

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
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WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

FOURTEENTH SESSION

Panama City, Panama, 6-9 February 2012

Main decisions and recommendations of the twenty-ninth session of COFI and the thirteenth session of WECAFC

SUMMARY

1. This document contains highlights of the topics discussed at the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the Thirteenth Session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC). The full reports of both sessions are made available respectively as WECAFC/XIV/2012/Ref.6 and WECAFC/XIV/2012/Ref.2.
2. The Commission is invited to discuss the decisions and recommendations of the two meetings and propose actions for WECAFC and its members to follow-up on the decisions and recommendations made.

Report of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, 31 January- 4 February 2011

Opening of the Session

3. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its Twenty-ninth Session in Rome from 31 January to 4 February 2011. The Session was attended by 115 Members of the Committee, by observers from two other FAO Member Nations, one Associated Member, the Holy See, by representatives from five specialized agencies of the United Nations and by observers from 64 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations. A list of delegates and observers is attached as *Appendix B*.

4. Mr Zbigniew Karnicki, Chairperson, Twenty-eighth Session of COFI opened the Session welcoming the record number of participants to COFI. He congratulated the new Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Mr Árni M. Mathiesen upon his appointment and thanked the former Assistant Director-General, Mr Ichiro Nomura, for his good leadership of the Department during 2000–2010.

5. Ms Ann Tutwiler, Deputy Director-General (Knowledge) delivered a statement on behalf of Mr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO. The text of her statement is attached as Appendix D. Mr Mathiesen proceeded to introduce the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010 (SOFIA) and to present its main findings.

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Designation of the Drafting Committee

6. The Committee elected Mr Mohammed Pourkazemi (Iran, Islamic Republic of) as Chairperson and Mr Johán H. Williams (Norway) as First Vice-Chairperson. Canada, Chile, India, Spain and Zimbabwe were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.

7. The following Members were elected to the Drafting Committee: United States of America (Chair), Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Congo (Republic of), Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Russian Federation, Sweden and Syrian Arab Republic.

Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements for the Session

8. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session. The Agenda is given in Appendix A to this Report. The list of documents which were placed before the Committee is shown in *Appendix C*.

Progress in the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments, including International Plans of Action and Strategies, and other matters

9. The Committee recognized that progress was being made to implement the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and its associated instruments but agreed that additional efforts were required to broaden and deepen implementation. The Committee expressed disappointment that only 36 percent of FAO Members had responded to the questionnaire. The Committee strongly urged all Members to respond to the questionnaire as a means of demonstrating their commitment to the Code's implementation.

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10. In relation to the Code's implementation, the Committee:
- a) noted the importance of incorporating the Code's principles into national policy and legislation to promote a solid base for the long-term sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture;
 - b) stressed the need to involve all stakeholders;
 - c) underscored the importance of using information collected from the Code's questionnaire to identify implementation challenges, linkages to FAO's technical assistance programme, and to quantify and assess progress and results achieved;
 - d) encouraged Members to improve and extend the collection and analysis of information to support enhanced conservation and management;
 - e) urged Members to ensure that the best scientific advice available underpins the elaboration of conservation and management measures;
 - f) agreed that the use of traditional knowledge could, as appropriate, play an important role in elaborating conservation and management measures in small-scale fisheries;
 - g) encouraged Members to apply widely the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and aquaculture (EAA) and the precautionary approach;
 - h) underlined the need for FAO to continue to promote the implementation of the international plans of action (IPOAs). In particular, the Committee recognized the threats posed to sustainable fisheries by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fleet overcapacity;
 - i) underlined the need to enhance the ability of developing countries to develop their own fisheries as well as to participate in high seas fisheries including access to such fisheries;
 - j) FAO was requested to prepare a report on the extent of the implementation of the 1999 FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), and the challenges being faced by Members in implementing the instrument, for presentation to the Thirtieth Session of COFI;
 - k) recognized the importance of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), including vessel monitoring systems (VMS), to improve fisheries conservation and management; and
 - l) noted that some Members and regional fishery bodies (RFBs) were implementing marine protected areas (MPAs) as a tool to support more effective fisheries conservation and management.
11. The Committee acknowledged that not all countries had equivalent capacity to implement the Code. The Committee stressed the need for well-targeted capacity development activities to be continued and strengthened. This should include, *inter alia*, technical assistance to support the implementation of the IPOAs and the EAF and EAA. The Committee reiterated the importance of inland fisheries and the challenges facing them, and requested FAO support in capacity-building to implement the ecosystem approach to inland fisheries. The Committee also encouraged initiatives to facilitate technology transfer to developing countries and regional workshops to promote the Code's implementation. The Committee recognized the assistance provided to developing countries by FAO's FishCode Programme.
12. The Committee expressed its concern about the challenges posed by piracy to the responsible management of fisheries in the Indian Ocean. The Committee acknowledged that piracy was creating an additional burden for fishery administrations, making it more difficult to manage fisheries as human and financial resources were diverted to other uses.
13. The Committee welcomed the positive results of the 2010 pilot test of the electronic Code questionnaire and agreed that it should be implemented for the 2012 COFI Session. However, the Committee was aware that Members would continue to have the option to complete the questionnaire in paper copy if they preferred.

