFBs where there is agreement to do so. He noted that WCPFC does not automatically accept the IUU Vessel Lists of another tuna RFB.

233. Mr Aubrey Harris recalled that, as an advisory body, SWIOFC's approach is to support countries that have needs or expressed an interest for assistance with IUU fishing. For example, the activities of Mozambique were endorsed by members at a recent Commission meeting, including the meetings of heads of MCS operations held over the last few years. Through this informal network there has been significant exchange of information and technical personal exchanges, as well as some interesting cases of apprehension. It has improved the understanding and some of the activities. He emphasized the importance of using the FAO Port State Measures Agreement as a basis for potentially strengthening MCS among members as the network develops more formally.

234. Mr Mohamed Seisay stated that an important issue in GCLME is the need to ensure the adequacy of national legislation and human capacity for implementing key international instruments that combat IUU fishing, such as the FAO Port State Measures Agreement and the EU Regulation No. 1005/2008 on IUU Fishing. He underscored the importance of harmonizing such legislation among members.

235. Mr Shibanov explained that IUU fishing activities are not a very big problem in the NAFO Area because of the success of the Joint IUU Vessel List between NAFO and NEAFC. He encouraged other RFBs to explore the possibility of establishing similar lists and cooperative arrangements, particularly where they have competence over the same areas or species.

236. Mr Compean reported that IATTC had worked hard over the years to develop their current precise procedures, noting that the Resolutions of the RFMO may not always be clear. The Kobe process has addressed combined IUU Vessel Lists, and some of the tuna RFMOs have expressed skepticism because the listing criteria are different. For example one RFMO may apply to fishing inside EEZs and others may apply to the high seas only. In principle, however, possibilities for future collaboration were worth further thought.

237. Mr Meski referred to the relevant ICCAT Recommendation which automatically incorporates a vessel on the ICCAT IUU Vessel List if it has been listed by another tuna RFMO. Other measures to control IUU fishing included a statistical document and bluefin document scheme and a Regulation that requires all vessels greater than 24 meters to have a VMS system. An electronic bluefin CDS is being developed and will be adapted for other species. ICCAT has made very important progress on this matter.

238. Mr Windsor indicated that the NASCO Convention prohibits fishing for salmon beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction, and in most areas beyond 12 nautical miles from the baselines of the territorial sea. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a small number of vessels reflagged to Panama and Poland had been observed fishing for salmon in international waters in the North-East Atlantic and this action had threatened to undermine the effectiveness of the strict measures taken by NASCO and its Parties. The problem was addressed through a combination of diplomatic initiatives and actions to prevent landings. NASCO had also taken measures to improve the exchange of surveillance information. NASCO Parties are taking measures to reduce the level of unreported catches (e.g. improved reporting procedures and use of carcass tagging) and information reported to NASCO suggests that unreported catches currently account for around 20 percent of the total catch.

239. Mr Massa reported that GFCM had adopted a Recommendation to list vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in GFCM area when evidence is presented that the vessels have engaged in certain activities, and taking into account vessels on the IUU vessel list established by other RFMOs. An Authorized Vessel List was established in 2008, and relevant data is submitted directly to GFCM.

240. The Chairperson observed that the situation relating to RFB efforts to combat IUU fishing has improved, but there is still much to learn. The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures was a major step forward. He noted the experience in NEAFC regarding the process of listing. Where one of the inspection vessels or another vessel sees a vessel not on NEAFC Authorized Vessel List, NEAFC must inform the flag State immediately. Many vessels may not be fishing illegally but are contravening NEAFC regulations. In such cases, if there is no explanation, they are seen as contravening the regulations and put on a provisional list, and, if the flag State does not offer an explanation, a confirmed list. RFBs should ensure that there are procedures for de-listing, for example upon the change of ownership when certain conditions are met. In fact, most of the vessels on the IUU Vessel List have gone out of business and were scrapped. Addressing the sharing of vessel lists with other organizations, he encouraged RFBs to review the criteria and actions to be taken for such vessels.

241. In discussion, it was noted that the decision of some RFMOs to combat IUU fishing with regard to the control of nationals has often been overlooked, but acknowledged that this presents problems to some countries. Generally, the RSN recognized that there had been progress in combating IUU fishing and improvement in the available tools, and looked forward to the development and implementation of new tools.

### **Overcapacity**

242. The Chairperson, in inviting discussion on overcapacity, asked participants to consider if overcapacity was a problem for individual countries or RFBs.

243. Mr Meski reported the decision of ICCAT in 2008 to reduce the capacity for bluefin tuna. During 2010, several meetings on compliance had taken place and Contracting Parties adopted a plan of action to reduce the capacity for bluefin tuna, which had been reduced by around 40 percent. In the Kobe process, capacity has been discussed and a workshop was held but there was no consensus to reduce capacity because some Commissions had difficulties to

proceed with this. Discussion had therefore ended but the issue will continue to be discussed within some tuna RFMOs.

244. Mr Compean stated that IATTC had adopted a Resolution on fishing capacity to maintain capacity at same level as it was at time of adoption. In 2004, a Resolution was adopted with a plan for reduction of capacity to a level recommended by assessment but this is not in force. The IATTC measures only apply to the purse seine fleet, but it was planned to expand them to longliners in future.

245. Mr Nyeko, LVFO, called on participants to take cognizance of issues discussed at COFI 29 relating to flag States, particularly the planned FAO Technical Consultation on flag State Performance. In his view, these issues did not accord landlocked states an adequate opportunity of having an interest in the high seas. In relation to fishing capacity, there is an RPOA that was approved by the LVFO Council regarding Nile perch, under which a species-specific management plan was developed that addresses capacity reduction. However, he also drew the Meeting's attention to the effect of capacity reduction on livelihoods in small-scale fisheries and the consequent political and moral aspects, while the alternative of stocks collapsing was not acceptable. The issue would need to be addressed in a realistic manner by taking into account the livelihoods of those affected.

246. Mr Seisay expressed the concern of GCLME about the effect of capacity reduction on target and demersal fisheries. An assessment was being conducted of the implementation of fisheries management plans agreed with countries and underpinned by science. He noted the overcapacity of trawlers, especially in shrimp fisheries and the effect on shrimp trawling not only on the target species but also on the bycatch, with resulting rapid decline of some of the demersal species.

