

July 2019

E

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
---	--	--------------------	--	--	---	--

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Miami, United States of America, 15-18 July 2019

Summary notes of the Tenth Scientific Advisory Group meeting

The Tenth session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was held electronically on 4th June 2019. The SAG discussed the outcomes of the work carried out by various joint working groups in 2018 and their recommendations to WECAFC 17.

The complete report of this electronic SAG will be prepared and published in the second half of 2019 as FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report.

Suggested Action by the Commission

The Commission is invited to consider and, as appropriate, to endorse the report of the Tenth SAG session and provide guidance with regard to issues discussed during the session.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSION

The 10th Session of SAG recommended the following:

- Endorse the Report of the 1st Preparatory meeting for the Transformation of WECAFC into a RFMO, subject to three suggestions: (i) to recommend as action by the Commission the **identification of the members to conduct the feasibility of establishing a regional fisheries management entity or arrangement with regulatory powers in the ABNJ**; (ii) amend the beginning of paragraph 13 by adding **“The majority of”**, (iii) point 3 of the recommendations be reformulated in lieu of a statement as it stood during the review.

Nonetheless, in implementing this 3rd suggestion, the Secretariat felt that not only this point but also the first two points, do not fall under the headings “Recommendations to WECAFC17”. They are rather suggested changes to be made to the agenda of the meeting and an account of specific deliberations. As such they were addressed in previous sessions of the report, hence can be taken out without altering its comprehensiveness or the soundness of the recommendations.

- Endorse five recommendations from the (joint) Working Groups that have been thoroughly reviewed by the experts, contingent to the finalization of the targeted amendments made (See Appendix 1 for the endorsed recommendations):
 - (CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM WORKING GROUP ON SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS,
 - WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP,
 - CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH,
 - CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES USING Moored FADS)
- Endorse the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (RPOA-IUU) in the WECAFC area of competence, with the suggestions that (i) a **definition section be added, or at least “fishing vessels” and “fishing related activities” as well as any other technical terms useful for this RPOA be defined**; and (ii) for measures 9 and 10, members should be **“strongly encouraged to aim for harmonization and classification in accordance with international standards classification”** as relates to the Regional Record of fishing vessels and the list of vessels,
- SAGX discussed the **Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation draft Fishery Management Plan (FSA FMP)**. Collectively the SAG felt the current draft required further development. The group recommended that the draft be conveyed to the WG with the concurrence of returning a revised version for further review by 11 June. Additionally, SAGX concurred that a revised and further consolidated Section 7, complete with Introduction, Background and presentation of relevant issues of concern and proposed measures to address such, could be considered by the SAG alone.”. It was further noted that Section 7 could be best considered as a framework for management in its current state of development, noting further development of Section 7 was required.

- Endorse the revised Terms of Reference for the three working groups with the changes recommended by SAG, while requesting **the Secretariat to consider in the intersessional period the review of the terms of reference of all 11 working groups of WECAFC** for a consistent and standardized format (See Appendix 2 for the endorsed Terms of Reference):
 - (WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP (FDS-WG),
 - CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH,
 - CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES USING MFADS)

- Endorse the Intersessional activities and progress made by the members and working groups on the implementation of the Work Programme for 2016-2018.

- Endorse the Draft Programme of Work of WECAFC (2019 - 2020).

Appendix 1: Endorsed recommendations

Draft Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/21 amendment to Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/2 “ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERIES USING FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES IN THE WECAFC AREA”

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, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

RECALLING the conclusions and proposals of the first and second meetings of the WECAFC ad hoc working group on the development of sustainable moored fish aggregating device fishing in the Lesser Antilles (Martinique, 8-11 October 2001 and Guadeloupe, 5–10 July 2004); as well as with those of the recent ICCAT-IATTC-IOTC joint Tuna-RFMO MFAD Working Group meeting (Madrid April 2017) providing new and significant technological and scientific insights regarding the use of MFADs in tuna fisheries;

REAFFIRMING its commitments, made at the 14th session of WECAFC, through establishing the

IFREMER/WECAFC Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored MFAD Fishing in the Lesser Antilles. In this respect the 15th session agreed to expand the Working Group into a joint Working Group on MFADs in which WECAFC, JICA, IFREMER and CRFM participated;

RECOGNIZING the conclusions and recommendations of the CRFM-JICA CARIFICO/WECAFC- IFREMER MAGDELESA Workshop on MFAD fishery Management, which was held in St Vincent and the Grenadines, 9-11 December 2013;