14. The Committee welcomed the ongoing collaboration between FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in relation to safety at sea. The Committee encouraged the continuation of such collaboration and existing activities.

Decisions and recommendations of the Twelfth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26–30 April 2010

15. The Committee agreed to:

- a) endorse the Report of the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26–30 April 2010;
- b) refer the Report of the Expert Consultation to Develop an FAO Evaluation Framework to Assess the Conformity of Public and Private Ecolabelling Schemes with the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, Rome, 24–26 November 2010, to the Thirteenth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade for further guidance and follow-up action, including consideration of the need to convene a Technical Consultation on this matter;
- c) adopt the Guidelines as contained in Appendix E of the Report of the Expert Consultation on the Development of Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, Rome, 25–27 May 2010;
- d) continue FAO collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on issues related to trade in fish and fishery products, and in particular the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies; and
- e) accept the offer made by India to host the Thirteenth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

16. The Committee expressed the view that:

- a) technical aspects related to trade and management should be considered by the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for Assessment of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing proposals for commercially-exploited aquatic species in accordance with the existing terms of reference;
- b) FAO should initiate work to develop international best practices guidelines for traceability of fish and fishery products in order to facilitate coherence of different traceability systems;
- c) FAO should continue to provide input to improve the classification of fish and fishery products in the World Customs Organization's Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System) and provide technical assistance to developing countries implementing new Harmonized System codes; and
- d) FAO should monitor and analyse the impact of international trade in fish and fishery products on food security.

17. The Committee requested FAO to study the possibility of funding under the Regular Programme the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for Assessment of CITES listing proposals for commercially-exploited aquatic species.

18. The Committee thanked the Government of Argentina for hosting the Twelfth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

Decisions and recommendations of the Fifth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Phuket, Thailand, 27 September–1 October 2010

19. The Committee recognized the growing importance of aquaculture for food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, employment creation and its overall social and economic benefits to the people worldwide. The Committee emphasized the need for better management of the sector to ensure its sustainable growth.

20. The Committee recommended that more emphasis should be given to FAO's work towards the development of aquaculture in Africa, Latin America, small island developing States (SIDS) and Central Asia and the Caucasus and Near East. The Committee recognized the importance of the regional approach to aquaculture and emphasized that it should be targeted in FAO's future activities.

21. Considering the growing demand for technical assistance by Members for sustainable development and management of aquaculture, the Committee recommended that in the future FAO Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) greater priority be given to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department for its work on aquaculture.

22. The Committee emphasized the importance of improving the Members responses to FAO reporting on progress in the implementation of the aquaculture provisions of the Code and recommended that the new reporting questionnaire on aquaculture be simplified, finalized and implemented.