247. Mr Flewwelling informed that overcapacity was a sensitive issue in the WCPFC. The majority of fisheries are inside the EEZs of SIDS, which aim to take a more active role and gain socio-economic benefits of vessels in zones. They are building their own fleets – in fact several purse seiners have been ordered in this regard – so reducing the number of vessels could deprive them of developing their own fisheries. Overcapacity issues are, however, being approached on a universal basis with the aim of controlling fishing effort to achieve sustainable levels. Management measures have focused on closed seasons for fish aggregating devices (FADs) to reduce the catch of juveniles, closed high seas pockets and the introduction of a vessel day scheme. The reason these measures are adopted is that they have a more direct connection with the quantity of fish taken as opposed to a general reduction of the number of vessels.

248. Mr Katonda reported that there was an open access fishery in the LTA Area, but it was not effective and posed a big problem for fisheries management because fishers stood a chance of losing their livelihood and this would have political implications.

249. Mr Vakily reported that, in the SRFC Area, a well known problem was the overcapacity in the artisanal fishery. SRFC was developing minimal conditions of access to the artisanal fishery, and the problem of defining a “small-scale fishery” would have to be addressed. The owners of the artisanal vessels are big investors but the people working on them are very poor and a reduction in capacity will affect their livelihoods. SRFC is working to introduce registration and licensing systems, and this can result in a reduction of fishing effort. It was hoped that future meetings will be able to assess the success of SRFC's activities in this regard.

250. Mr Massa noted that fishing capacity has been an issue in GFCM for years, especially for demersal and small pelagic fisheries. In 2010, the Commission adopted a Recommendation on the management of fishing capacity which provided that the levels of

the overall fishing capacity in GFCM area would be determined based on an RPOA considering the national and regional fishing capacity management plans and scientific advice. Members must submit an updated list of their vessels greater than 15 meters that were entitled to fish in GFCM area, must not exceed the overall level of fishing capacity when vessels are replaced and must transmit existing fishing capacity management plans to the GFCM Secretariat.

251. Ms Rebecca Metzner, Fishery Analyst, Policy, Economics and Institutions Service, FAO, stated that overcapacity tends not to be addressed in the absence of difficult symptoms such as conflicts, declining profits, declining safety, and pressure on politicians (as well as fishery managers). Ironically, under such conditions, the issues of access, allocation, entry and exit, and possible changes in profits become all the more contentious, and the motivations to cheat and/or to fish illegally become all the greater.

252. She noted that managing fishing capacity does mean, ultimately, setting up rights for users, but that the type of rights system for one fishery will not be the same as for another. Under the LVFO RPOA Capacity there are user rights based on communities, on the beach management units, but this probably would not be useful design for a high seas fishery. In addition, flexibility is key, as well as the ability, even under RPOAs, for nations to design systems that are culturally and socially acceptable.

253. As a preface to FI's activities relating to capacity management, she indicated that FI was going through a fundamental shift and de-emphasizing the process of measuring first and acting later, and putting increased emphasis on assisting countries and regions to understand how to set up and move to management systems that help for resolve and reduce the recurrence of overcapacity. She noted that FI is focusing on sharing lessons learned supporting capacity management as well as outreach activities. In this regard, recent and ongoing work in FI includes the following.

- Finalization and translation of the experiences and lessons learned in seven countries in Central America and one in South America (Ecuador) as a means of providing assistance to their respective national teams of professionals to prepare their National Plan of Action for Capacity Management. The work is being coordinated by the Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture (OSPESCA) and was initially financed through various FAO Technical Assistance Programs.
- Development of a draft GFCM RPOA-Capacity as a result of the work during two sessions held in 2010 of the SCESS/SCSA/SCSI<sup>3</sup> Transversal Workshop on the Assessment, Management and Monitoring of Fishing Capacity in GFCM Area.
- Continued efforts with the LVFO in support of implementing the various components of the LVFO RPOA-Capacity.
- Collaboration with the Partnership for African Fisheries Governance Group, especially regarding the political economy of facilitating transitions away from overcapacity.
- Participation in the 2009 Kobe II meeting in San Sebastian with the presentation *Successfully Managing Fishing Capacity: What options are available?*
- Contribution to and participation in the VIGO 2009 conference.
- Contribution to the 2010 International Workshop on Rights-based Fisheries Management: its costs and benefits hosted by the University of Tokyo, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Nippon Foundation.

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<sup>3</sup> Within the GFCM, the SCESS is the Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences, the SCSA is the sub-Committee on Stock Agreement, and the SCSI is the Scientific Advisory Committee.

- At the national level, ongoing collaboration at national levels to develop NPOAs (e.g., Vietnam, Ecuador).

254. In discussion, Mr Meski expressed the view that the capacity issue is a very serious one. If it is believed that there will be problems in future managing the overfishing of a certain species, one of the first things to do would be to reduce the capacity so that the Contracting Parties do not face a CITES-type situation. RFBs cannot purport to adopt conservation measures for these species unless such measures are accompanied by reductions in fishing capacity. He encouraged FAO to be more aggressive on this issue, and observed that not enough attention is paid to this issue possibly because it is a major source of the problems.

255. The Chairperson remarked that there were a range of problems facing efforts to address overcapacity of fishing fleets, but the issue is central to fisheries management and a balance needs to be identified.

### **Catch documentation harmonization and port State measures**

256. The Chairperson drew the attention of the meeting of the value of catch documentation and port State measures, but also the danger of impeding the legal flow of fish to the market through the relevant processes for implementing these tools. For example, it takes time for the port State to request the flag State to certify that the fish were caught legally, and for the flag State to respond. However, for port State measures there has been good cooperation between the port State and the flag State and for the NEAFC region, there had been no complaint even though up to five thousand landings have been involved.

