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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Report of the

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE RECOFI WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 19-21 February 2019

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PREPARATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the eleventh meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM), in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman from 19 to 21 February 2019. The report was prepared by the RECOFI Secretariat. The material contained in the appendixes is reproduced as submitted.

ABSTRACT

The eleventh meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 19 to 21 February 2019. The Meeting was convened by RECOFI and FAO and attended by 12 participants from the following seven RECOFI member countries: Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates in addition to the FAO Secretariat and one invited expert. The meeting included participation from the Convention on Migratory Species-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/CMS) Secretariat. The WGFM welcomed the entry into force of the MoU between ROPME and FAO/RECOFI, stressing the importance of collective interests and common mandates of the two parties to the MoU. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing was found a major issue affecting the sustainable exploitation and conservation of marine fishery resources. There was an agreement that IUU fishing-related issues, on the many occasions, were brought to the attention of the WGFM. The WGFM welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and acknowledged the great deal of global effort devoted to the development the SSF Guidelines. The WGFM acknowledged the benefits of developing FIRMS Marine Resources of regional relevance for the RECOFI region and recommended the initiation of the process focusing on Spanish mackerel. It was proposed that FAO could provide further support in developing specific case studies using the EAF approach in the RECOFI Area. Participants provided updates of the current work ongoing at the national level with regards to the RECOFI priority species, and discussed data collection challenges. The Meeting noted the difficulties in reporting and sourcing updated data and agreed on freezing the number of current RECOFI priority species. The Terms of Reference for the FIRMS Regional Focal Point were approved. The Meeting was informed that at its ninth session (2017) the Commission was of the opinion that it did not have enough background information about splitting some FAO sub-areas and requested the WGFM to re-consider the proposal to split FAO sub-area 51.3 into divisions 51.3.1. Findings and recommendations of the Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), which was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman on 17–18 February 2019 were discussed. The results reveal that the stock appears to be in an overexploitation status with the current fishing mortality and landings exceeding the levels required to exploit the stock at MSY. The WGFM adopted the proposed recommendations of the workshop with certain modifications.

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OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The eleventh meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman from 19 to 21 February 2019. The meeting was convened by RECOFI and FAO and attended by 12 participants from the following seven RECOFI member countries: Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates in addition to the FAO Secretariat. Bahrain did not attend. The meeting included participation from the Convention on Migratory Species-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/CMS) Secretariat. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 2.

2. The meeting was opened with a welcome address by Abdulaziz Al-Marzouqi, General Director of Fisheries Resources Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. He welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of the task ahead. He highlighted Sultanate of Oman's commitment ensure a sustainable marine fishery through implementation of effective policies and management strategies, in compliance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other international fisheries instruments to which the country is a party. He also gave certain examples of good fisheries management practices from Oman in relation to technical thematic areas covered by the meeting. The opening address of Mr Al-Marzouqi is included in Appendix 4.

3. In her opening address (Appendix 5), Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman (FAOR) welcomed the audience. The FAOR highlighted the valuable efforts of the Sultanate of Oman to develop the blue economy, with a view to diversifying sources of income, raising the level of fish production and creating jobs for future generations. She also congratulated the Sultanate of being one of the few countries in the NENA to have joined the Port State Measures Agreement and invited other countries to sign this important international agreement. She explained that the 11th meeting of the WGFM is an extension of the work of RECOFI, which provides an appropriate umbrella and framework within which this cooperation can be activated continuously and systematically. The FAOR looked forward to the development of important recommendations from RECOFI, including successful management methods, good practices and joint programs on fisheries resources and in other areas that fall within the mandate of the WGFM.

4. Following the opening addresses, Hussain Al Muscati, Director of the Fisheries Resources Development, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries made a presentation on the fisheries of Oman.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

5. Nabil Fita, Director-General of Fisheries Research Center in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia and Chairperson of the WGFM welcomed participants to the meeting and together with the Secretary of RECOFI informed the participants of the administrative arrangements of the meeting. The availability of working documents on the webpage of the meeting was noted, with the exception of RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf5, which was only made available in hard copy.

6. The Agenda, attached as Appendix 1, was adopted. The list of documents for the meeting is attached as Appendix 3.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

7. The WGFM participants invited and unanimously agreed to renominate Nabil Fita for an additional term.

BRIEFING ON MAIN DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COFI 33, NERC 34, INTEGRATION OF RECOFI REGIONAL DATA SET INTO REGIONAL AQUACULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM (RAIS) AND RECOFI REVIEW

8. Haydar Fersoy, the RECOFI Secretary, informed the meeting that at its ninth Session, the Commission decided on the inclusion of the main decisions and recommendations of COFI and NERC to the regular meetings of its Working Groups.

9. Ahmed Al-Mazrouai, Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO presented the main decisions and recommendations of the 33rd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), held in Rome 9-13 July 2018. The meeting took note of the main decisions and recommendations the COFI Session and encouraged the member states to attend the upcoming related FAO activities of relevance to fisheries.

10. Haydar Fersoy provided the Meeting with the fisheries-related decisions and recommendations of the 34th Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa (NERC 34), held in Rome, Italy on 7-11 May 2018. The meeting noted that the One Health addressing transboundary plant, animal and fish pests and diseases: A Case for Regional Cooperation was the main agenda item of NERC 34 that was directly related to fisheries.

