

**GENERAL
FISHERIES
COMMISSION
FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN**

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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Rome, 19-22 November 2002

PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the final version of the report adopted in Rome, by the twenty-seventh session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 22 November 2002.

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-seventh session of GFCM was attended by delegates from nineteen of the twenty-three members of the Commission. The Commission reviewed the intersessional activities, particularly the conclusions and advices of the fifth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and of the third session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ). The Commission noted that the regional project proposal entitled "Mediterranean Fishery Statistics and Information Systems" (MEDFISIS) was to be initiated. The Commission also reviewed the status of action taken by Members towards ratifying the amendments to the GFCM Agreement relative to the autonomous budget. The Commission adopted Recommendation 2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and further endorsed three Recommendations by ICCAT concerning the management of large pelagic species. The Commission established a Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean. While adopting the programme of work for SAC and CAQ, the Commission also established a reference framework for the mandate of SAC for the intersessional periods 2003-2004.

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its Twenty-seventh Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 19 to 22 November 2002.

2. The Session was attended by delegates from 19 Members of the Commission. Observers from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Russian Federation, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) also attended. The list of delegates and observers is given in Appendix B to this report.

3. The meeting was called to order by Mr A. Berraho, Chairperson of the Commission, who welcomed the delegates, wishing them a successful session.

4. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr J-F. Pulvenis de Séligny, Director of the Fishery Policy and Planning Division addressed the Commission on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf.

5. Mr Pulvenis de Séligny expressed the satisfaction of the Organization for the good attendance at the Session, which was of particular importance since it took place in the year of the Commission's 50th anniversary. He stressed the adaptive capacity of the Commission which took positive action to face the challenge of responsible fisheries and aquaculture, taking into account the variegated interests of its Members and the diversity of their situations. He noted three areas where action by the Members was urgently called for: firstly, the provision of timely and reliable data and information to the Secretariat; secondly, ensuring the availability of adequate financial resources; thirdly, the entry into force of the amendments to the Agreement of GFCM which were adopted in 1997, through the deposit of the respective instruments of ratification by those Members that had still to complete their internal procedures for ratifying these amendments.

6. After recalling the utmost importance attached by FAO to GFCM, Mr Pulvenis de Séligny highlighted the generosity and hospitality of some Members which had allowed the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) to satisfactorily perform their duties. In this respect, he thanked the Government of Spain for its contribution to COPEMED, the Government of Italy for its contribution to ADRIAMED and MEDSUDMED, the Government of Tunisia for hosting SIPAM and the European Community for its contribution to the good progress being achieved in the area of statistics with the MEDFISIS project. Finally, he stressed the need for more progress in some areas, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Responsible Aquaculture in the region and the increase of scientific activities within the framework of SAC and CAQ in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea sub-regions.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

7. The Heads of Delegations introduced themselves and their respective advisors.
8. The Delegate of France, Mr X. Vant, informed the Commission that Mr J. Turenne, first Vice-Chairperson had taken over new functions and needed to be substituted within the bureau of GFCM. The Commission appointed Mr T. Cheriaa, former second Vice-Chairperson, as First Vice-chairperson, and Mr X. Vant as Second Vice-Chairperson.
9. The Commission agreed to discuss under Agenda item 7, “Any other matters”: the communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the draft Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean Sea under the Common Fisheries Policy, as well as the information related to the organization of a Multilateral Conference of Ministers on Mediterranean Fisheries, and the formalization of a logo for GFCM.
10. The Agenda attached as Appendix A to this report was adopted.
11. The documents which were before the Commission are listed in Appendix C.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES 2001-2002

Implementation of the recommendations of the Twenty-sixth Session of GFCM

12. Mr A. Bonzon, Secretary of GFCM, introduced this agenda item on the basis of documents GFCM/XXVI/Inf.3, Inf.4 and Inf.5. The Secretary reviewed the recommendations laid down in the Report of the Twenty-sixth Session and informed the Commission on follow-up actions taken for their implementation.
13. The Commission noted with satisfaction the actions taken by the Secretariat, SAC and CAQ on its recommendations. It further noted, however, that several Members did not provide SAC with all the necessary data to enable the Committee to optimally perform its tasks during the intersessional period, as defined in the terms of reference given in Appendix G to the Report of the Twenty-sixth Session.
14. The Commission was informed that the newly launched regional project entitled “Control of eutrophication, hazardous substances and related measures for rehabilitating the Black Sea ecosystem (Phase I)”, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), included support to resuming negotiations among concerned countries for the establishment of a Black Sea Fisheries Committee under the aegis of the Black Sea Economic Commission.

Report on the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

15. Mr J.A. Camiñas, Chairperson of SAC, reported on the activities of the Committee on the basis of documents GFCM/XXVII/2002/2 and GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.4. He acknowledged the intense work of SAC, its Sub-Committees and Working Groups. Fifteen meetings were held during the intersessional period, including a meeting of the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees.

16. The Chairperson of SAC informed the Commission that an increasing number of issues and scientific activities were cross-sectional, and fell under the mandate of more than one subsidiary body of the Committee. In this regard, SAC felt that the holding of meetings of Coordinators of its Sub-Committees was essential for the proper functioning of the Committee, and sought guidance from the Commission on this issue, as well as on the participation of the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees in GFCM sessions at the expense of the Commission.

17. The Chairperson of SAC expressed concern that the involvement of scientists at its meetings was often uncertain and unbalanced in terms of representation of Members and at variance with the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, mentioning, in particular, the scarce participation of experts from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea sub-regions.

18. The Chairperson of SAC stressed that substantial efforts were made to enhance the format of resource management advice for demersal and small-pelagics species. He also observed that, after reviewing stock assessment methodologies in the Mediterranean, SAC was of the view that more accurate scientific evidence could be obtained by applying more than one method. Moreover, the list of priority shared stocks was updated.

19. The Chairperson of SAC invited the Commission to encourage national institutions to provide in a timely manner data and information on environmental parameters following the agreed format, and also to provide SAC, timely, with National Reports.

20. While stressing the importance of developing a GFCM/SAC Home Page, Mr Camiñas noted that the GFCM Glossary had been updated and posted on COPEMED Home Page and the SCSA FTP site (<ftp://cucafera.icm.csic.es/pub/scsa>). The Chairperson of SAC alluded to the development of collaboration between SAC and FIGIS and pointed out that there was still a need to refine the objectives, formats and data ownership schemes to strengthen cooperation.

21. The Commission was informed that the Draft Project proposal entitled “Mediterranean Fishery Statistics and Information Systems” (MEDFISIS) was updated. The project would call upon resources and efforts from the EC, FAO Regular Programme, ADRIAMED, COPEMED and MEDSUDMED, as well as from beneficiary GFCM Members. The project document was to be finalized, targeting for its signature before the end of 2002.

