

REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Report of the

FOURTH MEETING OF THE RECOFI WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 3–5 October 2010



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ISBN 978-92-5-106472-6

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report of the fourth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management that was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010.

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Report of the fourth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 3–5 October 2010.

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 953. Cairo, FAO. 2010. 57p.

ABSTRACT

This document contains the report of the fourth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM), which was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. The Working Group considered and made decisions on matters concerning the Programme of Work and Budget for the 2011–12 biennium for the WGFM including a review of the regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management, the outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that took place at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, in May 2010, and stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management in the RECOFI region. Significantly, the WGFM adopted a Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area. This is the first Recommendation adopted by the WGFM. If accepted by RECOFI, it will become binding on Members of the Commission. The WGFM also considered a proposal by the Sultanate of Oman in relation to a proposal for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database on violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by RECOFI Members and promote the establishment of a regional fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance information exchange scheme. Finally, the WGFM reviewed the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI that was held at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, in May 2010, and the FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa that took place in Agadir, Morocco, in June 2010. Other important decisions made by the WGFM included the election of a new Chairperson, the agreement to propose to the Commission that the WGFM meet annually rather than on a biennial basis and that a special meeting of the Working Group be convened immediately prior to the May 2011 session of the Commission.

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The fourth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. The meeting was convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and RECOFI. The meeting was attended by six Members of Commission. A list of delegates is attached as Appendix B.

2. His Excellency Hamed Said Al-Oufi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, welcomed delegates to the Sultanate and the meeting. He pointed out that the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) would provide a unique opportunity for Members to share knowledge and information and to promote stronger regional collaboration in fisheries. He noted the importance of fisheries for food security in the region and expressed his desire that the meeting would produce robust discussion and results. His statement is in Appendix D.

3. Mr Piero Mannini, RECOFI Secretary and Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt, made a statement on behalf of Mr Saad Al-Otaibi, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt. He reiterated that the RECOFI region was rich in marine biodiversity and productive ecosystems supporting valuable fish stocks. However, there had been an apparent decline in production between 2006 and 2008 from approximately 700 000 tonnes to 640 000 tonnes. Mr Al-Otaibi highlighted some of RECOFI's work undertaken over the past two years including the review of fisheries laws in certain RECOFI Members. He added that regional cooperation and regional fishery bodies and arrangements were critical to international fishery governance, underscoring the importance of strengthening regional cooperation among RECOFI Members. He referred also to efforts to strengthen and develop RECOFI. He noted that the agenda for the meeting was an important one, particularly in view of the forthcoming Sixth Session of the Commission in Bahrain in May 2011. Mr Al-Otaibi's statement is in Appendix E.

4. The Chairperson of the WGFM, Mr Saleh Z. Al-Hinai, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, welcomed delegates to the meeting. He referred to the need to work efficiently in the meeting and to produce a sound set of recommendations for the next session of RECOFI. He expressed the desire that Members work constructively to address the issues before the WGFM to find realistic and lasting solutions.

5. In his introductory remarks, Mr Mannini highlighted RECOFI activities that had taken place recently, referring in particular to the finalization of two reports and work on the development of a binding Recommendation for Members to consider for onforwarding to the Commission. He reminded the meeting that the joint Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and WGFM GIS Workshop would be held in Doha, Qatar, from 24 to 28 October 2010. He encouraged Members to participate actively in the workshop, pointing out that it was an important initiative for capture fisheries. In addition, he referred to the questionnaire that had been dispatched to Members following the Rome meeting in relation to the independent technical review of RECOFI. Mr Mannini added that some Members had already completed

and returned the questionnaire to the Secretariat. He urged all Members to do so in order to permit a comprehensive paper to be elaborated for the Sixth Session of the Commission in May 2011.

6. Mr David Doulman, Technical Secretary of the WGFM and Senior Fishery Liaison Officer, FAO, Rome, Italy, in his opening remarks, expressed the view that the WGFM should develop a comprehensive and concrete set of recommendations and projects for consideration by the Commission at its next session. He mentioned in particular the importance of the draft Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area, and the draft terms of reference for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations, a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of a monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) information exchange scheme, submitted to the WGFM by the Sultanate of Oman.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

7. The Agenda, attached as Appendix A, was adopted. The list of documents for the session is attached as Appendix C.

8. The Chairperson invited the Technical Secretary to outline the timetable for the meetings' work. He reviewed the timetable indicating that there would be flexibility in discussion to ensure that all issues were addressed adequately.

UPDATE ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2011-2012 IN RELATION TO WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INCLUDING A REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

9. The Technical Secretary introduced document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/2. It is attached in Appendix F.

10. In his presentation the Technical Secretary recapped on the process undertaken at the second meeting of the WGFM in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2008 to develop the Working Group's strategy, prioritized objectives, regional activities and projects. He recalled that the strategy, a broad and non-specific statement, provided direction and coherency for the WGFM. It reflected the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other outcomes including the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and other relevant international instruments. The Technical Secretary noted that the prioritized objectives served to promote the strategy and that the regional activities indicated initiatives to be undertaken to implement the objectives. At the lowest level, the projects were the mechanisms by which the strategy, prioritized objectives and regional activities were implemented. He added that in reality fishery administrations were required usually to balance projects to achieve responsible and sustainable management over a range of objectives.

11. The Technical Secretary reminded the WGFM that RECOFI in May 2009 had reviewed and agreed on the strategy and approved a number of projects for implementation. Subsequently, in Doha, Qatar, in October 2009, at its third meeting, the WGFM reviewed the strategy and projects approved by RECOFI for implementation. He noted that all activities agreed by the Commission for implementation had been undertaken except the project on the

integration of catch and effort data. This project would be initiated in the near future and its results could be communicated to the Sixth Session of the Commission in May 2011.

12. The Technical Secretary noted that RECOFI had postponed a number of WGFM activities principally because of a lack of funds. However, projects that had been postponed could be reconsidered for implementation if that was the desire of the WGFM. He added that the WGFM's workplan over the next biennium should reflect outcomes of the independent technical review, recommendations coming from the study on the integration of catch and effort data, downstream work from the possible Recommendation on minimum data reporting, the proposal for the regional database on violations, list of vessels authorized to fish and the MCS information exchange scheme, and the possibility of increasing the frequency of WGFM meetings from a biennial to an annual basis.

13. In a sequential and holistic manner the WGFM reviewed the strategy, prioritized objectives, regional activities and projects. In doing so, the number of prioritized objectives was reduced from seven to five, with the intention of streamlining the number of projects proposed for implementation. The revised strategy, prioritized objectives, regional activities and projects that will be submitted to the next session of the Commission in May 2011 are in Appendix G.

14. With respect to the frequency of WGFM meetings, it was agreed that a recommendation should be made to the Sixth Session of the Commission that the WGFM should meet on an annual basis, maintaining, if possible, the current October schedule for the meeting. Despite the additional resources required to support an annual meeting, the WGFM noted that an increase in the frequency of meetings would enable the WGFM to review, update and monitor its activities in a more effective manner.

15. In relation to discussion concerning the outcomes from the study on the integration of catch and effort data, the Technical Secretary and the WGFM were of the opinion that its recommendations should be considered by the WGFM prior to their submission to the Commission. Two options were considered to review the report: (i) electronic consultations, and (ii) a one day meeting of the WGFM immediately prior to the Sixth Session of the Commission in May 2011. The Technical Secretary indicated that in his view a short special meeting would be preferable as it enabled face-to-face consultation and the more rapid resolution of differences among delegations. After some discussion, the WGFM agreed to convene a special meeting of one day immediately prior to the next session of the Commission to consider the outcomes of the study on the integration of catch and effort data and any other matters that should be addressed prior to the Commission's session. The Technical Secretary indicated that it would be feasible to organize such a special meeting and to produce a report of the proceedings. The WGFM requested the Secretariat to make arrangements for the special meeting.

OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL MEETING ON RECOFI CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ROME, ITALY, 11-12 MAY 2010) AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

16. The Secretary of RECOFI introduced document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/3. It is attached as Appendix H.

17. The Secretary explained that the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development was convened at the request of the Fifth Session of the Commission. The meeting was convened at FAO's headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. The purpose of the Special Meeting was to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role as a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO). The basis of the meeting's work was a comprehensive technical paper prepared by an independent consultant.

18. The Secretary informed the WGFM that the Special Meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the Commission's future technical, institutional and financial needs. These recommendations were:

- **Technical:** It was agreed that Members would review the meeting document "Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries" in their countries and provide written comments on each of the eight points raised in the document to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.
- **Institutional:** The meeting noted that RECOFI operated with a part-time Secretariat. This situation limited the scope and depth of the Commission's work. Members should consider whether the services provided by FAO at the current level were sufficient and adequate to meet the fisheries needs and challenges of the region. If this was not the case a decision concerning a permanent Secretariat would have to be faced as an option. Decisions relating to the Commission's structure and other institutional considerations were needed.
- **Financial:** Based on the information contained in the meeting document "Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options", the meeting recognized that RECOFI's financial needs, including the level of Members' contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was recognized also that the current contribution level (USD 5 000 per year) was quite inadequate, particularly when the amount of arrears were taken into account. After having assessed and agreed the Commission's technical and institutional requirements to address fisheries and aquaculture issues in the region, RECOFI should determine how the work programme would be funded. The Commission's core functions and activities should be covered at least by Member contributions while other activities of a project nature could be funded by extra-budgetary funding.

19. While recognizing the challenges that the technical review posed for RECOFI Members, the Secretary advised the WGFM that the Secretariat would prepare an inclusive and consolidated paper for consideration by the May 2011 session of the Commission. It was hoped that a decision would be made that would put RECOFI and its work programme on a more solid footing. This paper would reflect fully the outcomes of the technical review and the responses by Members to the questionnaire that had been dispatched by the Secretariat in August 2010.

20. In discussion following the presentation, the WGFM agreed that the consolidation and strengthening of the Commission was of extreme importance, particularly in relation to ensuring that it had adequate financial resources to undertake its programme of work. Delegates recognized that should the current level of Members' contributions remain unchanged, this would have a significant impact on RECOFI's future work.

21. With respect to the outcome of the technical performance review and the survey questionnaire that had been dispatched by the Secretariat in August 2010, the WGFM requested the Secretariat to communicate to Members the options to be considered for strengthening the Commission well in advance of the Commission's May 2011 session. Some delegates indicated that it could be instructive to learn from the experience of other, longer-established RFMOs, as to how they had taken steps to strengthen their roles and performance.

STOCK STATUS REPORTING IN SUPPORT OF LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE RECOFI REGION INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT RECOMMENDATION FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE SIXTH SESSION OF RECOFI

22. Ms Sachiko Tsuji, Senior Fishery Statistician, FAO, Rome, Italy, introduced document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/4. It is attached as Appendix I.

23. Ms Tsuji explained that monitoring stock status and impacts of fisheries on the ecosystem was fundamental to the RECOFI mandate. She added that RECOFI had made substantial and steady progress in this regard, especially following the establishment of the WGFM at its fourth session in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 7 to 9 May 2007.