23. The Committee approved the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

24. The Committee noted that the implementation of the Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification shall be gradual. The Committee recognized the existing standards and guidelines set by international organizations and instruments such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for aquatic animal health and welfare, CODEX Alimentarius Commission for Food Safety and ILO for socio-economic aspects. However, in the absence of a precise international reference framework for the implementation of some specific minimum criteria contained in the Guidelines, it will be necessary to develop, at a multilateral level and in coordination with the relevant intergovernmental organizations, appropriate standards, in order to ensure that the certification systems do not become unnecessary barriers to trade and remain consistent with the reference international standards, in particular with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the WTO. The Committee also noted the need for the provision of assistance for capacity development in developing countries.

25. The Committee recommended that FAO develop an evaluation framework to assess the conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO aquaculture certification guidelines.

26. The Committee underscored the necessity for improving biosecurity in aquaculture and strongly recommended that assistance be provided to address the two fast spreading diseases of Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) in freshwater fish in Southern Africa and Infectious Myonecrosis Virus in shrimp in Southeast Asia. The Committee also stressed the importance of understanding the interactions between wild capture fisheries and aquaculture as well as cooperation with other international organizations involved in biosecurity issues.

27. The Committee stressed the importance of promoting the use of indigenous aquatic species in aquaculture and requested FAO's assistance for this purpose.

28. The Committee appreciated the establishment of regional aquaculture networks in Latin America and Africa and recommended that assistance be provided to improve their contribution to aquaculture development in those regions.

29. The Committee thanked the Government of Thailand for hosting the Fifth Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

30. The Committee accepted the offer by South Africa to host the Sixth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, in Capetown, 2–6 April 2012.

31. The Committee adopted the report of the Fifth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

Progress made with regard to measures against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, including port State measures, flag State performance, market-related measures and development of a Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels

32. The Committee agreed that IUU fishing continued to be a major global threat to the long-term sustainable management of fisheries and the maintenance of productive and healthy ecosystems. The Committee noted that developing countries in particular were impacted by IUU fishing. The Committee also noted that many Members were taking action to combat it.

33. The Committee agreed that port State measures were a potent and cost-effective tool to combat IUU fishing. The Committee noted the adoption of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (the Agreement), noting that many Members had their domestic processes in train for the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Agreement.

34. The Committee recognized the critical role of capacity development as a means of assisting developing countries to combat IUU fishing through port State measures. The Committee welcomed FAO's capacity-development initiatives and noted that there was strong support for FAO to commence preparatory work aimed at the future implementation of Article 21 of the Agreement. The Committee requested FAO to report to the Thirtieth Session of COFI concerning progress with the implementation of its capacity-development work to support port State measures.

35. The Committee supported the statement concerning the Agreement by the Africa Group that requested the Committee to support the rapid implementation and entry into force of the Agreement. The Committee requested FAO to form an open-ended working group or similar mechanism to draft terms of reference for the ad hoc working group envisioned in Article 21 of the Agreement. This group would also assess capacity needs and explore funding mechanisms.

36. Considering that compliance by flag States with their duties under international law is an essential factor in achieving sustainable fisheries and combating IUU fishing, the Committee welcomed the arrangements made to convene the FAO Technical Consultation on Flag State Performance in May 2011.

37. With respect to market-related measures to combat IUU fishing the Committee urged Members to ensure that such measures were clear and as simple as possible, did not become

unnecessary barriers to trade and were implemented in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner with adequate prior consultation between exporting and importing States. The Committee also encouraged FAO to provide technical assistance to developing countries to support the implementation of market-related measures to combat IUU fishing.

38. The Committee noted the recommendations of the November 2010 Technical Consultation on the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record), and reiterated its support for the Global Record as one of the useful tools to combat IUU fishing. The Committee also recognized the need for further work to refine some of the terms used in the recommendations for establishing the Global Record.