RECOGNIZING the important scientific research results pertaining behavior of target and bycatch species associated with moored MFADS and capacity building carried out on MFADs by the EU funded MAGDELESA project, as well as the pilot activities on MFADs conducted under the CRFM-JICA project on the "Formulation of a Master Plan on sustainable use of fisheries resources for coastal community development in the Caribbean";

RECOGNIZING also the potential contribution that offshore pelagic fisheries may contribute to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, income, and employment for present and future generations in the Caribbean;

CONSIDERING that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) issued at its 23rd regular meeting, held in South Africa, November 18-25, 2013, a recommendation (13-01) amending the recommendation on a multi-annual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin tunas, which binds a number of WECAFC and CRFM members in terms of MFAD fisheries by industrial fleets catching these tunas;

WHILE CONCERNED for the status of significant levels of exploitation of large pelagic resources exerted by several nations and the deficiencies in enforcement and communications recently (April 2017) expressed by Joint ICCAT-IATTC-IOTTC MFAD Working Group regarding 21 regulatory protocols on MFADs;

NOTING the ongoing effort of the CRFM through its pelagics fisheries Working Group meetings and in collaboration with the CLME, to improve conservation and management of the offshore pelagic resources;

RECOGNIZING the significant contribution of the CRFM MFAD Management Plan emphasizing on objectives and works necessary to improve MFAD fisheries management in the Caribbean;

RECOGNIZING the need of implementing CRFM MFAD Fishery Management Plan with critical considerations on the status of exploitation of the targeted resources as dictated by ICCAT and CRFM resource assessments;

REAFFIRMING the need for further action by all interested parties to ensure the long-term sustainable use and management of the offshore pelagic fisheries resources in the region based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries that considers proper dimension of regional MFAD fisheries development under conditions of fully utilized resources availability in the WECAFC region;

REAFFIRMING also its commitment to promote the use of co-management and other participatory approaches involving all affected parties in the development and implementation of relevant policies and programmes;

NOTING the concerns of the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational

Fisheries about the billfish stocks in the Caribbean and the untapped value of this resource in terms of catch-and-release fisheries; and considering the noticeable dominance of blue marlin as the most impacted species in moored MFAD fisheries in the region;

NOTING that the fishery on fish-aggregating devices (MFAD) in the Lesser Antilles has grown substantially in the last ten years, apparently increasing catches of pelagic species but also catches of vulnerable and already overexploited stocks of species; and adding the need to regulate MFAD numbers and MFAD density to avoid adverse economic consequences;

REAFFIRMING its commitment to the application of the precautionary approach, which establishes that lack of scientific evidence should not be used as a reason for not taking management measures for the conservation of fishery resources and securing sustainable fisheries;

ACKNOWLEDGING the good efforts of various WECAFC and CRFM members to license MFADs fishers, prepare legislation for MFAD fishery, ensure disaggregated data collection and analysis in terms of MFAD fishery, encourage best-practice design and training in MFAD construction and use, promote safety-at-sea when fishing with MFADs, reduce conflicts over the use of MFAD, notify maritime authorities of MFADs locations, establish co-management regimes for MFAD fishery and promoting the proper maintenance of MFADs;

NOTING that the exchange of information between researchers, fisheries managers and fishers on MFADs fishery has improved in recent years and needs to be strengthened;

RECOGNIZING that the ongoing development of MFAD fisheries in the WECAFC area provides new opportunities for income generation, livelihoods and contributes to food security, as well as may reduce the pressure on coastal and reef fish stocks;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need to improve data and information to reduce uncertainties to stock assessment methodologies currently used and to monitor the long term impacts of these fisheries on the stocks especially recognizing that MFAD catch rates (CPUE) are indicators of biomass aggregation by MFADs, which may not reflect relative abundance of the wild stocks;

CONSIDERING the need to conduct more research related to the potential impact of moored MFADs on the migration patterns, size/age/sex structures and compositions of stocks, change in yields per recruit and other biological effects due to the conspicuous presence of juvenile tuna species in MFADs, as well as on the currently used concept of CPUE for stock assessment and management purposes, co-management options, social and economic aspects, environmental and climate change, fishing techniques and technologies;

NOTING the issues on access to resources via MFADs fisheries, and property rights claims and disagreements on MFAD aggregated resources;

NOTING the economic impact of natural phenomena, such as strong hurricanes, on the destruction of MFADs and the lack of reporting of MFAD numbers, locations, lifespan and replacement;