24. Ms Tsuji reminded delegates that the second meeting of the WGFM (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008) reviewed briefly the major fisheries in the RECOFI region and recommended moving towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) with adaptive management procedures. Subsequently the Fifth Session of RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009) adopted this recommendation and decided to convene a workshop specifically focusing on a review of data and statistics available in the region and stock status reporting.

25. The Workshop on "Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting" (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009) was called upon to review data and stock status information available in the region. The Workshop faced difficulty in assembling data and developing a draft protocol on the minimum set of data required in addressing three major common concerns identified. These concerns were: (i) ecosystem wide impacts of shrimp trawls, (ii) exploitation levels of finfish resources, and (iii) stock status especially for narrow-barred Spanish mackerel. The third meeting of the WGFM (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009) reviewed and adopted this protocol for minimum data reporting and requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution for discussion at the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 3–5 October 2010).

26. The WGFM reviewed the proposed "Draft Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area" (RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/4, Appendix 1) with special attention being paid to considerations that would enable all Members to implement the recommended actions. The agreed draft Recommendation is reproduced below. It will be submitted to the Sixth Session of RECOFI in May 2011 for consideration.

27. During discussion, the WGFM noted the urgent need for RECOFI to establish a regional database to maintain information required to support directly fisheries management in the region as a public asset of the Commission. Moreover, the WGFM reconfirmed the need for further preparatory works identified and agreed at the third meeting of WGFM. This included (i) a review of national fisheries monitoring programmes in order to identify the areas of improvement in addressing minimum data requirements, (ii) establishment of common formats for reporting and sharing information, and (iii) a workshop to ensure the smooth implementation of minimum data reporting experimenting with actual data exchanges and examinations.

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION RECOFI/6/2011/1
ON MINIMUM DATA REPORTING IN THE RECOFI AREA**

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI),

RECALLING that the purpose of RECOFI is, *inter alia*, to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture;

RECALLING that the third meeting of RECOFI's Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009) agreed that a recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI Area should be drafted for review by the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010) for submission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI (Manama, Bahrain, 10-12 May 2011);

REAFFIRMING the strong desire of RECOFI Members to promote closer international cooperation and harmonization in fisheries of mutual interest;

AWARE that minimum data reporting requirements for the RECOFI Area are fundamental to promoting long-term sustainable fisheries, especially for species of common interest in the region (see Appendix 1);

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of RECOFI Agreement that:

1. (a) Each Member shall take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the collection and submission of information required under the paragraph 2, 3 and 4 of this recommendation.
- (b) Nothing in this recommendation shall constrain a Member pursuing data collection and sharing them with the Commission for the purpose of improving management of fisheries and fishery resources in the RECOFI area beyond the requirements of this recommendation.
2. (a) Each Member operating with shrimp trawl fishery shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to that fishery:
 - (i) opening and closing dates of the fishery;
 - (ii) number of vessels engaged in the fishery according to its own vessel type/ size categories (e.g. steel-hulled/speed boats/dhows);

- (iii) annual average tow duration, annual average number of tows per day, and total number of days at sea, according to vessel type/size categories;
- (iv) live-weight equivalent of annual catch of shrimp, swimming crab, cuttlefish, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, emperors, groupers, sharks, rays, and other finfishes, taken by the fishery;
- (v) annual amount of discards, and
- (vi) species composition of by-catch and discards, if available.

(b) If any by-catch reduction device (BRD) is used or other mitigation measure taken, each Member should advise the Commission of details of such BRD/mitigation measure used and submit the catch and effort for those vessels with mitigation measures separated from those vessels operating normally.

3. Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to gillnets, wire-traps, and hooks-and-line fisheries, respectively:

(a) annual effort in individual fisheries, in terms of “number of days at sea”, and if this is not possible, alternative effort with its brief description, and

(b) live-weight equivalents of annual total catch, and of annual catches of narrow-barred Spanish mackerels, emperors, groupers, sharks and rays taken by individual gears with species identification of emperors and groupers to the extent possible, and amount of discards if available.

4. (a) Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel *Scomberomorus commerson* taken in any fishery in the country:

(i) catch in live-weight equivalent on a monthly basis to the extent possible, if not on an annual basis;

(ii) fork length composition of catch on a monthly basis to the extent possible, if not on an annual basis, either based on fishery monitoring or obtained from other sources, and

(iii) for operations targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (e.g. kingfish fixed net, gillnet and hooks and line), monthly catch with fork length composition and effort by gear type, together with clear description of kinds of effort used, to the extent possible.

(b) Each Member shall make available to the Commission any results obtained through surveys and research works relevant to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, including fishery-dependent and fishery-independent stock indicators, biological parameters (e.g. growth rate, length frequency data obtained by projects, age-length relationship, reproductive information, natural mortality) and ecological information (e.g. distribution, feeding habitat, habitat preferences).

5. Each Member shall, to the extent practicable, make available to the Commission the following additional information:

(a) shrimp species composition within the shrimp trawl catch, and

(b) species composition of discards.

6. Each Member shall submit to the Commission the information required under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation, and any modification to information reported previously, before the end of August of the following year. Each Member shall cooperate in exchanging historical information relevant to those described in this recommendation.
7. Each Member shall cooperate in sharing survey plans and protocols prior to their implementation, as well as results of such surveys upon their conclusion, to the relevant Members through the Commission.
8. The Commission shall collate, maintain and promptly disseminate to Members the information provided under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation. The Commission may, subject to the request from a Member who provided information, impose restrictions on access to the information by the public.
9. The Commission shall monitor and evaluate regularly the status of implementation of this recommendation.

APPENDIX 1

List of key species supporting main reference fisheries in the RECOFI Area

FAO name	ASFIS code	Common name	Scientific name
Penaeid shrimps nei	PEZ	Shrimps	Penaeidae
Blue swimming crabs	SCD	Blue swimming crab	<i>Portunus pelagicus</i>
Pharaoh cuttlefish	IAH	Cuttlefish	<i>Sepia pharaonis</i>
Stolephorus anchovies	STO	Anchovies	<i>Stolephorus</i> spp.
Indian oil sardine	IOS	Indian oil sardine	<i>Sardinella longiceps</i>
Bludger	NGY	Jacks	<i>Carangoide gymnostethus</i>
Golden trevally	GLT	Golden trevally	<i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i>
Indian mackerel	RAG	Indian mackerel	<i>Rastrelliger Kanagurta</i>
Snubnose emperor	LBW	Orange finned emperor	<i>Lethrinus borbonicus</i>
Pink ear emperor	LTS	Redspot emperor	<i>Lethrinus lentjan</i>
Spangled emperor	LHN	Spangled emperor	<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>
Coral hind	CFI	Coral grouper/Bluespotted grouper	<i>Cephalopholis miniata</i>
Orange-spotted grouper	ENI	Orange-spotted grouper	<i>Epinephelus coioides</i>
White-spotted spinefoot	SCN	Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus canaliculatus</i>
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	COM	King mackerel/Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>
Longtail tuna	LOT	Longtail tuna	<i>Thunnus tonggol</i>
Requiem sharks nei	RSK	Sharks	Carcharhinidae

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO REVIEW THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL DATABASE ON VIOLATIONS, ESTABLISH A LIST OF VESSELS AUTHORIZED TO FISH BY MEMBERS AND PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS) NETWORK

28. Mr Abdullah Hilal Al-Balushi, Head, Section of Fishery Resources Development, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, introduced document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/5 on behalf of the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman. It is attached as Appendix J.

29. Mr Al-Balushi explained that the purpose of the initiative was to contribute to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. He noted that there was poor regional information available on vessel identification, ownership and control for MCS purposes and information that was available was not easily accessible by RECOFI Members. It was therefore proposed that a regional database be established to provide information to Members in a timely manner to support their efforts against IUU fishing and as a means of enhancing resource management.

30. The Sultanate of Oman proposed that a feasibility study be undertaken to assess whether a regional database of fishing violations, a list of vessels authorized to fish, and a MCS information exchange scheme should be established. It was stressed that the feasibility study would not create commitments for any Members. In addition, Mr Al-Balushi explained that the results of the feasibility study would be considered at a subsequent meeting of the WGFM before any further action was taken.

31. There was protracted discussion on the proposal and issues were raised in relation to the need to involve other national agencies responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) such as the coastguard if a project moved beyond the feasibility stage. In discussion, the similarities and differences among Members in terms of the characteristics of their fishery sectors were noted. Some Members explained that they had comprehensive vessel authorization and monitoring schemes already in place. The WGFM agreed that the feasibility study should be listed in the projects for implementation by RECOFI. However the title of the feasibility study was amended by the WGFM to “Feasibility study to review the development of regional databases for violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of a MCS information exchange scheme”.

REVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE TRIPARTITE MEETING ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF RECOFI (ROME, ITALY, 13 MAY 2010) AND FAO/INFOSAMAK SEMINAR ON “FISH TRADE AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: IMPLICATION OF CERTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY SCHEME FOR THE REGION” (AGADIR, MOROCCO, 22–24 JUNE 2010)

32. The Secretary of RECOFI introduced document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/6. It is attached as Appendix K.

Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI

33. The Secretary informed the WGFM that at the third meeting of the WGFM (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009), the Secretariat convened a second meeting to advance the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI. At this meeting, the implementation of a survey questionnaire was agreed to support certain issues central to the Initiative with quantitative information and to create a solid base for discussion and analysis. The completed questionnaires were shared among the Parties to the Initiative. These developments represented a positive step forward and, as a consequence, the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat convened a third meeting (FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, 13 May 2010) to take the Initiative further.

34. The Rome meeting confirmed the countries' commitment and availability to support the Initiative and agreed to proceed towards a higher-level meeting as a means of formalizing and substantiating the Initiative. Moreover, it was agreed that the higher-level meeting would be preceded by a technical meeting with the following agenda:

- 1) Presentation and discussion of the survey questionnaire results;
- 2) Definition of the area concerned by the Initiative, and
- 3) Review and discussion of the focus topics identified as central elements of the Initiative including:
 - a) fisheries management in the northern area of RECOFI including the review of effectiveness of current conservation and management measures to preserve the resources and aquaculture;
 - b) sub regional trade (dynamics, constraints and opportunities);
 - c) promotion of sustainable inland, brackish and marine waters aquaculture, including stock enhancement, and
 - d) establishment of scientific cooperation and implementation of joint activities.
- 4) Identification of the main technical components of a project proposal to implement the Initiative.

35. The outline of the project proposal referred to in point 4 above will be presented for consideration at the higher-level meeting. The Delegation of Kuwait offered to host the technical preparatory meeting prior to the higher-level meeting. The preparatory meeting is proposed for 1 and 2 November 2010. The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) confirmed its offer to host the higher-level meeting in due course.

36. The WGFM took note of these developments and commended the Secretariat for its efforts to promote the subregional Initiative. The WGFM also expressed its satisfaction with the excellent progress achieved.

FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Scheme for the Region”

37. The Secretary informed the WGFM that the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, in partnership with the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory

Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region (INFOSAMAK), implemented a regional seminar entitled “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”. It was held from 22 to 24 June 2010 in Agadir, Morocco. He noted that the Seminar sought to address concerns expressed by the WGFM at its third meeting (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009).

38. The Secretary advised the WGFM that 75 participants from 22 countries, the European Community, various international organizations including RFMOs and international non-governmental organizations, and the private sector attended the Seminar. It provided information relating to:

- practical information on catch documentation schemes in fisheries;
- an introduction to the use of traceability schemes;
- an understanding of the implications of certification and related schemes;
- knowledge about the relationship between IUU fishing and trade for the region, and
- information about the role and function of fishery products certification and related schemes as means to combat and deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU fishing.

39. The Seminar approved, by consensus, a statement summarizing the basic considerations and priority issues for the Near East and North Africa Region including key-activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities. The statement and the identified priority issues for the region are attached to Appendix K.

40. The WGFM expressed considerable interest in the outcome of the Seminar and pointed out that many of the priorities and issues relating to IUU fishing and fish trade identified by the Seminar were highly relevant to the RECOFI region. The WGFM agreed that the terms of reference for the feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations, establish a list of vessel authorized to fish by Members and promote the establishment of a MCS information exchange scheme should take into consideration the Seminar’s final statement.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

41. The WGFM elected unanimously Mr Abdulkarim H. Radhi, Head of Fisheries Assessment Section, Directorate of Fisheries Resources, General Directorate for Protection of Marine Resources, Public Commission for Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife, Manama, Bahrain, as Chairperson of the Working Group for the next two years.

42. The Secretary of RECOFI advised the WGFM that the Secretariat had been forwarding information on a regular basis to WGFM Members, particularly through the designated focal points. He noted that this was an attempt to address a concern that was expressed at the last meeting of the WGFM, adding that there had been little feedback as to whether this information was useful. Some Members indicated that routing the information through focal points was a positive development while others indicated that there were some difficulties in obtaining information that had been sent. It was requested that in addition to the focal points, other delegates participating in meetings of the WGFM be added to the electronic distribution list.

43. The Secretariat informed the WGFM that the manager of a FAO project entitled “Fishery Information and Resource Monitoring Systems” (FIRMS) had approached the RECOFI Secretariat with the proposal to hold a regional consultation to update fisheries inventories. If this consultation materialized, the WGFM may take this opportunity to proceed with preparations for establishing minimum data reporting in the region. The Secretariat undertook to keep Members informed about development with this possible consultation.

44. The documents prepared for the meeting and the PowerPoint presentations made during the meeting were distributed to delegates on CD-ROM. In addition, the 2010 revised and updated version of the CD-ROM containing the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related documents was distributed to delegates. The Technical Secretary noted that in this revision of the CD-ROM, documents in the Arabic language had been included for the first time.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

45. A special meeting of the WGFM will be convened immediately prior to the Sixth Session of RECOFI. The special meeting will be held on 9 May 2011 in Manama, Bahrain.

46. Depending on the decision of the Commission, it is anticipated that the next meeting of the WGFM will be held in October 2011 at a location to be confirmed.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

47. The report of the meeting was adopted on 5 October 2010.

48. The Chairperson thanked delegates for their cooperation in making the meeting a success. He stated that it had been a pleasure to act as Chairperson over the past two years. He concluded by wishing delegates a safe and speedy journey to their respective countries.

49. On behalf of the delegates, Mr Radhi from Bahrain thanked the Sultanate of Oman for its very generous and gracious hospitality in hosting this meeting. He also thanked the Chairperson for his skills in guiding the WGFM through its fourth meeting. He added that it had been a great pleasure to be back in Muscat again and to meet in such pleasant surroundings. He complimented the Secretariat for its efficient planning and staging of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the meeting
3. Update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2009–2010 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management including a review of the regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management
4. Outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010) and considerations for the Working Group on Fisheries Management
5. Stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management in the RECOFI region, including consideration of a draft recommendation for transmission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI
6. Consideration of draft terms of reference for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations; establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members, and promote the establishment of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) network
7. Review of the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI, Rome, Italy, 13 May 2010, and FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”, Agadir, Morocco, 22–24 June 2010
8. Any other matters
9. Date and place of the Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
10. Adoption of the report

APPENDIX B**List of delegates****BAHRAIN**

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List of documents

RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/1	Agenda
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/2	Update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2009–2010 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management including a review of the regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/3	Outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010) and considerations for the Working Group on Fisheries Management
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/4	Stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management in the RECOFI region, including consideration of a draft recommendation for transmission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/5	Consideration of draft terms of reference for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations; establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and promote the establishment of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) network
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/6	Review of the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI and FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.1	List of documents
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.2	List of participants
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.3	Statement by the Assistant-Director General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.4	Report of the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.5	Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status. Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009 (advance copy)
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.6	Report of the third Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.7	Report of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development. Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010 (advance copy)
RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.8	Trends and emerging issues of the Gulf fisheries: a regional perspective

Welcoming Statement
by
His Excellency Hamed Said Al-Oufi,
Undersecretary, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth,
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Good morning.

Honorable participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure I warmly welcome you all to Muscat, Sultanate of Oman for the 4th Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management under the Regional Commission for Fisheries.

I believe that the meeting will provide a unique opportunity to learn from each other and sharing of knowledge and information, about the key issues and challenges that we are currently facing in managing our fisheries resources in a sustainable manner. By jointly deciding on an effective regional fisheries management program, where appropriate, we will be able to establish an internationally consistent strategic approach to improve our regional fisheries governance system.

Under the recent campaign of globalization and considering various complex issues of fisheries management, a regionally integrated approach is inevitable and indeed consistent with the international policy requirements. More importantly, I believe that a collaborative regional approach to improve regional fisheries management is not beyond our reach. It requires commitment, rational planning and practical steps forward. In light of this, I assure you that we provide our full support to the “Commission” to fulfilling its mandates reflected in its core functions and responsibilities.

Furthermore, as we know, fisheries make a major contribution to the human food supply in the region. To strengthen and secure its future contribution a collective as well as pro-active approach is vital and indeed “the Commission” is providing us with a platform for regional dialogue among regional leaders and policy makers on sustainability of fisheries resources in the region.

It gives me great pleasure to meet colleagues representing Member States of the Commission and from FAO. I would like to thank each of you for your participation in the meeting as it demonstrates a growing recognition of, and commitment to, the challenges of effective fisheries governance in the region.

It is my sincere hope that this meeting produces robust discussion on the issues listed on the agenda and a way forward for achieving the core objectives of this regional program.

I wish all the participants a pleasant stay in Muscat.

Thank you.

Opening statement
by
Mr Piero Mannini, Senior Fishery Officer
on behalf of Mr Saad Al-Otaibi
Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East
and North Africa
FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

Excellency Undersecretary, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Director of Fisheries, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), I have the pleasure to welcome you to Muscat on the occasion of the Fourth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management that is being hosted by the Ministry of Fisheries Wealth of the Sultanate of Oman.

The RECOFI region is characterized by rich marine biodiversity and productive ecosystems, supporting valuable fishery stocks. In the RECOFI region, marine fisheries production in 2008 was about 640 000 tonnes with an apparent decline since 2006 when the maximum total landings reached about 700 000 tonnes. Fisheries in the region assure the livelihoods of a significant part of the coastal communities and play a key role in contributing to food security. It is of concern that there are reports indicating that RECOFI capture fisheries are relying increasingly on low-value species, thereby concealing the slow degradation of demersal high-value resources.

An integrated ecosystem approach to the management of the Gulf and Sea of Oman fisheries is essential and suitable indicators need to be used at the national and regional level to assess the status of resources and the performance of fisheries management measures and actions. I am pleased to note that last year the WGFM successfully endeavoured to address the critical issue of stock monitoring and stock status reporting, adopting a holistic approach and in coherence with the EAF principle. This is a substantial and promising step towards sustainable fisheries and it is also in line with the indications of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries that clearly emphasize the need for international and regional cooperation for the management of shared fishery resources, particularly those occurring in semi-enclosed seas.

Moreover, a harmonized approach to fisheries laws in the region would provide a foundation for cooperation in management of shared stocks. The “Review of Fisheries Laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries” recently prepared by FAO and RECOFI is now available in English and Arabic and provides a suitable base of knowledge to support the revision, updating and harmonization to the extent possible of fisheries legislation in the region.

In addition, I would like to recall the recent international fisheries instruments that have been developed with a view to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and encouraging cooperation and harmonization of fisheries management. These instruments underpin fisheries governance at national and regional levels. A sound approach for countries in the RECOFI region would be to ratify and implement these instruments. The

aim would be to ensure that the legal framework for fisheries would embrace modern concepts, principles and provisions, and that implementation would be robust and coordinated, as appropriate, at the regional level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is widely recognized that regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements such as RECOFI, are the cornerstones of international fisheries governance and for this reason regional cooperation in the area should be strengthened. We know that many regional fisheries problems can be solved through effective consultation and the timely exchange of information. I remind you that the RECOFI Agreement was established in 1999 to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture. Also, I want to underscore that RECOFI is empowered to formulate and adopt binding recommendations for the conservation and management of living marine resources.

Within the current efforts undertaken to strengthen and develop RECOFI an important event was the special meeting on consolidation and development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries that was held at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. I wish to underline that the meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. It was stressed that Members should lead the Commission's work and activities, both in the period of reorganization and strengthening and afterwards as RECOFI took on its role as a fully functional and operational regional fisheries management organization. The special meeting on RECOFI consolidation and development concurred that RECOFI was vital to the region if regional fisheries cooperation was to be enhanced further and if problems such as overfishing, resource depletion, environmental damage and adverse impacts on wildlife were to be mitigated or avoided and if food security in the region is to be enhanced.

I notice that you have a demanding Agenda addressing some of the most salient issues related to fisheries management in the region. It is my hope that you will succeed to progress from the theoretical approach to real actions and to the implementation of fisheries management measures jointly concerted at the regional level. I wish to emphasize that for the first time you have the opportunity to produce a recommendation to be submitted by the Commission at its next session. I am confident that you will seize this momentum thus marking a major progress in the story of RECOFI. The Commission has effective management powers and should start to exercise them.

I assure you that I will follow your deliberations with keen interest. The recommendations that you make this week will be very important because they will be transmitted to RECOFI's Sixth Session in Bahrain in May 2011 for consideration and review.

Distinguished participants, I am certain that you will have a very productive and fruitful meeting. I wish to extend my thanks to those in RECOFI and FAO who have worked together to ensure that enduring outcomes will be achieved for the benefit of all. I wish to thank again the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Fisheries Wealth for hosting the meeting.

Thanks for your attention

Update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–2013 in relation to working group on fisheries management including a review of the Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management

BACKGROUND

1. The Third Meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009) reviewed the outcomes of the fifth session of RECOFI's (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009) programme of work and budget for the 2009–2010 biennium in relation to the work of the WGFM. This paper builds on that review with the goal of developing a coherent and forward looking set of activities to be implemented in the 2011–2013 biennium, consistent with the terms of reference for the WGFM and within the framework of the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a work plan. For ease of reference the terms of reference for the WGFM are in Appendix 1. They were amended, and then approved, by the fifth session of the Commission.

2. The purpose of this paper is to (i) consider progress with the implementation of activities approved by the Commission for implementation under the guidance of the WGFM, (ii) review and update, as appropriate, the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan, (iii) consider and agree upon a proposed programme of work for the WGFM for the biennium 2011–2013, and (iv) consider the frequency of meetings for the WGFM.

STATUS OF ACTIVITIES APPROVED BY THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

3. At its fifth session the Commission either approved or postponed activities submitted for consideration by the WGFM. Except for an activity relating to the integration of catch and effort data in the RECOFI Area that was agreed by the Commission, all other activities approved have been undertaken.¹ As a consequence of funding becoming available in 2010, it is anticipated that the activity on the integration of catch and effort data will be commenced in late 2010 and be completed prior to the Sixth Session of RECOFI in May 2011.

4. Activities that were postponed by the Commission because of a lack of funding should be reconsidered at the fourth meeting of the WGFM to determine whether they remain a priority for the WGFM's work programme. New activities, as appropriate might also be added.

5. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the WGFM activities that were approved for implementation or which were postponed by the Commission at its fifth session.

¹ Activities completed include the workshop on stock status reporting and the third meeting on the WGFM. The joint activity between the WGFM and WFA on red tides was cancelled so as to avoid duplication with activities by other organizations in the RECOFI Area. The other joint activity, on GIS, will be undertaken in October 2010.

REVIEW OF REGIONAL STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING A WORKPLAN

Consideration of progress with the implementation of activities approved by the Commission for implementation under the guidance of the WGFM

6. Progress with the implement of approved activities is proceeding as planned. Funding for the integration of catch and effort data has been secured and a report will be available for the Sixth Session of the Commission. Unfortunately, because of the RECOFI meeting cycle and the non-availability of funds earlier in the biennium to finance this activity, the WGFM will not have opportunity to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Commission. However, Members will have access to the report before the session and would be expected to, comment substantively on it when the Commission considers it in May 2011.

Review and update, as appropriate, the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan

7. The Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan were considered in detail and agreed by the WGFM at its second meeting (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008). They were endorsed by the Fifth Session of the Commission. Subsequently, at its third meeting the WGFM updated the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities to reflect RECOFI decisions and to incorporate new initiatives proposed by the WGFM.

8. To ensure that the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities (Appendix 3) reflect current regional fisheries needs, the WGFM should, in a step wide approach:

- review the Strategy and assess if it remains adequate;
- consider the seven prioritized objectives to determine if they require amendment (note: that the Secretariat has proposed some amendments essentially to improve drafting);
- assess the regional activities under the prioritized objectives to evaluate if they require amendment (note: that the Secretariat has proposed some amendments to improve drafting);
- agree on regional projects, target implementation dates and locations for projects;
- indicate tentative funding requirements (in US dollars) and if possible, a funding source;
- after agreeing on projects, rank them according to regional priority, and
- indicate the major outputs for each project.

9. An important aspect of the review of the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities is to provide a forward-looking approach to the work of the WGFM. While one of the primary purposes of the review process is to develop a solid set of recommended projects for submission to the Sixth Session of the Commission for consideration for implementation in the 2011–2013 biennium, a longer-term review of activities and projects will assist in ensuring that there is coherency and sequential linkages between activities and biennia.

10. For the first time the WGFM will consider making a Recommendation to the Commission on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area (RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/4). The implementation of this Recommendation, if it is endorsed by the WGFM and the

Commission, will have implications for the work of WGFM. Work associated with this Recommendation should be incorporated into the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities.

11. A further consideration for the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities are the recommendations stemming from the report of the independent consultant who was engaged by the Secretariat to undertake a technical review of RECOFI. The recommendations and outcomes of this review were discussed at the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 12–14 May 2010). However, it was agreed that Members would review the report of the Special Meeting in their countries and provide written comments on each of the eight points raised in it (RECOFI:2010/2) to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat in turn would collate and analyse the national responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the Sixth Session of the Commission (RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/3). For this reason it would be premature to incorporate the report's recommendations into the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities. This task can be undertaken after the Sixth Session of the Commission and prior to the next meeting of the WGFM.

Consider and agree upon a proposed programme of work for the WGFM for the biennium 2011–2013

12. The WGFM should propose a list of activities to be undertaken between the Sixth and Seventh sessions of the Commission. The list of activities should be realistic and achievable, build on past activities to the extent that is possible and promote RECOFI's strategic goals with respect to fisheries management. The activities need also to be costed accurately and timelines indicated so that their budget implications can be assessed and work programmed in a systematic and orderly manner. Where possible, if an activity is to be implemented with extra-budgetary support, this support should be indicated.

FREQUENCY OF WGFM MEETINGS

13. The WGFM is scheduled to meet once each biennium. In the last biennium, the WGFM has met twice in order to reorientate its focus of work (i.e. broaden its focus from statistics to fisheries management) and to recover from several years of inactivity. Normally regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements, such as RECOFI, meet annually in general session. This is done to ensure that there is a high level of effective control over the work of the Commission. Working groups, working parties, sub-committees etc often meet more frequently than once a year (e.g. twice annually).

14. An increase in the frequency of meetings for the WGFM has logistical considerations for the Secretariat and financial implications for the Commission and its Members. It would be prudent to consider these issues before making a recommendation to the Commission, if that is the desire of the WGFM.

15. On the other hand, there would be considerable merit in having the WGFM meet on an annual basis (i.e. twice in each biennium). An increase in the frequency of meetings would enhance the WGFM's supervision over its work programme, enabling decisions to be taken more rapidly if and when required. More frequent meetings in fisheries management would raise the profile of the Commission and its work.

16. It might be noted that the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture meets annually and annual meeting for the WGFM would standardize meetings for both Working Groups.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

17. The Working Group is invited to:

- consider progress with the implementation of activities approved by the Commission for implementation under the guidance of the WGFM;
- review and update, as appropriate, the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan;
- consider and agree upon a proposed programme of work for the WGFM for the biennium 2011–2013, including regional projects, target implementation dates, location, indicative costing, ranking and major outputs,
- consider the frequency of meetings for the WGFM.

**Terms of reference for the Working Group on Fisheries Management²
adopted as amended³**

The Working Group on Fisheries Management shall, taking into account the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related documents and other international instruments, as appropriate:

1. Exercise the role and functions conferred on the Working Group by RECOFI including the consideration of biological, statistical, social, economic, policy, legal and institutional aspects of fisheries conservation and management with a view to ensuring the long-term sustainable development of resources in the region, and
2. Provide technical and scientific advice to RECOFI. Specifically, the Working Group on Fisheries Management shall:
 - Review the state of fisheries, including the state of resources, making recommendations for appropriate research and development activities in support of effective management and sustainable fisheries, as well as the rebuilding of stocks.
 - Review on a regular basis national statistical systems and outturns, as appropriate, to enhance and harmonize fisheries data on a regional basis.
 - Formulate recommendations for the implementation of conservation and management measures that will be applied in conformity with the precautionary approach to fisheries, taking account of the best scientific evidence available and the need to promote the development and proper utilization of fisheries resources.
 - Assess the need for harmonized conservation and management measures on a scientific basis and formulate recommendations as appropriate, including to but not limited to:
 - regulate fishing methods and fishing gear;
 - prescribe minimum sizes for particular species;
 - establish open and closed fishing seasons and areas;
 - implement marine protected areas;
 - regulate bycatch and discards;
 - prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
 - manage fishing capacity;
 - regulate the amount of total catch and fishing effort and their allocation among Members; and
 - market-based measures.

² The terms of reference incorporate relevant aspects of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related documents and other international instruments as well as the fisheries management provision of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. They are forward looking in character, adaptable and able to deal with emerging issues in fisheries. They are intended to be a “living document” that can be reviewed and amended by the Working Group to take account of changing fisheries conditions.

³ Fifth session of RECOFI, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009.

- Identify major fishery-related issues and emerging trends for fisheries management practice, including the ecosystem approach to fisheries, and make recommendations, as appropriate, for follow-up action.
- Identify and apply, as appropriate, a set of regionally-agreed indicators for sustainable fisheries development.
- Promote closer regional cooperation and collaboration in fisheries conservation and management, including through coordinated and harmonized policies and programmes relating to fisheries legislation, acceptance and implementation of international fisheries instruments, adoption of fisheries and management measures and monitoring, control and surveillance including vessels monitoring systems.
- Monitor and report on adverse impacts induced by human-made activities on fisheries and their long-term sustainable management and utilization, as appropriate, and make recommendations concerning remedial measures and action.
- Encourage human capacity building and institutional strengthening and enhance extension services in all aspects of sustainable fisheries management and utilization, including making recommendations for appropriate regional programmes.
- Assemble, publish and disseminate information concerning the state of the region's fisheries.
- Promote collaboration with other regional and international organizations, as appropriate, to enhance the sustainable fisheries management and utilization in the region.
- Undertake other activities relating to fisheries management considered important and appropriate by the Working Group or as directed by RECOFI.

3. The Working Group on Fisheries Management may review these terms of reference from time to time and make recommendations for their amendment, as appropriate, to RECOFI.

**RECOFI WGFM activities approved and postponed by the Commission
for the 2009–2011 biennium**

Working Group	Activity	Date	Location	Duration	Indicative cost (USD)	Status⁴
Fisheries Management	Fourth WGFM meeting	3–5 October 2010	Oman			Approved
Joint fisheries management and aquaculture	Geographical Information System and spatial tools applications for capture fishery and aquaculture	24–28 October 2010	Qatar		30 000	Approved
Fisheries Management	Integration of catch and effort data in the RECOFI area	2010/2011	RECOFI countries	TBD	30 000	Approved
Fisheries Management	Review of national fisheries programmes	2009	RECOFI countries	TBD	40 000	Postponed
Fisheries Management	Workshop on the utilization of fishery dependent data	2010	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Fisheries Management	Workshop on RECOFI fisheries economics	2010	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed
Fisheries Management	Training workshop on fishery resources appraisal	2010/2011	TBD	4 days	40 000	Postponed
Fisheries Management	Pilot joint assessment of shared stocks	2011	TBD	3–4 days	30 000	Postponed

⁴ Approved or postponed by the Fifth session of RECOFI, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009.