257. Mr Jallow stated that in the CEEAF region, because some or most of catches are landed outside the region, countries in the region have no access to the information or documentation on board. Although it is standard worldwide for vessel owners to pay the costs of observers as a condition of fisheries access, the owners tend to control what the observers report in the CEEAF region. It is hoped that the problem can be addressed using port State measures, given the difficulties in obtaining and maintaining statistics in the region.

258. Mr Wright noted the extremely effective operation of the electronic CDS by CCAMLR. He recommended a publication by the British Department for International Development which profiles all existing CDSs and identifies best practices in each. In discussion, it was observed that the CDS and port State measures gather the same information and aim to certify that the catch was legally taken.

259. Mr Meski referred to the broad experience of ICCAT in several areas. Since the end of the 1990s, it has used statistical documents for swordfish, bluefin tuna and bigeye. Since 2007 a very complex bluefin catch document scheme form has been in force, which follows the fish from the time it is caught to the market and which exceeds the information requirements of CITES. He remarked that it took substantial work to maintain the database. When the fish product reaches the market, the ICCAT Web site will show whether the fish has been caught legally. An electronic bluefin catch document scheme will be developed in 2012 and the extension of this scheme to swordfish and bigeye, for which statistical documents are still required, and possibly to other species is under consideration. The documentation has had a significant impact, for example in Japan where a considerable quantity of fish has been rejected because the bluefin documentation was not correct. All the basic data from the documents are on the ICCAT web site. Efforts were being made within tuna web sites to harmonize the catch documents, but further development was needed in some RFMOs.

260. Mr Kennedy reported that CCSBT had implemented a CDS in January 2010, with similarities to the ICCAT bluefin catch document. It requires that each southern bluefin be tagged to identify legally caught fish. There is a problem in the validation of documents because different members are using different standards for validation of information. CCSBT is developing minimum standards for the CDS and for validation.

### **Role of RFBs/RFMOs—thematic session**

261. The RSN took note of the description of the role of RFBs in the opening statement made by Mr Árni M. Mathiesen in Appendix D.

### **Small-scale and inland fisheries**

262. The Chairperson described the growing global recognition of the importance of inland fisheries and invited participants to share their experience and views.

263. Mr van Anrooy stated that, even though the Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Fishery Body is just in initial stages, the first five-year work plan includes the development of better data collection methods and information systems for small-scale fisheries in the region. Very little information was available; some information on aquaculture existed but because catches were landed in many different places it was difficult to establish data collection systems. Workshops to establish such systems have been held and information from other RFBs on their information collection systems has been sought.

264. Mr Jallow emphasized the importance of small-scale fisheries, which constitute 80 percent of landed catch in the CECAF region. CECAF has a working group on Small-Scale Fisheries through its Scientific Sub-Committee, but it has had problems with funding. He noted also that small-scale fisheries are based in remote areas, so data collection is a problem. Work had been carried out with the FAO project on the Status and Trends of Fisheries (STF) which involved training, especially on the collection and processing of information and data. The STF project facilitated some training programs at the University of Ghana for fisheries statisticians in CECAF members and for the conduct of frame surveys. He expressed hope that CECAF will be able to work with FAO on this, mindful of the recent COFI endorsement of an international instrument on small-scale fisheries and related elements.

265. Mr Katonda underlined the importance of the contribution of inland fisheries to fish production, and the countries' dependence on them in the LTA region. He supported efforts in FAO to prioritize the area of small-scale fisheries.

266. Mr Cochrane endorsed the views given by participants on the importance of this issue. He explained that FAO had strong inland fisheries group 10 to 15 years ago, but staff had since been reallocated to the aquaculture sub-sector. However, the importance of inland fisheries has been recognized by COFI and the need to rebuild the inland fisheries group has been acknowledged.

267. Mr Yadava recalled that small-scale fisheries have been on the COFI agenda every year since 2005, and that it has now called for a global instrument. He requested that international instrument take into account multidimensional and multidisciplinary aspects of small-scale fisheries, and include their social and economic aspects.

268. Mr Nyeko called for COFI to clarify the scope of small-scale fisheries. He explained that LVFO addresses only small-scale fisheries because trawling was banned on the Lake 15 years ago. He supported the creation of a COFI Sub-Committee for small-scale fisheries and sought views on how to achieve this. In response, Mr Cochrane noted that, as a result of the

process of FAO decentralization, the Regional Conference would be an appropriate platform to express such views. As well, such issues could be brought before COFI or strategies/measures could be developed at regional level.

269. Mr Harris stated that the main feature of SWIOFC is small-scale fisheries. He underlined the difficulty of gathering and managing data and information from an area which has not had intellectual muscle because of complexities involved. It is continuously addressed in the Scientific Committee. Work has been done to compile small-scale fisheries information under two projects, and to develop fisheries management plans which would include aspects of data and information. Work is carried out with IOTC because it was found that, based on modelling, significant information on catch and data were missing and efforts were being renewed in obtaining data from the small-scale fisheries.

270. Mr Pongsri stated that in the SEAFDEC region, small-scale fisheries cover a wide area, diverse habitat types and the nature of inland fisheries is not homogeneous and seasonal. This makes statistical information gathering difficult. Ten years may be spent in collecting good data but conventional methodology cannot cover this, and this results in underestimates. Other methodologies are being developed, for example converting information on fish consumption back to the quantity of inland fish caught. Although inland fisheries are highly important, there is a very serious situation caused by competition from other powerful sectors like hydropower and irrigation that share the same area and water, and impact the habitat. It is important to convey the right message to decision-makers and ensure that they recognize the livelihoods and food security provided by inland fisheries.

271. Mr Marmulla, speaking as a staff member of the Marine and Inland Fisheries Service, FAO, advised that the FAO inland fisheries programme has been strengthened in recent years and that a big project on technical support to the LTA and its four riverine countries was being implemented, including a frame survey on Lake Tanganyika.

272. Mr Rolf Willmann, Senior Fisheries Planning Officer, Policy, Economics and Institutions Service, FAO, described the process for developing the new international instrument on small-scale fisheries, which will take the form of International Guidelines. There would not be enough time to finalize the text prior to the next meeting of COFI in July 2012. Therefore a longer lasting, more intensive process was planned, taking into account the views of some of the civil society organizations which believe that the path to develop the Guidelines are as important as the Guidelines themselves. There will be an intensive process of negotiations and consultations, and contributions by RFBs to this process are welcome.