11. RECOFI Secretariat briefed the meeting that during the intersessional period no progress was recorded with the integration of the RECOFI regional data set into regional aquaculture information system (RAIS). It was noted that, as previously agreed, the integration of the system will be done under the framework of Kuwait-FAO partnership framework which was not operational during the intersessional period. The WGFM took note and asked the Secretariat to follow-up on the matter with the concerned member.

12. The Secretariat briefed the meeting on the intersessional period progress with the RECOFI Review-related decisions taken at the 9th Session of the Commission (2017). The meeting was informed that, in accordance with the respective high-level decision of FAO, the Review was not circulated to the respective Ministers of the RECOFI member countries for their consideration of both the value and benefit of RECOFI, as well as the challenges faced.

RECOFI-ROPME COOPERATION

13. Haydar Fersoy introduced the working document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/2: RECOFI/ROPME cooperation. He informed the Meeting that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ROPME and FAO/RECOFI became effective on 27 November 2018. He described the MoU as a significant milestone for RECOFI as the Commission entered a joint formal collaboration for the first time under a MoU.

14. The WGFM welcomed the entry into force of the MoU between ROPME and FAO/RECOFI, stressing the importance of collective interests and common mandates of the two parties to the MoU. The WGFM, however, expressed regret that ROPME was not able to attend the meeting. The Committee acknowledged considerable effort of the Secretariat in the execution of the MoU.

15. The WGFM reviewed the potential cooperation activities listed in the Annex 1 of the current MoU. There was a concern that some of the likely cooperation activities would fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment of the RECOFI Member States. Following discussions, the WGFM suggested, the following selected cooperation activity areas to be implemented, in order of priority, under the MoU within budgetary limits of the two parties:

- Conservation, protection, management and sustainable use of marine living resources;
- Management of coastal and marine resources and ecosystem;
- Promotion of ecosystem-based fisheries and aquaculture management including the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture;

- Mitigation of the impact of fisheries and aquaculture activities on the marine habits and species;
- Conservation and responsible management of threatened and endangered species;
- Joint organization of seminars, workshops and technical training in the fields of the mutual interests; and
- Promotion of ecosystem based approach to the conservation of marine environment, its ecosystem and the sustainable use of marine living resources.

INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

16. The Secretariat introduced the working document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/3. Main focus issues included the scale of IUU fishing, global efforts to combat IUU fishing and respective international fisheries instruments, and the role of the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in combating IUU Fishing. It was noted that Sultanate of Oman is the only RECOFI Member State who became a contracting Party to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). There was a call from meeting, seconded by the Secretariat, to encourage the rest of RECOFI countries to also become a contracting party of the PSMA, noting that cooperative efforts are essential to fight against IUU.

17. IUU fishing was found a major issue affecting the sustainable exploitation and conservation of marine fishery resources. There was an agreement that IUU fishing-related issues, on the many occasions, were brought to the attention of the WGFM. Therefore, no specific recommendation was made at the meeting to further combat IUU fishing in the RECOFI Area. However, inter alia, increased compliance with the respective international instruments and strengthening of fisheries Monitoring, Surveillance and Control were considered favourable to combat IUU fishing in the RECOFI Area.

ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES-EAF-GULF SUBREGIONAL PROJECT

18. Mark Dimech, Senior Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO introduced the reference document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/4. He provided an overview of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and how it was applied by FAO in different parts of the world. It was highlighted that there is now a broad agreement at the international policy level that the EAF is the appropriate and necessary framework for fisheries management. One of the key outcomes of the EAF is the development of comprehensive fishery management plans. These plans can guide the implementation of agreed management measures, as well as their adaptation in face of changing conditions, thus helping managers make more informed decisions for the sustainable use of fisheries resources. It was proposed that FAO could provide further support in developing specific case studies in RECOFI Area by the internationally well-recognized EAF approach.

19. A second presentation was made on the EAF-Gulf Project “Supporting the Application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management considering climate and pollution impacts in the Gulf”. The main reason for the development of the project is that marine and fisheries research and management remains an overarching and cross-cutting challenge in the RECOFI area. Capacity development needs are broad and range from fishery-related data collection, stock assessment and fisheries management (including formulation of management advice). Furthermore fish stocks and related ecosystems are often shared among neighboring coastal countries, which requires collaboration and concerted effort among the countries concerned both in research and in management.

FAO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION

20. The working document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/5 was introduced by Ahmed AlMazrouai. The WGFM welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and acknowledged the great deal of global effort devoted to the development the SSF Guidelines.

21. The meeting was informed on several aspects of the SSF Guidelines.

COUNTRY REPORTS: CURRENT WORK ON RECOFI PRIORITY SPECIES

22. The Secretariat introduced the reference document RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/2. The Chair invited the participants to inform the meeting of any relevant work being undertaken at the country-level with regards to the priority species. The Secretariat informed the meeting that Kuwait provided the requested information prior to meeting. Qatar provided the meeting with an update during meeting. The updated table with country inputs is given in Appendix 6.

23. The meeting noted the difficulties in reporting and sourcing updated data and agreed on the freezing number of current RECOFI priority species.