CONSIDERING IFREMER conclusions that species diversity associated with MFADs varies according with regions within the WECAFC area as well as seasonality of the catch rates of target and bycatch species;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the Working Group, CRFM annual scientific meeting and the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG);

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the *RECOMMENDATION* that:

1. Members of WECAFC prepare (if relevant) national level MFAD fisheries development and MFAD management plans that consider status of exploitation of targeted and bycatch species as determined by ICCAT and CRFM stock assessment results.
- 2.
3. Members put in place appropriate legislation in support of a sustainable MFAD fishery adhering to the FAO Code of Conduct if insufficient technical and scientific data are available for proper management of MFADs at this time.
4. Members of WECAFC adhere to standardize as far as possible MFAD protocols that could generate compatible MFAD fishery statistics using standard terminology (as determined by the Working Group on MFADs) for the different varieties of MFAD fisheries in the WECAFC area and report in an agreed format on their total catch (i.e. landings and discards) and effort data in FAO Area 31 to the Working Group on MFADs in support of ongoing research, decision making and management processes at national and regional level..
5. Members of WECAFC, in line with similar recommendations from ICCAT, IATTC and other RFBs, aim to:
 - a) Prohibit the unauthorized transshipment at sea of MFAD caught fish in the WECAFC area.
 - b) Collect and analyze biological, ecological, social and economic data and other scientific literature and information to inform decision making processes on MFAD Fisheries.
4. WECAFC, CRFM, and as appropriate OSPESCA, support the regional harmonization of national MFAD technologies and fishing protocols that will secure compatible fishery regulations contained in national fishery management plans and related legislation, in accordance with the best available information (including scientific evidence and local and

traditional knowledge) and consistent with international best practices, and present the progress made to the respective regular sessions of these RFBs.

5. WECAFC, CRFM, and as appropriate OSPESCA, support a regional MFAD characterization of the impacts and impacts mitigation measures of moored MFAD fishing in the different regions (within the WECAFC area), and building that regional knowledge into the management decision-making.
6. Members of the WECAFC be encouraged to improve MFAD designs, use non-entangling materials, and adhere to minimum standards to increase durability in order to reduce marine debris, the entanglement of marine animals, and the impact on ecosystems.
7. Members communicate to the Working Group on MFADs the measures taken to adhere to the above paragraphs.
8. The Commission support the Members, in the establishment of stakeholder- and public outreach and communication campaigns, in the area including addressing the need to enhance and increase communication of research findings and best practices on MFAD to the fishers and facilitate inputs from stakeholders.

Draft Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 amendment to Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/3 “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, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16th 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 regional fishery management organization (RFMO) to include efforts to (i) Increase and improve 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 requirements in support of evidence based decision-making.

REAFFIRMING the commitment of CARICOM States to improving evidence based decision-making through regional cooperation as expressed in multiple regional policy documents including the “Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf 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 members 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 FDS-WG;

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

1. Recognize the WECAFC-FIRMS (Fisheries and Resource Monitoring System) project as a collaborative platform for collation and sharing of scientific information, leveraging ongoing regional projects, and prioritizing national data needs,
2. Promote provision of national data and statistics to the Regional DataBase (RDB) according to Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF),
3. Recognize the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA , through the regional and subregional focal points to support and to validate national inventories and their

publishing through FIRMS as part of the global monitoring framework requested under SDG14.4.1, 'Proportion of fish stocks within biological levels'

4. Endorse the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), as a foundation for fisheries data and statistics collection and collation to feed the needs of developing, monitoring, assessing and reviewing regional fisheries policies such as FMPs as required by any RFMO.
5. Promote continued participation in the FDS-WG and specifically to support the intersessional work plan as relates interactions with thematic working groups relating to national vessel mappings to regional fleet segment classifications, promotion of species for priority reporting, and associated identification of sub-areas for species reporting,
6. Strengthen collaboration between the FDS-WG and thematic working groups to refine and keep updated the DCRF and associated data sharing policies.

Draft **RECOMMENDATION ON WECAFC/17/2019/23** “THE LIST OF PRIORITY SPECIES IN THE WECAFC AREA”

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, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16th 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 Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) to include efforts to (i) Increase and improve 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 requirements in support of 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 and North Brazil Shelf 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 members 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;

RECALLING that The WECAFC shall cover all living marine resources, without prejudice to the management responsibilities and authority of other competent fisheries bodies and other living marine resources management organizations or arrangements in the area.