273. Mr Devin Bartley informed the Meeting that FAO was conscious of the problems that were raised regarding the difficulty of managing inland fisheries. He advised that FAO was developing a strategy on handling this, involving indicator development, and that FAO would be actively seeking the participation of relevant RFBs in moving this forward.

### **RFB/RFMO performance enhancement**

274. Mr Watanabe reported on the status of development the FAO Fisheries Circular on the performance review of seven RFBs. According to guidelines agreed in RSN-2, the first volume of the report was being finalized and it was planned to finish the work by the end of March for publication. He proposed a second volume of the same type of report, to cover other organizations which have just finished performance reviews, such as SEAFO and GFCM, and others expected to undertake reviews. The second volume was expected to be initiated by the end of this year, and work with RSN would continue in this regard. Mr Watanabe sought the guidance of the Meeting.



275. In discussion, relevant participants reported on current or planned performance reviews as follows.

- GFCM performance review was now available on the Web and would be considered at the next session in May 2011.
- IATTC had not undertaken a performance review based on the Kobe process because its new Convention had only been in force for six months, however there was a formal review last year of the panel responsible for stock assessment undertaken by an independent panel with representatives from different institutions.
- ICES performance review will likely be completed in 2010.
- NASCO undertook a comprehensive and open performance review of its work in 2005/2006 and has moved quickly to implement the recommendations. Stakeholder consultation meetings were held in Europe and North America and the main recommendations related to commitment to NASCO's agreements, transparency and inclusivity and raising NASCO's profile. A second performance review will be conducted prior to NASCO's 2012 Annual Meeting.
- NAFO was in a position to conduct the process in 2011, and the first meeting was scheduled for February.
- RECOFI had just carried out technical performance review, and the outcome was scheduled to be discussed at the next plenary session in May 2011.

276. Relevant participants reported on completed performance reviews as follows.

- ICCAT reported that there had been a good performance review by an external panel, endorsed by the Commission. However, other evaluations made by other organizations without the direct participation of the RFMOs have not always clearly indicated the criteria used nor how the final determination or score was reached;
- CCAMLR was one of the first RFBs to initiate a performance review, but there was no prioritization in the review of the more than 100 recommendations that could serve as a guide as CCAMLR considered its response.

277. The Chairperson noted that the independent reviews have been very helpful, and underscored the importance of prioritizing recommendations.

### **Ecosystem approach**

278. The Chairperson invited discussion on the EAF and highlighted some areas that would usefully serve as the focus of discussion: MPAs, VMEs, bycatch and discards and climate change. He underlined the complex nature of these areas, and suggested that the general trend was to move forward with the EAF incrementally by building upon existing fisheries management mechanisms.

279. Mr Meski reported that ICCAT has an ecosystem subcommittee which recommends important actions to the Scientific Committee in relation to sharks, sea turtles and seabirds. Management measures have focused on closed fishing seasons (e.g. a one month season for bluefin tuna) and closed areas, but have not included MPAs as such. ICCAT has also taken or strengthened measures that implement the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

280. Mr Yadava referred to discussions in COFI and references in the Code of Conduct relating to the EAF and noted the difficulty of ensuring that the Code is understood by stakeholders. He requested guidance on taking forward the EAF in this context.

281. Mr Mannini reported that RECOFI has endorsed EAF, but it was not yet implemented in the RECOFI region. Acknowledging the major efforts made by FAO to supply the necessary tools for implementation of EAF, and noting its activities in the Mediterranean in this regard, he identified a need for a FAO field programme to support RECOFI members in implementing an EAF. Significant human capacity development would be necessary.

282. Mr Su'a referred to the 2006 FFA Guide to Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management for the Tuna Fisheries of the Western and Central Pacific Region, developed by three expert consultations and implemented in 2007. He noted the complexity of the EAF and the challenge this presented to human capacity development. The Guide covered target and non-target species and socioeconomic aspects of fisheries management, and after a review, simpler and more effective EAF guidelines were developed

283. Mr Compean reported that the IATTC Antigua Convention requires the EAF to be used in fisheries conservation and management. Under the previous 1949 Convention IATTC had adopted some practical measures that affected non-target species in the ecosystem such as release of non-target species and measures relating to bycatch, sea turtles and seabirds.

284. Mr Wright recalled that CCAMLR measures had reduced the seabird bycatch in the Convention Area high seas to almost zero. He supported the inclusion of certification requirements in EAF management.

285. Mr Shibanov stated that NAFO had introduced a number of EAF-related measures, including those on bycatch and the delineation of existing fishing areas and bottom fishing areas. Scientists from different universities were working together to identify the existing ecosystem within the NAFO Area and results will be presented to NAFO Commission.

286. Mr Nyeko emphasized that inland waters were more vulnerable than marine areas to the impacts of non-fisheries activities on fisheries. Describing the governing bodies of LVFO, he explained that matters are first referred to a broader Basin Commission, which then refers them to the LVFO. He noted the potential difficulties in securing funding for fisheries projects covering other aspects of the ecosystem. A successful LVFO model project involved coastal communities that farm fish and protect the area at the same time through placement of low volume, high density cages. However, there is insufficient capacity to collect historical data for climate change, and adaptation will be particularly critical for small inland fisheries.

287. Mr Seisay described collaboration between GCLME and the University of British Columbia on ecosystem modelling, where the integrated ecosystem approach is taken. Fisheries data is included in the modelling, with the aim of developing an ecosystem model for the GCLME as a start. Compliance and enforcement of fisheries regulations is a challenge in the artisanal fisheries sector management, so efforts have been made, with some successes, to involve the fishers unions or organizations in the management of small-scale fisheries. Coastal communities have been involved in efforts to address IUU fishing. The uncontrolled use of inshore destructive fishing methods will have an effect on the offshore fisheries.

288. Mr Papworth observed that the EAF brings with it a huge demand for resources, and ACAP addresses this by bringing in the expertise of organizations and institutions representing a range of disciplines. A significant challenge involves the constraints in resources for data collection and analysis. Observer programmes, a main source of data, are very expensive but remote sensing and, in the case of seabirds, video footage of longline operations may help to fill some gaps.