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOFI RECOMMENDATION ON MINIMUM DATA REPORTING (RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/7)

24. Paula Anton, Fishery Officer, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, introduced working document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/7: Update on the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting. The meeting was informed that regarding 2018 round of data submission only Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Oman submitted their data for 2017 (Qatar submitted their 2017 data during the meeting), and only Iraq and Qatar submitted their data in 2016. The WGFM took note that Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia submitted data under the Recommendation to the Secretariat, and encouraged Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to submit their data. A summary of the data submission is provided in Appendix 7. The meeting took note that the data reported under the MDR, although slightly improved, is still not yet at the standards required for a standardized and harmonized regional database, and acknowledged the efforts made by the Secretariat on improving the regional statistics.

25. The meeting discussed the possible causes of the limited data submission according to the minimum data requirements. It was agreed that the Secretariat will share with countries a detailed RECOFI MDR questionnaire in English and Arabic for their review.

26. The Meeting was informed that at its ninth session (2017) the Commission was of the opinion that it did not have enough background information and requested the WGFM to re-consider the proposal to split FAO subarea 51.3 into divisions 51.3.1 and 51.3.2. Following discussions, finally the WGFM agreed on splitting the FAO subarea 51.3 into the divisions 51.3.1 – Oman Sea and 51.3.2 – Arabian Sea (South Western).

27. The meeting was informed that a new proposal designed in a modular and incremental way in order to cater for diverse possibilities of activities and budget, and with the main goal to ensure progress on the development of the regional database, was prepared by the RECOFI Secretariat and offered to Kuwait. The WGFM reiterated the interest to establish a regional database and information centre to strengthen the Commission and support fishery management in the region through RAIS and deferred this matter to Kuwait for further consideration and decision. Kuwait confirmed their commitment and indicated that steps are being taken from their side to move forward on this matter. The WGFM acknowledged with appreciation the role that Kuwait was undertaking and the Secretariat will follow up with Kuwait during the intersessional period.

DISSEMINATION OF RECOFI FISHERIES AND STOCKS THROUGH FIRMS, IN THE SDG14 CONTEXT

28. Paula Anton presented the RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/8: Dissemination of RECOFI fisheries and stocks through FIRMS, in the SDG14 context. An overview of FIRMS and benefits and opportunities for RECOFI region and member countries was presented. At national level, FIRMS supports the need for easy access to high quality information for the development/enhancement of fisheries policies and management plans at national and regional levels; at regional level, RECOFI-FIRMS is providing the

first experience/opportunity of a web-based information sharing system on fisheries among RECOFI countries and RECOFI-FIRMS inventories properly articulated with a regional statistical database could provide a powerful analytical and reporting structure in support to resource assessments and fishery management; and at global level, FIRMS ensures national and regional visibility at global level guaranteeing a role in the global policy agenda.

29. The meeting was informed of the current status of available RECOFI-FIRMS fisheries status reports and the number of records in the marine resources and fisheries inventories. The workflow for uploading FIRMS information through data calls launched by FIRMS Secretariat once per year and National Focal Points updating their latest available excel based national fisheries records, add in the inventory any new relevant national fisheries, and remove extinct fisheries if any, was presented. Member countries were encouraged to update their FIRMS fisheries inventories, mentioning the good timing in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator 14.4.1: “proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels”.

30. The WGFM decided that the FIRMS National Focal points can be the same ones that the MDR National Focal Points, list which will be distributed to member countries for update as soon as possible.

31. The WGFM acknowledged the benefits of developing FIRMS Marine Resources of regional relevance for the RECOFI region and recommended the initiation of the process focusing on the Spanish mackerel and shrimps as priority species. The Terms of Reference for the FIRMS Regional Focal Point were approved (Appendix 8). Until a final decision is made by the Commission, the WGFM expressed its desire to nominate the RECOFI Chair as FIRMS Regional Focal Point. The Secretariat was asked to send an official letter to member countries with the list of National Focal Points to be updated.

32. The various data and information submitted by the RECOFI member states and used during the Working Group assessment sessions remain the property of the RECOFI and no other party will be authorized to make any use of it unless a formal approval is provided for that purpose from the RECOFI Secretariat after consultation of all member countries.

REGIONAL JOINT ASSESSMENT OF KINGFISH STOCK: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Discussions took place based on the working document RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/9. The RECOFI Secretariat briefed the meeting on the objectives, findings and recommendations of the Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*) which was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman on 17-18 February 2019. It was noted that despite the poor attendance, the workshop was successful in delivering the outcomes expected from it.

34. A first attempt to assess the status of kingfish stock in the RECOFI region was based on the application of a production model based on the CMSY method (Froese et al., 2017). A pseudo-cohort analysis was also carried out as a way to start accounting for the length/age structure of the landings of different member countries and fishing gears. Data used in the analyses included the following: (i) official FAO annual landings of RECOFI countries for the period 1986-2015 (ii) revised and integrated with 2016-2017 landings data provided by workshops participants; and (iii) length frequency data of landings by gear for the period 2013-2018 were submitted by all countries, except Iran (Islamic Republic of), and Iraq.