ACKNOWLEDGING the WECAFC members challenges to collect data and produce statistics on all living marine resources

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the FDS WG and Species specific WGs;

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

1. WECAFC supports the structure and concept of developing a list of priority species, for statistical reporting by members, based on several selection supporting criteria by the FDS WG. **In particular to support monitoring and reporting for:**

- Species for which there is historical establishment of species and/or fisheries working groups, and/or where fisheries specific regional and sub-regional management plans exist (conch, lobster, flying fish), mFADs, deep sea, recreational billfish and FSA),
- Species of the high seas straddling/migratory/deep seas in areas beyond national jurisdiction that would correspond to the WECAFC-as-RFMO mandate (as per WECAFC 16¹ decision),
- Species with existing mandatory reporting to RFMO's (e.g., ICCAT tuna and tuna-like species)
- Commercially targeted and threatened sharks and rays
- Other Reference species identified to other importance to the regional and subregional fishery bodies (e.g., CRFM, or OSPESCA)

2. The FDS-WG should continue to seek guidance and final approval of the species priority list from all WECAFC members.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bo086e.pdf>

Draft Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/24 “ON THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SPAWING AGGREGATIONS AND AGGREGATING SPECIES”

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, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

REAFFIRMING its commitment to support management and implementation of regional strategies and regulations to protect spawning aggregations and aggregating species through the establishment of the WECAFC Working Group on Spawning Aggregations (SAWG) at the 14th session of WECAFC in 2012.

NOTING that stocks of many species of groupers and snappers in the Caribbean have declined significantly in the last three decades, some of their fish spawning aggregations (FSAs) have declined or disappeared and that immediate action is required to stop further reductions.

MINDFUL that many fishers' livelihoods are dependent on harvest from spawning aggregations and the fisheries that they support, but also that these fishers have experience and expertise that could be invaluable in the conservation, management, and possible tourism at such sites and that the development of economic alternatives for affected fishers should accompany efforts to halt fishing during spawning periods or close areas where spawning occurs.

REAFFIRMING the recommendations of the Declaration of Miami (2013) issued at the 1st CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations.

REAFFIRMING and supporting the recommendations and the workplan from the 2nd meeting of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations.

NOTING members' commitment to the 2018 SAWG workplan, various planned actions and that activities are well underway,

COMMITTED to individually and collectively taking measures and actions to further improve the management and conservation of fish spawning aggregations and species that aggregate to spawn in the Wider Caribbean Region

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Members of WECAFC strongly encourage Working group members to identify and determine the status and timing of all known Fish Spawning Aggregation (FSA) sites (particularly for snapper and grouper).
2. WECAFC, CFMC, and as appropriate CRFM, OSPESCA, and CEP-SPAW support the development of a regional Fisheries Management Plan (for national adoption throughout the region) for species forming FSAs (targeting groupers and snappers), in accordance with the best available science, for presentation to the WECAFC Secretariat in 2020.
3. WECAFC Secretariat and Members invest resources and support the standardization of existing FSA monitoring programmes ensuring harmonization with the Regional Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) to share data designed to track the status and trends of aggregations and the species that form them and thus contribute to local, national and regional management efforts.
4. Members of WECAFC call for international action to protect Fish Spawning Aggregations (FSAs), including strengthening enforcement of closed seasons, closed areas, and species specific sales bans during the closed season.
5. Members of WECAFC agree upon and adopt a regional seasonal closure for all commercial and recreational fishing of Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*), at least for the period 1 December – 31 March and that Members will not permit export or commercial sale of Nassau grouper or its products (e.g. roe, fillets) for the duration of the seasonal closure.
6. WECAFC Secretariat support an assessment of the economic value of FSAs and the socio-economic impact of proposed management measures to inform future management decision-making.
7. Members offer training to fishers (displaced due to FSA closures) in monitoring, research, assessment, and suitable economic alternatives. Fishers and other stakeholders to be involved in cooperative research and FSA management.
8. The WECAFC Secretariat support a regional outreach and communication strategy on conservation and management of FSAs.
9. Members of WECAFC prioritize FSAs by species and areas or monitoring, conservation, and management based on status, vulnerability and Members' institutional capacity.
- 10.** The WECAFC Secretariat, together with the Members of WECAFC, seek to mobilize resources to assist the Members in the implementation of priority research, monitoring, enforcement, management and conservation of FSAs and the species that form them.

Appendix 2: Revised Terms of (selected) joint Working Groups

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP (FDS-WG) (Period 2018-2019)

Convener: Nancie Cummings (NOAA)

Preamble:

CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC, in January 2016, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate, support and strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries. WECAFC in its 16th session held in Guadeloupe, France, 20-24 June 2016 agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership and in support of the development of a regional database in collaboration with the Members and partners in the region.

The aim of the envisioned FDS working group was to strengthen collaboration on fisheries data and statistics matters among the three regional fisheries bodies. The European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) agreed to support financially the organization of the first meeting of the FDS-WG in the context of the WECAFC-FIRMS project phase II.

The FDS-WG will report to the WECAFC Commission

- Formulate recommendations and guidelines for data collection and statistics.
- Develop standardized data collection formats and templates to be collectively considered for coordinated national and regional implementation.
- Conduct work under direction from the WECAFC Commission, and in close interaction with the WECAFC Secretariat emphasizing the prioritization of work activities in alignment and support of WECAFC towards becoming a fully functional and effective RFMO.
- Develop biennial work plans prioritizing activities and identify actions to be taken, and annually provide a report of activities, outputs, and prioritized future work plans with considerations for specified intervals (short term 1-2 years, medium term 3-5 years, as well as general directions for the long term) to the Secretariat.

The FDS-WG will interact/liaise with:

- All working groups under the WECAFC and regional fishery bodies (CRFM), OSPESCA, CFMC and their working groups with the aim to strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries.
- Intergovernmental institutions, including those that constitute the Interim Coordination Mechanism of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems

The Membership of the FDS-WG:

National Officers responsible of Fishery Statistics and Data in WECAFC Member Countries (e.g., statisticians, data managers, directors of fisheries statistics, or fisheries offices, etc.) with activities related to the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analysing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g., RFMO reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.)

- Regional Officers from the three Regional Fisheries Bodies (CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC) involved in the same domains related to fisheries data and statistics as listed above;
- The WECAFC Secretariat.

Sessions of the FDS-WG:

- The FDS-WG shall meet ideally annually face-to-face, and at least once every two years.
- The FDS-WG elects a convener (and vice convener) every two years among its members.
- The vice-convener will assist the convener in his/her roles and shall fulfil the duty of the convener if the convener is not able to carry-out the duty of the position;
- Meeting of the FDS-WG will be notified by the FDS-WG convener.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize the FDS-WG meetings.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will inform the FDS Members at least 3 months in advance and share the agenda and meeting documents at least 2 months before the meeting.
- The FDS-WG may include experts appointed as resource persons by the WECAFC Secretariat, on the basis of their knowledge in FDS matters and their expertise in FDS regional issues.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize with the support of CRFM and OSPESCA resource persons the drafting, translation, review, validation and distribution of the FDS-WG meeting report and its recommendations when relevant.

Intersessions of the FDS-WG:

- The WECAFC Secretariat supervises in close consultation with the FDS convener the intersession activities recommended by the FDS-WG, with the support of resource persons.
- The WECAFC Secretariat ensures coordination among regional projects and other thematic working groups related to fisheries data and statistics with the support of the WECAFC-FIRMS task force.

The FDS-WG will assist with:

Data collection at national level - Provide recommendations and guidelines to address national data collection and sharing challenges in the WECAFC region:

- Identify issues (gaps, deficiencies), challenges and best practices in data collection at national level in the region, and provide recommendations on how to address issues and challenges, and implementing best practices.
- Identify and recommend best practices for the region including how to involve private interests in data collection (of fisheries operational and socio-economic data from industry's stakeholders, intergovernmental groups, etc.).
- Review and make recommendations on standard data collection formats for use at national level and related minimum guidelines for collection.
- Review and make recommendations on coordination opportunities for new data and statistics projects coming into the region.

Data sharing and harmonization at regional level - Provide recommendations to address open data sharing challenges at international level for the benefit of fisheries, research and management communities and to improve the ability of WECAFC to manage fisheries resources:

- Identify and recommend a list of data to be shared among WECAFC countries in a regional data base (RDB), defining regional standards, classifications and data policies.
- Define formats, metadata, policies (including confidentiality matters) and best practices to exchange data.
- Provide recommendations on data harmonization to allow data collation at regional level including the mapping between national and regional classifications

Countries data reporting to international bodies and global monitoring systems (i.e., CRFM, FAO, ICCAT, OSPESCA, FIRMS) - Provide recommendations to streamline reporting from national to regional and international levels, including through collaborative arrangements promoting harmonization:

- Address issues of multiple reporting standards and formats among the various international organizations, including through review of documents, sharing experiences and lessons learned and formulate recommendations and guidelines in support to enhanced reporting on shared fisheries resources in the WECAFC area.
- Formulate mechanisms to coordinate / streamline exchanges among regional fishery bodies and other intergovernmental institutions operating at regional and global level, including methods, tools and procedures for the harmonization of national/sub-regional/regional data collection, storage formats and reporting approaches
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme and in the regular reporting of the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOME), making recommendations to ensure that data sets, information and assessment approaches follow statistically sound and regionally harmonized methods.

