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FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

Thirty-third Session

Santiago, Chile, 6-9 May 2014

Summary of the Recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions

LACFC Report

A. General Information

Establishment, functions and members

1. The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) was established at the Fourth Session of the FAO Conference (1948). Its primary function is to serve as a neutral forum for the Member Nations of the Region to discuss forestry issues. The Commission has 33 Member Nations working in sub-regional groups (Caribbean, Mesoamerica, Amazon and Southern Cone) to prepare their work programmes within the LACFC framework.

Date, Place and Number of Participants at the Last Session

2. LACFC held its 28th Session in Georgetown from 9 - 13 September 2013 at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Guyana. Delegates from 21 Member Nations and representatives of seven organizations, including observers, United Nations System Agencies and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended.

B. Introduction and Sectoral Context

3. Nearly half the surface area of the Latin American and Caribbean Region is covered by forests (an estimated 49 percent in 2010), and the Region is home to more than half the world's primary forests (57 percent). The forest area has decreased in Central and South America in recent decades due to conversion of forest to agricultural land, making it the Region with the world's highest rate of forest loss. Forest area has increased in the Caribbean, however, due to new forest plantations and natural recovery of abandoned forest areas. The annual rate of forest loss in the Region is estimated at 3.95 million hectares (0.40 percent), including three million hectares of native forest.

4. The Secretariat reported that increasing numbers of Member Nations in the Region were implementing emission reduction from deforestation and forest degradation" (REDD+) programmes. Approximately USD 22 million had been allocated to five recipient Member Nations under the United

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Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), with nine additional Member Nations joining this initiative.

5. Important prospects involving forest development in the Region included according value to forest eco-system services by remunerating local communities for them; according enhanced forest activities a greater role in national economic programmes to generate income for household economies; and increasing recognition of the importance of forests in climate change mitigation and national social and economic development endeavours.

C. Relevant Activities During the Period

6. The LACFC Secretariat reported on the activities carried out as follow-up to the recommendations made at the previous LACFC Session and, in particular, on the support provided to Member Nations in preparing for the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA); efforts in monitoring forest genetic resources; preparation for forest fire management initiatives; follow-up to the international dialogue on forests and climate change; promotion of sustainable forest management programmes; and launch of forest and farm initiatives.

7. The Vice-Chairs of the Commission's Mesoamerica, Southern Cone, Caribbean and Amazon Sub-regional Groups briefly summarized the activities carried out during the 2012-2013 period and reported that the Member Nations of the Region were focusing primarily on matters relating to community forestry, forest monitoring, development of national forest policies and plans, climate change, invasive species, information systems and forest governance.

8. The participants confirmed the importance of the role of forests in food and nutrition security, poverty eradication and sustainable natural resource management.

D. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

For the Attention of the FAO Regional Conference

- Increase Member Nations' awareness of the role of forests in reducing poverty and food insecurity, in improving and safeguarding livelihoods, and in ensuring productive, sustainable forest and farming systems. In this connection, reiterate the importance of environmental services in the development of farming and livestock activities.
- Understand that food security requires an enhanced forest sector, and that forests, trees and forest genetic resources are important in ensuring strong, resilient agriculture and livestock practices. In this connection, also understand that forest resource losses resulting from expansion of agricultural terrain and development of improper farming practices makes it difficult for Member Nations to achieve food security.
- Promote inter-agency efforts at the national level to develop holistic inter-sectoral policies couple forest, environment and farming issues with land management practices conducive to enhanced food security and economic development, as well as decreased rural poverty.
- At the international level, strengthen intergovernmental organizations dealing with technical cooperation on forest matters to better promote sustainable forest management initiatives, increased food security and combat poverty. Specifically, it is requested that FAO enhance its ability to cooperate with Member Nations of the Region on forest matters as part of its new Strategic Objectives..

For the Attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO)

- Promote review and enhancement of public forest policies to better integrate forest management and national development processes in achieving food security and attaining social welfare. It is important to promote integration of native and cultivated forest management practices into agriculture, livestock, aquaculture and other and fisheries production systems at the local level. It is also recommended, in this connection, that applied research take place in cooperation with Specialized Agencies.