35. Results of the analysis indicate a Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) value of 27300 tons which is lower than the current annual landing (2017) in the RECOFI area of 36293 tons. The stock biomass shows a decreasing trend in the last ten years with the current biomass being very close to biomass at MSY (BMSY): $B/BMSY = 1.06$ (1.0-1.31). The estimated $F/FMSY$ is 1.25 (1.01 -1.32) indicating that the current fishing mortality (F) exceeds the F required to exploit the stock at MSY

36. Discussions took place on the proposed recommendations of the workshop. The WGFM adopted the proposed recommendations with certain modifications. The adopted recommendations are

given in Appendix 9. The RECOFI Secretariat was asked to submit these recommendations to the tenth Session of the Commission, tentatively scheduled for June 2019, in RECOFI Recommendation format for its adaptation consideration by the Commission in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of RECOFI Agreement.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

37. The WGFM agreed to re-establish the previous working document format of the WGFM meetings.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

38. Sultanate of Oman offered hosting the next meeting in February 2021. The offer was acknowledged by the meeting. Additionally, a proposal for a 2019-2021 programme of work and budget was agreed for consideration by the Commission at the tenth Session of RECOFI and is attached in Appendix 10.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

39. The report of the meeting was adopted on 21 February 2019. The WGFM thanked the Sultanate of Oman for kindly hosting this meeting.

Agenda

19 February 2019	
Morning Session 09.30-12.30	1. Opening of the Meeting
	2. Adoption of the agenda <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/1)</i>
	3. Election of the Chairperson
	4. Briefing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Main decisions and recommendations of the 33rd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries – Main decisions and recommendations of 34th Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East of relevance to fisheries – Integration of RECOFI regional data set into Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) – RECOFI Review
	5. RECOFI-ROPME Cooperation <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/2)</i>
12.30-13.30	Lunch break
Afternoon Session 14.00-17.00	6. International instruments and tools to combat Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/3)</i>
	7. Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries-EAF-Gulf Subregional Project <i>(reference doc: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/4)</i>
	8. FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/5)</i>
20 February 2019	
Morning Session 09.00-12.30	9. Country reports: Current work on RECOFI priority species <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/6)</i>
	10. Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/7)</i>
12.30-14.00	Lunch
Afternoon Session 14.00-17.00	11. Dissemination of RECOFI fisheries and stocks through FIRMS, in the SDG14 context <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/8)</i>
	12. Regional joint assessment of kingfish stock: Findings and recommendations <i>(reference document: RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/9)</i>
	13. Any other matters
	14. Date and place of the next meeting
21 February 2019	
Morning Session 09.30-12.30	15. Preparation of meeting report
12.30-14.00	Lunch
Afternoon Session 14.00-17.00	16. Adoption of the report

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List of documents

RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/1	Provisional agenda
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RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/3	International instruments and tools to combat Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/4	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries-EAF-Gulf Subregional Project
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/5	FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/6	Country reports: Current work on RECOFI priority species
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/7	Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/8	Dissemination of RECOFI fisheries and stocks through FIRMS, in the SDG14 context
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/9	Regional joint assessment of kingfish stock: Findings and recommendations
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf.1	List of documents
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf.2	List of participants
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf.3	Report of the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (Doha, State of Qatar, 6 - 8 December 2016)
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf.4	Report of the ninth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) (Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 9-11 May 2017)
RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/Inf.5	Report of the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (Rome, Italy, 9-12 July 2018)

APPENDIX 4**Speech delivered by Dr Abdulaziz Al-marzouqi, General Director of Fisheries Resources Development, Ministry Of Agriculture and Fisheries**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to all the participants, who made a long journey to attend this RECOFI session, a very warm welcome and to say how grateful we are to the RECOFI Secretariat for organizing this session in Oman which we are delighted to host.

My special gratitude goes particularly to the Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Sultanate of Oman, to Dr. Nora Ourabah, Head of the FAO Representation in Muscat, to RNE Office in Cairo and to the Fisheries Department Officers from the FAO Head Quarters for all their efforts to have diligently contributed to the successful organization of this RECOFI session.

The agenda of our present session covers a wide range of materials starting from a briefing on the latest recommendations emanating from various FAO instances and update on the cooperation platform between RECOFI and ROPME, as well as recalling the international instruments to combat IUU fishing, promoting Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and securing the Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries.

The session will also be a good occasion to be briefed on the implementation status of the RECOFI recommendation on minimum data reporting as well as the outputs of the Regional Joint Assessment of kingfish stock held in Muscat during the last couple of days.

From my side, I would also like to seize this opportunity to share with you the outcomes of the FAO 2018 evaluation of the level of implementation by member states of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing. In this context, Oman has been evaluated to be at the very high level of implementation of instruments combatting IUU fishing particularly through the adoption of all international instruments related to fisheries starting from the 1982 Law of the Sea to the FAO Agreement for Port States Measures.

Regarding the promotion of the Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines, Oman allows considerable importance through the development of specific programs to improve the livelihood of the fishermen's communities, their involvement in the design and implementation of policies and development programs in addition to the regulations designed to ensure long term sustainability of the exploited resources. In this aspect, Oman has also been ranked at the top level of implementation for instruments for access to resources and markets for Small Scale Fisheries.

These two achievements constitute a comforting recognition of our efforts towards the long-term sustainability of the living resources, especially when coming from a specialized Organization in the Fisheries sector.

Regarding the role of the RECOFI in the monitoring of our shared resources, I would like to highlight the importance of improving our knowledge of the dynamics of these resources particularly the data sharing between all the actors in the fisheries in the region particularly in the management of the marine resources and their sustainability.

