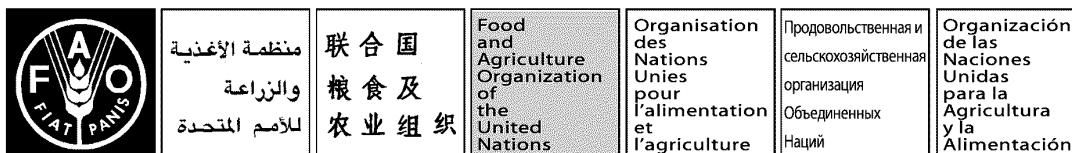


May 2018

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**WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)****1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS WG)****Barbados, 14-17 May 2018****Draft recommendation on Data Collection Reference Framework****Recommendation WECAFC/xxx/2018/TBD****“ON WECAFC DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK”**

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16<sup>th</sup> session of WECAFC held in Guadeloupe, France, 20-24 June 2016, agreed to establish the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDSWG) ;

CONSIDERING the identified minimum steps needed to improve the capability of the Commission in becoming a functional management organization as (i) Increase and improve information content on fisheries data and statistics, (ii) Increase accuracy of data and statistics via utilizing agreed practices in data collection, (iii) Develop and implement agreed practices for data sharing and (iv) Identify feasible stock assessment models for the region

MINDFUL that qualitative and quantitative improvement of regional data and statistics requires harmonization and standardization at national and regional level with the definition of minimum data requirement in support to evidence based decision-making;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of CARICOM States to improving evidence based decision-making through regional cooperation as expressed in several regional policy documents including the “Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem”, the CARICOM Strategic Plan, 2015 -2019, the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the CRFM Strategic Plan, 2013-2021.

RECOGNIZING the important steps taken by the OSPESCA and CRFM memberships in terms of building capacity for reliable and timely statistics in the past years.

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the WECAFC members to increase their capacities to collect, analyze and report fisheries data and statistics;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the FDSWG and the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG);

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes this RECOMMENDATION that:

1. The Data Collection Reference Framework as minimum data requirements to support fisheries management and stock assessment in general and more particularly the monitoring of the Regional Fisheries Management.
2. Each Member of WECAFC adopts and apply DRCF.
3. Relevant WECAFC subsidiary bodies may draw the attention of the Commission to the possible need for any revision of Annexes 1–5 to this recommendation in order to ensure the effectiveness of data collection and analysis.