

**Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/9 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER IN THE WECAFC AREA”**

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC),

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING with concern the ongoing challenges in ensuring sustained harvests of the Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*), while recognizing the ecosystem value of these stocks and the increased need for further development of regional collaboration and harmonization of the management of this important regional resource;

MINDFUL of the high socio-economic importance of the spiny lobster fisheries for the WECAFC area, their contribution to export earnings, employment and coastal livelihoods;

RECALLING the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People Rights, as in several countries of the region indigenous people conduct lobster fishing;

RECOGNIZING the important step taken by OSPESCA in updating the Regional Management and Conservation Plan of Caribbean Spiny Lobster, within the framework of the OSPESCA Ecolobster+ sub-project.

RECOGNIZING the St. George’s Declaration on Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) adopted by the CRFM Ministerial Council in 2015, which harmonizes lobster fisheries management measures within the CRFM membership;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the CRFM members and other major lobster fisheries countries in the WECAFC region to manage lobster fisheries sustainably in their waters;

APPRECIATING the agreement on a Joint Action Plan of CRFM and OSPESCA, concluded in September 2012, which emphasizes the need for joint work on, inter alia, spiny lobster research and sustainable management, and the ongoing work by the CLME+ project, CFMC and WECAFC towards sustainable utilization of the resource;

DEEPLY APPRECIATING the OSPESCA initiative on common assessment methodologies for stock assessment to the entire Caribbean region;

RECALLING the outcomes of the first meeting of this newly established working group

FURTHER RECALLING that most WECAFC members have endorsed the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Strategic Action Programme (SAP), including SAP Sub-Strategy 4A, which aims at facilitating the adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach to the Caribbean spiny lobster fisheries, and RECALLING the inclusion under the UNDP/GEF CLME+Project of dedicated financing to support the implementation of the aforementioned SAP Sub-Strategy;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/2 “On spiny lobster management and conservation in the WECAFC area”;

**ADOPTS** in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. WECAFC members and partners implement the elements made available and discussed, in terms of scientific knowledge, methods and relevant measures, management measures that were collectively agreed by the Caribbean spiny Lobster working group and actions under the Strategic Actions Program (SAP) of the CLME+ region;
2. WECAFC Members consider scaling-up the OSPESCA initiative on common assessment methodologies for stock assessment to the entire Caribbean region or wherever relevant in sub-regions with stocks of Caribbean Spiny Lobster.
3. WECAFC members adopt and implement the updated Regional Management and Conservation Plan of Caribbean Spiny Lobster (the MARPLESCA Plan ) and presented at the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Joint WG (March 2018).
4. WECAFC Members are encouraged to develop and implement Catch Documentation Schemes in accordance with voluntary guidelines adopted or traceability systems for fishery products, in order to improve the traceability of Caribbean spiny lobster products through the value chain and to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, ensure food safety and data generation in support of decision making for fishery management.