- Promote effective forest resource governance, to include land and forest tenure systems, and develop assessment mechanisms to evaluate environmental services of benefit to forest-holders. In this connection, and in addition to promoting the development of carbon payment systems, it is recommended that the aforementioned environmental services be widely recognized and publicized, that the appropriate incorporation of forest resources into national budgets be encouraged and that natural and cultivated forests be afforded social and environmental recognition.

For the Attention of the FAO Programme of Work

- Promote review, enhancement and modernization of legal and institutional frameworks, the development of information systems, the decentralization of functions and application of community-based approaches.
- Promote South-South Cooperation in strengthening inter-State monitoring and mutual support activities designed to prevent and contain forest fires.
- Support Member Nations in building national, technical and institutional capacities on forest inventory and assessment.
- Develop guidelines in preparing national development policies encompassing forest matters, agro-forestry and community forestry.
- Support development incentives for agro-forestry and forestry systems (e.g., non-timber forest products (NTFPs)), and for restoration of damaged land (forests) through community-based rural development approaches.
- Promote diversification and marketing of forest products, to include timber and non-timber products and forest environmental services, thereby contributing to overall food and nutrition security initiatives.. Undertake studies assessing the role of forestry goods and services in national budgets..

CLDLAC Report

A. General Information

Establishment, Functions and Members

9. The Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLDLAC) was established by FAO at the request of Member Nations, by Council Resolution 1/92 of 1987. Beginning in 1998, the Member Nations agreed to convene biannual meetings of sub-regional chapters in response to differences in agro-ecological, production, trade and socio-economic contexts, in line with regional integration agreements: the Southern Cone Chapter (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay), Andean Chapter (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) and Mesoamerican Chapter (Central America, Cuba, Mexico and the Dominican Republic).

Date, Place and Number of Participants at the Last Meeting

10. During the past biennium, the 12th Session of the Southern Cone and Andean Chapters (Asunción, Paraguay, November 2012) and the 12th Session of the Mesoamerican Chapter (Mexico City, December 2013) were held. The number of participants, including delegates and observers, was 45 and 70, respectively.

A. Introduction and Sectoral Context

11. The livestock sector contributes over 46 percent of Latin America's agricultural gross domestic product (GDP), and livestock production has increased in the Region at a higher annual rate than the global average growth rate (4.0 and 2.1 %, respectively). Poultry production has witnessed the highest growth rates, try , which have doubled over the past decade, while beef, pork and milk

production have witnessed more than 30 percent increases during the same period. The Latin America and Caribbean Region produces a higher percentage of global beef and poultry output than the United States of America, with the two Member Nations producing the same percentage of global milk output.. Moreover, the Region's pork and poultry production is approaching that of the United States, and is greater than the global average for both industries.

12. Latin America exports 40 percent of beef sold in international markets, leads the world in poultry exports and is the third largest pork exporter. However, production is concentrated in a few Member Nations, of which three produce over 70 percent of the world's cattle and pigs, 64 percent of its milk cows and 60 percent of its laying hens and broiler chickens. Just six Member Nations (Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay) account for 98 % of all livestock exports. Brazil remains the largest exporter with 89 % of poultry exports, 71.6 % of beef exports and 51.7 % of pork exports. Argentina has increased its poultry exports, and will soon rank fourth in the world after Thailand, Brazil and the United States. However, the Caribbean and most of the Central American Member Nations are net importers of animal origin food.

13. Moreover, , the role of livestock products in diet and nutrition is growing among Latin American and Caribbean consumers. It should be noted, however, that the Region still has many vulnerable Member Nations and, in particular, communities that consuming little animal proteins due to poverty and inability of affording meat or milk purchases.

14. Increasing pork, poultry and milk production produce risks in the areas of public health, animal health and welfare, as well as the environment, and require strengthening of veterinary services and environmental regulations to ensure sustainable systems and healthy, safe products for consumption.

15. There is no doubt that the livestock sector can play a far greater role in the eradication of hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the Region and should therefore move towards socially, economically and environmentally-sustainable production schemes.

B. Relevant Activities during the Period

16. FAO support for the sub-regional mechanism to support the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in Member Nations of the Community of Andean Nations made it possible to reinforce the disease-free production areas of Colombia and Peru, declare the Bolivian altiplano free of foot-and-mouth disease without vaccination campaigns, and strengthen technical veterinary capacities in Andean countries. In so doing, these Member Nations were able to proceed with disease control programmes at the national level and along border areas between Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. The Andean sub-region has been free of foot-and-mouth disease for the past two years and is preparing to enter the final pre-eradication phase. The sub-regional mechanism for this phase will be formulated and adopted by the Andean Member Nations..