For this purpose, the role of each of the RECOFI member states, is crucial, mainly through providing data, attending the various workshops of the Organization and fulfilling all the requirements prescribed.

Finally, let me say that, as a conclusion of this introductory words, the strength of our Organization depends totally and exclusively on our effective involvement in the activities of this Organization.

I finally wish you success in your workshop and a nice stay in Muscat.

Thank you for your attention.

APPENDIX 5

Speech delivered by Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman

Your Excellency Dr. Hamd Ben Said Al-Oufi,

Undersecretary for Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth in Sultanate of Oman,

Distinguished participants from RECOFI Member Countries,

Distinguished FAO Colleagues,

Distinguished Guests,

Salam Alykum,

On behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), I would like to extend warm welcome to all participants and in particular to His Excellency Dr. Hamed Al-Oufi, Patron of the opening ceremony of the Working Group of the Fisheries Management of the RECOFI, to honor us with his participation and continuous support.

First, I would like to express my deep thanks and appreciation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Sultanate of Oman for hosting, preparing and organizing this meeting.

Dear Guests,

FAO plays a leading role in international fisheries policy, including with COFI and related subcommittees on fish trade and aquaculture. FAO is also working with a wide range of partners in this region to promote the growth and sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the world.

As you know, total fisheries and aquaculture production has increased significantly in this region over the past decades, rising from 2.2 million tons in 1996 to about 6 million tons in 2016, almost tripling within a period of 10 years. The bulk of this increase comes from capture fisheries (from 2 to 4 million tons), and the aquaculture sector which is also growing. Despite this increase in fish production, the region relies on the imports of fish and fishery products to meet domestic demand, with per capita fish consumption increasing from 5.9 kg to 12.1 kg during the period 1996-2016.

Dear Guests,

The 11th Session of the Working Group of Fisheries Management in Muscat will be held from 19 to 21 February 2019 as an extension of the work of the Regional Fisheries Commission, which was established on the basis of Resolution No. 117/1 adopted by the FAO Council in its 117th session in 1999.

FAO works to support and activate collective action aimed at sustaining and harnessing fishery resources, in line with the SDG14, relating to the conservation, sustainable use and use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. In this context, the organization hopes that the RECOFI will work effectively to achieve its goals and mission in the region, in the same way as it does in other regions. This can only be achieved through collective and cooperative action.

It should be recalled that the Committee on Fisheries in its 33rd Session held in Rome on 9-13 July 2018 called on FAO to continue to cooperate with fishery bodies in order to achieve its objectives.

The Organization is fully confident of the determination of the fisheries officials to work together to achieve the desired goals, towards the sustainability of resources and to protect the interests of small fishers and to strengthen their participation for the optimum exploitation of available fishery resources to ultimately contribute to Food security for the peoples of the region.

Your Excellency,

Dear Guests,

The agenda includes many important topics and in particular, this meeting comes after a workshop for the assessment of kingfish stocks in RECOFI work area. This is the first initiative of its kind, held in Muscat during the past two days, 17 to 18 February 2019. During this workshop, specialists evaluated the status of fish stocks and reviewed the procedures in place, their appropriateness given the stock situation, and proposed a future plan in this regard.

As you all know, kingfish is one of the most important fish resources in the region. It is characterized by its economic value upon which a wide range of small-scale fishermen rely as well as its importance as a source of for this region.

It is also a migratory species, which requires cooperation among member countries, in the collection and analysis of data as well as the proposal of appropriate fish management measures for the sustainability of this resource, and then application and adherence to these procedures and pursuing periodic review.

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) provides an appropriate umbrella and framework to continuously and systematically activate this cooperation.

We hope to take advantage of the recommendations of the workshop and discuss them in this meeting in order to assess the reality of the inventory, identify the challenges, ways to overcome them and propose the most successful management methods. We also hope that this event will mark the beginning of a joint work that will expand to other types of fisheries resources and activate joint work in other areas that fall within the mandate of this Commission.

FAO has an important role to play in combating illegal fishing, as it has been referred to at different occasions during the deliberations of the last meeting of the Committee on Fisheries. It is worth noting that June 5th was designated as the International Day to Combat Illegal Fishing.

We note the FAO Convention on Port State Measures as an important document in this regard as it entered into force in July 2016.

The first binding international treaty aimed at eliminating illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. Fifty-seven) countries have joined this treaty, including six Arab countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, which we hope will be followed by the rest of the countries in the region.

The area of competence of the Regional Fisheries Commission on the Indian Ocean is characterized by its hopes and aspirations. The blue growth initiative, which includes several priorities, such as the sustainable development of fisheries and conservation of the fisheries ecosystem, as well as the development and sustainable development of aquaculture, should be noted.

In this context, it is important to commend the Sultanate of Oman for its relentless efforts to contribute to the blue economy, with a view to diversifying sources of income, raising the level of fish production and creating jobs for future generations. The Future Economic and Future Technologies Conference was held in Muscat on 11-13 February 2019, which we hope will be a promising start in Oman's economic development.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Sultanate of Oman for hosting the meeting of the Fisheries Management Working Group and the Evaluation Workshop of the kingfish Stocks, hoping that the efforts of all will be fruitful. I would also like to thank Dr. Hamd Ben Said Al-Oufi for his patronage of our meeting today. I wish all participants fruitful deliberations.