22. The Commission commended the excellent progress made by SAC and its subsidiaries despite the lack of an autonomous budget for GFCM, and congratulated Mr Camiñas and all the scientists involved for their dedication and hard work. The Commission expressed its gratitude to those Members and national institutes who facilitated the organization of SAC meetings.

23. The Commission noted that the most salient cross-sectional activities included: the sustainability of the Bluefin tuna resource vis-à-vis the developments in farming, the adoption/promotion of an ecosystem approach to fisheries, studies on the management of sturgeon including restocking and reintroduction programmes to be undertaken by the Ad Hoc EIFAC/GFCM Working Party on the subject, and the structure of Operational Units (OUs) and related socio-economic indicators, as well as their relationship to the concept of Local Operational Units (LOUs).

24. The Commission further noted that SAC had made substantial progress in the collection of information on the OUs in the Western Mediterranean (Alboran Sea and Gulf of Lions), Adriatic and the Gulf of Gabès, but that national data on OUs from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea were generally not available, preventing SAC from building a full consensus on the OU composition.

25. The Commission acknowledged the suggestion that a step-by-step approach, starting with assessing the nature of cooperative and co-management arrangements in all GFCM countries and monitoring current activities of ADRIAMED and COPEMED was essential to promote greater participation of the private sector in research activities.

26. The Commission expressed concern on the unbalanced participation, both in connection with scientific discipline and geographical distribution, in the work of SAC. In this respect, the need to formulate a regional project for the Eastern Mediterranean was reiterated. The Commission urged all Members to ensure the participation of National scientists in SAC activities and to provide the Committee with the data it needed to perform its mandate.

27. The Commission noted the need to clarify and implement properly the procedures governing the work of the Sub-committees and Working Groups, including the terms of reference of Coordinators and the designation and role of national focal points, in order to enhance participation and make data collection and analysis more effective.

28. The Commission further endorsed the suggestion by SAC that a multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Working Group of SAC, CAQ and the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) should be established to develop Technical Guidelines on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean and welcomed the definition on tuna farming provided by SAC.

29. The representative of the World Wide Fund for Nature brought to the attention of the Commission the “Cartagena Call for Action for Sustainable Tuna Farming in the Mediterranean”. This document referred, *inter alia*, to GFCM to address the sustainability of tuna farming practices.

30. The delegate of Morocco confirmed the availability of his country to host the next meeting of the Working Group on Small Pelagic Species, as well as the meeting of the Working Group on Demersal Species, if the latter was organized back-to-back with the former.

31. The Representative of the EC confirmed the intention of his Organization to co-finance the MEDFISIS project, and was provided with clarification on the scheme for incorporating contributions from the beneficiary GFCM Members.

32. At the request of the delegates of Morocco and Monaco, the Secretariat recalled the process which led to the convening of the FAO Expert Consultation on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, referred to in paragraph 23, highlighted the main provisions of the draft guidelines and indicated that the draft guidelines would be made available at the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI, in February 2003. The Secretariat emphasized that the adoption of an

ecosystem approach to fisheries should be incremental and both conventional and ecosystem approaches were required for responsible fisheries management.

33. The Coordinator of MEDSUDMED informed the Commission on progress and activities of the project related to ecosystem and fishery aspects.

34. Following a suggestion by the delegate from Monaco, the difficulties encountered by the SCMEE in establishing its activities were noted but it was felt, however, that establishing a Working group on ecosystem approach was premature.

35. Concerning the participation of the industry in the work of the Commission, the delegate of the EC reiterated the importance of that issue for the European Union and its Members. He informed the Commission that a meeting to support and encourage the establishment of a Mediterranean fishery association would be organized by the EC, early in 2004.

36. The Coordinator of ADRIAMED provided complementary information on the Second Meeting of the Adriatic Fisheries Associations held in September 2002, which had agreed to establish the Regional Committee of Adriatic Fisheries Associations for Responsible Fisheries. This Committee will promote a consultative approach with fishery scientists and management authorities and with Fishery Associations on discussion of fishery management options. A brief document highlighting the ADRIAMED activities implemented so far was provided to GFCM delegates.

37. The Director of COPEMED provided information on the first forum to be organized in 2003 by the project, involving the private sector, research institutions and administration representatives, with the view to enhancing governance and co-management. He also informed the Commission on work initiated on fisheries management regulations and related legal systems.

38. Complementary explanations were provided on the process and criteria used to arrive at the adoption of the fleet segmentation by SAC. It was noted, however, that the relationship between the fleet segmentation, vessel capacity and resource stocks needed to be further clarified. The Commission invited GFCM Members to supply data on Operational Units (OU).

39. The Secretariat presented and distributed a preliminary version of a CD Rom of the FAO Fish Species Identification Sheets for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, which was prepared by the Marine Resources Service (FIRM), with the support of COPEMED.

Report on the activities of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)

40. At the invitation of the Chairperson of GFCM, Mr J.P. Blancheton, Chairperson of CAQ reported on the basis of document GFCM/XXVII/2002/2 and GFCM/XXVI/Inf.5, on the activities carried out during the intersessional period by the three main networks of CAQ: SIPAM (Information Systems for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean); TECAM (Technology and Aquaculture in the Mediterranean); and SELAM (Socio-Economic and Legal Aspects of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean). The activities of the networks were implemented with limited financial resources. Some priority activities, therefore, such as the development of

producers' associations or linkage and promotion to existing associations operating in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, were not implemented.

41. The Commission was informed that the SIPAM network has been in full operation in the Regional Centre in Tunis and in the sixteen participating countries. The sixth annual meeting of SIPAM National Coordinators was held in January 2002 and a Steering Committee meeting was held in June 2002.

42. During the intersessional period, Albania, Romania and Lebanon were linked to SIPAM. These countries benefited from training to install and operate the SIPAM software. Efforts were made for future participation of Israel, Slovenia and Syria. The visibility of SIPAM databases was improved through the creation of a portal (www.faosipam.org). The Chairperson of CAQ emphasized that the portal still required financial support for future development and maintenance, as the Regional Centre currently lacked necessary technical skills.

43. The Commission was informed that the SIPAM portal was expanded to include a dynamic communication flow for data and information supply through FIGIS (FAO - Fisheries Global Information System) and four other partners. In addition, the SIPAM portal had established the "SIPAM National Coordinators Forum" as a platform for communication among the National Coordinators. Other technical fora were being established, including one on marketing and trade, to discuss among other current issues affecting the regional seabass and sea bream industry. In this regard, the EC Representative informed the Commission that a meeting at Community level was planned to further investigate the nature of the problem, and that findings would be shared with the Commission.

44. The Commission noted that the TECAM network organized, during the intersessional period, a seminar on mollusc production and finalized a survey on Mediterranean aquaculture diagnostic laboratories. A workshop on Mediterranean Fish Nutrition was held in Rhodes, Greece, organized under the aegis of the Tenth International Symposium on Nutrition and Feeding of Fish. Other TECAM and SELAM activities forecasted could not be implemented due to lack of funding. It was further noted that numerous activities of the two networks had been organized in Zaragoza, Spain, due to the available facilities at CIHEAM. Member Countries were invited to enable national institutions to host future activities through co-funding arrangements.