17. The Classical Swine Fever (CSF) control project for the Andean sub-region, implemented within the framework of the Classical Swine Fever Eradication Plan for the Americas, created State Veterinary Office technical capacities in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela , and included the creation of an Andean sub-regional programme for control and eradication of the disease within a five-year timeframe. The size of the land areas and the number of animals in disease-free and disease-contained areas increased during the project implementation period.

18. As part of the Commission's recommendations, round-tables were held in Ecuador and Cuba (Latin American Association of Animal Production (ALPA) to discuss the Framework for Strengthening Family-based Livestock Production that had been adopted by CLDLAC at its meeting in Paraguay. An international workshop was also held on the role of the livestock sector in food security and poverty alleviation, attended by Government representatives as well as those from producers' organizations, livestock enterprises, civil society and cooperation agencies.. Online courses on analysis and management of family-based pig production value chains and on best practices for

family-based pig production were prepared, and the outcomes of the Technical Cooperation Project conducted in Ecuador, Paraguay and Nigeria were disseminated.

19. A policy guidance framework for sustainable livestock sector development in Central America was developed on the basis of the national Technical Cooperation Projects implemented in six Member Nations. The Technical and Economic Strategy for the Progressive Control of Bovine Brucellosis in Central America was also formulated.

23. The 12th Session of the Commission, held in Mexico City, discussed working papers on (a) the status of and prospects for the livestock sector in Central America, (b) the promotion of institutionally- sustainable agro-silvo-pastoral systems, (c) the design and implementation of cattle traceability programmes in Central America, (d) the development of climate-smart livestock, (e) the strengthening of institutional capacity for national veterinary services in Central America; and (f) associations and strategic alliances as tools in increasing the competitiveness of the family-based dairy farm sector.

C. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

24. The Commission emphasized the importance of international cooperation and public-private partnerships in the identification, formulation and implementation of joint strategies for sustainable development of the livestock sector in the Region.

25. It maintained that greater public and private investment must be encouraged to increase family-based livestock production and to improve extension services as well as credit and market access for small-scale livestock producers.

26. It highlighted the weaknesses of some Member Nations sectoral information systems and the importance of enhancing statistics in analysing production chains to better assist producers and policy-makers in taking informed decisions.

27. It stressed the need to improve coordination between veterinary and public health services in combating diseases using the One Health approach advocated by FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

29. It considered that the framework for the strengthening of family-based livestock production introduced by FAO was a valuable tool in promoting targeted public policies and family-based livestock farming support programmes. It therefore proposed that FAO coordinate inter-sectoral round tables in Member Nations to support the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Plan of Action strategy designed to promote rural development, increase small-scale farmer incomes and facilitate poverty reduction and food insecurity alleviation efforts.

30. It drew Member Nations' attention to the potential social, economic and environmental risks associated with increased livestock production in the Region unless appropriate measures were taken to protect natural resources, biodiversity and small-scale producer livelihoods. It was important to develop recovery programmes for damaged areas to improve free-range livestock production efficiency, and it was felt that CLDLAC working group project on livestock and the environment would assist in achieving that goal.

31. It indicated that the average capacity of the institutional system comprising national veterinary, research and rural extension services in the Region was below the minimum acceptable standard. It was emphasized that the livestock sector's potential for competitiveness would depend largely on institutional capacity to provide more effective support to producers, particularly those involved with small-scale family-based activities in the Region..

32. It emphasized that a principal challenge for the livestock sector was to have it increase its producers' competitiveness by reducing production costs and increasing the added value of products. Achievement of that goal would depend to a great extent on the stakeholders' capacity to work together in a coordinated manner.

33. It indicated that a greater inter-agency effort by Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of the Environment was required in addressing issues of mutual concern jointly.

For the Attention of FAO

34. The Commission highlighted four priorities for FAO technical cooperation regarding animal production and health in the Region:

- Support programmes for the control and eradication of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses, as well as the reduction of risks associated with animal and public health.
- Strengthen family-based livestock production as a strategy for increasing the sector's role in food security achievement efforts.
- Support inclusion of social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable livestock production systems and livestock sector adaptation to climate change in proposed policies.
- Strengthen information systems, statistics, sectoral analyses and livestock policies.