39. The Committee recognized that the Global Record should be developed as a voluntary initiative under FAO's supervision with a need for flexibility and a phased approach to implementation. The Committee indicated that the development of the Global Record should be done in a cost-effective manner, taking advantage of existing systems and information technology (IT) platforms, where possible. To achieve efficiencies, the Committee proposed that FAO further consults with other organizations, particularly IMO, IHS-Fairplay and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), as appropriate. To support the Global Record as a long-term initiative, the Committee indicated its preference for the use of FAO Regular Programme funds to the extent possible, supplemented as required, by extra-budgetary funding.

40. The Committee recognized that capacity development in the management of fisheries is an essential aspect to the assistance to be provided to developing countries for their participation in the Global Record.

Fisheries and aquaculture in our changing climate: adaptation and mitigation measures in fisheries and aquaculture

41. The Committee recognized the significant activities undertaken by FAO during the intersessional period regarding climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation.

42. The Committee recommended:

- a) that Members should intensify their efforts to assess environmental and anthropogenic factors affecting aquatic ecosystems including changes in migratory patterns of fish species and other adverse impacts including ocean acidification, and should consider these in management approaches;
- b) that FAO should continue efforts to keep Members informed about the implications of climate change for fisheries and aquaculture, based on the best available scientific information and the needs of vulnerable nations and developing countries;
- c) that emphasis should be placed on the ecological and economic resilience of fisheries and aquaculture operations and the communities that depend on them;
- d) that FAO should provide Members with information on possible fishing industry contributions to climate change and on technologies and ways to reduce the sector's reliance on, and consumption of, fossil fuels, respecting the principles embodied within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

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- e) while recognizing the global nature of climate change, it is necessary to downscale the analysis of, and responses to, climate change impacts at the national and regional levels. Regional bodies and organizations should play a leading role in coordinating actions by countries in their region;
 - f) taking note of the urgent need of many Members for technical assistance, that FAO should continue and strengthen support to Members and especially developing countries, particularly in relation to adaptation, including facilitating access of these countries to UN adaptation funds for fisheries and aquaculture; and
 - g) that FAO should help to raise the profile and awareness of the role of fisheries and aquaculture regarding food security under climate change, considering that important terrestrial food sources could be seriously affected in many areas.

43. The Committee agreed that better coordination between UN organizations and agencies is required and encouraged FAO to improve interagency coordination and look for stronger synergies.

44. The Committee agreed that marginalization of fisheries and aquaculture is a major problem and requested FAO to continue efforts to raise the profile of the sector, including in the preparations for the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 17.

45. The Committee highlighted the role of large marine ecosystems as a relevant scale to address climate change and the need to implement concerted and harmonized management approaches by countries with shared ecosystems and stocks.

46. The Committee noted FAO's roadmap for fisheries, aquaculture and climate change, encouraged its further development and recommended that appropriate funding be provided. The Committee further noted that such work should be complementary to other core areas of work such as the implementation of, and compliance with, the Code as well as the implementation of EAF and EAA.

FAO's role for improved integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection

47. The Committee supported FAO's efforts to improve the integration of fisheries and aquaculture development and management with environmental protection and conservation of biological diversity.

48. The Committee reaffirmed that FAO is the primary source of scientific expertise and advice regarding global issues on fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee recognized that the mandates of several international organizations are relevant to some aspects of fisheries and aquaculture. To increase sustainable use and conservation of aquatic resources, the Committee recommended that FAO:

- a) collaborates with relevant international organizations, for example, CITES, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to build and share information, create synergies and provide coherent guidance;
- b) continues its efforts to work with and strengthen RFBs; and
- c) continues to collaborate with non-governmental organizations.

49. The Committee recognized the important role that fisheries and aquaculture play in providing food security and economic opportunities and recommended that FAO continues to

play a leading role in promoting and raising awareness about the Code and the benefits and sustainability arising from responsible fisheries and aquaculture.