APPENDIX 6

Current work on RECOFI priority species (updated)

Species	Country	Type of Research	Implementing institution	Methodology	Activities	Results
Green Tiger Prawn <i>Penaeus semisulcatus</i>	Oman	Biology and Fisheries Management	Marine Science and Fisheries Center	Trawlers Fisheries	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling	Biomass estimate Size composition Age and growth Exploitation Rate = 0.71 Bycatch analysis Gear selectivity Long term monitoring program
Blue swimming crabs <i>Portunus pelagicus</i>	Oman	Biology and Fishing gear	MSFC	Commercial Catch Sampling	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling	Age and growth Size composition Maturity analysis
Pharaoh cuttlefish <i>Sepia pharaonis</i>	Oman	Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Commercial Catch Sampling Trawling Survey	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling. Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate stock spatial distribution Maturation, age and growth Recruitments Exploitation Rate = 0.61 MSY Target Reference point
Stolephorus anchovies <i>Stolephorus spp.</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Acoustic survey Mid-water trawling;	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution
Indian oil sardine <i>Sardinella longiceps</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Acoustic survey Mid-water trawling Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturity Age and growth Recruitments Exploitation Rate = 0.47 Biomass (commercial catch = 330,390 t entire coast of Oman) MSY

Bludger <i>Carangoide gymnostethus</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Trawling Survey	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock Spacial distribution Maturation Age and growth
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.3118; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.8010
Golden trevally <i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Trawling Survey	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturation Age and growth
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.4489; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 2.3692
Indian mackerel <i>Rastrelliger Kanagurta</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spacial distribution Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Acoustic survey Mid-water trawling Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturity Age and growth Recruitments Exploitaion Rate = 0.45 Biomass (commercial catch = 1,062t entire coast of Oman) MSY

Snubnose emperor <i>Lethrinus borbonicus</i>	Qatar	Reproductive Biology; Current status of fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. 7 Years projection period used to develop management measures.	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling; Length frequency Distribution Analysis. Relative Y/R and Relative B/R detection. Production model using ASPIC: A Stock Production Model including Covariates.	Monthly commercial catch sampling. Length frequency recording in a daily manner. Statistical Data recording	
Pink ear emperor <i>Lethrinus lentjan</i>	Kuwait	Demersal fish Stock assessment of the Gulf and Sea of Oman (Period of Research 2011)	(KISR) Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	Trawl survey, Survey and Trap fishing data through cruise programme Stock Assessment and Modeling	Biomass estimation, Biological and ageing studies Biomass modeling	Though the total biomass of fish stock from Kuwait waters from 9,515 to 14, 508 tonnes, no record for <i>Lethrinus lentjan</i> the present survey
	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Trawling Survey	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturation
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.7808; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.0640

	Kuwait	Demersal fish Stock assessment of the Arabian Gulf and Sea of Oman (Period of Research 2007- 2011)	(KISR) Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	Trawl survey, Acoustic Survey and Trap (gargoor) fishing data through five cruise programme Stock Assessment and Modeling	Biomass estimation, Biological and ageing studies Biomass modeling	Biomass of <i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i> from Trawl survey ranged from 12.1 to 30.2 tonnes in Kuwait waters.
Spangled emperor <i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Trawling Survey Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturity Age and growth Recruitments
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.5946; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.385
Orange-spotted grouper <i>Epinephelus coioides</i>	Kuwait	Demersal fish Stock assessment of the Arabian Gulf and Sea of Oman (Period of Research 2007- 2011)	(KISR) Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	Trawl survey, Acoustic Survey and Trap (gargoor) fishing data through five cruise programmes Stock Assessment and Modeling	Biomass estimation, Biological and ageing studies Biomass modeling	Biomass of <i>Epinephelus coioides</i> from Trawl survey ranged from 6.3 to 216.7 tonnes in different cruises in Kuwait waters.
	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology	MSFC	Trawling Survey Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Reproductive characteristics

	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.2330; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.7360
White-spotted spinefoot <i>Siganus canaliculatus</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Trawling Survey Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturity Age and growth Recruitments MSY
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.8606; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.3870
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel <i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology and stock assessment	SQU (Sultan Qaboos University) MSFC	Trawling Survey Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Genetic analysis Maturity Age and growth Recruitments MSY Long term Monitoring program
	Qatar	Current exploitation rate of fish stock evaluated against that required to achieve the MSY	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling; Length Frequency Distribution Analysis. Relative Y/R and Relative B/R detection.	Monthly commercial catch sampling. Length frequency recording in a daily manner.	Over-exploited as $E_{max} = 0.710$ & $E_{current} = 0.744$ Management measures are being applied regionally.

