



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

### TENTH SESSION

Rome, Italy - 9-11 July 2019

### REPORT ON THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (WGFM)

#### Executive summary

This document serves to report on the intersessional period work of RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. During the inter-sessional period from May 2017, the following to events were organized under the programme of work of the WGFM: Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 17-18 February 2019); and Eleventh meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 19-21 February 2019). Findings and recommendations of the workshop are provided in the reference document RECOFI/X/2019/5.

#### Suggested Action by the Commission

The Commission is invited to:

- Note this report and provide further general guidance.
- To review and approve the Terms of Reference: for RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point

## INTRODUCTION

1. During the intersessional period the following two events of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) took place:

- Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 17-18 February 2019, and
- Eleventh meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 19-21 February 2019).

2. The outcomes of the Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), referred to in above paragraph, and detailed in the reference document “Draft Recommendation on the assessment and management of Kingfish stock in the RECOFI Area” (RECOFI/X/2019/5).

**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE WGFM: KEY DISCUSSIONS, OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS**

3. The eleventh meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 17 to 18 February 2019. The meeting was convened by RECOFI and FAO, and attended by 16 delegates from seven RECOFI member countries: Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

4. Key discussions, outcomes and decisions of the meeting were as follows:

- The WGFM participants invited and unanimously agreed to re-nominate Mr. Nabil Fita as the Chairperson for an additional term.
- The Meeting was informed about the intersessional period activities.
- The Meeting was briefed on the main decisions and recommendations of (i) Seventh Meeting of RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture; (ii) 33rd Session of the FAO Fisheries Committee on fisheries (COFI);
- The Meeting was briefed on the progress with integration of RECOFI regional data set into regional aquaculture information system (RAIS), RECOFI review and the cooperation between FAO/RECOFI and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME).
- The Meeting was briefed on recent aquaculture developments, including emerging issues and national priorities in RECOFI countries.
- The Meeting had an agenda item on international instruments and tools to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. IUU fishing was found a major issue affecting the sustainable exploitation and conservation of marine fishery resources. There was an agreement that IUU fishing-related issues, on the many occasions, were brought to the attention of the WGFM. Therefore, no specific recommendation was made at the meeting to further combat IUU fishing in the RECOFI Area.
- The Meeting had an agenda item on ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) - Gulf subregional project. It was proposed that FAO could provide further support in developing specific case studies in RECOFI Area by the internationally well-recognized EAF approach.
- The Meeting had an agenda item on FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.
- Country reports on the current work on RECOFI priority species were submitted to the meeting. The meeting noted the difficulties in reporting and sourcing updated data and agreed on the freezing number of current RECOFI priority species
- The Meeting as provided with an update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on minimum data reporting (RECOFI/WGFM11/2019/7). The meeting discussed the possible causes of the limited data submission according to the minimum data requirements. It was agreed that the Secretariat will share with countries a detailed RECOFI minimum data reporting questionnaire in English and Arabic for their review.
- The Meeting was informed that at its ninth session (2017) the Commission was of the opinion that it did not have enough background information and requested the WGFM to re-consider the proposal to split FAO subarea 51.3 into divisions 51.3.1 and 51.3.2. Following discussions,

- finally the WGFM agreed on spiting the FAO subarea 51.3 into the divisions 51.3.1 – Oman Sea and 51.3.2 – Arabian Sea (South Western).
- The Meeting was informed of the current status of available RECOFI-FIRMS fisheries status reports and the number of records in the marine resources and fisheries inventories. Member countries were encouraged to update their FIRMS fisheries inventories, mentioning the good timing in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator 14.4.1: “proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels”.
  - The WGFM decided that the FIRMS National Focal points can be the same ones that the MDR National Focal Points.
  - The WGFM acknowledged the benefits of developing FIRMS Marine Resources of regional relevance for the RECOFI region and recommended the initiation of the process focusing on the Spanish mackerel and shrimps as priority species. The Terms of Reference for the FIRMS Regional Focal Point were approved (Appendix 1). Until a final decision is made by the Commission, the WGFM expressed its desire to nominate the RECOFI Chair as FIRMS Regional Focal Point.
  - The Meeting was informed on the outcomes of the Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*). The WGFM adopted the proposed recommendations of the workshop with certain modifications. The RECOFI Secretariat was asked to submit these recommendations to the tenth session of the Commission in RECOFI Recommendation format for its adaptation consideration by the Commission in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of RECOFI Agreement. (For more details please see the reference document: Draft Recommendation on the assessment and management of Kingfish stock in the RECOFI Area” (RECOFI/X/2019/5).

## APPENDIX 1

**Proposed Terms of Reference: RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point**

Within the coverage area of the Commission, the RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point (RFP) will:

- Promote and support the activities of RECOFI-FIRMS, especially in the intersessional periods;
- Encourage RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points (NFPs) to initiate, update and enrich their national fisheries records, and facilitate this work.
- Facilitate the identification, collection, validation of national and regional marine resources/stocks records and their updating in the RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resources inventory;
- Facilitate the exchange of information related to stocks and fisheries among member countries, and more generally promote and enhance regional cooperation among Members; and
- RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will be the main interface on marine fisheries and resource/stocks matters between the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs and the FIRMS Secretariat. As such will ensure an updated list of functional NFPs.

*Expected outputs:*

- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory developed;
- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory yearly updated, enriched and validated; and
- A functional list of NFPs.

Furthermore, the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs are briefed fully on the activities of FIRMS and, as appropriate, provide advice on the Commission's FIRMS related programme of work and budget.

To ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP is in a position to undertake these responsibilities, they should be experienced fisheries data managers, fisheries statisticians or fisheries researchers with regular contact with the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs.

The RECOFI WGFMM may review these terms of reference from time-to-time and make recommendations for their amendment.