50. The Committee reaffirmed the relevance of the EAF and EAA and endorsed the approach as the appropriate framework to assist with this integration. Furthermore, some specific activities relevant to biodiversity conservation were highlighted, including:

- a) establishing MPAs, including MPA networks;
- b) carrying out restocking programmes to support depleted populations of wild stocks;
- c) identification and protection of fish refugia; and
- d) carrying out impact assessments;
- e) continuing action to implement the FAO guidelines on deep sea fisheries.

51. The Committee took note of the needs of developing countries in relation to the necessity to strengthen their technical capacities in order to ensure a better implementation of the working framework deriving from the EAF and EAA

52. The Committee adopted the Report of the Technical Consultation to Develop International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards¹ and endorsed the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards contained therein. The Committee further recommended that FAO provide support in capacity building and implementation of these guidelines and ensure that the guidelines do not become barriers to international trade. The Committee thanked the Government of Norway for its leadership in this process.

53. The Committee noted that Iceland endorsed the Guidelines noting that it was a voluntary instrument, and that their understanding of the term “their objectives” in paragraph 3.1.1 related to the objectives of the competent national fisheries management authority.

54. The Committee noted that some Members reiterated that references in the Guidelines to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) did not prejudice the position of any State with respect to signature, ratification or accession to this instrument, and that some Members also reiterated that references in the Guidelines to the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement did not imply that this Agreement may apply to States that had not expressed their consent to be bound by it.

Good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries: Sharing of experiences and lessons learned in responsible fisheries for social and economic development

55. The Committee welcomed the conclusions and recommendations stemming from an extensive process of consultation, including three regional workshops, with the effective participation of stakeholders.

56. The Committee agreed on the important role played by the small-scale fisheries sector, particularly for developing countries in the context of food security and poverty alleviation. The Committee noted that often this importance was not recognized and due attention was not given to the needs of small-scale fishers and their communities. The Committee further agreed that FAO should continue to give high priority to small-scale fisheries and ensure adequate visibility for them, particularly in relevant international fora which dealt directly or indirectly with these fisheries.

57. The Committee recognized the need to take account of the heterogeneity, diversity and complexity of the small-scale fisheries sector, including its cross-sectoral and gender dimensions, when defining policies and measures. The Committee noted the concern about the need for clarification of the term “small-scale fisheries”.

58. Consistent with the conclusions and recommendations of the regional workshops, the Committee approved the development of a new international instrument on small-scale fisheries that would draw on relevant existing instruments, complementing the Code. The Committee agreed that the new instrument should be voluntary in nature, address both inland and marine fisheries and focus on the needs of developing countries. The Committee indicated some preliminary issues to be addressed in this instrument, recommending that all stakeholders should be associated, as appropriate, with its development.

59. The Committee agreed that the new instrument should take the form of international guidelines, rather than an international plan of action or a new Code article.

60. The Committee noted the proposal made by some Members to establish a COFI Sub-Committee on Small-scale Fisheries.

61. The Committee agreed on the need to strengthen the conditions of safety at sea in particular with regard to small-scale fisheries.

62. The Committee agreed to the establishment and implementation of a global assistance programme along the thematic areas proposed.

FAO’s Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture

63. The Committee expressed its support for the Organization-wide reforms, including the new Strategic Framework, and welcomed the approach taken in the preparation of document COFI/2011/9.

64. The Committee agreed with the priorities, including areas for emphasis and de-emphasis, as described in the document. In particular, the Committee agreed that activities of a continuing nature linked to FAO’s prime responsibilities and core functions should primarily be funded by the Regular Programme funds.

65. The Committee agreed to de-emphasize the convening of the Global Conference on Fleet Capacity, without prejudice to the general work on fishing capacity. The Committee did not support the proposed de-emphasis of the issues related to safety at sea for fishing vessels.

66. The Committee took note of some conflicting views that were expressed regarding the emphasis or de-emphasis given to specific areas or activities such as deep-sea fisheries.

67. The Committee also took note of the way in which extra-budgetary resources are related to the regular budget and stressed that, as a matter of principle, extra-budgetary funds should be allocated to priority areas as identified in the PWB.

