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Продовольственная и
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Объединенных
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Organización
de las
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y la
Alimentación

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

FOURTEENTH SESSION

Panama City, Panama, 6-9 February 2012

Draft resolution of the members of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments

The Members of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission:

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Statute of the Commission,

Mindful that the international community deplores the fact that fish stocks, including straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, in many parts of the world are overfished or subject to sparsely regulated and heavy fishing efforts, as highlighted in recent United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Sustainable Fisheries including Resolution A/Res/64/72 of 4 December 2009 and A/Res/65/38 of 7 December 2010,

Noting with deep concern the declining global catch of fisheries, the increased percentage of overexploited, depleted or recovering stocks, the fact that the situation seems more critical for some highly migratory, straddling and other fishery resources that are exploited solely or partially in the high seas, and the overall reduction of 30 percent during the past decade in capture fisheries in Western Central Atlantic as reported in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2010,

Recognizing the concerted and ongoing efforts of the international community to build a foundation for actions to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems, including through the development of both legally binding and voluntary international fisheries instruments and their effective implementation,

Mindful that the international fisheries instruments are based upon and applied consistently with the legally binding 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the voluntary 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which itself serves as a basis for the development of relevant instruments,

Noting the progress made towards implementing relevant international fisheries instruments by some Members of the Commission as well as the need for assistance by many developing country Members,

Recognizing the initiatives to support improved fisheries governance within the Commission's Area of Competence by relevant organizations and projects that base their work on relevant international fisheries instruments, including the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project,

Further recognizing the importance attached to implementing international fisheries instruments in the 2010 Castries (St. Lucia) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism,

Deeply conscious of the need to preserve biodiversity, minimize the risks of long-term or irreversible effects of fishing operations, avoid adverse impacts on the marine environment, maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems including deep-sea vulnerable marine ecosystems and effectively apply the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management,

Convinced of the urgent need to strengthen effective implementation of international fisheries instruments, including legally binding and voluntary instruments, in order to ensure the long-term benefits of sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems,

Committed to individually and collectively taking measures and actions to strengthen implementation of relevant international fisheries instruments at national, subregional, regional and international levels as appropriate, including through the adoption of policies, plans, priorities, strategies, laws and regulations,

1. AGREE TO MAKE ALL EFFORTS to become party to a legally binding international fisheries instrument where this has not yet been done.

2. AGREE TO TAKE ACTIONS AND MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION of existing international fisheries instruments and those that may be developed in the future, including the following:

- a. 1993 FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (FAO Compliance Agreement);
- b. 1995 United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UN Fish Stocks Agreement);
- c. 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Port State Measures Agreement);
- d. 2003 FAO Technical Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries;
- e. 2008 FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas; and
- f. 2010 FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards.

3. RECOGNIZE THAT, to the extent possible, the following actions and measures should be taken in reviewing and strengthening implementation of international fisheries instruments:

- a. an analysis of the instruments to identify gaps in implementation and areas to be strengthened;
- b. consultations with relevant stakeholders;
- c. identification of the commonalities among the instruments to facilitate an integrated approach towards implementation;
- d. development of national policies, plans, priorities, strategies, laws and regulations as appropriate;

- e. cooperation and collaboration through sub-regional, regional and/or international mechanisms to identify priorities, harmonize actions and measures and ensure compatibility of fisheries management measures;
- f. identification of assistance to developing countries as may be relevant and required; and
- g. identification of a mechanism/s to monitor progress.

4. AGREE TO ESTABLISH a WECAFC subsidiary body on the management of deep sea fisheries [in the high seas], to guide the management of such fisheries by WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities while ensuring the conservation of marine living resources and the protection of marine biodiversity and to facilitate the implementation of the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

5. AGREE TO COOPERATE THROUGH, SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN existing subregional, regional and international organizations and initiatives in efforts to implement international fisheries instruments and, as appropriate, establish new mechanisms and initiatives.