Updated RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan⁵

STRATEGY: Promotion of sound and effective regional fisheries governance by:

- ensuring that fisheries are exploited and utilized in a responsible and long-term sustainable manner,
- ensuring that fisheries generate maximum social and economic benefits for RECOFI countries, and
- ensuring that ecosystem considerations are incorporated into conservation and management decisions.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS, TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATES AND LOCATION	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
1. To implement effective fisheries management through regional cooperation and harmonization, including shared stocks and fisheries of common interest, based on the ecosystem approach	Awareness building about the need for effective fisheries management (e.g. publications, media, etc)				
	Development and implementation of information system to support regional fisheries management plans	Preparatory exercise for implementation of minimum data requirements (Follow-up to Iran Workshop)	20 000 (Source: TBI)		Initial data set to be incorporated into regional database
		Establishment and maintenance of a regional database to support management of major fisheries	Cost to be determined (Source: TBI ⁶)		Regional database
		Review of national fisheries monitoring programmes	40 000 (Source: TBI)		
	Development and implementation of agreed management scope, operational objectives and conservation measures (e.g. closed areas, seasons, restrictions on species and sizes)	Regional fisheries management plan	15 000 (Source: TBI)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries management plan • Harmonization and cooperation to strengthen management
	Assessment and implementation of fishing capacity reduction programmes				
	Implementation of the precautionary approach to fisheries when conditions are uncertain				

⁵ Updated September 2010.

⁶ TBI= to be identified.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS, TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATES AND LOCATION	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
	Implementation of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), including vessel monitoring systems (based on agreement at WGF3 whereby a feasibility review of options was to be undertaken)	Project to implement a regional MCS network Project to implement regionally VMS: phase 1 to ascertain feasibility	15 000 (Source: TBI) 30 000 (Source: TBI)		Mechanism to assist in the reduction of IUU fishing in the region Report with recommendations and options concerning the implementation of regional VMS
	Annual regional meeting of MCS officers to exchange information of common interest and consider the possibility of promoting a harmonized regional MCS approach		15 000 (Source: TBI)		Strengthened approach to addressing regional MCS problems through enhanced cooperation and harmonization of activities
	Implementation of measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing including port States measures and flag State performance criteria (based on agreement at WGF3 whereby a feasibility review of options was to be undertaken)	Project to develop a regional database on fisheries violations Project to establish a regional list of vessels authorized to fish by Members	15 000 (Source: TBI) 15 000 (Source: TBI)		Mechanism to assist in the reduction of IUU fishing in the region Mechanism to assist in the reduction of IUU fishing in the region
	Establishment of a regional scientific network for cooperative fisheries appraisals	Sharing plans, protocols and results of surveys, biological parameters and stock assessment results Pilot joint assessment of kingfish Pilot joint assessment of ecosystem impact of shrimp fisheries	15 000 (Source: TBI) 30 000 (Source: TBI) 30 000 (Source: TBI)		Regional scientific network intended to improve regional cooperation for fisheries of common concern Recommendations and options for the assessment of joint stocks

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS, TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATES AND LOCATION	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
<p>2. To facilitate human resource development and institutional strengthening to ensure the capacity to implement management measures</p>	<p>Workshops, country attachments and other training opportunities to enhance human resource development</p>	<p>National applied training programme for fish data collectors for identification of priority species</p>	<p>25 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		<p>Fish data collectors capable of identifying priority species</p>
		<p>Workshop on fishery resources appraisal</p>	<p>40 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		
		<p>Workshop on RECOFI fisheries economics</p>	<p>30 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		
		<p>Workshop on the utilization of fishery dependent data</p>	<p>30 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		
<p>3. To promote good science to underpin decisions for fisheries management</p>	<p>Promotion of national and regional library and information resources to support fisheries management</p>				
	<p>Promotion of applied research (related to biodiversity and conservation and management measures)</p>				
<p>4. To promote legal discussion and review and revise fisheries legislation to reflect policy and international commitments</p>	<p>Stock assessment to evaluate the status of stocks and development of management measures: follow-up to the October 2010 GIS Workshop</p>				
	<p>Acceptance and implementation of international instruments</p>				
<p>5. To encourage the reduction of impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity</p>	<p>Promotion of bycatch and discards reduction (related to improve utilization)</p>	<p>A study to evaluate and promote options to improve utilization of bycatch and discards</p>	<p>15 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		
	<p>Implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries</p>	<p>Evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts</p>	<p>15 000 (Source: TBI)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced undesirable impact of fisheries on the ecosystem • Greater responsibility and sustainability in fisheries

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS, TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATES AND LOCATION	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
6. To reflect cultural and social values and economic consideration in fisheries management	Facilitation of practices to promote safety at sea				
	Promote improved post-harvest fish handling and food safety				
	Recognition of the cultural role played by fisheries especially in inshore areas and more isolated communities	Workshop on fishery economic performance, dynamics and trends	10 000 (Source: TBI)		Enhanced understanding of the economic dimensions of the fishing industry in the region with a view to the development of economic indicators
	Promotion of fisheries activities to continue to support food security and nutrition				
7. To coordinate and promote information exchange and fish trade in the RECOFI Area	Collection and analysis of economic data and related information (e.g. employment, trade, value, cost of operations, losses due to poor handling, etc)				
	Promotion of responsible and sustainable fisheries development and value added activities (e.g. processing)				
	Implementation of measures to maintain the contribution of fisheries to livelihoods especially where alternative employment opportunities are limited				
	Promote better cooperation in regional fish trade	Implication of certification and related schemes to be investigated together with the relationship between IUU fishing and trade and the estimated value of IUU fishing in the region	20 000 (Source: TBI)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of impacts of certification and related schemes • Assessment of the effects of IUU fishing on trade • Estimation of the value of IUU fishing in the region
	Establish regional standards for fish exports and imports				

Updated RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan: 2011–2012

STRATEGY: Promotion of sound and effective regional fisheries governance by:

- ensuring that fisheries are exploited and utilized in a responsible and long-term sustainable manner,
- ensuring that fisheries generate maximum social and economic benefits for RECOFI countries, and
- ensuring that ecosystem considerations are incorporated into conservation and management decisions.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
1. To implement effective fisheries management through regional cooperation and harmonization, including shared stocks and fisheries of common interest, based on the ecosystem approach	Development and implementation of information systems to support regional fisheries management plans	Preparatory exercise for implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment and maintenance of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries (Follow-up to Iran Workshop)	20 000 (Source: TBI) Cost of establishment and maintenance of regional database to be determined	1	Initial data set to be incorporated into regional database Establishment of a regional database
		Review of national fisheries monitoring programmes	40 000 (Source: TBI)	8	Enhanced national fisheries monitoring programmes to support sustainable fisheries management
	Development and implementation of agreed management scope, operational objectives and conservation measures (e.g. closed areas, seasons, restrictions on species and sizes)	Pilot joint assessment of kingfish and workshop on the utilization of fishery dependent data	30 000 (Source: TBI)	3	Recommendations and options for the assessment of joint stocks
		Pilot joint assessment of ecosystem impact of shrimp fisheries	30 000 (Source: TBI)	7	Recommendations and options for assessing ecosystem impacts of shrimp fisheries
	Workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and conservation measures for fisheries management	15 000 (Source: TBI)	2	Fisheries management plan Harmonization and cooperation to strengthen management	

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
	Implementation of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), including vessel monitoring systems	Project to implement regionally VMS: phase 1 to ascertain feasibility	30 000 (Source: TBI)	14	Report with recommendations and options concerning the implementation of regional VMS
		Annual regional meeting of MCS officers to exchange information of common interest and consider the possibility of promoting a harmonized MCS approach	15 000 (Source: TBI)	13	Strengthened approach to addressing regional MCS problems through enhanced cooperation and harmonization of activities
	Implementation of measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing including port States measures and flag State performance criteria	Feasibility study to review development of regional databases of violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of a MCS information exchange scheme (refer to FAO/INFOSAMAK priorities)	30 000 (Source: TBI)	10	Options and recommendations to address IUU fishing in a more comprehensive and effective manner
	Promotion of bycatch reduction in support of improved utilization	A study to evaluate and promote options to improve utilization of bycatch	15 000 (Source: TBI)	15	Reduced bycatch in fisheries
2. To facilitate human resource development and institutional strengthening to ensure the capacity to implement sustainable fisheries	Promotion of gear types to mitigate bycatch and ecosystem impacts	Evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts	15 000 (Source: TBI)	9	Reduced undesirable impact of fisheries on the ecosystem Greater responsibility and sustainability in fisheries
	Workshops, country attachments and other training opportunities to enhance human resource development	Applied training programme for fish data collectors for the identification of priority species	25 000 (Source: TBI)	4	Fish data collectors capable of identifying priority species
3. To promote legal discussion and review and revise fisheries legislation for harmonizing fisheries management, reflecting international instruments	Promotion of the acceptance and implementation of international instruments and harmonization of fisheries laws among Members	Comparative analysis of certain legal issues to promote further harmonization of legislation, building on initial work undertaken by RECOFI and taking into consideration other relevant work	20 000 (Source: TBI)	5	Enhanced understanding of requirements to promote greater harmonization of legislation to support regional approaches to fisheries management

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
4. To reflect social values and economic consideration in small-scale fisheries	Recognition of the social and economic role including food security and nutrition, played by fisheries and their utilization	Workshop on social and economics aspects of small scale fisheries	10 000 (Source: TBI)	6	Enhanced understanding of the economic dimensions of the fishing industry in the region with a view to the development of economic indicators
	Promote better cooperation in regional fish trade including consideration of regional standards for fish exports and imports	Evaluation of certification and related schemes to be investigated together with the relationship between IUU fishing and trade and the estimated value of IUU fishing in the region	20 000 (Source: TBI)	12	Enhanced understanding of impacts of certification and related schemes Assessment of the effects of IUU fishing on trade
5. To coordinate and promote information exchange and fish trade in the RECOFI Area		Workshop to consider regional standards for fish exports and imports as a means of promoting better cooperation and trade	15 000 (Source: TBI)	11	Estimation of the value of IUU fishing in the region More rigorous standards for fish exports and imports

**Outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation
and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010) and considerations
for the Working Group on Fisheries Management**

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on the main findings and outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that was held in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. A short summary about the meeting and its outcome is provided below.

BACKGROUND

2. The Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development was convened as a follow-up to the Fifth Session of RECOFI held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009. At this meeting Commission requested the Secretariat to convene an *ad hoc* inter-sessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO). The Meeting was attended by seven Members of the Commission. The agenda of the meeting is in Appendix 1.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

3. The preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission were presented and discussed. The technical review was to make recommendations to enhance RECOFI's role and efficiency. The analysis and preliminary findings of the technical review were based on eight considerations:

- a. Knowledge on the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing;
- b. Knowledge on the status of aquaculture;
- c. Regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- d. Decision making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy and to assess the results;
- e. Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis;
- f. Decision making process to adopt Commission recommendations and measures;
- g. Capacity development, training and technical assistance, and
- h. Communication and information.

4. A number of pertinent issues were highlighted in the technical review including that the Commission:

1. was heavily reliant on FAO services, both financial and in kind;
2. had not yet made recommendations to its Members concerning fisheries management and aquaculture despite having the mandate to do so; and
3. had served as a forum for the transfer of knowledge and for strengthening capacity for fisheries research and management and aquaculture development.