68. The Committee agreed to review its practices including its rules of procedure at its Thirtieth Session in 2012.

69. The Committee agreed that FAO through its Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, and in particular the Assistant Director-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture, should play a proactive advocacy role about fisheries and aquaculture issues, within their respective mandates, through regular high-level, direct contacts with Members and stakeholders, especially with regard to promoting implementation of the Code and its related instruments, and proposing priority areas of work.

Any Other Matters

70. In a statement to the Committee, Sri Lanka advised that it recognized fisheries and aquaculture as a priority sector within the national plan of development under its Presidential Vision. Sri Lanka informed the Committee about its intention to convene an Asia Regional Ministerial Meeting entitled “Aquaculture Development for Food Security and Economic Development”, to discuss, decide and develop a mutually-beneficial regional partnership to ensure responsible, sustainable, viable and profitable development of Asian aquaculture. Sri Lanka requested FAO to be a partner in this activity, along with the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). Upon request of the Committee, Thailand clarified that there was a similar event scheduled in Thailand in June 2011, the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security Towards 2020 “Fish for the People 2020: Adaptation to a Changing Environment”. The Committee approved Sri Lanka’s proposal.

71. The Committee heard a statement of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Congo (Republic of) in his current role as Chair of the Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP). The Committee was advised that COREP’s scope of work included assessment of fish resources and knowledge of stock dynamics of commercial resources for the management of the Gulf of Guinea fisheries resources. COREP gave high priority to both fisheries and aquaculture development. The Minister’s statement encouraged Members and FAO to collaborate with, and support activities of, COREP. The Committee noted that Members were invited to participate in the forthcoming COREP Regional Scientific Conference on Fisheries and Aquaculture to be held in Central Africa in November 2011.

72. The delegate of the Kyrgyz Republic, also speaking on behalf of Azerbaijan and Turkey, informed the Committee about the importance of recreational fisheries in the Central Asian and Caucasus Region and requested that global attention be given to the collection of data and information to enable proper management of these fisheries. The delegate encouraged FAO to make more effective use of RFMOs concerning the increasing awareness and implementation of the Code and related instruments.

Date and place of the next Session

73. The Committee agreed that the Thirtieth Session of COFI should be held at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 9 to 13 July 2012.

MAIN DECISIONS OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE WECAFC

The Commission:

Intersessional Activities

Summary report of the intersessional activities and FAO projects in the WECAFC region

1. noted that, based on the information presented in document WECAFC/XIII/08/5, the FAO/WECAFC technical assistance to the region had been substantial. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the work and achievements of the WECAFC ad hoc working groups. (para. 15)

Report of the Fourth Session of the Scientific Advisory Group – Matters Requiring the Attention of the Commission

2. recognized that there is a variety of different actions that can be taken to improve fishery management. (para. 20)

3. suggested that the effectiveness of management would be greatly increased if management measures were taken in coordination by countries. The potential role for WECAFC in this field was noted. (para. 22)

Report of the National Workshop on Nassau Grouper, 20–21 October, 2008

4. accepted and endorsed the recommendations of the workshop (para. 35), which were as follows:

- The workshop recommended that WECAFC and the CFMC establish an ad hoc Nassau grouper working group (NGW). Regional fisheries organizations should be encouraged to participate in the NGW as partners.
- This group should meet in two years, prior to the fourteenth session of WECAFC. Other countries not present at the workshop should be invited to participate in the NGW.
- The main purpose of the group is to foster regional cooperation in the management and conservation and restoration of Nassau grouper stocks in the WECAFC region; and to include coordination and harmonization of efforts for the management and conservation of the Nassau grouper.

Report of the Third Meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on the Strengthening of WECAFC – Rules of Procedure

5. endorsed the recommendation that Rule IX pertaining to the Scientific Advisory Group of WECAFC) should not be modified at this time and that given the financial implications, this decision should be reviewed after the current world economic situation has improved (para. 39) and adopted the proposed Rules of procedure; Appendix E of the report. (para. 40).