289. Mr Windsor noted that, as reported to previous RSN meetings, NASCO has adopted an EAF but there still appears to be confusion concerning this approach to fisheries

management. There had been little interest in a seminar related to the EAF that was to have been convened in 2010 by ICES but the reasons for this were not clear.

290. Mr Maguire supported the view that the interpretation of EAF varies. Some see it as requiring considerable data, but FAO and FFA seemed to take a risk-based approach and implement EAF with whatever data is available. Dialogues on the EAF do not seem to attract much attention. ICES was now in a position to advise on mixed fisheries in the North Sea, but objectives must first be identified. There was a possibility that EAF multispecies integrated advice for the Baltic Sea may be provided in next few years.

291. Referring to MPAs, Mr Cochrane explained that although FAO had been slow in developing guidelines, they should be finalized in the next few months. There were many complexities in blending guidelines for MPAs with the requirements of fisheries management and the aim was to address MPAs as a tool within fisheries management. Establishment of MPAs is underpinned by the objective of protecting the marine environment against different types of human activity and although MPAs are not equivalent to the EAF, they serve as a tool to help achieve it.

292. It was recognized that bycatch and discards represented major issues in fisheries and control of these activities would be essential for an EAF. In this regard, the International Guidelines for Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards that had been developed by FAO Expert and Technical Consultations, and recently endorsed by COFI, were welcomed.

293. Addressing climate change, Mr Yadava advised that the BOBP IGO was working on this on a global scale. Fisheries are part of the global climate change research, so it will be necessary to understand how FAO can support global climate change research in the fisheries sector. He suggested that the outcomes of the research should be easily understood by and accessible to stakeholders.

294. Mr Cochrane advised that there was deep concern that fisheries and oceans were being overlooked in climate change debates, and a number of organizations have tried to ensure this will not happen. Progress was being made for fifth assessment review of the international Commission on Climate Change and Development, which was taking a regional focus on high seas and on adaptation. The establishment of funding mechanisms for climate change adaptation had been agreed, and all sectors were competing for funds. This response to climate change requires that progress be made on a range of problems that have been under consideration over many decades. He encouraged participants to ensure that their Members are aware of the relevant risks and opportunities.

295. Ms Bahri Tarub, Fishery Resources Officer, Marine and Inland Fisheries Service, FAO, informed the Meeting that FAO was endeavouring to establish climate change partnerships in fisheries and aquaculture which would facilitate access to available funds. There were currently 20 organizations in the partnership, and it would be possible for RFBs to join as well. She underlined the importance of receiving more information on a regional basis and the strong need for collaboration.

## **ADVICE AND FUTURE WORK**

296. It was recalled that RSN-1 had agreed to focus the work of the Network on capture fisheries, however, noting the increasing importance of aquaculture to food security and the number of RFBs that have a mandate over inland or coastal aquaculture, it was agreed that aquaculture may be included on the RSN agenda in future.

297. Given the time constraints for the RSN meetings and the opportunity for side events during COFI that could spotlight selected themes, it was suggested that future work of the RSN could focus on items flowing from COFI.

#### **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS**

298. Mr Andrew Wright was acclaimed as Chairperson, Mr Yugraj Yadava as First Vice-Chairperson and Mr Kaitira Ibarahim Katonda as Second Vice-Chairperson.

299. Mr Wright thanked Mr Hoydal for his excellent work in guiding the RSN forward during his term of office.

#### **FOURTH RSN MEETING (RSN-4) DATE AND VENUE**

300. It was agreed that RSN-4 would be convened during the 30th Session of COFI on Friday morning, 13 July 2012 and, if necessary, extend to Saturday morning.

#### **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

301. The RSN adopted a Statement expressing its concern about the allegations of anti-fishing lobbies in the press and some scientific journals that most RFBs are failing internationally in their efforts to effectively conserve and manage fisheries resources. Recognizing that challenges exist and there is room for further improvement of regional fisheries governance, the RSN elaborated why many of these condemnations are unjustified, welcomed evaluations of their practices and encouraged communications and constructive comments. The Statement may be used by RSN Members as a basis for raising awareness in the broader community about the work and achievements of RFBs, encouraging dialogue and countering unsubstantiated condemnations. It was suggested that RFBs could also issue summaries of key successes for such purposes. The text of the Statement is in Appendix F.

302. The RSN took note of the process to set up a community of practice for fisheries.

303. Mr Wright reminded the RSN of the initiative of CCAMLR to engage developing States in the work of RFBs and encouraged others to provide recent information that would support CCAMLR's work in relation to this as appropriate.

304. Mr Meski, on behalf of RSN-3, expressed gratitude to the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Rapporteur for their good work and helpfulness. He conveyed appreciation to the Secretary for keeping participants informed during the intersession and congratulated the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons.

#### **ADOPTION OF REPORT**

305. It was agreed that draft report would be circulated to RSN partners and that comments would be accepted until 24 February 2011 after which the report will be finalised and published.

#### **CLOSURE OF MEETING**

306. The meeting was closed at 16.30 hours on Tuesday 8 February 2011.

### Agenda

1. Opening of meeting
2. Adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements
  - Adoption of Agenda
  - Meeting arrangements
  - Observers
3. RSN internal matters
  - Round-table presentation, by member and by region, identifying main activities and challenges since RSN-2
  - Sharing of information electronically intersessionally
  - The future of RSN
4. FAO, IGOs and UN family initiatives
  - Review of COFI-29 decisions relating to RFBs/RFMOs
  - Other FAO related activities
    - Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)
    - Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP)
    - Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)
    - RSN Web site
    - D4-Science project and other information sharing platforms
    - Legally-binding Agreement on Port State Measures
    - Climate change
    - Any other matters
  - UN family initiatives, CITES, OECD
    - The 2010 Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement
    - Listing of fisheries managed or dealt with by RFBs/RFMOs and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
    - OECD report on RFMOs
  - Other projects
    - Technical Experts Overseeing Third Countries Expertise (TXOTX)
    - Global Environmental Facility and Area Beyond National Jurisdiction (GEF ABNJ) Project
    - UNIDO Guinea Current Commission

