

	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

Proposal for abolishment of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles

Proposal for abolishment of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles.

1. The Committee, which held its First Session in 1983, was established by the Third Session of WECAFC1 as a subsidiary body under paragraph 5 of its Statutes and remains its only subsidiary body. The Commission agreed that its functions:

“would be to exercise the functions of the present Commission assigned to it under paragraph 2 of its Statutes with respect to fisheries development and management within the area of the Lesser Antilles. The Committee would carry out these functions on behalf of the Commission and report to it. The Committee would also act as a steering committee for a technical assistance project to be established and attached to it as a technical support unit.”

2. The immediate underlying impetus of establishing the Committee was that it was “basic to the FAO/EEZ programme”. On a broader basis, the Committee was established in a period of great transition in two contexts: countries in the region were gaining independence from colonial rule and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea was recently adopted and gaining momentum.²

3. The Director-General of FAO had determined that necessary funds were available in the relevant chapter of the approved budget of the Organization. However, the cost of

¹ FAO Fisheries Report R246.

² Events are described more fully: “The decade of the 1980s was particularly important in the eastern Caribbean, as most of the former British colonies of the subregion were achieving political independence. This created a specific demand for the kind of policy support that FAO and WECAFC were in a position to provide, as these newly independent States began to assume their new responsibilities and were anxious to establish and safeguard their sovereignty. In response to specific demands from the subregion and in recognition of the specific conditions of the small island states of the eastern Caribbean, WECAFC established its Committee, which held its first meeting in Saint Lucia in May 1983.” Renard, Y., Chakalall, B. Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission. Historical overview, impacts and main lessons learned. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular* No. 1050. Rome, FAO. 2010. 172p.

servicing the Committee was an issue, and it was agreed that in order to partly offset the additional cost, two Working Parties would be merged.

4. Full reports of each Session were published from the First Session in 1983 through the Fifth Session in 1995.³ After that, the title of the report of each WECAFC Session also indicated the report of the Committee Session.⁴ However this was by title only - the reports themselves do not contain a separate report of a session of the Commission and the Committee, only a report of the Commission which includes recommendations made by the Committee. During the past ten years, the only recommendations involved two projects: one on moored fish aggregating devices and another on ecosystem-based management (completed in 2007).

5. The administrative and financial implications for WECAFC of supporting the Committee and its session were large and added up to an estimated USD 50 000 per session (at current prices).

6. Moreover, circumstances have changed significantly since the establishment of the Committee in the following ways:

- the broad geopolitical reasons for establishment are no longer priorities, and other priorities have superseded them;
- the Committee does not carry out the functions originally agreed, including as a steering committee and technical support unit;
- the FAO/EEZ programme no longer exists and there are no other such programmes in existence or likely to materialize;
- most members of the Committee are also members of regional or sub-regional mechanisms, including CRFM and OECS, that have been established or strengthened over the past two decades and largely replace the functions of the Committee;
- some other functions (e.g. in terms of recommendation sfor management of shared flying fish stocks, queen conch and other shared resources, as well as the work on FADs) have been absorbed by the joint working groups of WECAFC with other regional partners, such as CRFM, CFMC, OSPESCA, IFREMER;
- the decreasing administrative and financial resources available to FAO and for the WECAFC in particular, cause that maintaining the Committee would have negative implications for other work to be carried out by the Commission.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

7. The Commission is invited to recognize the significant role played by the Committee in the 1980s and early 1990s and to recommend that the Committee be abolished as a subsidiary body of WECAFC.

³ FAO Fisheries Report R539.

⁴ e.g., Report of the thirteenth session of the Commission and of the tenth session of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles