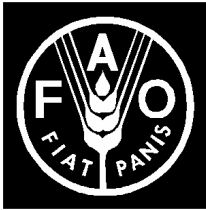


May 2004



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FISHERY COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

Seventeenth Session

Dakar, Senegal, 24 – 27 May 2004

MONITORING OF HIGH SEAS FISHERY RESOURCES AND STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION BETWEEN CECAF AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)

SUMMARY

This document responds to the recommendation of the Third Session of CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee which requested the Committee to review and adopt a draft Resolution on the monitoring within the framework of CECAF of fisheries resources in the high seas and further suggested that it was essential that cooperation between CECAF and ICCAT be strengthened.

1. At its Sixteenth Session in Tenerife, Spain, 22-24 October 2002, in connection with the consideration of options for future arrangements for cooperation in fisheries in its area of competence, the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) noted that such area of competence was subject to two distinct legal regimes, including areas under the national jurisdiction of coastal states and areas of the high seas. This fact conditioned a range of issues relevant to any possible new structure for CECAF. In the event, the Committee recommended that the terms of reference of CECAF be revised, but felt that the legal *status quo* of the Committee should be maintained and, in particular, that it could continue to operate as an advisory body set up under Article VI, paragraph 2 of the FAO Constitution.
2. The Committee also recommended that, without prejudice to the proposal that the current status quo of CECAF be maintained, the Director-General of FAO should keep under review the issue of a possible framework for the high seas, bearing in mind the current priorities of the work of CECAF and of most of its Members, as well as relevant considerations, including cost

considerations, and take such preliminary measures in that connection as appropriate. These preliminary measures should include a review by the CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) of available data on resources in the high seas and an elaboration of legal and institutional proposals for that area, as might be required.

3. In pursuance of the above recommendations, a preliminary assessment of the state of resources on the high seas was undertaken by the Secretariat and the findings were discussed by the Third Session of the Scientific Sub-Committee in Lomé, Togo, in February 2004.

4. The Sub-Committee noted that the main high seas fishery resources currently under exploitation in the region were tuna and tuna-like species, and that the management of these resources was within the mandate of the International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). There were few if any other high seas resources currently under exploitation, although exploratory fisheries had been undertaken on alfonsino (*Beryx splendens*) on sea mounts in the region. In view of this situation, the Sub-committee considered that there was no reason to consider the immediate establishment of a separate commission for the management of high seas resources other than tuna in the region.

5. The Subcommittee agreed that the state of high seas fishery stocks other than tuna, as well as any fisheries on those resources should be monitored within the framework of CECAF. In this connection, the Sub-Committee recommended that a draft resolution be prepared for adoption by CECAF at the present session calling on all Members of CECAF fishing in the high seas in the CECAF region for species other than tuna to provide reports on their catches to CECAF. The resolution should also call on States or fishing entities not Members of CECAF fishing in the area to similarly provide CECAF with reports on their high seas non-tuna catches in the region.

6. Given that the main fisheries on the high seas in the CECAF region are for tuna and tuna-like species, the Sub-Committee considered that it was essential that cooperation between CECAF and ICCAT, as the body responsible for the management of tuna and tuna-like species, be strengthened. In particular, Members of CECAF, even if not members of ICCAT, should be encouraged to provide information on their catches of tuna and tuna-like species. ICCAT, in turn, should provide CECAF and CECAF members with data on catches in the region, including catches of non-tuna species. Other ways of improving cooperation should also be explored, including the holding of joint meetings between CECAF and ICCAT bodies, the reporting of specific ICCAT recommendations to CECAF, reporting of information on ICCAT sanctions and exploring ways of facilitating the participation of CECAF members in the work of ICCAT.

7. In response to the recommendations by the Third Session of SSC the Secretariat has prepared the draft Resolution that is given as an Annex to this document.

8. The Committee may wish to recall that in the past CECAF and ICCAT had undertaken a number of joint activities, in such areas as fishery statistics, resources evaluation and on studies on juvenile tropical tunas. Another FAO regional fishery body, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) whose geographical area of competence overlaps with that of ICCAT maintains strong working relationships with the latter. In addition GFCM adopts those ICCAT recommendations which are relevant to the Mediterranean. At the working level, ICCAT provides the technical secretariat for joint working groups while GFCM is entrusted with administrative work.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

9. The Committee is invited to review and adopt the draft Resolution given in the Annex. The Committee is further requested to consider and adopt mechanisms to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between CECAF and ICCAT, particularly at the level of the CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee. It may wish to recommend that the relationship between ICCAT and CECAF be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding between the concerned organizations

Annex
Draft resolution

Monitoring of high seas fishery resources other than tuna

The Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic,

COMMITTED to ensuring the long term conservation and sustainable use of all living marine resources in the Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean, and to safeguarding the environment and marine ecosystems in which the resources occur;

RECOGNISING the duties of States to cooperate with each other in the conservation and management of living resources of the high seas in the Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean;

DEDICATED to exercising and implementing the precautionary approach in the management of fishery resources, in line with the principles set out in the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, 1995;

COMMITTED to responsible fisheries;

COGNIZANT of the fact that the present state of the fishery resources of the high seas other than tuna in the CECAF area and the related fishing activities do not, at the moment, necessitate the establishment of a separate fishery commission for the management of those resources and activities, but do call for the continuous monitoring of the state of those resources and related fishing activities and keeping under review the need to set up such a commission;

RECOGNISING, in particular, the fragility of the ecosystems of sea-mounts on which exploratory fisheries have taken place;

1. Calls on members of the Committee, fishing for species other than tuna in the high seas in the CECAF area, and members of the Committee fishing within areas of national jurisdiction in the CECAF area on fish stocks for species other than tuna that straddle those areas and the adjacent high seas in the CECAF area, to report on an annual basis to the Committee on their fishing activities in the area and on the state of the fishery stocks on which their activities are based;
2. Invites states and fishing entities that are not members of the Committee, to submit, on a voluntary basis, information on any fishing activities that their vessels may conduct on the high seas for species other than tuna in the CECAF area, and on fishing activities within areas of national jurisdiction in the CECAF area on fish stocks other than tuna that straddle those areas and the adjacent high seas in the CECAF area, and information on the state of the fishery stocks on which their activities are based, on an annual basis to the Committee;
3. Requests the Secretary of the Committee to compile and analyze the information submitted under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this resolution and to submit the compilation and analysis to the Committee for its review;
4. Recommends that the Committee keep the state of the fishery resources, other than tuna, of the high seas area of the CECAF area under review at its forthcoming sessions on the basis of the reports submitted.