Other discussions in the UN

Johannesburg fisheries-related commitments

5. Thematic approach to important issues
  - IUU fishing
  - Overcapacity
  - Catch documentation harmonization and port State measures
  - Role of RFBs/RFMOs—thematic session
  - Small-scale and inland fisheries
  - RFB/RFMO performance enhancement
  - Ecosystem approach
6. Advice and future work
7. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons
8. Fourth RSN meeting (RSN-4) date and venue
9. Any other matters
10. Adoption of report
11. Closure of meeting

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## List of documents

RSN/III/2011/1	Agenda and Timetable
RSN/III/2011/2	Draft Report of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 31 January–4 February 2011
RSN/III/2011/3	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments, including International Plans of Action and Strategies, and other matters (COFI/2011/2)
RSN/III/2011/3.Supp.1	Results of the Informal 2010 Pilot Test of the Electronic Questionnaire for the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible (COFI/2011/2.Supp.1)
RSN/III/2011/4	Decisions and recommendations of the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26–30 April 2010 (COFI/2011/3)
RSN/III/2011/5	Decisions and recommendations of the Fifth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Phuket, Thailand, 27 September–1 October 2010 (COFI/2011/4)
RSN/III/2011/6	Progress made with regard to measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including port State measures, flag State performance, market State measures and development of a Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (COFI/2011/5)
RSN/III/2011/7	Fisheries and aquaculture in our changing climate: adaptation and mitigation measures in fisheries and aquaculture (COFI/2011/6)
RSN/III/2011/8	FAO's role for improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection (COFI/2011/7)
RSN/III/2011/9	Good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries: Sharing of experiences and lessons learned in responsible fisheries for social and economic development (COFI/2011/8)
RSN/III/2011/10	Implementation of the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partnership Agreement: Status and Prospects

RSN/III/2011/11	Compilation of Information Provided by the Chairpersonperson for Discussion
RSN/III/2011/12	Compilation of Information Provided by Regional Fishery Body Secretariats for Discussion
RSN/III/2011/Inf.1	List of documents
RSN/III/2011/Inf.2	List of participants
RSN/III/2011/Inf.3	Opening Statement by Mr Árni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
RSN/III/2011/Inf.4	Annotations on Agenda Items
RSN/III/2011/Inf.5	Report of the Second Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network, Rome, 9-10 March 2009 (FIEL/R908)
RSN/III/2011/Inf.6	Report of the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26-30 April 2010 (COFI/2011/Inf.8)
RSN/III/2011/Inf.7	Report of the Fifth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Phuket, Thailand, 27 September-1 October 2010 (COFI/2011/Inf.9)
RSN/III/2011/Inf.8	Report of the Twenty-third Session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics, Hobart, Australia, 22-26 February 2010
RSN/III/2011/Inf.9	Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (A/RES/61/105)
RSN/III/2011/Inf.10	Report of the resumed Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/CONF.210/2010/7)
RSN/III/2011/Inf.11	Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (A/65/L.21)

**Opening statement by Mr Árni M. Mathiesen  
Assistant Director-General  
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For the third meeting of the regional fishery body secretariats network**

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Representatives of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know some of the colleagues here also attended the twenty ninth Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) just held last week, but once again, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to be with you today at the opening of this Third Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN-3) and to extend to you all a warm welcome to Rome and to FAO on behalf of the Director-General.

Regional Fishery Bodies play a unique role in facilitating international cooperation for the conservation and management of fish stocks. Regional Fishery Bodies represent the primary means for managing highly migratory fish stocks and straddling or transboundary stocks. Regional Fishery Bodies also promote the necessary institutional framework for regional and global cooperation toward sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture as well as provide common platforms and mechanisms to exchange views and information.

The twenty seventh Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI-27) held in 2007 discussed the issue of regional fishery bodies and related matters under a stand-alone Agenda item, for the first time in the history of COFI. While they were not considered under a stand-alone Agenda item during the following session, the twenty eighth Session of COFI (COFI-28) in 2009, Regional Fishery Bodies were directly present in the discussion of several items on the agenda for that session. The situation during the twenty ninth Session of COFI (COFI-29), which took place last week, is more or less the same. I may refer to, for example, item 4 “Progress in the Implementation of the Code and International Plans of Action” and item 6 “Progress made with regard to measures against IUU fishing”. Throughout these discussions, the important role of Regional Fishery Bodies has been repeatedly underscored.

In the highly internationalized fisheries arena, it is now almost impossible for FAO to work on global and regional or even national fisheries issues without cooperation from the bodies that you represent and support. Therefore, I would like to reaffirm FAO’s strong expectation and commitment to work with regional fishery bodies on a systematic and permanent basis and in a collaborative manner. In this respect, I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the high level of cooperation lent to FAO by you, a contribution of which is highly valued and of significant importance to FAO in the implementation of its activities<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, 17 Regional Fishery Bodies (14 at the last time in 2008) positively responded to the Code Questionnaire 2010, which were reflected to the COFI/2011/2. Those responded positively to the questionnaire are 18 RFBs: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), Benguela Current Commission (BCC), Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Commission for the Conservation of Southern Blufin Tuna (CCSBT), Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front (CTMFM), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture (OSPESCA), Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO), Secretariat of the Pacific Commission (SPC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

I wish to reiterate that cooperation and coordination among Regional Fishery Bodies is one of the most effective ways to strengthen regional fisheries governance. As far as I know, this meeting is the unique and only opportunity for Regional Fishery Bodies to get all together regularly and exchange their views and information. As in the previous ones, since this meeting is being held just after the conclusion of COFI, you may review the relevant conclusions and recommendations made by COFI and elaborate further implication for your own activities as Regional Fishery Bodies. This, however, never prejudices the consideration of specific matters on your own agenda which are directly related to the work of your bodies.

As usual, FAO will pay particular attention to the discussions throughout your meeting, provide technical input, as called for, and, following its conclusion, will endeavour to collaborate further with you in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations that you might agree. For this purpose, relevant staff of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department will remain fully available during the meeting.