5. In addition, it was noted that:

1. Members lacked the financial and human resources to maximize benefits for the initiatives already being undertaken by the Commission;
2. the non-political nature of FAO regional fishery bodies (RFBs) was an important element in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among Members;
3. efforts to overcome Members' constraints identified in the questionnaire should be addressed including fostering a more participatory approach in the Commission's work and decision-making;
4. an assessment of national governance capacities was required;
5. criteria and principles to define and develop RECOFI's regional governance priorities was needed;
6. weaknesses in raising financial resources to support RECOFI's activities required attention, and
7. a new vision was required to guide the Commission.

6. The Special Meeting, while noting the considerable amount of work carried out by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during the last biennium as indicated in the up-to-date list of RECOFI publications (Appendix 2), expressed considerable concern about the lack of follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations from technical meetings convened by the Commission. Reasons were identified for this lack of follow-up and it was agreed that RECOFI should be involved in assisting Members in implementing decisions. However, it was recognized that such a role had financial implications and that funding would need to be secured if activities to support the implementation of Commission decisions were to be undertaken.

7. The Secretariat reviewed the financial situation of the Commission as of May 2009 highlighting in particular the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. In the last biennium (2008–09), the actual total working costs related to RECOFI activities were USD 557 459.91, including the cost of FAO staff members (technical support and travel costs) supporting the Commission. The latter cost was about seven times greater the total national Members' contributions over the same period (USD 80 000). The Secretariat noted that FAO contribution over the same period represented 73.61 percent of financial commitments. If the Commission was to be fully autonomous and financially self-supporting, Members' annual contributions would need to rise. The independent consultant estimated the rise to be around USD 35 000 per country per year, *as a minimum*.

8. The Secretariat expressed the view that RECOFI should evolve towards an organisation capable of better delivering services to Members, broadening the scope of activities, and involving other stakeholders such as regional bodies and the private sector. The importance of ways and means of improving the Commission's financial capacity was based on the following utilities:

- more autonomy for the Commission;
- more activities in service of Members;
- more participation of internal and external human capacities; and
- a higher ability to attract partners/donors as the commitment of the latter was based on the degree and ability of RECOFI to self-finance on an ongoing basis.

Looking to the future, three scenarios were presented with respect to financing the Commission:

1. status quo of equal payment with upward adjustment of annual contributions;
2. maintaining the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions by Member's on a voluntary basis; and
3. replacing equal payments with indexed contributions based on a variety of variables.

9. Delegates noted that besides the three aforementioned scenarios, other options could be identified also and taken into consideration. Moreover, it was highlighted by the Secretariat that there were two different financial means to support the Commission:

1. directly through agreed contributions by Members and,
2. indirectly, and additionally, through extra-budgetary funding of field projects (national or regional).

10. The Special Meeting took note of the very significant financial contribution that FAO has provided to RECOFI during the last biennium. The Meeting was informed that this level of support could not be continued indefinitely, given the financial constraints faced by FAO.

11. The Special Meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. However, it was recognized that the movement towards a stronger and more dynamic Commission should be achieved in a phased, stepwise approach. It was stressed that Members should lead the Commission's work and activities, both in the period of reorganization and strengthening, and afterwards, as RECOFI took on its role as a fully functional and operational RFMO. Under this scenario the Commission, as a FAO body, would continue to benefit from support and guidance provided by the Organization.

12. The Meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs:

13. Technical: It was agreed that Members would review the meeting document "Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries" in their countries and provide written comments on each of the eight points raised in the document to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.

14. Institutional: The meeting noted that the RECOFI operated with a part-time Secretariat. This situation limited the scope and depth of the Commission's work. Members should consider whether the services provided by FAO at the current level were sufficient and adequate to meet the fisheries needs and challenges of the region. If this was not the case a decision concerning a permanent Secretariat would have to be faced as an option. Decisions relating to the Commission's structure and other institutional considerations were needed.

15. **Financial:** Based on the information contained in the meeting document “Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options”, the meeting recognized that RECOFI’s financial needs, including the level of Members’ contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was recognized also that the current contribution level (USD 5 000 per year) was quite inadequate, particularly when the amount of arrears were taken into account. After having assessed and agreed the Commission’s technical and institutional requirements to address fisheries and aquaculture issues in the region, RECOFI should determine how the work programme would be funded. The Commission’s core functions and activities should be covered at least by Member contributions while other activities of a project nature could be funded by extra-budgetary funding.

16. Members were aware that a major challenge for delegates attending the Special Meeting would be how to present its recommendations and outcomes to relevant national authorities after returning to their respective capitals. This would be important to ensure that solid decisions could be made at the Commission’s 2011 session. The Meeting underscored the fact that RECOFI was vital to the region if regional fisheries cooperation was to be strengthened further and if problems such as overfishing, resource depletion, and environmental damage were to be mitigated or avoided and if food security in the region is to be enhanced.

FOLLOW-UP

17. The technical performance review of the work and operations of the Commission that was being prepared by an independent consultant will be finalized by the Secretariat and submitted to RECOFI Members. The review will include the results of the survey questionnaire completed by Members as well as the outcome of the interviews made with delegations attending the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development in May 2010.

18. In addition, the Secretariat circulated a questionnaire to Members on 24 August 2010 containing the technical recommendations that should be considered by Members to strengthen RECOFI. The Special Meeting agreed that Commission Members should review the suite of recommendations to appraise their relevance to the needs and priorities of Members and the region as a whole. The completed questionnaire should be returned to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

19. The Working Group is invited to consider the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development and to comment on them, as appropriate. In particular, the Working Group may wish to consider the possible scenarios and consequences for the long-term sustainability of the RECOFI fisheries, should the Commission fail to identify and adopt ways and means to fulfil its mandate and to enhance its role as a RFMO.

**Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development
Rome, 11–12 May 2010**

Agenda

Tuesday, 11 May 2010

Morning: 9:30 hours

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the meeting
3. Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries
4. Outline of some existing arrangements and financing mechanisms of regional management bodies

Afternoon: 14:30 hours

5. Financial and activities scenarios: present situation and future options
6. The point of view and experience of a stakeholder of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
7. Options and recommendations to the VI Session of RECOFI on the consolidation and development of the Commission
8. Any other matters

Wednesday, 12 May 2010

Morning:

Free

Afternoon: 14:30 hours

9. Adoption of the report

RECOFI PUBLICATIONS

(2008 TO PRESENT)

List of publications

Stamatopoulos, C. Improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members. Regional Commission for Fisheries, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo. 2008. 56p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 6–10 April 2008). *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 876. Rome, FAO. 2008. 119p.

FAO. Report of the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 889. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 65p.

Regional Commission for Fisheries. Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production (1986–2006). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. CD-Rom prepared for and presented at the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, 27–30 October 2008, Cairo, Egypt.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 25–26 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 892. Rome, FAO. 2009. 135p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 27–28 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 895. Rome, FAO. 2009. 44p.

FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 30 March – 2 April 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 903. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 30p.

FAO. Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. Report of the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Dubai. United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 915. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 70p. [Bilingual version English/Arabic].

FAO. Report of the third meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 922. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 63p.

Swan, J. Review of fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular*. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. 2009. 81p. [English version]

Swan, J. Review of fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular*. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. 2009. [Arabic version]

FAO. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status. Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. XXX. Cairo, FAO. 2010. XXp. In preparation

FAO. Report of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development. Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. XXX. Cairo, FAO. 2010. XXp. In preparation

All RECOFI publications are available at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en>

**Stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management
in the RECOFI region, including consideration of a draft Recommendation
for transmission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI**

BACKGROUND

1. Stock status reporting is fundamental to the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) mandate. However, little progress has been made since the establishment of the Commission in 1999. At its Fourth Session (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7–9 May 2007) RECOFI addressed the issue and referred it to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) for further analysis.
2. The second meeting of the WGFM (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008) reviewed briefly the major fisheries in the RECOFI region and identified a set of species of primary concern, agreeing on a gear-boat classification to be used for further work.
3. The Fifth Session of the RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009) agreed to move towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) with adaptive management procedures and decided to hold a workshop specifically focusing on a review of data and statistics available in the region and stock status reporting.
4. The FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting” (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009) focused its attention on identifying key issues in the region and determining the minimum data requirement to address those key issues from the perspective of monitoring stocks and fisheries status (refer document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.5).

REGIONAL RESOURCE MONITORING STRATEGY

5. A RECOFI regional resource monitoring strategy including minimum data reporting was developed at the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to monitor:
 - ecosystem-wide impacts of shrimp trawls;
 - exploitation of coastal finfish resources using groupers and emperors (identified as the most vulnerable component within this group) as reference indicators of fishing pressure, and
 - stock management of priority species with narrow-barred Spanish mackerels as the first target species.
6. The WGFM at its third meeting (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009) reviewed and adopted the regional resource monitoring strategy as developed by the Workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting”, including the minimum data reporting necessary to estimate the relevant monitoring indicators. The WGFM also agreed to establish a regional database to maintain such information that supported directly fisheries management in the region as a public asset of the Commission. Moreover, the need for a follow-up workshop, including actual data reporting and examination to ensure the smooth implementation of the minimum data reporting, was also agreed.

7. The protocols for minimum data reporting required to estimate the monitoring indicators are as follows:

Ecosystem wide impacts of shrimp trawls

- Dates of opening and closure of the season;
- Species composition of discards, if available;
- Total number of vessels operating shrimp trawls as well as the number of vessels by size categories (e.g. steel/speed boats/dhows);
- Annual effort in terms of the average tow duration and number of tows per day, and the number of days at sea, according to vessel size categories;
- Quantity of annual catch of shrimps, swimming crabs, cuttlefish, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, emperors, groupers, sharks, rays, other fin fishes and the annual amount of discards;
- Shrimp species composition within the shrimp catch, if available [optional], and
- Catch composition of discards.

Exploitation of finfish resources

- Annual effort of driftnet/gillnet gear, wire traps, and hook-and-line fisheries, respectively, and description of efforts used. Members may decide to define the type of effort used but are encouraged to include the “number of days at sea”;
- Annual total catch, the amount of catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerels, emperors, groupers, sharks and rays, and amount of discards. For emperors and groupers, species should be identified to the extent possible, and
- Species composition of discards, if available.

Stock status of selected species (Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel)

- Monthly catch and its fork length composition;
- For operations targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (e.g. fixed nets, driftnets/gillnets and hook-and-line gear), monthly catch with length composition and effort by gear type, together with a clear description of types of effort used, and
- Any results obtained through surveys and research work relevant to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel that could include fishery-dependent and fishery-independent stock indicators, biological parameters (e.g. growth rate, age-length relationship, reproductive information, natural mortality) and ecological information (e.g. distribution, feeding habitat, habitat preferences).

RECOMMENDATION ON MINIMUM DATA REPORTING

8. The third meeting of the WGFM agreed that a resolution¹ should be prepared for the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010) concerning minimum data reporting for submission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI (Manama, Bahrain, 10–11 May 2011) for consideration. The Secretariat advised the meeting that it would draft a recommendation for review and consideration by the fourth session of the WGFM. The draft recommendation entitled “Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area” is attached in Appendix 1.