45. The Commission further noted that the Plan of Action, endorsed by GFCM, following the Consultation on Article 9 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, held in 1999, provided the framework for the activities which were reviewed at the Twenty-sixth Session of the Commission. Outputs were discussed at the Third Session of CAQ held in Zaragoza, Spain, from 25 to 27 September 2002.

46. The Commission agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a revised and focused regional aquaculture project proposal for submission to potential donors, as recommended by the Third Session of CAQ.

47. The CAQ Technical Secretary informed the Commission that an FAO study on finfish fattening activities, using wild-caught juveniles including bluefin tuna, would be available in early 2003. It was suggested that the study could be used to finalize the terms of reference of the

proposed Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean.

AUTONOMOUS BUDGET – STATUS OF RATIFICATION OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE GFCM AGREEMENT

48. The Secretary of GFCM introduced this Agenda item, referring to document GFCM/XXVII/2002/3. He briefly retraced the process which led the Commission to amend the GFCM Agreement, particularly with regard to the establishment of an autonomous budget and revision of internal rules and regulations of the Commission. He recalled the modalities for determining the budget ceiling, particularly the scale of contributions, as adopted at the Twenty-fifth Session of the Commission (Sliema, Malta, September 2000).

49. The Commission was informed that nine Members (Cyprus, European Community, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Spain and Turkey) out of twenty-three had deposited their instruments of acceptance of the amendments.

50. The Commission noted that, because the quorum of two-thirds of acceptance by Members required for the amended Agreement to enter into force was not attained, GFCM would continue to operate in a transitional manner in the year 2003.

51. The delegate from Tunisia informed the Commission that his government had ratified the amendments and that the instrument of acceptance would be deposited soon.

52. Upon request of a delegation, Members were requested, through a “tour de table”, to qualify their position with regard to the autonomous budget and to provide the Commission with the status of action taken towards ratifying the amendments. Among some of the Members who had not yet ratified, the following status was noted:

- The delegate from Algeria expressed concern with the catch component of the scale of contributions retained for his country. He reiterated the favourable position of his Government regarding the autonomous budget and stated that every effort would be made to initiate the procedure for ratification of the amendments.
- The delegate from Albania informed the Commission that the amendments were presently being reviewed by the Parliament and, most probably, would be ratified before the end of 2002.
- The delegate from Croatia explained that the Fisheries Authorities had initiated the procedure again and was confident that the amendments would be ratified and the instruments of acceptance deposited in early 2003.
- The delegate from Japan reiterated his position in favour of the autonomous budget and informed the Commission that the matter was under consideration by the Government to be submitted to the Diet (Parliament) for approval.
- The delegate from Morocco reported that internal procedures for the ratification of the amendments had been initiated and that the instruments of acceptance would be deposited with FAO as soon as the matter was approved by the Parliament.

53. Some delegations acknowledged progress in the status of ratification and also noted that the procedure necessary for ratifying the amendment were often long. Several delegations expressed disappointment as there was no guarantee that the amendment to the Agreement on the autonomous budget would enter into force prior to the next session of GFCM.

54. The Commission urged Members which had not ratified to make every effort to accelerate their internal procedures. The Commission further invited the Director-General of FAO to urge the Members which had not yet deposited their letters of acceptance to do so at their earliest convenience. The Commission requested the Secretariat of GFCM to directly approach the relevant authorities of concerned countries, including through travelling to and meeting with, these respective Authorities, to further explain the important contribution that GFCM could make to responsible fisheries management and sound aquaculture development in the Mediterranean, if GFCM had an autonomous budget.

55. The Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a study with a view to facilitating the *modus operandi* of the Commission, when endowed with an autonomous budget. The study should include, *inter alia*, technical, procedural and legal issues related to the effective implementation of an autonomous budget. The Commission also stressed the need to update the catch component of the scale of contribution and the terms of reference of the bureau and subsidiaries of GFCM.

MANAGEMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES

Review of the recommendations of the Fifth Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

56. The Chairperson of SAC presented, for each of the Sub-Committees, and on the basis of document GFCM/XXVII/2002/4, the recommendations adopted at the Fifth Session of the Committee. He indicated that these recommendations were further detailed and synthesized in table format in Appendix H of the report of SAC.

Sub-Committee for Stock Assessment (SCSA)

57. The Commission noted that advices on resource management for demersal and small pelagic species were the result of eight assessments of demersal stocks and eleven assessments of small pelagics mainly carried out in the GFCM geographical sub-areas of the Western Mediterranean, the Sicily channel and the Adriatic Sea.

Large Pelagic Species

58. The Commission endorsed the establishment of a joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group to Develop Technical Guidelines on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean. Concerning the priority themes for the Working Group, the delegations of Tunisia, Croatia, EC and Malta proposed that emphasis should be given to the environmental and socio-economic issues listed in the Terms of Reference for the Working Group (Appendix G of the SAC Report), while the delegations of Cyprus and Morocco stressed the need to initially

focus on the statistical component of the work. The Commission agreed that the issue should be addressed by the group of experts concerned, under the responsibility of the Chairperson of SAC.

59. The Commission was informed that experts from Malta, Italy, Tunisia and Spain had participated in the COPEMED dolphinfish sub-project but that assessment methodology for that species was yet to be perfected.

60. With reference to the recommendation on historical and recent swordfish data, the representative of ICCAT informed the Commission that his Organization had planned an assessment of swordfish stocks in 2003 and called for the collaboration of all GFCM Members for the provision of related scientific information and data.

61. The Commission acknowledged the advice of SAC on large pelagic species and invited Members to take action accordingly.

62. At the invitation of the Chairperson of the Commission, the representative of ICCAT informed the participants that out of the many recommendations formulated at the last ICCAT Plenary Session, four of them, which were reproduced in document GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.6, were of particular relevance to GFCM. They respectively covered: a multi-year conservation and management plan for bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean [02-08], the reduction of catches of juveniles in the Mediterranean [02-09], tuna farming[02-10], and the establishment of a working group to develop integrated and coordinated management strategies [02-11].

63. The Commission reviewed these recommendations and endorsed recommendations [02-08], [02-09] and [02-10] as reproduced in Appendix E, F and G, respectively, of this report.

64. The delegate from Japan suggested that other relevant resolutions and recommendations adopted by ICCAT also needed to be duly considered by GFCM Members.

65. The delegation of Malta made reference to Recommendation [02-08] of ICCAT and stressed that its country intended to maintain its historical bluefin tuna catching capacity and effort to guarantee Malta's share of the total allowable catch for bluefin tuna as in past years, and until further development on the matter within ICCAT.