Lastly I would like to touch upon the change of the date of the next session of COFI, which COFI itself endorsed last week. The Resolution 1/2008 and Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA) recommended that, in accordance with the overall reform of the Organization, the date of FAO Conference would move to June starting from 2011 with a corresponding shift in the dates of all meetings of other FAO governing bodies, including COFI. Accordingly the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI (COFI 30) is now scheduled to be held from 9 to 13 July 2012. Therefore, I would like to ask you to take this new schedule into account when you discuss the schedule of the next session of this meeting.

In conclusion, I wish you the greatest success in your deliberations during this Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network.

Thank you very much for your attention.



**Written Statement of Mr Serguei Tarassenko,  
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Mr Chairperson,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

The purpose of this written statement is to highlight recent developments in the work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) that are directly relevant to regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As).

Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement

The resumed Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in May 2010 pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 63/112 and 64/72.<sup>5</sup> The Conference assessed the effectiveness of the Agreement in securing the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and conducted a review of the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the Review Conference in 2006<sup>6</sup>.

The resumed Review Conference adopted additional recommendations to be implemented by States and regional economic integration organizations, individually and collectively through RFMO/As.<sup>7</sup> The recommendations cover a wide range of issues relating to the conservation and management of stocks, mechanisms for international cooperation and non-members, monitoring, control and surveillance and compliance and enforcement, and developing States and non-parties. The Conference also recommended that the Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement continue and that the Agreement be kept under review through the resumption of the Review Conference at a date not earlier than 2015.

The recommendations were considered by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 in the context of its annual resolution on sustainable fisheries. In resolution 65/38, which was adopted by consensus on 7 December 2010, the General Assembly encouraged accelerated progress by States and RFMO/As regarding the recommendations of the Review Conference and encouraged States and RFMO/As to also consider implementing the recommendations of the resumed Review Conference.

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the resumed Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/CONF.210/2010/7).

<sup>6</sup> Outcome of the Review Conference (A/CONF.210/210/7, Annex)

<sup>7</sup> Outcome of the resumed Review Conference (A/CONF.210/2010/7, Annex).

Review by the General Assembly of actions taken by States and RFMO/As to address the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems

At its sixty-fourth session in 2009, the General Assembly conducted a review of the actions taken by States and RFMO/As to regulate bottom fishing activities and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, the results of which were reflected in resolution 64/72. In 2011, the General Assembly will conduct a further review of the actions taken by States and RFMO/As in response to relevant paragraphs of resolutions 61/105 and 64/72 with a view to ensuring effective implementation of the measures and to make further recommendations, where necessary.

In order to assist the General Assembly in its review, the Secretary-General will prepare a report to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the actions taken by States and RFMO/As in response to resolutions 61/105 and 64/72. The report, to be prepared in cooperation with FAO, will be based on contributions from States and regional economic integration organizations and RFMO/As. The contributions of RFMO/As will constitute an important part of the report of the Secretary-General.

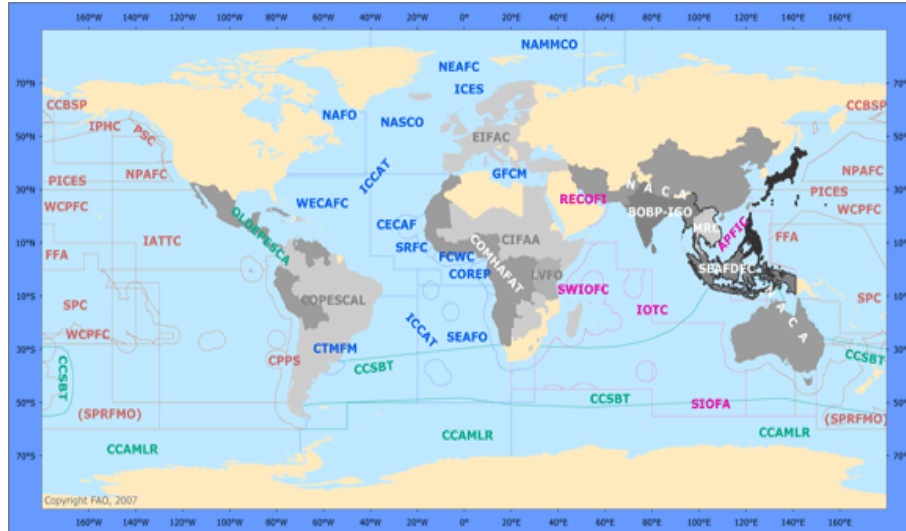
Formal requests for contributions to the report were conveyed to RFMO/As through the FAO. The United Nations Secretariat expects to receive these contributions by 30 April 2011.

In preparation for the review, the Secretary-General will also convene a two-day Workshop in September 2011 at United Nations Headquarters in New York to discuss implementation of the relevant paragraphs of these resolutions. In accordance with paragraph 128 of resolution 64/72, invitations to the Workshop will be sent to States, the FAO and other relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes, RFMO/As, other fisheries bodies, other relevant intergovernmental bodies, and relevant non-governmental organizations and stakeholders.

Pursuant to paragraph 129 of resolution 64/72, the discussions during the Workshop will be taken into account by the General Assembly during its review of the actions taken by States and RFMO/As in response to resolutions 61/105 and 64/72. Given the key role of RFMO/As in the regulation of bottom fisheries, it will be of utmost importance for representatives of RFMO/As to attend the Workshop and participate in the discussions. Invitations to the Workshop will be sent by the Secretariat in due course.

Thank you.

### Statment of the third meeting of the regional fishery body secretariats network<sup>1</sup>



### THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS NETWORK (RSN),<sup>2</sup>

Recalling the continuing need for strong and effective fisheries governance at regional level and the important role played by Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) in this regard;

Recognizing that The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network is an informal consortium of secretariats representing the regional fisheries body Secretariats worldwide, which have varying responsibilities over inland, coastal and marine fisheries and aquaculture;

Noting the wide range of mandates and functions of RFBs, including advisory and management mandates, and the various challenges they face in discharging their duties and improving fisheries conservation, management and sustainable use;

Mindful of the measures taken by the international community and RFBs to strengthen fisheries governance, including the establishment of new RFBs and the conduct of comprehensive RFB Performance Reviews, as well as the implementation of the Recommendations of such Reviews;

Referring to the growing collaboration and cooperation among RFBs to apply modern principles of fisheries management and to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the significant progress made in these regards;

<sup>1</sup> The term RFB is used in this document to encompass regional fishery bodies, regional fisheries management organizations and regional fisheries arrangements.

