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منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
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Food
and
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des
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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, 4 - 8 December 2010

**Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions in the Near
East**

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1. This document provides a brief summary of the main outcomes and recommendations made by the Regional Commissions in the Near East and North Africa during 2008 –2009. The commission meetings included are: the Nineteenth Session of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC); Fifth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI); the Thirty Third and Thirty Fourth Sessions of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Commission for Controlling Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC); and the Sixth Session of the Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC).

I. NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION (NEFC)

2. The Nineteenth Session of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) was held in Hammamat, Tunisia, from 5 to 9 April 2010. The Session was attended by 33 representatives from 18 member countries and one observer country. Twelve representatives of seven observer organizations also attended. The Session was held under the theme: “Forests and Range: *Adapting to Global Changes for Sustainable Development*”.

3. The Commission reviewed and discussed: Policy, institutions and sustainable development; Forest and range resources: biodiversity and genetic resources, wildlife and protected areas, information and knowledge; Climate change; Resources management: forest protection (health and fires), bio-energy, good forestry and range practices in arid and semi-arid zones; Field programme; and International issues. The Commission endorsed the proposed amendment of the name and mandate of the Near East Forestry Commission to the Near East Forestry and Range Commission. The Article I of its Statute will be amended accordingly. The Commission made the following recommendations:

Recommendations to FAO

- The Commission noted with concern the decrease in the number of field projects in the Region and requested FAO, in partnership with national, international and regional funding institutions, to allocate adequate financial resources for the development of the forestry and rangelands sectors;
- FAO give strong emphasis to supporting national initiatives and regional collaboration, taking into account the national needs of capacity building on issues related to climate change, forest and rangeland policy, institution, wildlife and protected areas, forest fires, forest protection, afforestation and rangelands rehabilitation;
- FAO to facilitate the preparation of meetings for international conventions and congresses and link forests and forestry with other international years such as for the current International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and develop synergies between the International Year of Forests and the International Decade of Desertification 2010-2020. It furthermore recommended that greater cooperation between countries of the north and south Mediterranean Region be encouraged.

Recommendations to Member Countries

- The Commission noted with concern the scarcity of information about forest and rangelands resources and recommended that countries take into consideration rangelands in national studies to produce more integrated assessments, including environmental and social services. It also encouraged countries to prioritize information generation and to allocate resources accordingly;

- The Commission noted with concern that local knowledge was not sufficiently recognized in national policies and programmes and been lost and , therefore, recommended that countries work to preserve the social, economic and environmental values of traditional local knowledge in the advancement of forest and rangelands sectors in the Region and to strengthen partnership among stakeholders;
- The Commission noted with concern the high vulnerability of the Near East Region to climate change and urged its members to raise awareness among decision-makers of the pivotal role of forests and rangelands in climate change adaptation and to take into account climate change dimensions in national strategies, plans and programmes for the forestry and rangelands sectors.

II. FIFTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES (RECOFI)

4. The Fifth Session of RECOFI, held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009, reviewed the work of the Commission since the last session in 2007 including the Commission's administrative and financial reports; considered selected issues of particular relevance for the Region, such as status and trends of fisheries, aquaculture development prospective; reviewed the functioning of the Commission and adopted the Work Programme for 2009 and 2010.

Main outcome and decisions made:

- The Commission noted that by 31 December 2008; all Members ought to deposit their *Instrument of Acceptance*;
- Among the emerging issues identified, several Members recognized that the phenomenon of harmful algal blooms was an urgent issue to be addressed, been seriously affecting both the capture fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the Region. Consequently, the Commission agreed that the two RECOFI Working Groups (the Working Group on Aquaculture and that on Fisheries Management) should tackle this matter jointly and in close cooperation with other regional organizations;
- The Commission commended the work of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) noting its support to development of aquaculture in the Region, by providing an effective forum for discussing and tackling major aquaculture issues of regional concern;
- The Commission endorsed the proposal "*Regional Programme for Improving Aquatic Animal Health in the RECOFI Member Countries*" along with its components, elements and activities;
- The Commission commended the Secretariat for the timely response to the request at the last RECOFI session (May 2007) for the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) to be established, and its scope, role and functions amended to revitalize it and make it more efficient;
- The Commission adopted the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Fisheries Management including the Terms of Reference for the National Focal Points on Fisheries Management;
- The Commission endorsed the *RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management*, including a workplan;
- The Commission noted with satisfaction the Secretariat for organizing "*Review of National Fisheries Legislation in the Region*";
- The Commission agreed that: a pragmatic approach to stock assessment be adopted focusing on standardized reporting of priority species identified by the WGFM; a regional workshop on

stock indicators and stock status reporting be held; an ecosystem system approach to fisheries and adaptive management procedures be adopted for the RECOFI region; and cooperation among the RECOFI Members be improved for the appraisal of the state of fishery resources and the formulation of scientific advice for management;

