



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Brussels, 12.06.2019
MARE.B.2/SV

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF MRS YVETTE DIEIQUADI
WECAFC Secretary**

**Subject: Comments of the European Union on the provisional agenda of the
17th WECAFC Plenary**

Dear Yvette,

I would like to thank you for all the preparatory work in relation to the forthcoming 17th WECAFC Plenary Session and also take the opportunity to share with WECAFC Members and the Secretariat some comments and suggestions in relation to the provisional agenda of the meeting.

In view to further facilitate and benefit from the discussions, our main suggestion would be to structure the agenda into thematic sections, possibly as indicated in the annex to this letter.

In addition, we would suggest allocating more time than foreseen to the thematic section related to the reform of the organisation. In our view, it is important to ensure that there is enough time to allow Members discussing this important and complex issue and collectively defining the best way forward. Such an adjustment might require reducing the time allocated to some non-essential agenda points. In fact, there are some items on the agenda that although they seem interesting, in the absence of any related document we are not in a position to appreciate their relevance for the WECAFC Plenary meeting.

Finally, I would like to express some concerns of our delegation in relation to the many SAG recommendations that will be discussed at the Plenary.

The main one relates to the absence of any key background information underpinning the development of these recommendations. We believe that a working paper for each recommendation summarizing the key information discussed in the relevant technical/thematic WG would be very helpful to all Members. While we find that it is a very good idea to have at the opening of the meeting a review of WECAFC fisheries that would allow Members to better appreciate the importance and pertinence of some SAG recommendations, we also think that it would be useful that such a review provides maps with the geographic distribution of key WECAFC stocks, summarizes relevant management measures in place and emphasizes the key gaps in knowledge, data, methodologies etc., hindering the identification, the assessment of the conservation status and the sustainable management of these stocks.

Another concern relates to the fact that some recommendations seem to anticipate or imply the adoption of documents that, to our best knowledge, have not been adopted yet by WECAFC, such as the DCRF, the Regional Action Plan on Sharks (which by the way does not appear on the agenda) etc. We would very much appreciate if you could clarify the status of such documents before the meeting.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to inform you that our internal preparation process for such a meeting is quite lengthy and therefore it is essential for us to be able to access all meeting documents as much as possible ahead of the WECAFC Plenary meeting.

I would be grateful if you could circulate this letter and our comments and suggestions on the provisional agenda of the meeting to the Members of WECAFC.

Looking forward a fruitful meeting.

Kind regards,

(e-signed)
Stamatis VARSAMOS,
Head of the EU delegation to
WECAFC

c.c.: L. Marot, L. Molledo, S. Varsamos

ANNEX: Suggestion for restructuring of the Agenda of the 17th WECAFC Plenary

1. *Opening of the session*
2. *Election of the Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons for the Commission*
3. *Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the session*
4. **Management of WECAFC fisheries**
 - 4.1 *Review of the State of Fisheries in the WECAFC region*
 - 4.2 *Impacts of climate change, vulnerabilities and adaptation in the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries and aquaculture*
 - 4.3 *Caribbean spiny lobster (*Palinurus argus*) fishery regional management plan*
 - 4.4 *Latest developments in the conservation, management and trade of queen conch*
 - 4.5 *Caribbean Management Plan for Spawning aggregation*
 - 4.6 *The Regional Plan of Action IUU*
 - 4.7 *The WECAFC Data Collection Reference Framework; and Capacity building on statistics and information*
5. **SAG work and recommendations**
 - 5.1 *Main decisions and recommendations of the thirty-third session of COFI and the sixteenth session of WECAFC*
 - 5.2 *Intersessional activities of Working Groups and other matters referred to the attention of the Commission*
 - 5.3 *Report of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Sessions of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of WECAFC*
6. **Reform process of WECAFC**
 - 6.1 *Overview of the Permanent Coordination Mechanism process*
 - 6.2 *Study on the history, facts and development of the RFMOs*
 - 6.3 *Recommendations of the first Preparatory meeting for the reform of WECAFC*
7. **Future work**
 - 7.1 *Programme of Work of WECAFC (2019–2020)*
8. **Administrative and financial issues**
 - 8.1 *Report by the Secretary on the financial and administrative affairs of the Commission*
 - 8.2 *Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF) for the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission*
9. **Information points (tentative)**
 - 9.1 *Update from the Hidden Harvest report/The Internal Year of Small-scale fisheries*
 - 9.2 *New methodology for the reporting on SDG: Developments on selected Targets*
 - 9.3 *Highlights of issues and benefits of the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE)*
10. *AOB*
11. *Adoption of the report*