For the Attention of the Regional Conference

37. With respect to the strategic contribution of the Region's livestock sector to global food supply, the food and nutrition security of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, the welfare of small-scale rural producers and the poverty reduction effort, as well as the challenge that Member Nations face in protecting their livestock heritage, in reducing the risks associated with animal and public health and in enhancing their sustainable livestock development and climate change adaptation programmes, the Commission requests the FAO Regional Conference to:

- Adopt and incorporate into its biennial work programme the priorities and recommendations of the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Support and facilitate implementation of the South-South Cooperation Agreements between the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the Member Nations of the Region in promoting sustainable livestock development.
- Support and promote, within the framework of ECLAC, greater public and private investment to strengthen family-based livestock production and improve extension services and access to credit and markets by small-scale livestock producers.

COPESCAALC Report

A. General Information

Establishment, Functions and Members

44. The Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) was established by FAO Council Resolution 4/70, adopted at the Council's 70th Session (Rome, 29 November to 9 December 1976) pursuant to Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution. In light of the need to make various amendments to its statutes in acknowledging the importance for Latin America of both inland fisheries and aquaculture and the need to continue efforts towards their further development, amended statutes were adopted in November 2010 at the 140th ILO Conference. At present, the Commission has 21 Member Nations from Mesoamerica, South America and the Caribbean. A number of fisheries and aquaculture organizations in the Region also attend its meetings as Observers.

Date, Place and Number of Participants at the Last Session

45. COPESCAALC held its 13th Session in Buenos Aires from 19 to 21 March 2014. The Meeting was attended by 25 delegates from nine COPESCAALC Member Nations and by Observers from the Aquaculture Network for the Americas, the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fish Products in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPECSA), the World Forum of

Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), as well as by national Observers invited by the delegation of Argentina.

B. Introduction and Sectoral Context

46. After growing steadily for more than a decade, the Region's inland catch peaked in 2004 with 536 000 tonnes. Since then, however, the catch declined slightly to 524 000 tonnes in 2012 and includes a wide variety of native (from the Amazon River and the Río de la Plata Basin) and exotic (mainly tilapia) species. However, the exact production volume is unclear because catches have generally increased due to the introduction of fishing technologies and to improved statistics registering by Member Nations of the Region. Even though inland fish production is far lower than in marine fisheries, it is a major source of employment, perhaps more so than for marine fisheries and aquaculture. In other words, more jobs are created per kilogramme of fish through inland fisheries. They are also very important for food security because fish is the sole source of protein for many fishing communities in the Region.

47. The fact that fishery resources are freely available makes fishing an economically- productive activity providing both food and household income during times of crisis in other agro-production sectors. As a result, the occasional productive redeployment of crop farmers or small-scale livestock producers as fishers provides thousands of families in the Region with access to food and income when their own sector faces constraints. This type of redeployment has intensified since 2007, when food prices began to climb steadily, particularly in parts of Central and South America affected by climate-related phenomena and crop and livestock production losses.

48. The Region's aquaculture continues to grow and can potentially meet product demand currently met by imports from other continents. With more than 2.6 million tonnes of aquaculture products in 2012, Latin America and the Caribbean constitute 3 percent of global production, with a sustained average annual growth rate of 9 percent over the past five years. However, production in the Region is very uneven as four countries (Chile, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico) account for more than 80 percent of the Region's aquaculture volume and, together with the Commission's other Member Countries, for 99.7 percent of the Region's aquaculture production volume.. Nearly all Member Nations in the Region engage in aquaculture activities to varying degrees and they play a significant role in food security, employment and foreign exchange earnings. More than 100 000 families throughout the Region practice resource-poor aquaculture (equivalent to family farming), making it an important contributor to the overall economy and food production in rural areas.