- The Commission agreed that a systematic evaluation of all national statistical programmes be undertaken to provide national authorities with realistic recommendations for improving the performance of their fishery statistical programmes and facilitating data harmonization at the regional level. In addition, the Commission agreed that an expanded regional database be developed;
- The Commission re-stated its concern about the presence and impact of *Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Region* and congratulated the Secretariat on the success of the Workshop on IUU Fishing in the RECOFI Region;
- The Commission agreed that the Secretariat should support, on an ad hoc basis, an initiative to promote enhanced cooperation for fishery management and development among Iran, Iraq and Kuwait;
- The Commission decided to hold a special inter-sessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role and to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth;
- The Commission approved a workplan for the next inter-sessional period and agreed to support activities focusing on: stock status reporting; integration of catch and effort data; risk analysis in aquaculture; environmental monitoring in aquaculture; red tide impact on capture fisheries and aquaculture and counter measures; geographical information system and spatial tools applications for capture fishery and aquaculture; regional aquaculture information system (RAIS).

III. THIRTY THIRD and THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (GFCM)

5. The Thirty Third and Thirty Fourth Session of GFCM were held in Tunis, 23-27 March 2009 and in Athens, 14-17 April 2010 respectively. The Sessions reviewed through its Committee of Compliance the action taken by members to implement the binding recommendations recently adopted by the Commission, and assessed the inter-sessional activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee and of the Committee on Aquaculture and Committee of Compliance, and reviewed and adopted proposed recommendations on fisheries management, data reporting and monitoring and control.

6. At its Thirty Third Session the Commission agreed on the following:

- Modalities to launch the performance review of the GFCM in 2009, to be continued in 2010. The outcome of this review will be submitted to the Thirty-fifth Session (2011);
- To established a new Committee on Administration and Finance;
- A new approach to the functioning of its SAC-Working groups on demersal and small pelagic resources;
- To have a 10 % reduction of fishing effort for demersal trawl fisheries in the GFCM area;
- To established a new *Fisheries Restricted Area* in the Gulf of Lions as bounded by lines joining the following geographic coordinates: 42°40'N, 4°20' E; 42°40'N, 5°00' E; 43°00'N, 4°20' E; 43°00'N, 5°00' E;
- To established a minimum 40 mm mesh size in the codend of demersal trawl nets;
- To create a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area;

- To have *Minimum Standards for the Establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)* in the GFCM Area;
- To keep a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM Area, amending Recommendation GFCM/2006/4.
- To establish Geographical Sub-Areas in the GFCM Area;
- Implementation of the *GFCM Task 1 Statistical Matrix*;
- Reporting of *Aquaculture Data and Information*;
- To establish the *GFCM Regional Fleet Register*;
- *Endorsing the Recommendation [08-03]* of the International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on Mediterranean Swordfish;
- *Endorsing ICCAT Recommendation [08-05]* by ICCAT amending the Recommendation by ICCAT to establish a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean;
- *Endorsing the ICCAT Recommendation [08-12]* amending Recommendation [07-10] on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna catch documentation programme.

7. The Commission at the Thirty Fourth Session adopted three binding recommendations and endorsed three recommendations of ICCAT of relevance for the Mediterranean on:

- Establishment of the GFCM logbook in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea for vessel longer than 15 meters;
- The management on fishing capacity in the GFCM area;
- The identification of non-compliance;
- ICCAT recommendation [09-04] for a management framework for the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean swordfish and replacing ICCAT recommendation [08-03];
- ICCAT recommendation [09-06] amending recommendation [08-05] to establish a multi-annual recovery plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean;
- ICCAT Recommendation [09-07] on the conservation of Thresher Sharks caught in association with fisheries in the ICCAT convention area.