Demersal and Small Pelagic Species

66. The Chairperson of SAC presented a synthesis of the assessments undertaken. It was noted that advice on assessments of demersal and small pelagics only involved three priority species - hake, anchovy and sardine, and only three shared stocks, one of hake and two of anchovies. It was also noted that the evaluations made with MEDITS data by the SAMED Project were also included in the report of the Fifth Session of SAC.

67. The Commission called for an increased participation of experts in the Working Groups of SCSA, in particular to ensure that assessments and related data and information on priority shared stocks cover, if possible, all GFCM geographical sub-areas.

68. The delegate from Morocco and the representative of the EC requested clarification on the legal nature of the GFCM Recommendations. The Secretariat confirmed that only those Recommendations, taken by virtue of Article III, I, (b) of the GFCM Agreement and which explicitly refers to Article V of the Agreement, were compulsory for Members, taking into account the related procedure laid down in Article V concerning delay for entry into force and the possibility to formulate objection to the Recommendations.

69. A comprehensive debate arose on SAC advice on demersal and small pelagic stocks. On the initiative of the EC delegation, a draft proposal for a GFCM Recommendation on these stocks was submitted for consideration of the Commission. The Commission welcomed this proposal and, with the cooperative contribution from several delegations, the text of the first GFCM Recommendation on fishery management, based on the advices of SAC, was drafted.

70. The Commission acknowledged the advice of SAC concerning demersal and pelagic stocks and invited Members to take them into consideration. The Commission further adopted the Recommendation GFCM/2002/1, as attached in Appendix D.

Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)

71. Following the presentation of advice related to the work of the SCESS, the delegate from Italy emphasised that the manual on sampling methodology would serve as an important tool for facilitating development of socio-economic parameters for fleet segmentation and related operational units, and that it would serve training purposes as well.

72. The Commission acknowledged the advice of SAC, with regard to the activities of SCESS, and invited Members to take action accordingly.

Sub-Committee on Fishery Statistics and Information (SCSI)

73. The Chairperson of SAC emphasized the weak participation at this subsidiary body and the lack of work being carried out at working group level. He further pointed out the need to hold a meeting between COPEMED, ADRIAMED and SCSI in order to harmonize criteria on relevant existing data bases. Moreover, he reiterated that few Members had so far provided SCSI with data on Operational Units and pointed out that this information was needed to proceed with formatting the data which should be forwarded to FIGIS.

74. The Secretariat provided additional information on data coverage and on the schedule of main activities foreseen in the MEDFISIS project. In this respect, the delegate from Italy emphasized the importance of considering socio-economic data and information.

75. The Commission acknowledged the advice of SAC with regard to the activities of SCSI.

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)

76. The Commission noted with disappointment the low participation of scientists in this Sub-Committee and the limited progress made in returning completed forms on environmental parameters to the Coordinator of the Sub-Committee.

77. The delegate from Monaco informed the Commission on the Action Plan for cartilaginous species and about activities related to the Strategic Action Programme for Biodiversity (PASBIO) being implemented under the aegis of the institutions of the Barcelona Convention. She stressed the need to further increase cooperation with the institutions and arrangements established within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the other relevant IGOs and NGOs, including UNEP/RAC/SPA, IUCN, ACCOBAMS, WWF, particularly through developing joint activities within the relevant SCMEE Working Group.

78. On the basis of an EC proposal, the Commission agreed on an indicative Reference Framework for the work of SAC during the next two years, as attached in Appendix H.

Review of the recommendations of the Third Session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)

79. The Chairperson of the Committee on Aquaculture presented the advice adopted at the Third Session of CAQ, as outlined in document GFCM/XXVII/2002/4.

80. In relation to the reporting of aquaculture trends in the Mediterranean, the Commission agreed that freshwater, brackish water and marine aquaculture should be clearly identified in terms of their outputs and geographical origin, i.e. Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea versus Atlantic Ocean and Red Sea. Furthermore, the Commission agreed that trends on production and value for selected species should be published regularly and complemented by prospective analysis on market evolution.

81. Concerning the establishment of a joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean, the Commission supported the view that close liaison be maintained with the Domestication of *Thunnus thynnus thynnus* (DOTT) project, supported by the EC.

82. The Commission endorsed the invitation made by the Committee to the FAO Fisheries Department to continue supporting CAQ activities during the next intersessional period, as funds available were deemed insufficient to implement the proposed programme of work of the Committee. It further agreed that, whenever timely, the share of the autonomous budget dedicated to aquaculture should be enhanced in order to enable the Committee to carry out its mandate.

83. The Commission noted the recommendation by CAQ that the services of SIPAM should be extended to all GFCM Members. It encouraged Members to provide adequate resources to National SIPAM Centers and agreed that an independent audit of the Network be conducted.

84. The Commission encouraged a closer participation of national and regional institutions in the activities of TECAM and SELAM, with a view to ensuring the implementation of more planned activities, particularly those focused on environmental aspects.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

85. The Commission noted that the activities proposed reflected the needs and priorities identified by SAC, its Working Groups and Sub-Committees as well as by CAQ and its Networks.

Scientific Advisory Committee

86. The Secretary of GFCM introduced this agenda item on the basis of document GFCM/XXVII/2002/5 and with reference to Appendix J of the Report of the Fifth Session of SAC.

87. The Commission reviewed the proposed activities described in the Report of the Fifth Session of SAC and endorsed the Programme of Work of SAC.

88. The Commission confirmed that the Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC, referred to in paragraph 76, provided the appropriate guidance for the work of the Committee over the next biennium. The framework should be regularly updated and the Chairperson of SAC should determine priority activities based on available inputs and achieved results for the intersessional period.

89. The Commission agreed that a steering group, composed of the Chairpersons of SAC and CAQ, representatives of the Secretariat and ICCAT should, in a preparatory meeting to be held in January 2003, prepare a workplan for the technical meetings that would provide inputs to the Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming in the formulation of technical guidelines on the subject.

90. The Commission approved the convening of the following meetings of SAC during the intersessional period 2003.

MEETINGS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE			
Meeting 2003	Date	Place	Financed by
Sixth Session of SAC	June 2003	TBD	EC/?
Sub-Committees' meetings	May 2003	Cyprus	Cyprus
Coordinating Group of the Sub-Committees	May 2003	Cyprus	-
Workshop to finalize the glossary	May 2003	Cyprus	-
Preparatory Meeting of the Steering Group of the Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming	January 2003	Madrid	-
Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming*	TBD	Italy or Antalya (Turkey)	Italy or Turkey
Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information			
Joint Working Group SCIS/SCES/SCSA on Operational Units	March 2003	Rome	FAO/Participating Experts

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems			
Working Group on anthropogenic effects and fishing technology	March 2003	Tunis	Tunisia/Participating Experts
Working Group on ecology and environment	March 2003	Tunis	Tunisia/Participating Experts
Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences			
Working Group on Socio-Economic Indicators	February 2003	Salerno, Italy	Italy/Participating Experts
Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment			
Working Group on Demersal Species	February 2003	Morocco	Morocco/Participating Experts
Working Group on Pelagic Species	February 2003	Morocco	Morocco/Participating Experts
Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagics	May 2003	Madrid, Spain	Participating Experts

* Also referred to in CAQ Programme of Work.