IT management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase (RDB) - Provide recommendations for cost efficient and sustainable management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase

- Provide high level recommendations on technology and policy issues related to development, hosting and maintenance for the RDB.
- Provide RDB specifications, priorities, governance, policy mechanisms.
- Formulate project development phases and participation mechanisms.

Administration of the FDS-WG

The FDS-WG will be supported through the financial resources of the Commission.

Performance review of the RDB

- Conduct periodic review against a set of metrics of the data collection reference framework (DCRF) and best practices data collection guidelines.
- Recommend changes and adjustments to the RDB after review.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH (Period 2019-2021)

Convener: Maren Headley (CRFM)

1. Scope

The purpose of the Working Group is to support the sustainable management and conservation of Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) resources and its fisheries in the WECAFC Region. In undertaking its work, the working group will pay due attention to FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries' Article 6.4 of the general principles².

2. The goal of the Working Group

Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable conservation and management of the Queen Conch fisheries and trade. In pursuing this goal, the working group will contribute to the fulfillment of national, regional and international responsibilities and commitments for the management and conservation of and trade in Queen conch and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in accordance with agreed, documented management goals including ensuring the livelihoods of the people depending on these resources.

In particular, the Working Group will aim to support with technical and scientific advice the implementation of Decisions adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES on "Regional cooperation and management of and trade in queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)" (South Africa, 2016), and WECAFC 16 Recommendation (WECAFC/16/2016/1) "on the Regional Plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area" (Guadeloupe, 2016) and any relevant decisions that are adopted at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and WECAFC 17.

3. Terms of Reference (TORs)

Queen Conch is a transboundary resource with commercial and economic, as well as ecological, importance for most countries in the Wider Caribbean region. Therefore, these TORs apply at regional and/or national levels as appropriate. The working group, with the support of FAO, WECAFC, CFMC, CITES, CRFM and OSPESCA, will act in an advisory capacity to guide and facilitate the sustainable management and conservation of queen conch.

The Working Group will carry out the following general tasks:

1. Compile, analyze and share interdisciplinary available data and information on queen conch, in thematic areas such as: biology, management of this fishery, socio-economics and trade, fishing technology, environmental factors, and other relevant areas needed to provide advice for policy and decision-making processes.
2. Develop common and modern methodologies for data and information collection for monitoring of queen conch stocks and promote the involvement of the private sector in data collection.

² Conservation and management decisions for fisheries should be based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources and their habitat, relevant regional and international agreements, as well as relevant environmental, economic and social factors. States should assign priority to undertake research and data collection in order to improve scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries including their interaction with the ecosystem. In recognizing the transboundary nature of many aquatic ecosystems, States should encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research, as appropriate.

3. Monitor changes in abundance/density of queen conch stocks and populations in the Caribbean region.
4. Review data from the countries and other sources on queen conch catch and effort and aquaculture production in the range states and monitor changes as appropriate.
5. Provide advice on the implementation of national and regional management measures and regulations for queen conch to countries and regional organizations.
6. Establish communication between the members of the working group and interested parties and stakeholders, including the private sector.
7. Develop and implement a work plan that will be monitored and evaluated by the WECAFC SAG and Commission.
8. Report to CFMC, OSPESCA, WECAFC and CRFM at each of their sessions (on the outcome of each Working Group meeting).
9. Further advance and monitor the implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan that was adopted by WECAFC 16, CRFM, OSPESCA and CFMC at appropriate levels.
10. Invite selected experts to participate in the Working Group, ensuring that they have the necessary expertise, know-how and experience in areas relevant to the operation of the Working Group and the implementation of these Terms of Reference.

Mode of Operation

1. Role of WECAFC Member Countries

The members of the Working Group are to play a leading role in the Working Group activities through the following activities and commitments: • Participate in agreed activities of the working group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts; • Ensure involvement of both CITES and Fisheries Authorities in the work of the Group; • Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the agreed work plan of the Group; • Host working group meetings on a rotational basis.

2. Role of the FAO/WECAFC Secretariat

The FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the WECAFC Secretariat will facilitate and support the activities of the working group by collaborating actively with the partner agencies CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM and CITES in: • Co-coordinating the activities of the working group (including securing funding for its operation); • Providing a technical secretary; • Providing technical assistance and support to research; • Facilitating training (as appropriate); • Communicate outcomes to WECAFC, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and countries (as appropriate); • Ensure the participation of appropriate experts and other stakeholders in Working Group Activities.