C. Relevant Activities during the Period

49. The Commission held its 13th Session where it was reported that over 80 percent of the activities recommended had been carried out successfully by the Secretariat throughout the biennium. In particular, an initial meeting with all of the Region's fisheries and aquaculture organizations had been held under the auspices of the FAO Committee on Fisheries at Headquarters. Significant action had also been taken to support development of resource-limited aquaculture through capacity-building and agro-aquaculture demonstration farms operating successfully in several COPESCAALC Member Nations. Support had also been provided in implementing Sustainable Aquaculture Guidelines using an Eco-system Approach in Member Nations of the Central American isthmus and in improving fisheries and aquaculture statistics systems. A Regional Workshop to exchange information on best practices and areas for improvement had also taken place. Assistance regarding fisheries and aquaculture management had been provided to the Member Nations of the Commission through the preparation of sectoral development plans, strategies and policies.

50. The First Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Aquaculture Network of the Americas was held, thereby strengthening the Network in Member Nations of the Region and laying a solid foundation for continued implementation of that project.

51. Progress was made in enhancing mutual support endeavours between Member Nations involved in transboundary fisheries. A cooperation programme for the sustainable management of river fisheries in the adjacent sections of the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers (Piraguazú) facilitated the establishment of a Tripartite Scientific Committee as the first step towards joint management of the shared fisheries resources in this river basin.

D. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

52. The Secretariat submitted the new FAO Strategic Framework to the Commission in order to begin discussion of ways to harmonize the Commission's role within the new Framework. The following recommendations were made:

For the Attention of FAO

53. FAO should continue its work in the Region, as follows:

- Convene an intersessional meeting to discuss potential adjustments to the COPESCAALC statutory framework so that it can better fulfil its functions within the new FAO Strategic Framework and, have the Secretariat prepare a working paper to facilitate this discussion. The Secretariat should prepare, with the Office of the Chair pro tempore, a workplan in keeping with the new Strategic Framework. The same meeting should also address whether to expand the scope of COPESCAALC to include small-scale marine fisheries.
- Field-test, preferably in the Central American region, the guide prepared by FAO within the framework of the expert group on restocking of inland water bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Mobilize extra-budgetary resources when the Commission's Member Nations submit regional, sub-regional or national projects on matters within the Commission's competence.
- Continue to support the initiatives of OSPESCA Member Nations within the policy framework of integrating fisheries and aquaculture into the Central American Isthmus.

For the Attention of Governments

54. The Commission recommended that Member Nation Governments make greater efforts to develop, strengthen and harmonize systems for the collection and analysis of statistical data and information on fisheries and aquaculture of the quality and with the frequency needed for sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

- Strengthen fishers' and aquaculturists' associations in order to enhance their competitiveness and production chains.
- Build the capacities of fishers and aquaculture producers, with added value components, on matters relating to product catch, harvesting, processing, marketing and distribution.
- Incorporate interests and needs of inland fisheries and aquaculture into land-use planning policies.
- Include inland fisheries and aquaculture in national climate change adaptation plans, as well as other adaptation initiatives.
- Accelerate identification and official notification of the national COPESCAALC and FAO focal points for fisheries statistics. Consider the feasibility of designating functional areas of national administrations rather than specific persons as focal points in averting communications problems when the officials in question are replaced. This recommendation should be referred to the Council of Ministers to accelerate the appointment of as-yet-unidentified focal points.

For the Attention of FAO and Governments

55. The following two recommendations will be addressed jointly by FAO and Governments:

- The Governments of the COPESCAALC Member Nations should exert efforts to improve their systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of fisheries and aquaculture statistics in better managing their fisheries resources.
- International efforts to share information on transboundary fisheries in shared hydro graphic basins should be significantly increased.

For the Attention of the Regional Conference

56. The Commission recommended that, in the FAO Programme of Work for the Latin America and Caribbean Region (2012-2014), priority should be given to activities associated to the sustainable development of inland fisheries and aquaculture because of their great importance in improving food and nutrition security, as well as their role in poverty alleviation. Specifically, it was requested to:

- Support the improvement of policy-making, strategic planning and sustainable management of resource-limited aquaculture and micro- and small enterprises to strengthen food security and household economies. Also, support the development of aquaculture extension services.
- Support the assessment of shared inland fisheries in transboundary hydrographic basins and, in particular, the status of fisheries resources.
- Address the interest of COPESCAALC Member Nations in implementing a regional project on joint participatory management of transboundary fisheries focussing on eco-systems with extra-budgetary resources.
- Undertake measures to advocate for the nutritional benefits of sustainable regional fisheries and aquaculture products, encourage their consumption, and include them in school meal programmes.
- To the extent that the Global Blue Growth Initiative is implemented, enhance and supplement efforts by Member Nations of the Region to take an eco-system approach in developing fisheries and aquaculture.
- Continue stressing the importance of preparing international guidelines on securing sustainable small-scale fisheries [SSF guidelines].