91. The Commission indicated that SAC, mainly through the SCMEE Working Group on Ecology and Environment, should initiate collecting and analysing relevant information and data necessary for developing ecosystem approach to fisheries, taking advantage of similar work being initiated by the MEDSUDMED project.

92. The Commission welcomed the offer of the European Community to fund the sixth Session of SAC which will be hosted in one of the GFCM-EU member countries. It further acknowledged the offer of Cyprus to host the meeting of the four SAC Sub-Committees, stressing that meetings held in the Eastern Mediterranean would facilitate the participation of scientists from that sub-region.

93. In relation to the joint GFCM/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean, the Commission acknowledged the offer made by the delegate from Italy to host the first meeting and to secure the necessary funding requirements. The delegate of Turkey also expressed its interest to host this meeting in Antalya (Turkey), subject to confirmation by relevant authorities.

Committee on Aquaculture

94. The Commission reviewed and endorsed the proposed activities described in the Report of the Third Session of CAQ, as summarized in document GFCM/XXVII/2002/5.

95. With reference to the schedule of meetings, the Commission welcomed the offer of Egypt to host the Fourth Session of the Committee, subject to confirmation by the relevant national authorities.

96. The delegates of France and Italy confirmed that the first and second Workshops on Bio-indicators for Sustainable Aquaculture would be hosted and funded by their Governments respectively. The Director of ADRIAMED further confirmed that the Consultation on the

Interactions between Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture would be organized early in 2003. Additional funding would nevertheless be required to ensure the participation of experts from non-ADRIAMED countries.

97. The Commission noted that SIPAM annual meetings and meetings of its steering committee should take place regularly in order to ensure adequate functioning of the Network. It was further noted that funding would be required to enable the participation of all National Coordinators. Participating countries were however encouraged to support the attendance of their own National Coordinators unless funds were otherwise identified.

98. For the TECAM and SELAM Networks, coordinated by CIHEAM with the collaboration of the FAO Fisheries Department, the Commission was informed that the planned activities could be organized outside the CIHEAM premises located in Zaragoza, Spain, if supporting regional or national organizations in the member countries would cover the expenses otherwise not applicable in Zaragoza as a result of the available facilities. The Commission acknowledged the continuous support of CIHEAM in the organization of activities under the two Networks.

99. The Commission approved the convening of the following meetings of CAQ during the intersessional period, 2003-2004.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE			
Meeting 2003-2004	Date	Place	Financed by
CAQ Biannual Session	June 2004	Alessandria, Egypt	Egypt
1 st Workshop on Bio-indicators for Sustainable Aquaculture	2003	Montpellier, France	France
2nd Workshop on Bio-indicators for Sustainable Aquaculture	2004	Italy	Italy
Joint GFCM (SAC/CAQ)/ICCAT Working Group on Tuna Farming*	2003	Italy or Turkey?	Italy or Turkey
Joint GFCM (SAC/CAQ)/ICCAT Working Group on Tuna Farming	2004	Italy or Turkey	Italy or Turkey
Consultation on Interaction between Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture	2003	TBD	ADRIAMED / ?
MEETINGS OF SIPAM NETWORKS			
Annual Meeting	2003	Casablanca, Morocco	Morocco
Annual Meeting	2004	TBD	TBD
Steering Committee	2003	Rome, Italy	FAO/Tunisia/others
Steering Committee	2004	Rome, Italy	FAO/Tunisia/others

ACTIVITIES OF TECAM/SELAM NETWORKS			
TECAM Course on “ <i>Advances in Fish Reproduction and their Application on Broodstock Management</i> ”	3-7 February 2003	Zaragoza / Castellon, Spain	CIHEAM / CSIC
TECAM Seminar on the “ <i>Use of Vaccines and Chemotherapy in Mediterranean Aquaculture</i> ”	May 2003	Izmir, Turkey	CIHEAM/FAO/MARA (Turkey)
TECAM Seminar on “ <i>Recirculation Systems and their Application in Aquaculture</i> ”	2004	Montpellier, France	CIHEAM/FAO/IFREMER
SELAM Workshop on “ <i>Traceability of Aquaculture Products</i> ”	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO/EU?
Course on “ <i>Offshore Mariculture</i> ”	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO / ?
Seminar on “ <i>Finfish Species Diversification</i> ”	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO/ ?
SELAM seminar on “ <i>Aquaculture Legislation in Mediterranean countries</i> ”	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO/ ?
SELAM workshop on “ <i>Coastal Zonation for Aquaculture Development Purposes</i> ”	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO/ ?
TECAM advanced course/seminar on “ <i>Recent Developments in Mollusc Hatcheries Technique</i> ”.	TBD	TBD	CIHEAM/FAO / ?
Updating of the TECAM “ <i>Survey on Mediterranean Aquaculture Diagnostic Laboratories</i> ”	2004	TBD	CIHEAM / FAO

* Also referred to in SAC Programme of Work

ANY OTHER MATTERS

100. The representative of the European Community introduced to the Commission two Communications from the Commission of the European Community to the Council and the European Parliament. The first one laid down a “Community Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean Sea under the Common Fisheries Policy”, while the second detailed “A Strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture”. The Commission acknowledged the importance of these policy documents and their immediate relevance to the work of GFCM. It was noted, however, that these documents were under discussion in the European Council and in the European Parliament.

101. The representative of the European Community further informed the Commission of the initiative taken jointly with Italy and Greece to organize, in early December 2003, in Italy, a ministerial level Multilateral Conference on Mediterranean Fisheries. The Conference would aim at defining priority short/medium-term objectives for sustainable fisheries, and at developing policy orientations towards addressing monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) schemes and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Mediterranean.

102. The participants at the meeting referred to the sinking of the “Prestige” off the Northern shores of the Atlantic coast of Spain. They expressed their consternation on the magnitude of this environmental tragedy, as well as their solidarity with the Spanish delegation. They emphasized the potentiality of such accidents occurring in the Mediterranean, which would have the most devastating consequences on the living marine resources. They stressed the need for the Commission to intensify its cooperation with the other organizations and arrangements which are competent in the field of the preservation of the marine environment and the prevention or elimination of marine pollution in the area covered by the GFCM Agreement, particularly within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, and taking into consideration the draft protocol on “Liability and Compensation” prepared by the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP).