3. Roles of other Subregional organizations (e.g. CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM)

Subregional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the working group by: 1. Providing technical assistance and support; 2. Facilitating procurement of funding for working group activities; 3. Coordination of the activities of the working group; 4. Facilitating the decision-making process at the Subregional level.

Role of the Convener

The Convener, in consultation with the Working Group, will: • formally convene the meetings of the group, • technically guide the group work and determine subjects to be discussed, • represent the group in regional and international meetings (as appropriate), • invite new members and ad hoc experts to participate in working group meeting, • review and approve publications and messages produced by the working group, and • take a leading role in securing funding for working group meetings.

Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (Video conference, Skype and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country of WECAFC and organization/ agency identify a national focal point/expert through which communications will be directed. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through Working Group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and national fishery and CITES administrations and other relevant entities via the WECAFC Secretariat.

Working Group Meetings

The Working Group should meet physically at least once every two years or as needed. The meetings should be of two to five days duration. Meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES USING MFADS

Period 2019-2020

Convener: Manoel Cifuentes (OSPESCA)

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

FAD fisheries began to develop in the Caribbean Islands at the end of the 1980s. This activity is still developing in several states. Moored FADs (MFADs) allow small-scale, artisanal vessels easier access to offshore pelagic resources by aggregating them at fixed locations. Their use leads to different fishing practices and consequently, may impact different resources, depending on the local circumstances. The communities involved in this type of fishery, consist to a great extent of fishers with low incomes and limited other livelihood options, and the fishery contributes significantly to local food and nutrition security. Although the use of MFADs increases the probability of catching fish and consequently the overall catches, increases the savings on fuel costs and reduces the search time when compared with other methods of targeting offshore pelagic species it has become evident that there is need to implement MFAD management measures at the onset if the resources on which the fishery depends is to be sustained in the long term.

At the Fourteenth Session of WECAFC, convened in Panama City, Panama from 06 to 09 February 2012, the Commission agreed *to continue all Working Groups (Spiny Lobster, Flying Fish, MFADs, Queen Conch, Nassau Grouper/Spawning Aggregations) as joint working groups of WECAFC with partner organizations. It was considered that a leading role could be played by these partners as well.* The Terms of Reference for the IFREMER/WECAFC Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Fishing in the Lesser Antilles was articulated at that time.

Subsequently, the CRFM-JICA CARIFICO/WECAFC-IFREMER MAGDELESA Workshop on FAD Fishery Management was convened in Kingstown, St Vincent and the Grenadines from 9 to 11 December 2013. In light of the overlapping aims of the MAGDELESA project and its termination at the end of October / November, 2013, the joint workshop provided an opportunity to transfer knowledge and experiences, consolidate linkages among existing networks for FAD fishery management and also to discuss the future of the IFREMER/WECAFC Working Group. The Workshop proposed that the current IFREMER / WECAFC Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored FAD Fishing in the Lesser Antilles be transformed into a joint Working Group on FADs with the possible participation of JICA, IFREMER, CRFM and WECAFC. The joint Working Group would consist of one participant from all Caribbean countries with FAD fisheries, IFREMER, WECAFC and JICA / CARIFICO. The Workshop also agreed that the Terms of

Reference of the new Joint Working Group be made consistent with recommendations of the meeting.

This Terms of Reference for the Joint Working Group on FADs gives consideration to the recommendations by the 2013 CRFM-JICA CARIFICO/WECAFC-IFREMER MAGDELESA Workshop on FAD Fishery Management and recommendations of the

Seventh Session of the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group, which was convened in Panama City, Panama on 7 to 8 November 2015, while giving due cognisance for maintaining transparency and accountability in the operations of the Working Group.

2. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

2.1 Scope

The scope of the ad hoc working group is the development and management of moored FAD fishing in the [WECAFC Area 31], in a manner that is consistent with the long-term sustainability of associated pelagic fish resources and through the application of international best practices consistent with the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The working group will take a multidisciplinary and participatory approach to the sustainable development of moored MFAD fishing for pelagics and will contribute to the fulfillment of national and regional management responsibilities for shared pelagic fish stock management under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in particular Article 8.11: “Artificial reef and fish aggregation devices” as well as related management recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The Working Group is to function in a technical and advisory capacity.