9. Consideration of the recommendation by the WGFM is an important development for RECOFI Members and fisheries management in the region because it is the time that a recommendation will be submitted to the Commission for its consideration and adoption.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

10. The Working Group is invited to review the draft recommendation and to comment on it, as appropriate, with a view to submitting it to the Sixth Session of RECOFI for adoption.

¹ Under Article III (Functions) of the RECOFI Agreement, the Commission shall, *inter alia*, “formulate and recommend, in accordance with the provisions of Article V, (i) appropriate measures for the conservation and management of living marine resources, ...”. In this respect the Commission adopts “recommendations” rather than “resolutions”.

**Draft Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1
on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI area**

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI),

RECALLING that the purpose of RECOFI is, *inter alia*, to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture;

RECALLING that the third meeting of RECOFI's Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009) agreed that a recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI Area should be drafted for review by the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010) for submission to the Sixth Session of RECOFI (Manama, Bahrain, 10-11 May 2011);

REAFFIRMING the strong desire of RECOFI Members to promote closer international cooperation and harmonization in fisheries of mutual interest;

AWARE that minimum data reporting requirements for the RECOFI Area are fundamental to promoting long-term sustainable fisheries, especially for shared stocks;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of RECOFI Agreement that:

1. (a) Each Member shall take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the collection and submission of information required under the paragraph 2, 3 and 4 of this recommendation.

(b) Nothing in this recommendation shall constrain each Member pursuing data collection and sharing of them with the Commission for the purpose of improving management of fisheries and fishery resources in the RECOFI Area beyond this recommendation.

2. (a) Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to shrimp trawl fishery:

- (i) opening and closing dates of the fishery;
- (ii) number of vessels engaged in the fishery according to its own vessel type/ size categories (e.g. steel-hulled/speed boats/dhows);
- (iii) annual average of tow duration, annual average of number of tows per day, and total number of days at sea, according to vessel type/ size categories;
- (iv) live-weight equivalent of annual catch of shrimp, swimming crab, cuttlefish, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, emperors, groupers, sharks, rays, and other finfishes, taken by the fishery;
- (v) annual amount of discards, and
- (vi) species composition of by-catch and discards, if available.

(b) If any of by-catch reduction devices (BRD) are used or other mitigation measure are taken, each Member should be advised the Commission on details of such BRD/mitigation measures used and submit the catch and effort of those vessels with mitigation measures separated from those vessels operating normally.

3. Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to “driftnet/gillnet”, wire-traps, and hooks-and-line fisheries, respectively:

- (a) annual effort in individual fisheries, in terms of “number of days at sea” to the extent possible, and if not with brief description of efforts used, and
- (b) live-weight equivalents of annual total catch, and of annual catches of narrow-barred Spanish mackerels, emperors, groupers, sharks and rays, and amount of discards, taken by individual fishery with species identification of emperors and groupers to the extent possible.

4. (a) Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel *Scomberomorus commerson* taken in any fishery in the country:

- (i) monthly catch in live-weight equivalent;
- (ii) monthly fork length composition of catch, and
- (iii) for operations targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (e.g. kingfish fixed net, driftnet/gillnet, and hooks and line), monthly catch with length composition and effort by gear type, together with clear description of kinds of effort used.

(b) Each Member shall make available to the Commission any result obtained through surveys and research work relevant to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, including fishery-dependent and fishery-independent stock indicators, biological parameters (e.g. growth rate, age-length relationship, reproductive information, natural mortality) and ecological information (e.g. distribution, feeding habitat, habitat preferences).

5. Each Member shall, to the extent practicable, make available to the Commission the following additional information:

- (a) shrimp species composition within the shrimp trawl catch, and
- (b) species composition of discards.

6. Each Member shall submit to the Commission the information required under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation, and any modifications occurred in those information reported previously, before the end of May of the following year. Each Member shall cooperate in exchanging any historical information relevant to those described in this recommendation.

7. Each Member shall cooperate in sharing survey plans and protocols prior to their implementation, as well as results of such surveys upon their conclusion, to the relevant Members through the Commission.

8. The Commission shall collate, maintain and promptly disseminate the information provided under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation. The Commission may, subject to the request from a Member who provided information, impose restrictions on access to the information by the public.

9. The Commission shall monitor and evaluate regularly the status of implementation of this recommendation.

Consideration of draft terms of reference for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members, and promote the establishment of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) network

RATIONALE:¹

1. One of the greatest challenges faced by fisheries management and enforcement authorities in the region is the lack of access to region-wide information on fishing vessel identification, ownership and control. As stated in the proposal paper submitted to the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management held in Doha, Qatar, from 20-22 October 2009 (Appendix 1), that the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI, ‘the Commission’ hereafter), as regional fisheries body, has a strong role in regional fisheries management. In line with international agreements and initiatives with regard to IUU fishing the Commission could initiate the development of a regional database that keeps full record of all types of fishing violations by traditional vessels and other key information in relation to vessel operators, vessel characteristics, details of fishing operations, and catch compositions and amounts. This type of information could be shared among member states and could be used as a part of early alert system to reduce risk and improve efficiency of management measures.

2. Drawing from relevant case studies from other regions the proposed study should cover all issues relevant to the development of a regional database system. However, in particular the study should:

- Determine (by working closely with RECOFI and Members) the scope of the record, content and format of the proposed database system;
- Review comprehensively the current situations with regard to baseline information requirements, inventory of key information sources, national MCS scheme, current national policies and practices with regard to MCS, national capacity (human, financial and technology related) in meeting the needs, policies on access to information and the existing networking environment (if any), including all Member countries in the region;
- Provide complete appraisal of important factors such as, technology and system requirements including their functionality, information requirements, economic , legal and operational feasibility, and highlight any key elements that should be paid attention to create an effective MCS system;
- Recommend guidelines and a framework for a set of minimum requirements for the system with regard to data format, data types, data provision protocol and governance approach;

¹ Paper prepared and submitted by the Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman. Please note that these draft terms of reference are for comment. For consistency purpose the present draft follows closely the report on “Global Record Feasibility Study” by FAO in 2006.

- Recommend different options for the preparation of and access to a regional records of fishing violations as a part of regional knowledge management mechanism and that such options should be supported by associated cost estimates for implementation and long-term maintenance;
- Recommend practical and justified actions to any obstacles that could be considered to improve decision making and enhance information exchange among member countries for combating IUU fishing; and
- Determine essential requirements to ensure appropriate linkages to other relevant databases and networking initiatives.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

3. The Working Group is invited to review this proposal, in the light of discussions at the third meeting of the WGFM, and to consider the terms of reference proposed for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and promote the establishment of a regional MCS network.

**Proposal by the Sultanate of Oman in relation to the development
of a RECOFI record of IUU fishing violations**

INTRODUCTION

1. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is one of considerable concerns of global community. It undermines the rational and legitimate objectives of fisheries management as it imposes serious threats to the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources and the socio-economic welfare of coastal fishing communities. Within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) a coastal State has sovereign rights to the fisheries resources and it is responsible for the conservation and management of fisheries resources. However, to ensure effective management of shared resources and effective control of IUU fishing activities within EEZs including incursions by foreign vessels in to EEZs, a cooperative approach is essential.

RATIONALE FOR THE RECORD OF VIOLATIONS

2. The Regional Commission on Fisheries (RECOFI, “the Commission” hereafter), as a regional fisheries body, has a strong role in regional fisheries management. In line with international agreements and initiatives with regard to IUU fishing the Commission could initiate the development of a regional database that keeps full record of all types of fishing violations by traditional vessels and other key information in relation to vessel operators, vessel characteristics, details of fishing operations, and catch compositions and amounts. This type of information could be shared among Member States and could be used as a part of early alert system to reduce risk and improve efficiency of management measures.

HOW THE RECORD WOULD BE OPERATED AND MANAGED

3. We would like to propose that the Commission would be responsible for the overall management of the recommended database with the help of Member States. In this context, the Commission should, amongst others:

- request each Member State to provide necessary information on traditional fishing vessels fishing in its water;
- negotiate regulatory arrangements with the Member States in relation to the effective implementation of vessel monitoring systems (VMS) as appropriate;
- strengthen provisions for sharing information among Member States;
- develop mechanisms to improve monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures and establish a regional MCS network; and
- adopt appropriate trade related measures and promote exchange of fishery specific management related information among Member States to improve traceability of all fishery products traded with the regional countries.

BENEFITS OF THE RECORD TO RECOFI MEMBERS

4. A cooperative and regional approach would enhance resource and technical capacity to address IUU fishing in a cost-effective and efficient manner. This will also establish transparency in effective decision-making regarding IUU fishing in the region and ensure sustainability of shared fisheries resources.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

5. The Working Group is invited to:

- review the proposal along with the actions stated above and provide recommendations to the Commission for appropriate actions, measures and procedures to combat IUU fishing in the region; and
- provide guidance for the effective implementation of decisions and measures regarding IUU fishing.

Review of the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI and FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification for the Region

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) concerning two important meeting relevant to the Group's work that were held in 2010. The meetings were the:

- Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 13 May 2010), and
- FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implications of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region (Agadir, Morocco, 22–24 June 2010).

Short summaries of the meetings and their outcomes are provided below.

TRIPARTITE MEETING ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF RECOFI (ROME, ITALY, 13 MAY 2010)

Background

2. At the third meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management (Doha, Qatar 20–22 October 2009), the RECOFI Secretariat convened a second meeting to advance the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI (henceforth “the initiative”). The initiative is supported by a temporary Secretariat.¹ The FAO/RECOFI Secretariat assists in coordination and provides backstopping as necessary and feasible.

3. At the Doha meeting the status of the implementation of a survey questionnaire that had been agreed previously was deemed satisfactory and it was decided that the completed questionnaires should be returned to Mr Haider Murad. He had designed the questionnaire and had offered to carry out the data analysis and reporting.

4. The survey questionnaire was agreed to support certain issues central to the initiative with quantitative information. It was recognized that this information would create a solid base for discussion and analysis. The completed questionnaires were shared among the parties concerned with a copy forwarded to the FAO Senior Fishery Officer at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. These developments represented a positive step forward and, as a consequence, the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat convened a third meeting in Rome to take the initiative further.

¹ Members of the Secretariat include Messrs Ali Asghar Mojahedi Director General, Fishing and Fisher Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization (Iran, I.R.); Mr Ali Musaddak, Director General, General Board for Fish Resources Development (Iraq); Mr Haider Murad, Under Secretary, Deputy Director General, Fisheries Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (Kuwait).

Activities and results

5. The third meeting of the initiative was convened at the time of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010). The countries participating in the initiative met on 13 May 2010 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.²

6. It was unfortunate that some of the members of the Secretariat supporting the initiative could not attend the meeting and no properly informed and technically knowledgeable replacements were available. In the absence of the members of the Secretariat and technical representatives from Iraq and Kuwait, the proposed Agenda (Appendix 1) could not be adopted, nor could Agenda items 2 and 3 be discussed. As a result, a modified agenda was adopted based on past accomplishments (e.g. data sharing and completion of questionnaire), the good will shown so far on everybody's part, the positive and factual implementation of the initial phase, and on the need to define the way forward on how to proceed with the initiative.