Review of the State of Fisheries and of Selected Fishery Issues in the WECAFC Region

The status of fishery resources in the WECAFC region

6. suggested that WECAFC could assist in coordinating regional harmonization of (fisheries) regulations. (para. 45)

7. noted that effective management was only possible if it could be based on reliable information and statistics. (para. 48)

8. was encouraged to provide specific comments and recommendations for the guidance of the CLME project. (para. 50)

Status and trends of fisheries and aquaculture in the WECAFC region

9. supported the suggestion to organise a regional workshop to review existing fisheries policy formulation systems and processes, taking into account the challenges posed by the changing international fisheries normative environment. Small-scale fisheries policy formulation issues should receive a preferential treatment in the proposed workshop programme. (para. 55)

FAO Fishery Statistics Programme and WECAFC

10. in noting the importance of fisheries statistics for analysis and decision-making, requested the delegations to report to their national offices in charge of fishery statistics and exhort them to submit the available statistics to FAO, as soon as possible. (para. 63)

Work Programme of WECAFC

11. recognized the importance of work to confront illegal fishing and recommended that the sponsors WECAFC working group meeting on queen conch, Jamaica 2006, (CRFM, CFMC, UNEP-CEP) should be consulted on the scope of the proposed study in light of the outputs of the San Andres workshop (para. 67)

12. noted the suggestion from the US that WECAFC should take a lead role in Activity F3 – Diagnostic study to describe and quantify the problem of derelict fishing gear in the wider Caribbean. (para. 68)

13. in welcoming the support of the Regional Council of Martinique, noted that the acquisition of the scientific information of FADs was essential to provide fisheries managers with advice for the management and control of this emerging fishery. (para. 70)

14. in the light of the reported deterioration of the quality of fisheries statistics, suggested that fisheries data collection should be included in the work programme or be embedded in the projects and activities of WECAFC and also of other organizations supporting fisheries activities in the region. (para. 71)

15. approved the draft Work Programme for 2008–09. (para. 72)

Climate Change Implications for Fisheries and Aquaculture: Contributions to Global Discussion From FAO

16. agreed that there was a need for improved coordination and collaboration between countries in the region in improving disaster preparedness. In particular, there was a need to improve the collation and distribution of available information on climate change and its likely impacts. (para. 74)

17. recommended that fisheries administrators should ensure that climate change issues related to fisheries and aquaculture are adequately addressed at the national and regional levels. (para. 76)

CITES Issues with Respect to Fish Trade and CITESs/FAO Memorandum of Understanding

18. was supportive of the MOU between FAO and CITES and of the role of the FAO ad hoc Advisory Panel in advising CITES on listing proposals. (para. 78)

19. was in general agreement that the role of CITES had been beneficial in this case, assisting them in achieving effective management and control of fisheries and trade. (para. 80)

20. noted that there was frequently poor or no communication between national fisheries agencies and the CITES authorities in the same country. The need for fishery authorities of the region to work closely with their national CITES counterparts on any relevant matters that would be discussed at the fifteenth CoP, was emphasised. (para. 81)

Any Other Matters

UNDP/UNESCO/IOCARIBE/GEF – Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CLME)

21. urged member countries to contribute to and cooperate very closely with the CLME to ensure that high priority issues related to fisheries in the region were adequately addressed, especially at the ecosystem level. (para. 82)

Lionfish in the Bahamas

22. noted that the invasive lionfish, *Pterois volitans*, found in the Bahamian archipelago is a cause for great concern. Besides the problems this invasion may cause to the environment and fishery activities, the lionfish is a venomous species and may also be of public health concern. (para. 83)

Election of Officers

23. Elected Panama as Chairperson and Belize as Vice-Chairperson respectively. (para. 85)

Date and Place of Fourteenth Session

24. Noted the offer made by Panama to host the fourteenth session of WECAFC in October 2010.(para. 86)