2.2 Specific Terms of Reference for the period 2019 to 2021

- a. To review data on MFAD fisheries and conduct analyses of pelagic fish resources including through collaboration with the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group;
- b. To provide technical advice and guidance based on the outputs of the JICA-CARIFICO Project and the Billfish Project;
- c. To collaborate with IFREMER, academia, and other research institutions on research of key pelagic species associated with MFAD fisheries, encourage pluridisciplinary research on MFADs including ecological socioeconomics and governance issues, and to consolidate information on MFAD fisheries in order to accurately characterize MFAD fisheries in the region;
- d. To develop and finalize manuals on best practices in the fisheries using MFADs. The manuals are to address interests in MFAD design, construction and deployment, maintaining good quality of MFAD-caught fish, fishing and business strategies for sustainable MFAD fisheries, safety and working conditions of MFAD fishers and governance of MFAD fisheries. These manuals should be presented during training sessions with fishers.
- e. To promote the reporting of MFADs fisheries statistics to ICCAT;
- f. To collaborate on co-management within MFADs fisheries, noting the successful examples in Grenada, Dominica, and Bonaire, and strengthen ties with the Recreational Fisheries Working Group;
- g. To facilitate the sharing of data, information, and experiences related to MFAD fisheries in the region in collaboration with the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group;
- h. To review the CRFM Sub-Regional Management Plan for FAD Fisheries in the Eastern Caribbean, adapt to a broader a WECAFC regional FAD management plan and support Member Members’ efforts to develop (sub-) national FAD (co-)management plans.

2.3 Mode of Operation

2.3.1 Membership of the Working Group

Membership shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, including Overseas Territories and Departments, with a real interest in fisheries which utilize MFADs.

2.3.1 Election of Chair of the Working Group

The Working Group shall elect a Chair from among its Members States to serve during the working group meeting.

2.3.2 Role of Member States of WECAFC [Countries]

- a. To develop, implement, monitor and adapt accordingly, national systems for improving the quality of catch and effort data on the fisheries using MFADs, including historical time series data;
- b. To develop, implement, monitor and adapt accordingly, national systems for collecting socio-economic data on fisheries using MFADs;
- c. To implement inter-sessional activities, agreed upon by the Working Group, at the national level;
- d. To maintain active discussion on assessment and management issues, share data and information, and monitor implementation of inter-sessional activities of the Working Group using available ICT tools or other cost-effective methods;
- e. To facilitate expert participation by their designated representatives at meetings of the Working Group.

2.3.3 Role of WECAFC Secretariat

- a. To assist with the procurement of funds for the activities of the Working Group;
- b. To coordinate the formulation and adoption of recommendations by the Working Group, so as to facilitate the decision-making process at the regional level.

2.3.4 Role of IFREMER

- a. To assist in research, technical assistance, and implementation of the Work Plan;

2.3.5 Role of the CRFM Secretariat

- a. To assist with coordination of activities of the Working Group, at the regional level;
- b. To assist with the procurement of funds for the activities of the Working Group;
- c. To assist with convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- d. To coordinate the formulation and adoption of recommendations by the Working Group, so as to facilitate the decision-making process at the sub-regional level.

2.3.6 Role of the convener

Over the two year period, the convener will:

- a. Convene meetings of the Working Group;
- b. Technically guide the group work and determine the subjects to be discussed;
- c. Represent the group in regional and international meetings, as appropriate;
- d. Invite new Members and other experts to participate in working group meetings;
- e. Take a leading role in securing funding for working group meetings;
- f. Review messages and communications regarding information on MFAD activities in the region.

2.3.7 Communication

Communication is critical to the efficient execution of the work programme of the Working Group, particularly during the intersessional periods, so as to maximize the quality of outputs. Consequently, each country should designate a National Focal Point for this purpose. The

National Focal Point is to liaise with the Convener/Chair of the Working Group as well as the CRFM, OSPESCA, and WECAFC Secretariats to facilitate effective implementation of the Terms of Reference and communication among all entities. Available ICT tools should be utilized for this purpose as far as possible. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through the CRFM, OSPESCA, and WECAFC Secretariats to the respective Member States.

2.3.8 Working Group Meetings

Face-to-face meetings of the Working Group should be convened ideally once a year, or at least once every two years, or as resources are available. Such meeting arrangements should be cost-effective. Where possible the use of available ICT tools to facilitate electronic meetings should be maximized. Meetings shall be announced by the Convener and chaired by the Chair of the Working Group. Regional organizations and experts may be invited to participate in the meetings as required. The Convener shall coordinate intersessional activities of the Working Group.