103. The Secretariat presented to the Commission a draft logo for GFCM. It was decided that different options be prepared for presentation and selection at the next session of the Commission.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

104. The offer made by Morocco to host, subject to confirmation by the relevant national authorities, the Twenty-eighth Session of GFCM was welcomed by the Commission. The Session will be held in July or September 2003. The exact date and place of the meeting will be agreed upon in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

105. The report was adopted on Friday, 22 November 2002.

AGENDA

- 1. Opening of the Session**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session**
- 3. Intersessional activities 2001-2002**
 - Implementation of the recommendations of the Twenty-sixth Session of GFCM
 - Report on the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
 - Report on the activities of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)
- 4. Autonomous budget – Status of Ratification of the Amendment to the GFCM Agreement**
- 5. Management of Mediterranean fisheries**
 - Review of the recommendations of the Fifth Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
 - Review of the recommendations of the Third Session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)
- 6. Programme of work for the intersessional period**
- 7. Any other matters**
- 8. Date and place of the Twenty-eighth Session**
- 9. Adoption of the Report**

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

GFCM/XXVII/2002/1	Agenda
GFCM/XXVII/2002/2	Intersessional Activities 2001-2002
GFCM/XXVII/2002/3	Autonomous budget – Status of Ratification of the Amendments to the GFCM Agreement
GFCM/XXVII/2002/4	Recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee and of the Committee on Aquaculture
GFCM/XXVII/2002/5	Programme of work for the intersessional period 2003-2004
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.1	List of Documents
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.2	List of Participants
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.3	Report of the Twenty-sixth Session of GFCM (Lacco Ameno, Ischia, Italy, 10-13 September 2001)
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.4	Report of the Fifth Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (Rome, Italy, 1-4 July 2002)
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.5	Report of the Third Session of the Committee on Aquaculture (Zaragoza, Spain, 25-27 September 2002)
GFCM/XXVII/2002/Inf.6	Resolutions adopted by ICCAT during the intersessional period

**RECOMMENDATION GFCM/2002/1
ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SELECTED DEMERSAL AND SMALL PELAGIC
SPECIES**

RECOMMENDATION GFCM/2002/1

Recalling that the objectives of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and proper utilization of living marine resources;

Recalling that effective management measures aim to curb the decline in stocks targeted by scientific advice, and to improve their exploitation;

Noting that the wide diversity of fishing fleets and gear used in the zone under the competence of the Commission makes it essential to establish a general regulatory framework that permits the formulation and application of national regulations adapted to individual cases, in an effort to achieve the maximum effectiveness of sustainable management of living marine resources;

Considering the advice on demersal and small pelagic species given at the Fifth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC);

Considering that, in its advice of 2002, the Scientific Advisory Committee estimated that certain stocks are overexploited and that sustainable management measures should therefore be put into effect for the fisheries concerned;

Considering that the Members of the GFCM should therefore implement measures aimed at gradually adjusting fishing effort and reducing the capture of juveniles;

Noting that the stock assessments conducted by the SAC only concern specific geographical sub-areas corresponding to the data supplied by certain Members and that the assessed stocks may be shared with adjacent GFCM geographical sub-areas, all the Members concerned should ensure that the stocks are managed according to the following provisions:

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean recommends that:

1. The Members in the GFCM geographical sub-areas concerned are encouraged to adopt measures aimed at adjusting the fishing effort for selected demersal species (*Merluccius merluccius*, *Aristeus antennatus*, *Mullus barbatus*) and to rationalize their exploitation on the basis of the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee;
2. The Members in the GFCM geographical sub-areas concerned are encouraged to take measures aimed at minimizing the capture of small pelagics below the size needed to maintain recruitment stock at a level compatible with sustainable resource exploitation.

APPENDIX E

**ICCAT RECOMMENDATION [02-08] CONCERNING A MULTI-YEAR
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BLUEFIN TUNA
IN THE EAST ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN**
(endorsed by GFCM at its Twenty-seventh Session)

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) considers that, according to the quality of the data and the results of the 2002 assessment, it was not in a position to formulate or propose short-term management recommendations, and regretting the increasing degree of uncertainty in the statistics on catch and sizes;

NOTING that the SCRS has however pointed out that the current catches or higher catches can be sustained if total fishing mortality or fishing mortality on juveniles could be considerably reduced;

CONVINCED of the urgent need to improve scientific knowledge on the stock of East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

INSISTING on the need to immediately improve the protection of juveniles and to adjust the minimum sizes for East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the 2001 *Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities*;

CONVINCED that this policy constitutes a decisive step in defining a management strategy for tunas over the medium-term and will result in stability in the management of these fisheries;

NOTING that the new allocation criteria should be applied in a progressive manner;

DESIRING to achieve a fair and equitable allocation of the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) among all the Parties that fish bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic;

DESIRING to assure the implementation of effective measures aimed at halting the decline in the stock of East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

CONSIDERING that the implementation of a multi-year program of conservation and management over the medium term will assist the management of the bluefin tuna fishery, reducing fishing mortality and the fishing mortality on juveniles.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNA (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose vessels actively fish bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic implement a multi-year conservation and management program for 2003 to 2006.

Catch limits

2. Total allowable catches (TACs) are fixed at 32,000 MT for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

3. To establish a fair and equitable allocation of parts of the quotas in the bluefin tuna fishery in the East Atlantic and Mediterranean, an allocation scheme, for a period of four years starting in 2003, shall be established as follows:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Algeria	1,500	1,550	1,600	1,700
China (People's Republic)	74	74	74	74
Croatia	900	935	945	970
European Community	18,582	18,450	18,331	18,301
Iceland (1)	30	40	50	60
Japan	2,949	2,930	2,890	2,830
Korea	Pm	pm	pm	pm
Tunisia	2,503	2,543	2,583	2,625
Libya	1,286	1,300	1,400	1,440
Morocco	3,030	3,078	3,127	3,177
Chinese Taipei	pm	pm	pm	pm
Others	1,146	1,100	1,000	823

*pm: Fishing possibilities attributed to Korea and Chinese Taipei based on their traditional shares of 1.5% and 1.5% will only be activated in a given year when they individually have fished their current level of underages.

(1) Underages in the Icelandic fishery in any given year shall be transferred to the European Community.

4. Notwithstanding paragraph 2 of the 1996 *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries* which is also applicable to the South Atlantic swordfish fishery, any unused part (if this is specified in the pertinent management recommendation) or excess of the annual quota/catch limit shall be deducted from or added to, according to the case, the respective quota/catch limit during or before the adjustment year in the following manner:

	Year of Catch	Adjustment Year
East Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin tuna	2003	2005
	2004	2006
	2005	2007
	2006	2008

5. The provisions of the *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries* adopted at the 1996 Commission meeting and the provisions established in paragraph 3 shall be applied for the implementation of the individual quotas under paragraph 3 and for any Contracting Party and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, Entity or Fishing Entity. Each year shall be considered as an independent management period such as this term is used in the *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries*.
6. The TAC and the catch limits for 2006 in paragraph 1 shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised based upon the results of stock assessments in 2005 by the SCRS. Should adjustments to the TAC for 2006 be required following this assessment, the relative shares of the Parties for 2006 shall remain unchanged from those in the current recommendation.