7. The Secretariat informed participants at the meeting that the survey questionnaire had been completed and that as previously pointed out, Mr Haider Murad had carried out a thorough analysis of the survey data. He had prepared also a PowerPoint presentation to display and discuss the survey findings. The meeting participants reiterated their respective countries commitments to foster and implement Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI.

8. Despite of the aforementioned setback, the meeting participants:

- confirmed their respective countries' commitment and availability to support the Initiative and agreed on the convenience to progress toward an higher-level meeting³ to have this initiative formalized and substantiated;
- agreed that the higher-level meeting would be preceded by, and prepared for, through a technical meeting where the current Agenda (Appendix 1) will be resumed and the following items will be dealt with:
 - presentation and discussion of the findings from the survey questionnaire;
 - definition of the area concerned by the Initiative;
 - individual country review and presentation on Agenda Item 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d;
 - consolidating the countries' views into elements for a coherent project proposal that would represent a synthesis of the three countries' needs and priorities from an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture perspective;

² The meeting was attended by Mr Hassan Al Janabi, Permanent Representative of Iraq to FAO, Rome, Italy; Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi, Director General, Fishing and Fisher Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization, Iran I.R.; Mr Mehdi Shirazi, Deputy Director General, Public and International Relations, Iran Fisheries Organization, Iran I.R.; Mr Marzooq Alazemi, Fish Resources Manager, Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish, Kuwait; Mr Faisal Al-Hassawi, Alternate Permanent Representative of Kuwait to FAO, Rome, Italy; Mr Elie Moussalli, FAO Consultant, FAO/SNO, Cairo, Egypt. The Secretariat was represented by staff from the FAO Rome and Cairo offices.

³ At Deputy Minister level.

- identification and elaboration of key-topics to be presented for consideration at the higher-level meeting including the necessary financial means and *modus operandi* to implement the Initiative.
- The Kuwait delegation offered to host the technical meeting preparatory to the higher-level meeting tentatively in late July or early August 2010, or in October 2010. The final date will be fixed in consultation with the FAO Secretariat.
- The Iranian delegation confirmed the offer to host the higher-level meeting in due course.

Follow-up

9. The meeting agreed on the necessity, practicality and convenience that the three countries request unambiguously FAO to endeavour to technically support this initiative including the establishment of a cooperative framework and sub-regional dialogue for fisheries and aquaculture management and development in the area concerned. It was further agreed that such a request for technical support will be addressed to FAO by each of the countries concerned as the immediate follow-up to the present meeting.

FAO/INFOSAMAK SEMINAR ON FISH TRADE AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS OF CERTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY SCHEMES FOR THE REGION (AGADIR, MOROCCO, 22–24 JUNE 2010)

10. The Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa entered into an agreement with the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region (INFOSAMAK) to implement a regional seminar entitled Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region. It was held from 22 to 24 June 2010 in Agadir, Morocco.

Background

11. The initiative of holding a regional seminar on the topic for the Near East and North Africa was in line with the concerns expressed at the FAO Committee on Fisheries in March 2009. The Committee reaffirmed that IUU fishing remained one a principal threat to sustainable fisheries and emphasized the value of cooperative efforts in addressing such fishing.

12. In addition, the seminar sought to address the concerns expressed by the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) at its third meeting (Doha, 20–22 October 2009). The WGFM recognized that IUU fishing was a concern for RECOFI Members and that the problem should be kept under active consideration. RECOFI Members recognized that there were clear linkages between IUU fishing and the need to restrict the trade of IUU-caught fish, and that to reduce flows of such fish into international trade, certification requirements and catch documentation schemes were required. These requirements had implications for RECOFI Members and the Near East and North Africa region as a whole. There was a general consensus in the WGFM

that there would be merit in investigating the implications of certification and related schemes, and the relationship between IUU fishing and trade for the region.

13. In addition, the European Community (EC) Council Regulation No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 established an EC-wide system to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. The Regulation's aim was to halt the import of IUU fishery products into the EC. Some RNE Members have expressed concern about the introduction of this EC Regulation, noting that exports of fish from their countries could be interrupted.

Activities and results

14. Seventy-five participants from 22 countries, various international organizations including the EC, RFMOs and INGOs, and private sector representatives attended the Seminar. The Secretariat presented one of the three key-note papers entitled Brief overview of capture fisheries in the Near East and North Africa region: trends and emerging issues.⁴ Two other key-note papers were presented by the Secretariat on an Overview on IUU fishing activities worldwide and the Importance of IUU fishing in international fish trade.

15. Selected national reviews were presented encompassing the main fisheries systems of the Near East and North Africa region: i.e., Eastern Central Atlantic (Northern Coastal sub-area), south-eastern Mediterranean Sea, and Western Indian Ocean (Red Sea, Gulf, and Western Arabian Sea sub-areas). The private sector and other participants including NGOs took an active part in the Seminar and contributed significantly.

16. The Seminar was instrumental in providing FAO Members with:

- practical information on catch documentation schemes in fisheries
- an introduction to the use of traceability schemes;
- an understanding of the implications of certification and related schemes;
- knowledge about the relationship between IUU fishing and trade for the region; and
- information about the role and function of fishery products certification and related schemes as means to combat and deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU fishing.

The Seminar proceedings will be considered for publication.

17. The Seminar proved that the national responses and abilities to deal with IUU fishing and related activities in the region were very diverse. Some Members have been able to implement targeted approaches to traceability and reduce trade in illegal fisheries products (e.g., Morocco) but others were having difficulty with weak enforcement and low capacity (e.g., Yemen). In particular, the Seminar debate focused, among the others, on the priority needs for Members to:

- harmonize fisheries laws to combat IUU fishing;
- to ratify and implement international instruments, and
- enforce MCS including establishing VMS.

⁴ The paper was prepared jointly with Elie Moussalli (FAO/SNO Consultant), Monica Barone (Centro Inter-universitario di Biologia Marina, Livorno, Italy) and Cherif Touleib (SNE).

Furthermore, the Seminar that the organization of fishers' cooperatives and associations, which were not represented at the Seminar, could contribute significantly to combating IUU fishing if cooperation was improved with national management authorities.

18. The role of RFMOs was acknowledged and the establishment of a RFMO/A in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden was considered an important initiative that should be undertaken without delay.

19. Compliance with EC Regulation 1005/2008 (in force since 1st January 2010) will require additional human resources, new technical regulations and capacity development in catch certification procedures. Some Near east and North Africa Members already have the capacity and means to implement fully catch certification schemes that are compliant with the EC Regulation. However, other Members lack such capacity and need technical assistance to enhance their capacities. Among the main challenges identified in the Seminar were:

- a lack of capacity in fisheries management institutions;
- how to address catch certification from small scale fisheries;
- control of origin for imported fishery products;
- in some instances, decentralised and fragmented fisheries jurisdiction, and
- corruption.

20. The Seminar was informed that following the first six months of enforcement of EC Regulation 1005/2008, the Commission had started analysing trade data to assess impacts on imports/exports and possible trade diversions. Moreover it was anticipated that the additional costs met by non-EU countries related to compliance with the Regulation could lead to price increase for fishery products in EU markets and that EC consumers would be required to bear the increase in price because the catch documentation scheme's implementation should contribute significantly to enhancing the sustainability of fisheries.

21. The Seminar approved, by consensus, a final statement summarising the basic considerations and priority issues for the region including key-activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities. The statement and the identified priority issues for the region are in Attachment 2.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

22. The Working Group is invited to consider the outcomes of the two meetings reviewed in this paper and to comment on them, as appropriate. In particular, the Working Group may wish to consider issues arising from:

- the possibility of supporting technically the establishment of a cooperative framework and sub-regional dialogue for fisheries and aquaculture management and development as proposed at the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI, and
- the final statement summarising the basic considerations and priority issues for the region including key-activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities.

**Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation
in the Northern Area of the RECOFI**

(henceforth “the Initiative”)

Rome, 13 May 2010

Agenda

Thursday, 13 May 2010

Morning: 9:00 hours

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Presentation and discussion of the survey questionnaire results
- 3) Definition of the area concerned by the Initiative
- 4) Review and discussion of the focus topics identified as central elements of the Initiative:
 - a) fisheries management in the northern area of RECOFI including the review of effectiveness of current conservation and management measures to preserve the resources and aquaculture;
 - b) sub regional trade (dynamics, constraints, opportunities);
 - c) promotion of sustainable inland, brackish and marine waters aquaculture, including stock enhancement; and
 - d) establishment of scientific cooperation and implementation of joint activities

Afternoon: 14:30 hours

- 5) Identification of financial means and *modus operandi* to implement the Initiative
- 6) Any other matters

Appendix 2

**Statement by the participants in the FAO/INFOSAMAK regional seminar
“Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and
North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”
22–24 June 2010, Agadir, Morocco**

The Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing presents significant economic, biological and social threats to this region and across the world. While the primary responsibility for addressing many for the IUU problems rests at the national level with the country, there is recognition of the need to increase regional efforts to fight IUU fishing including supporting IPOA-IUU and the NPOA-IUU. Regional cooperation among the countries, through exchange of information, sharing experiences, and working together on many aspects of fighting IUU activities, has been acknowledged as a priority for the region as this cooperation will assist the countries in advancing their shared goal of preventing illegal fishing activities.

To this end, the following items have been identified as priority for the Near east and North Africa fisheries by the participants in the seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implications of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”:

- Capacity development;
- Further awareness and sensitization of stakeholders or resources users also through the dissemination of relevant information in the Arabic language;
- Involvement of RACs and social component of the fishery systems in the region;
- Develop capacity to establish/improve catch documentation and traceability schemes
- Harmonization and integration of national efforts to fight IUU at sub-regional level;
- Continued exchange of information;
- Support and empowerment of regional commissions and organizations and relevant organizations and institutions in the region;
- Development and establishment of a regional capacity to monitor and appraise IUU in the region.

This document contains the report of the fourth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM), which was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. The Working Group considered and made decisions on matters concerning the Programme of Work and Budget for the 2011–12 biennium for the WGFM including a review of the regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management, the outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that took place at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, in May 2010, and stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management in the RECOFI region. Significantly, the WGFM adopted a Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area. This is the first Recommendation adopted by the WGFM. If accepted by RECOFI, it will become binding on Members of the Commission. The WGFM also considered a proposal by the Sultanate of Oman in relation to a proposal for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database on violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by RECOFI Members and promote the establishment of a regional fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance information exchange scheme. Finally, the WGFM reviewed the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI that was held at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, in May 2010, and the FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa that took place in Agadir, Morocco, in June 2010. Other important decisions made by the WGFM included the election of a new Chairperson, the agreement to propose to the Commission that the WGFM meet annually rather than on a biennial basis and that a special meeting of the Working Group be convened immediately prior to the May 2011 session of the Commission.

ISBN 978-92-5-106714-7 ISSN 2070-6987



11916E/1/01.11