Longtail tuna <i>Thunnus tonggol</i>	Oman	Biology, population dynamic and stock assessment	MSFC	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Genetic analysis Maturity Age and growth Recruitments Exploitation Rate = 0.57 MSY
	Oman	Biology, population dynamic and stock assessment	MSFC	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling	Genetic analysis Maturity Age and growth Recruitments Exploitation Rate = 0.42 MSY
Kawakawa <i>Euthynnus affinis</i>	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 1.6720; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 0.6873
Requiem sharks nei Carcharhinidae	Qatar	Statistical data on CPUE of <i>Carcharhinus dussumieri</i> is being recorded.	Fisheries Department	Statistical Data on Catch, effort & CPUE	Statistical data recording & reporting	Statistical reports developed regularly
Silver pomfret <i>Pampus argenteus</i>	Kuwait	Captive breeding for mass production (On-going project)	KISR (Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research)	Manipulating water temperature and feed quality	The project constitute 4 phases, of which 3 have been completed	Enhancing the quality of egg and larvae Improve the survival rate of larvae and fry
King soldier bream <i>Argyrops spinifer</i>	Kuwait	Demersal fish Stock assessment of the Arabian Gulf and Sea of Oman (Period of Research 2007-2011)	(KISR) Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	Trawl survey, Acoustic Survey and Trap (gargoor) fishing data through five cruise programme. Stock Assessment and Modeling	Biomass estimation, Biological and ageing studies Biomass modeling	Biomass of <i>Argyrops spinifer</i> from Trawl survey ranged from 9.0 to 75.9 tonnes in different cruises in Kuwait waters.

	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution Biology and stock assessment	MSFC	Trawling Survey Commercial catch sampling	Quarterly survey at sea Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling.	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturity Age and growth Exploitaion Rate = 0.69 Recruitments MSY Long term Monitoring program
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.316; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 1.780
Painted sweetlips <i>Diagramma pictum</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Trawling Survey	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock Spacial distribution Maturation
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 0.04; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 2.527

Smalltooth emperor <i>Lethrinus microdon</i>	Oman	Biomass estimate Stock spatial distribution	MSFC	Trawling Survey	Quarterly survey at sea	Biomass estimate Stock Spatial distribution Maturation Age and growth
	Qatar	Fish stock evaluated by comparing the current situation with that required to achieve the MSY. Relative Biomass and relative fishing effort estimation	Fisheries Department	Commercial catch sampling	Monthly commercial catch sampling.	Relative Biomass (B/Bmsy) = 1.282; Relative fishing effort (F/Fmsy) = 0.6904
Indian white prawn <i>Penaeus indicus</i>	Oman	Biology and Fisheries Management	Marine Science and Fisheries Center (MSFC)	Trawlers Fisheries	Monthly Commercial Catch Sampling	Biomass estimate Size composition Age and growth Exploitation Rate = 0.68 Bycatch analysis Gear selectivity Long term Monitoring program

	Catch of emperors, groupers, sharks, and rays	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Amount of discards											
5-b	<i>Species composition of discards</i>											
Wire-traps												
3-a	Number of days at sea	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
	Alternative annual efforts						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
3-b	Total catch	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Catch of emperors, groupers, sharks, and rays	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Amount of discards											
5-b	<i>Species composition of discards</i>											
Hook-and-line												
3-a	Number of days at sea	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
	Alternative annual efforts						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
3-b	Total catch	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Catch of emperors, groupers, sharks, and rays	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Amount of discards											
5-b	<i>Species composition of discards</i>											
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel												
4-a-i	<i>Annual catch</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Monthly catch											
4-a-ii	Fork length composition	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	
4-a-iii	<i>Catch, effort and fork length composition of targeted gears</i>											
4-b	Relevant information on narrow-barred Spanish mackerel											

* average fork length

ii) Islamic Republic of Iran

		2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005 >
Shrimp Trawl														
2-a-i	Opening/closing dates					Y	Y	Y	Y					
2-a-ii	Number of vessels by types and size categories	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
2-a-iii	Average tow duration by vessel type/ category	Y				Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*					
	Average number of tows per day by vessel type/ category	Y												
	Total number of days at sea by vessel type/ category	Y												
2-a-iv	Catch of shrimp	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Catch of swimming crab, cuttlefish, emperors, groupers, sharks, and rays	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Catch of other finfishes	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
5-a	<i>Shrimp species composition</i>													
2-a-v	Amount of discards	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
2-a-vi	Species composition of bycatch and discard													
2-b	BRD related information	Y				Y**	Y**	Y**	Y**					
		* Total tow duration reported; ** General configuration												
Gillnets														
3-a	Number of days at sea	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Alternative annual efforts													
3-b	Total catch	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					
	Catch of emperors, groupers, sharks, and rays	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y					

Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel		2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006>
4-a-i	<i>Annual catch</i>	Y	Y	Y								
	Monthly catch											
4-a-ii	Fork length composition											
4-a-iii	<i>Catch, effort and fork length composition of targeted gears</i>											
4-b	Relevant information on narrow-barred Spanish mackerel											

Data for 2012 cover the period from September to December 2012.

APPENDIX 8**Terms of Reference for RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point**

Within the coverage area of the Commission, the RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point (RFP) will:

- Promote and support the activities of RECOFI-FIRMS, especially in the intersessional periods;
- Encourage RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points (NFPs) to initiate, update and enrich their national fisheries records, and facilitate this work.
- Facilitate the identification, collection, validation of national and regional marine resources/stocks records and their updating in the RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resources inventory;
- Facilitate the exchange of information related to stocks and fisheries among member countries, and more generally promote and enhance regional cooperation among Members; and
- RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will be the main interface on marine fisheries and resource/stocks matters between the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs and the FIRMS Secretariat. As such will ensure an updated list of functional NFPs.

Expected outputs:

- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory developed;
- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory yearly updated, enriched and validated; and - A functional list of NFPs.