Closed fishing seasons

7. Bluefin tuna fishing shall be prohibited in the Mediterranean by large-scale pelagic longline vessels over 24 m in length during the period from 1 June to 31 July
8. Purse seine fishing in the Mediterranean shall be prohibited during the period between 16 July and 15 August in order to protect juveniles.

Minimum size

9. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the catch, landing or transshipment of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing less than 6.4 kg.

Notwithstanding this provision, the Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall have the possibility to grant tolerances for landing by vessels that have incidentally caught bluefin tuna weighing less than 6.4 kg with the condition that the total of these incidental catches is less than 10% in number of fish per landing of the total bluefin tuna catches of these vessels or their equivalent in percentage in weight.

It is prohibited to retain on board, land or sell bluefin tuna under 4.8 kg in the Mediterranean.

Data collection

10. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall respect the guidelines established for the transmission of annual nominal catch data (Task I) for the vessels that fly their flag, as established in the ICCAT *Field Manual for Sampling and Statistics**. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the reporting of their total landings, transshipments and caging of bluefin tuna carried out by the vessels that fly their flag.
11. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall provide the SCRS with specific data on bluefin tuna caught within the framework of the sport fishery in order to assess the impact of sport fishing on this species and to make recommendations.
12. The Commission shall consider and, if necessary, adopt at its 2003 meeting, appropriate effective measures to control expansion of fisheries, in particular in the “others” category, which exceed the catch limits set by this recommendation.

*Note from Secretariat: the Secretariat annually notifies Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities of reporting requirements and deadlines (see also www.iccat.es).

**ICCAT RECOMMENDATION [02-09] TO DEVELOP A PLAN
AIMED AT REDUCING THE CATCHES OF JUVENILE
BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**
(endorsed by GFCM at its Twenty-seventh Session)

CONSIDERING that Commission has, since 1975, established various general recommendations aimed at protecting juvenile bluefin tuna weighing less than 6.4 kg, 3.2 kg, and 1.8 kg, setting different tolerance levels according to the minimum size-weight established, as well as defining closed seasons in the Mediterranean (including the Adriatic).

CONFIRMING that the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) in its recent assessment in 2002 estimated that in the year 2000, 36% and 40% of the bluefin tuna caught in the overall Mediterranean were less than 3.2 kg or 6.4 kg, respectively, and that it is possible that catches of age 0 fish are being under-estimated.

CONSIDERING that the SCRS identifies the lack of size data on many fisheries as one of the sources of uncertainty in its assessments, for which a significant portion had to be estimated by SCRS itself through substitutions among fleets and, therefore, the Committee does not have confidence in the analytical assessments based on such data.

CONFIRMING that since January 2002 some countries in the Mediterranean area have prohibited the use of drift nets to catch bluefin tuna, among other species,

CONFIRMING that the SCRS recommends doing everything possible to assure compliance with the current minimum size/weight limit of 6.4 kg in order to contribute to the increase in the spawning biomass and to the stock yields, and also reiterates the need to adopt effective measures to avoid the catch of age 0 and 1 fish.

CONSIDERING the great variety of gears and fleets that operate in the Mediterranean, industrial as well as artisanal, which constitutes a highly complex framework for scientific monitoring and compliance with the measures in force to protect juveniles in general.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall assure the maintenance or development of adequate schemes to provide scientific information in the formats requested by ICCAT and in smallest time-area possible on the size distributions of the catches taken by the various fishing gears, including fish destined for farming.
2. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall develop in 2003-2004, within the scope of their respective jurisdictions, specific plans directed at reducing their catches of juvenile bluefin tuna in their Mediterranean fisheries with the objective of reaching at least the tolerance levels indicated in the current ICCAT recommendations for the protection of juvenile bluefin tuna which according to SCRS recommendations, would lead to a reduction of at least 60% in the number of fish caught below 6.4 kg in the Mediterranean. Such plans and the results obtained shall be presented to the Commission in 2005.

3. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall develop in 2003-2004 specific scientific programs to identify the various fisheries that fish bluefin tuna as well as the size distribution of their respective catches, including historical catches in their estimates, if these are available. The results of these scientific projects shall be presented to the SCRS in 2005.

4. Based on this scientific information and other information available, the SCRS shall inform the Commission in 2005 on the availability and improvements in the size data for scientific purposes, for the various Mediterranean gears-fleets. Besides, the SCRS shall evaluate the overall data on the catch levels of juveniles by fishing gear(s), with time-area stratification, if necessary, for more adequate detailed information. This information could be incorporated in the new East Atlantic bluefin tuna assessment aimed at developing possible recovery scenarios.

5. Based on this information from the SCRS, the Commission shall, in 2005, consider additional measures or alternatives for the protection of juvenile bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean.

**ICCAT RECOMMENDATION [02-10]
ON BLUEFIN TUNA FARMING**
(endorsed by GFCM at its Twenty-seventh Session)

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the increasing development of bluefin tuna farming activities, especially in the Mediterranean;

RECALLING the conclusions of the 6th GFCM/ICCAT meeting on the stocks of large pelagics in the Mediterranean relative to the effects of bluefin tuna farming and on the solutions that could be studied to regulate this activity;

CONSIDERING the advice of the 2001 Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) on effects of bluefin tuna farming in the Mediterranean on the collection of data and consequently on stock assessment procedures;

DESIRING to gradually implement effective management measures that permit the development of bluefin tuna farming in a responsible and sustainable manner in relation to the management of the bluefin tuna stock;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose flag vessels fish or transfer quantities of bluefin tuna to cages for farming of the bluefin tuna shall undertake the necessary measures:
 - a) to require that the captains of vessels carrying out the transfer operations of bluefin tuna for farming maintain vessel logs and report the quantities transferred and the number of fish as well as the date, place of harvest and name of the vessel and the company responsible for the farming, in one of the official languages of the Commission.
 - b) to establish national scientific observer programs covering at least 10% of their flag vessels that carry out transfer operations of bluefin tuna for farming. The program shall be designed so as to provide an estimate of the total quantities of bluefin tuna for farming and an estimate of the sizes of the bluefin tuna placed in cages, as well as information on the date, time and area of harvest and fishing method.
 - c) to require the reporting of the total amount of the transfers of bluefin tuna for farming, carried out by their flag vessels, and include this information in the Task I data.
 - d) to set up and maintain a record of their flag vessels that fish for, provide or transport bluefin tuna for farming purposes (name of the vessel, flag, license number, gear type) i.e., fishing boat, transport vessel, vessels with pools, etc.
2. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities under whose jurisdiction are located the farms for bluefin tuna in the Convention area shall adopt the necessary measures to:

