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الغذية والزراعة
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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Intersessional Meetings of Aquaculture and Fisheries Subject Groups

Eight Meeting of the Aquaculture Subject Group (AS) and Twenty-Ninth meeting of the Fisheries Subject Group (FS)

20 – 23 June 2022

(Online, Zoom platform + FAO HQ Queen Julian Room – B323)

WECAFC activities report to CWP

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The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in 1973 by Resolution 4/61 of the FAO Council under Article VI (1) of the FAO Constitution. Its statutes were amended by the FAO Council at its Seventy-fourth Session in December 1978 and by the Hundred and Thirty-first Session of the FAO Council in November 2006. WECAFC is a Regional Fishery Body (RFB), which has the mandate to issue fishery management advice, which may be implemented by its members on a voluntary basis. Regional Fishery Bodies do not have the authority to issue binding advice for its members.

The 16th Commission agreed to establish a Working Group for fisheries data and statistics (FDS-WG) matters, based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership and supported the development of a regional database in collaboration with the Members and partners in the region. At the 16th Commission Members Adopted Resolutions that 1) Members contribute to the RDB through the FDS-WG and provide national data and statistics according to the guidelines of the interim DCRF and 2) build on best practice guidelines for logbooks, and contribute to developing and updating national inventories of fisheries and resources.

The most recent Commission session (17th) convened in 2019 in Miami, Florida (USA) with 28 members participating. Observers from four Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and four intergovernmental organizations also participated. More specifically on data and statistics, Members adopted Recommendations that: 1) Members endorse the structure and concept of developing a Reference list of aquatic species, according to guidance provided through the Interim DCRF on harmonization of collection of data and statistics, including socio-economic data, based on several selection supporting criteria by the FDS WG-1, 2) endorse the Interim Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), as a foundation for fisheries data and statistics collection and collation to feed the needs of developing, monitoring, assessing and reviewing regional fisheries policies, taking into account the need for adaptive review, 3) Members promote the provision of national data and statistics to the WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Regional DataBase (RDB) according to the Interim DCRF, and 4) Members encourage strengthened collaboration between the FDS-WG and thematic working groups to refine and keep updated the DCRF and associated data sharing policies, taking into account the input from all Members.

During the intersession WECAFC has been involved in the following activities related to CWP through activities of the FDS-WG and the WECAFC-FIRMS Partnership including:

1. Convening the Second meeting of the FDS-WG which included review of:
 - a. FIRMS – WECAFC Regional Database data viewer
 - b. WECAFC Subarea Proposals for establishing short, medium, and long-term options for statistical reporting

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- c. WECAFC List of Reference List of Aquatic Species species and prioritizing DCRF tasks to report for selected species and by subareas
 - d. Interim Data Collection Reference Frame (DCRF) main body and Appendices review related to structure and organization
 - e. Vessel Mappings/ Small Scale Fisheries Matrix related to content and gaps
2. Progressing Operationalization of the interim Data Collection Framework through:
 - a. Training events for informing the regional database (WECAFIS)
 - b. Training events for progressing the FIRMS inventories of fisheries and stocks
 - c. Progressing work on informing fishery data in the region (Calipseo) (Dominica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago)
 3. Informing statistical delineations for operationalization of the DCRF
 - a. Holding intersessional discussions for subareas requiring additional considerations
 - i. Central America / Honduras- short term option agreed
 - ii. USA/Bahamas- short term option agreed
 - iii. Southern region- area 31 and 41.1.1 discussions ongoing

Noting the work on subareas-is pivotal and incorporates the UNGA recommendation to enable separation of catches within and outside EEZs, it implements the main principle of developing subareas according to ecosystem boundaries **building as much as possible the subarea delimitations on the basis of existing EEZs' treaty lines. This was enabled thanks to an intense and long (3 to 4 years) collaborative work with WECAFC Members.**

4. Advancing the work of WECAF-FIRMS further to increase the number of new FIRMS inventories of fisheries and to update previously submitted inventories through:
 - a. Intersessional outreach with members
 - b. Holding intersessional preparatory workshops (online) and follow up workshops at which 12 additional fact sheets were completed by four Members and
 - c. Identifying difficulties in completion of fact sheets through surveys finding the primary impediment was the time requirement to collect all data needed for the template.
5. Developing data templates for use by Members in submitting relevant DCRF task data and holding training workshops leading to:
 - a. Three data preparatory workshops
 - b. Submission of data for one task of three required by eight countries for 10 years for the main species of the List of Reference species
 - c. Identification of primary obstacles to completion of submission of data was difficulty and challenges associated with adapting Members data to the template format.
6. Work during the oncoming intersession will include:
 - a. DCRF- Subareas 1- hold further intersessional discussions towards finalizing short term option in southern region
 - b. DCRF- Subareas 2- Considerations of short to long term objectives to revise boundaries of WECAFC- will require CWP members
 - c. DCRF- Progress work on informing Appendix 6 (DCRF)- biological measures through consultation with WECAFC working groups
 - d. RDB/FIRMS- Continuing training sessions for populating the RDB (WECAFIS)
 - e. Involves further statistical training in some countries