Furthermore, the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs are briefed fully on the activities of FIRMS and, as appropriate, provide advice on the Commission's FIRMS related programme of work and budget.

To ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP is in a position to undertake these responsibilities, they should be experienced fisheries data managers, fisheries statisticians or fisheries researchers with regular contact with the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs.

The RECOFI WGFM may review these terms of reference from time-to-time and make recommendations for their amendment.

APPENDIX 9

**Adopted draft recommendation on the assessment and management of Kingfish
(*Scomberomorus commerson*) stock**

- 1) Each Member State, starting in 2019 and for each subsequent year would provide to the RECOFI Secretariat, prior to 1st July, previous year national data on catch, effort and length frequency information on kingfish,
- 2) The quality of data submitted pursuant to this recommendation shall be regularly analyzed, with stock assessment methodology every year with a view to ensuring the formulation of scientific advice for the Commission. In order to facilitate the standardized collection of data for stock assessment purposes and economic aspects of kingfish fishery, the RECOFI Secretariat shall develop a standard protocol for the collection of kingfish data. The rationale behind the design of the data collection protocol is to focus the data requirements for stock assessment and fishery management purposes and encompass them into a single, simple and easy-to-understand manual, providing Member States with the necessary indications for the collection and transmission of data related to fisheries to the RECOFI Secretariat. Moreover, the information gathered should be sufficient and reliable enough to review the status of the stock, to assess the economic and social dimensions of the fleets and to provide scientific advice on the status of the resources, as well as to allow the Commission to develop recommendations to manage this resource. The main characteristics of the protocol should include:
 - clear identification of the main thematic areas of the data collection (defined as “tasks”) together with the definition of their purposes,
 - detailed description of all the data variables,
 - simplified level of data aggregation for requested variables,
 - a fleet segmentation scheme,
 - simple measures of fishing effort,
 - well-defined data collection practices, and
 - online data transmission procedure.
- 3) Establish a permanent RECOFI Working Group on Stock Assessment under the WGFM in order to assess the kingfish stock on a regular basis.
- 4) Following a technical discussions, the WS on kingfish stock assessment in RECOFI area agreed on key recommendations for the consideration of the WGFM:
 - Considering that the preliminary stock assessment showed that the stock is exploited above MSY, with an estimate (F/F_{msy}) ratio of 1.25 the fishing mortality has to be reduced by 20% as minimum, the workshop recommends among the other likely management and conservation measures, to introduce a closed season on an annual basis.
 - Seeing that there is already an annual closed season for kingfish fishery in some RECOFI Member countries, an option could be to have the closed season during the same period which is from the 15th of August to the 15th of October, for all gill net fishing gears exploiting the stock.
 - Accordingly, the group recommends the annual closed season in the RECOFI Area for kingfish fishery should be between 45 and 60 days.
 - These measures shall apply to all the kingfish fleets.
 - These measures shall be reviewed annually and may be amended by the Commission based on the results of the stock assessment.

APPENDIX 10

PROPOSED WGFM PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET 2019–2021

Activity	Tentative Date	Location	Duration (days)	Indicative budget (USD)	Priority
Technical Activities/Workshops					
Regional joint assessment of kingfish stock	Feb 2021	Oman	3	25 000	1st
Development of a monitoring programme for socio-economic parameters for use in fisheries management (follow-up to the outcome of the socioeconomic workshop held in Bahrain in 2012)	TBD	TBD	3-4	20 000	2nd
Annual meetings of the WGFM					
12th meeting of the WGFM	Feb 2021	Oman	3	15 000	1

The eleventh meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 19 to 21 February 2019. The Meeting was convened by RECOFI and FAO and attended by 12 participants from the following seven RECOFI member countries: Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates in addition to the FAO Secretariat and one invited expert. The meeting included participation from the Convention on Migratory Species-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/CMS) Secretariat. The WGFM welcomed the entry into force of the MoU between ROPME and FAO/RECOFI, stressing the importance of collective interests and common mandates of the two parties to the MoU. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing was found a major issue affecting the sustainable exploitation and conservation of marine fishery resources. There was an agreement that IUU fishing-related issues, on the many occasions, were brought to the attention of the WGFM. The WGFM welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and acknowledged the great deal of global effort devoted to the development the SSF Guidelines. The WGFM acknowledged the benefits of developing FIRMS Marine Resources of regional relevance for the RECOFI region and recommended the initiation of the process focusing on Spanish mackerel. It was proposed that FAO could provide further support in developing specific case studies using the EAF approach in the RECOFI Area. Participants provided updates of the current work ongoing at the national level with regards to the RECOFI priority species, and discussed data collection challenges. The Meeting noted the difficulties in reporting and sourcing updated data and agreed on freezing the number of current RECOFI priority species. The Terms of Reference for the FIRMS Regional Focal Point were approved. The Meeting was informed that at its ninth session (2017) the Commission was of the opinion that it did not have enough background information about splitting some FAO sub-areas and requested the WGFM to re-consider the proposal to split FAO sub-area 51.3 into divisions 51.3.1. Findings and recommendations of the Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), which was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman on 17–18 February 2019 were discussed. The results reveal that the stock appears to be in an overexploitation status with the current fishing mortality and landings exceeding the levels required to exploit the stock at MSY. The WGFM adopted the proposed recommendations of the workshop with certain modifications.

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