- a) ensure that a report is presented, in one of the official languages of the Commission, on each fishing or transport vessel that participated in the transfer of tuna to cages for fattening, including the quantities of bluefin tuna destined for farming. This report shall include information relative to the quantities (in kg) of fish transferred to the cages, the number of fish, the date, the name and location of the vessel and harvest, as well as its flag and license number.
 - b) recommend that the tuna farms and the scientific institutes obtain data on the size of the fish caught as well as the date, time and area of harvest and the fishing method used, in order to improve statistics for stock assessment purposes.
 - c) ensure the reporting of the quantities of bluefin tuna placed in cages and estimates of the growth and mortality while in captivity and the amounts sold.
 - d) set up and maintain a registry of the farming facilities managed by their nationals.
3. The Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities that export farmed bluefin tuna products shall ensure that the description of these products includes “Farming” in the “Gear Code” column of the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document (BTSD) or in the right hand column “Description of Fish Re-exported”, on the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Re-export Certificate.
 4. The information specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be transmitted by the relevant Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities annually to the Executive Secretary prior to August 31.
 5. The Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities mentioned in this recommendation as well as the Contracting Parties that import bluefin tuna shall cooperate, particularly through the exchange of information.
 6. The Commission shall request non-Contracting Parties that farm bluefin tuna in the Convention Area to cooperate in the implementation of this recommendation.
 7. Based on the reports referred to in paragraph 4, on the BTSD reports and Task I data, the Commission shall review the effectiveness of these measures.

**REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANDATE OF
THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)
FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIODS 2003 AND 2004**

SAC is requested to strengthen the critical role of Coordinators of subcommittees with the aim to improve the linkages among subcommittees and National focal points of GFCM Members.

1. Management of fisheries

SAC is requested:

- 1.1. To update the list of shared stocks identifying also the geographical sub-areas as well as the operational units involved. For this purpose SAC should make use both of the knowledge on stock units and of the spatial distribution of operational unit activities as well as of the mixed nature of some fisheries. Deepening both the knowledge and the list of shared stocks should not necessarily extend the list of priority species, so far agreed, for which scientific assessment and advice has to be provided.
- 1.2. To update, at sub-regional level and by geographical sub-areas, the inventory of operational units generating catches of shared stocks. To this end, SAC is also requested to monitor and fine tune, as necessary, the fleet segmentation, as adopted in principle (Appendix E of the report of the 5th Session of SAC). Whenever possible, description of Operational units should report the share, by weight and value, of priority species as well as of other important species, their fishing regime, trends in catches and landings, discard estimates.
- 1.3. To continue its ongoing works of reviewing and debating stock assessment methods with the aim both to widen the use of common agreed standards and methodologies and to continue to improve the scientific quality of submitted assessments.

To compare, and comment, as relevant, the outcomes and recommendations arising both from stock assessment methods and from other fisheries assessment tools mainly based on economic and social matters. Evaluations coming from bio-economic models should also be used for comparison. To this end, SAC should implement some case studies where both approaches are applicable.

- 1.4. To initiate an in-depth reflexion on conservation reference points (safe biological limits, precautionary reference points) that could be routinely used in the Mediterranean to establish a precautionary approach. SAC is also requested to highlight gaps in the current scientific knowledge and research and monitoring needs to set up such a framework.

- 1.5. To update evaluation for priority demersal and small pelagic species, by using the most recent data sets collected both by direct and indirect methods. SAC is requested to give priority to assessment of stocks in those geographical sub-areas not yet concerned by the 2001 and 2002 SAC assessments.

However, SAC should feel free both to extend the list of priority species and to accept for consideration stock assessments of species not included in the current list of priority species.

SAC is requested to explore different outputs consequent to different management scenarios for fisheries where there is evidence of overfishing. In the light of the above outputs SAC is requested to evaluate the appropriateness of present management measures and should propose new or alternative conservation measures whenever necessary. In this regard, the GFCM invites SAC also to take into account both the knowledge of nursery and reproductive areas (geographic co-ordinates) and the outcomes of experiments aiming to improve the exploitation pattern. SAC advices should highlight different management options in terms of risk to be avoided, expected improvements and cost/benefit both in biological and socio-economic terms.

List of priority species:

Merluccius merluccius, Micromesistius poutassou, Merlangius merlangus, Mullus barbatus, Mullus surmuletus, Pagellus erythrinus, Psetta maxima, Engraulis encrasicolus, Sardina pichardus, Sardinella aurita, Sprattus sprattus, Trachurus trachurus, Trachurus mediterraneus, Thunnus thynnus, Thunnus alalunga, Xiphias gladius, Coryphaena hippurus, Aristeomorpha foliacea, Aristeus antennatus, Parapenaeus longirostris, Nephrops norvegicus, Eledone cirrhos, Prionace glauca, Isurus oxyrinchus, Lamna nasus and Acipenser sturio.

- 1.6. To participate actively in the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on tuna farming.
- 1.7. To participate actively in the Joint EIFAC/GFCM Working Group on management of sturgeon.

2. Environmental protection

- (1) Continue updating information on incidental catches of protected species and on by catch of large migratory sharks.
- (2) With a view to progressively implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries, update information on mapping essential fish habitats.
- (3) Provide an overview of driftnet and surface gillnet fisheries in the Mediterranean, broken down by main basin and geographical sub-areas. Essential points to report on are: fishing effort (Number and size of vessels, size of gears, duration of fishing), technical characteristics (mesh sizes, rigging, marking, control of drift), measures for environmental protection

(prevention of gear loss, acoustic alarms) and research programmes in course for this type of fisheries, in particular those aiming to investigate by-catch.

(4) Provide an overview of surface and bottom longline fisheries in the Mediterranean, broken down by main basin. Describe interaction with non-commercial fish, birds and turtles. Report on measures taken to make more efficient use of baits and to prevent bird and turtle mortality.

(5) Report on the geographical occurrence, seasonality, extent and effects of mucilaginous algae blooms.

(6) With a view to progressively implement ecosystem-approach to fisheries, describe a few simple but clear species assemblages where trophic and other biological links are well identified.

The twenty-seventh session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was attended by delegates from nineteen of the twenty-three members of the Commission. The Commission reviewed the intersessional activities, particularly the recommendations and conclusions of the fifth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and of the third session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ). The Commission noted that the regional project proposal entitled "Mediterranean Fishery Statistics and Information Systems" (MEDFISIS) was to be initiated. The Commission also reviewed the status of action taken by Members towards ratifying the amendments to the GFCM Agreement relative to the autonomous budget. The Commission adopted Recommendation 2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and further endorsed three Recommendations by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) concerning the management of large pelagic species. The Commission established a Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming Practices in the Mediterranean. While adopting the programme of work for SAC and CAQ, the Commission also established a reference framework for the mandate of SAC for the intersessional periods 2003–2004.

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