IV. TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR CONTROLLING THE DESERT LOCUST IN THE CENTRAL REGION (CRC)

8. The Twenty-Sixth Session of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) was held in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman, in July 2008. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Ethiopia and Somalia accommodate an important Desert Locust habitat, in addition to performing as a corridor or a transit for locust invading other neighbouring countries. Since the resources available in both countries to intervene against Desert Locust during outbreak or invasion are far below the requirements, it was agreed that Ethiopia, to prepare and submit a project proposal to the Commission to support Desert Locust operations in Ethiopia and northern Somalia for further submission to FAO.
- Although Somalia is not a member country of the Commission, it was found necessary to fund Desert Locust operations from the Commission's resources, after obtaining the necessary request and securing the support from FAO.
- It was made clear by FAO that it is difficult to make pesticides available to countries in a short period of time, particularly in case of emergencies. It was important that in case of emergencies in which *FAO provided pesticides to countries; that the ownership of these*

pesticides should remain with FAO in order that the remaining pesticides are re-exported to other countries in case needed. In order to avoid legal implications, countries were asked to investigate this issue and to send the results to the Commission.

- Along the same gesture and in case of emergencies where FAO provides registered pesticides to one country, other countries should not object to importing these pesticides even if not registered in their countries. In order to avoid legal implications, countries were asked to investigate this issue and should send the results to the Commission
- As obsolete and unwanted pesticides stocks is problematic, it was recommended that inventories of obsolete and unwanted pesticides should be prepared in details and sent to the Commission for further submission to the specialized unit at FAO for advice.
- In order to provide the Member Countries with recommendations on sprayers for pesticides application and to minimize FAO procurement procedures, and since recommendations are needed also for protective clothing and camping equipment, a recommendation was made to “*organize two consecutive workshops in Arbeel or Sulimania in Iraq, (alternatively in Egypt)*” to test spray equipment, protective clothing and camping equipment.
- Reference was made to the new technology, specifically regarding the use of guidance system (DINGO1) in locust aerial operations, it was agreed that a small workshop would be organized after consultation with DLIS, the representative of Saudi Arabia and Secretary of the Commission were to study the new navigation technology.
- Short training courses were much-admired by the Member Countries who stressed the importance of its continuity and requested more support to national activities for the benefit of *National Master Trainers*, who could also participate in training courses in other countries in the Central Region.
- The necessity to organize, jointly with *Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa* (DLCO-EA), regional training course on Desert Locust Aerial control operations.
- The necessity to organize annually sub-regional training course on Desert Locust Survey and Control Operations for non-front-line countries.
- An inter-regional workshop should be organized annually for Desert Locust Information Officers of the front-line-countries for updates on *RAMSES* new versions and *eLocust2*.
- A workshop should be organized on contingency planning and early preparedness for front-line-countries Desert Locust Departments Heads.
- In view of the very high cost of the post graduate Desert Locust Diploma Course organized by the University of Khartoum, it was recommended to Freeze the Desert Locust Diploma Course, but to be resumed whenever there were sufficient funds from sources other than the Commission Trust Fund.
- In case the University of Khartoum was convinced to sponsor three scholarships for this Diploma; then the *Desert Locust Diploma Course to be continued* provided that the University sponsors 50% (about US\$75,000) cost of the Diploma students.
- With regard to the announced Master Degree Programme, the Member Countries endorsed the candidates Mr. Hussein Osman Abou Bakr from Sudan and Mr. Osama Rabie Mahmoud from Egypt to benefit from the Commission’s M. Sc. Sponsorship in 2008-2009.
- As no research proposals were received by the Commission from the Member Countries, Heads of Locust Control Units should encourage research institutes in their countries to submit research proposals.

- Since the *Index Cards on Desert Locust and Grasshoppers* and the vegetation of Desert Locust breeding areas were already available in English; it was recommended to prepare an Arabic version.
- The Desert Locust Glossary should be produced electronically in English and Arabic; while the French version could be produced at a later stage.
- Maintain the website and update it regularly by the Commission.
- In order to avoid confusion regarding *Settlement of Contribution and Arrears* to the Commission Trust Fund; Member Countries were requested to provide the Commission with copies of the *Bank Transfers* regarding payments, for follow-up within FAO.
- The Commission recommended, that in case of emergency; the budget line of (US\$100,000 per year) which was ear-marked for emergency pesticides; should be reviewed and though consultations with the Commission Chairman, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Secretary of the Commission., in order to cover the costs of implementing any necessary operations when such activities were not reflected in the workplan.

V. SIXTH SESSION OF THE AGRICULTURE AND LAND AND WATER USE COMMISSION FOR THE NEAR EAST (ALAWUC/NE)

9. The Sixth Session of the Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East (ALAWUC/NE) will be held immediately before the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East. The Session recommendations will be presented to the Regional Conference for adoption and therefore will be reported on separately.