<sup>2</sup> FAO serves as the secretariat to the RSN. It was established twelve years ago and meets biennially in tandem with the meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries. The RSN provides a valuable international resource for disseminating information. More information can be found at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn>.

*Mindful* of the increasing reliance by RFB Members on these bodies as leaders in regional fisheries governance;

*Concerned* that too many of the global fish stocks remain overexploited or depleted and that RFBs must proactively continue to seek ways to improve and promote enforcement of conservation and management and sustainable use;

*Further concerned* that unsubstantiated and/or erroneous information has been used by anti-fishing lobbies whose advocacy activities have the objective of denigrating the work of RFBs;

*Affirming* its commitment to achieving strengthened and effective governance for fisheries conservation, management and sustainable use,

**MAKES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:**

1. The RSN Network provides a forum for promoting consultation and dialogue, addressing priority issues of common concern and fostering ongoing cooperation and exchange of information. In executing its functions, the RSN serves to underpin the important role played by RFBs in the conservation, management and sustainable use of fish stocks.
2. The significance of the role of RFBs in fisheries governance has been increasingly and profoundly emphasized in international law, international fisheries instruments and international organizations including through the United Nations (UN) System. A wide range of UN fisheries instruments, both binding and non-binding, continue to develop and deepen areas for cooperation through RFBs, such as the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures as well as UN General Assembly Resolutions.
3. The establishment of seven new RFBs in the past decade demonstrates the determination of the international community to improve fisheries governance at regional level. In turn, the commitment by the RFBs to the RSN process reflects their resolve to further enhance the manner in which they perform their role in fisheries governance.
4. RFB mandates and functions vary significantly and include the following key elements:
  - Mandates may range from taking binding decisions on fisheries management, to providing non-binding advice to supporting cooperative arrangements for information sharing;
  - Establishment may be by Convention, Agreement or as an FAO RFB;
  - Fish stocks may be highly migratory stocks, straddling stocks, shared inland and riverine stocks, anadromous stocks, catadromous stocks and/or aquaculture species;
  - Species responsibility may be single species or multispecies, and may involve ecosystems and multiple industry sectors;
  - Fisheries sub-sectors may range from artisanal to small scale to industrial;
  - Aspects of the relevant fishing industry may be highly technological, labour intensive and/or capital intensive.
5. The RFBs face similar challenges in their efforts to support the collaborative processes that assist their members to achieve fisheries conservation and management and sustainable resource use. There are also clear challenges in identifying and, as appropriate, implementing measures to achieve sustainable use of fishery resources. In this regard, the RFBs rely on

support by their members in providing information and implementing decisions, but this may be uneven from time to time. In addition, some RFBs established in the distant past have recognized the need for restructuring and revision of their Basic Texts, and have initiated or completed the relevant processes.

6. To address these challenges, a total of eleven RFBs have, since 2006, either completed Performance Reviews or have agreed to undertake them. For each Performance Review, some element of independent evaluation has been included, similar transparent and comprehensive criteria have been used and the results have been made publicly available. RFMOs have begun to implement the recommendations of the Performance Review Panels in an effort to meet the challenges and strengthen fisheries governance.

7. RFBs generally take into account modern principles of fisheries management, including the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries, mindful that fishing is totally dependent on healthy ecosystems. It is the RFBs that are best placed, in a holistic, integrated process, based on these approaches and other emerging concerns such as climate change, to achieve sustainable, responsible fisheries in their respective areas of competence.

8. RFB Secretariats continue to work closely with relevant experts, including fisheries scientists, managers and stakeholders, in their efforts to effectively fulfil their mandates and objectives. The Secretariats work closely internationally within the UN system and together with other RFBs and civil society which share common interests, have mandates over the same species and/or provide scientific advice. In this way, significant progress has been made in increasing cooperation and addressing global problems such as IUU fishing, destructive fisheries practices, bycatch and discards, scientific data and information collection, exchange and analysis and capacity building.

9. RFB Secretariats recognize the existence of anti-fishing lobbies whose advocacy activities have the objective of denigrating the work of RFBs. They do not use neutral scientific information, and may serve as a source of publicity for those involved. RSN expresses its concern about the allegations in the press and some scientific journals that most RFBs are failing internationally in their efforts to effectively conserve and manage fisheries resources.

10. It is acknowledged that challenges exist and that there is room for improvement of regional fisheries governance. However, the RSN believes that many of the condemnations are unjustified, particularly those made in a disproportionate and unfocused manner and with inaccurate conclusions. Scientific papers condemning fisheries or fishing practices are a special problem, especially where wrong data are used. This could be rectified if relevant RFBs were consulted to ensure the accuracy of the information or the paper is subject to peer review.

11. RSN welcomes evaluations of their practices and encourage communications and constructive comments. RSN is also always open to cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations and initiatives that seek to find the balance between utilisation and conservation and to promote sustainable aquaculture. In this way, continuous and sustainable fish production can be enhanced in the best interest of the communities and countries which depend upon these activities for employment and food security.

The Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN-3) was held in Rome, Italy, from 7 to 8 February 2011. It addressed many pressing issues relating to global and regional fisheries governance, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapacity, the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, small-scale and inland fisheries and the outcomes of the twenty-ninth Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome during the previous week. Twenty-eight Regional Fishery Body (RFB) Secretariats were represented at the meeting with varying responsibilities over inland, coastal and marine fisheries and aquaculture, as well as four intergovernmental organizations. The meeting reached a number of conclusions regarding matters that merit the attention of RFBs, governments and FAO. The RSN also issued a Statement responding to unsubstantiated information that had been published about RFBs and elaborating the challenges and achievements of RFBs.

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