WECAFC Report

A. General Information

Establishment, Functions and Members

57. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in 1973 by FAO Council Resolution 4/61 and currently comprises 33 Member Nations and the European Union as members. Almost all Caribbean and Central American Member Nations are WECAFC members.

58. The Commission's objective is to promote the conservation, management and development of living marine resources in the WECAFC area of operation, in line with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and to address common fisheries management and development problems faced by WECAFC members.

Date, Place and Number of Participants at the Last Session

59. The Commission's 15th Session was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 26- 28 March 2014, with 29 FAO Member Nations out of the 34 Member Nations of the Technical Commission participating (i.e. 85% of the membership). Observers from five Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and five intergovernmental organizations also participated. .

B. Introduction and Sectoral Context

60. The current limited cooperation in fisheries in the Region leads to over-exploitation and may lead to depletion of fisheries resources. As a matter of fact, landings decreased by approximately 40% over the last two decades. The WECAFC area is the most over-exploited in the world, with

approximately 55% of commercially- harvested fisheries stocks in the Region either over-exploited or depleted, and approximately 40% of stocks currently fully exploited.

61. The contribution of fisheries sector production to food security, income and livelihoods in the region can be increased through investments in regional fisheries management and aquaculture development initiatives. Rebuilding of fish stocks and marine fisheries production to 1970s and 1980s levels will require collaborative fisheries management and better general governance of the sector.

62. WECAFC encompasses Area 31 and the northern part of Area 41. The total water surface covered by WECAFC is 18,368,333 square km, or the approximate equivalent of twice the land mass of the United States and four times the land mass of the European Union. Moreover, 51% of the WECAFC area consists of high seas, with 89% of its mandate area in the deep sea range (i.e. below 400 meters).

63. In 2011, the total reported catch in the WECAFC Area 31 was 1.497 million tonnes, with 99.8% of all catches made by WECAFC members. Within the membership of WECAFC, the 8 members that are also members of the Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organisation (OSPESCA) landed 46 000 tonnes, or 3 % of the total catch, while the 15 members that are also involved in the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) landed (163 000 tonnes, or 11% of the total catch. In essence, 86% of the reported catches in the area were made by 13 WECAFC members that are neither members of OSPESCA or CRFM. The importance of WECAFC for the region is thus clear. The estimated first-sale value of catches in WECAFC Area 31 has been between USD 2.4 and 3 billion annually in recent years.

WECAFC members consider Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, particularly of Queen Conch and lobster a major problem in the Region. Efforts taken to combat IUU Fishing by Member Nations in the Region to date are insufficient, and conflicts between fishing fleets and Governments on fisheries matters are prevalent.

C. Relevant Activities during the Period

64. In the intersessional period 2012 -2013, approximately 75% of the agreed Programme of Work was implemented; 31 WECAFC Member Nations participated in its activities; 22 Member Nations identified their WECAFC National Focal Points; six of the seven joint Working Groups (i.e. Queen Conch, spawning aggregations, fish aggregating devices (FADs), lobster, recreational fisheries, flying fish) were active; 10 Working Group meetings were organized by WECAFC and partners; 7 regional technical workshops were held; 35 FAO projects supported work on fisheries and aquaculture in WECAFC Member Nations, and 12 FAO-WECAFC publications were issued.

65. WECAFC 15 was officially opened by H.E. Anthony Carmona, President and H.E. Devant Maharaj, Minister for Food Production of Trinidad and Tobago. The Commission reviewed the state of fisheries in the Region, as well as intersessional activities and guidance from COFI and the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). It also discussed and agreed on the financial and administrative affairs of the Commission. The Commission further made recommendations on fisheries management, discussed the WECAFC Performance Review, options for strategic re-orientation of WECAFC, the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2014 - 2020, proposals for amendment of its Rules of Procedure, regional collaboration in addressing IUU Fishing, the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol and regional fisheries management, the WECAFC – FIRMS partnership, and the Programme of Work of WECAFC (2014 -2015).

D. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

66. WECAFC 15 adopted 9 of the 10 presented regional fisheries management recommendations and resolutions; thanked FAO for the Performance Review; adopted the Strategic Plan 2014-2020, approved the Programme of Work (2014-15), endorsed the WECAFC – FIRMS partnership, adopted the revised Rules of Procedures and discussed the options for strategic reorientation. No decision was taken on initiating a transition process of WECAFC into a Regional Fisheries Management

Organization (RFMO) because Member Nations requested additional information for the 2014 -2015 period.

67. WECAFC 15 met with the greatest participation in the Commission's 40-year history. For the first time, non-binding fisheries management measures were presented and adopted. The current alignment of joint Working Groups with RFBs, as well as partnership with FIRMS, appears to be highly productive and successful. Financial constraints are mitigated through extra-budgetary funding from partners and members. The revised Rules of Procedure of the Commission allows for greater collaboration with the partners, and transfers part of the translation/interpretation costs incurred to the members.

68. The Commission further recommends that FAO and the EU continue to support its ongoing re-orientation process, with the costs and benefits of the various strategic options for strengthening WECAFC to be presented to the next Session in 2016.

For the Attention of the FAO Programme of Work

69. Assist the Commission in its ongoing re-orientation and/or restructuring process with legal and policy advice.

70. Allocate sufficient resources from the FAO Regular Programme to enable the Secretariat to organize WECAFC Sessions and Meetings of its Statutory Bodies, while simultaneously taking into account WECAFC's essential contribution in implementing FAO's Strategic Objectives in the RLC Region and in promoting COFI decisions at the regional level.

Assist the Commission and its Secretariat in identifying extra-budgetary resources to implement the Programme of Work 2014-2015, and to:

- Assist in technically developing fisheries management plans and support their implementation.
- Increase capacity- building support for fisheries and aquaculture data collection, analysis and sharing.
- Continue to assist the Commission in building capacity for the implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port-State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing).
- Support the assessment of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas Areas of the Western Central Atlantic.
- Closely monitor the lionfish invasion and unsustainable harvests of sea cucumber in the Caribbean.
- Develop measures and tools for climate change adaptation in the Caribbean fisheries and aquaculture sector.

For the Attention of Governments

71. The Commission calls for its Member Governments to implement the following recommendations and resolutions:

- WECAFC/14/2012/1 on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments in the WECAFC Area,
- WECAFC/15/2014/1 on the establishment of a regional closed season for fisheries in the WECAFC area to protect spawning aggregations of groupers and snappers,
- WECAFC/15/2014/2 on the sustainability of fisheries using fish-aggregating devices in the WECAFC area,
- WECAFC/15/2014/3 on the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area,
- WECAFC/15/2014/4 on strengthening fisheries management planning in the WECAFC area,
- WECAFC/15/2014/6 on region-wide support to the implementation of the CRFM Castries, St Lucia, (2010) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing,

- WECAFC/15/2014/7 on promoting the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean, as prepared by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and partners,
- WECAFC/15/2014/8 on promoting the implementation of voluntary guidelines on small-scale fisheries and tenure,
- WECAFC/15/2014/9 on the implementation of the Port- State Measures Agreement and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Flag- State Performance in the Region, and
- WECAFC/15/2014/10 on the strategic action programme for the sustainable management of shared living marine resources of the Caribbean and the north Brazil shelf large marine ecosystems (CLME+ SAP).

72. Governments should continue to incorporate the Eco-system Approach to Fisheries (EAF), including adaptive management concepts in managing their fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

73. Expenses related to participation of experts and staff of national fisheries authorities in WECAFC meetings, as well as working groups and projects, should be budgeted for by the Governments to allow for proper representation and participation by all stakeholders in the WECAFC activities.

For the Attention of the Regional Conference

74. The Regional Conference is invited to consider and, as appropriate, to endorse the Report of WECAFC 15, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 26 - 28 March 2014.

75. The Regional Conference is invited to adopt and incorporate the WECAFC Recommendations and Resolutions and the WECAFC Programme of Work (2014 - 2015) in the biennial Programme of Work and Budget of the Conference in terms of fisheries and aquaculture sector priorities and activities.