

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FAO FRAMEWORK

Executive Summary

This document presents summary of the most recent recommendations and decisions of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) established within the FAO framework (based on Article VI or XIV of the FAO Constitution) for reference.

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I. Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

1. The Thirty-first Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) was held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, 6-8 September 2010. The Session was attended by 34 participants - delegates from 13 Member countries of APFIC, 5 FAO staff, and 3 observers from 3 International and Regional Fisheries organizations and arrangements or national agencies: Bay of Bengal Program – Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO), Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) and Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC).

2. Recommendations of the Commission:

- The Commission recommended that APFIC should seek new partnerships and strengthen the cooperation with other regional bodies as it implements the APFIC session recommendations;
- The Commission emphasized the importance of regional and sub-regional collaboration and requested APFIC to work on such kind of mechanisms and initiatives;
- The Commission emphasized the need for lower cost assessment methods that were not heavily reliant on survey cruises;
- The Commission requested a clearly defined concept of Small Scale Fisheries and further recommended that this definition should not be limited to the size of the vessel or gear used, but should also be based on other indicators;
- The Commission strongly recommended that all countries develop a national Ecosystem Approach framework through which EAF/EAA activities can be implemented and reported;
- The Commission expressed its desire for FAO to work more closely with WTO on fisheries subsidies particularly in relation to developing countries and small-scale fisheries;
- The Commission encouraged members to develop alternative aquaculture feeds that contain or utilize less wild fish;
- The Commission recommended that information on the cost benefits and the environmental impacts of stock enhancement practices should be collected and reported;
- The Commission noted several regional projects and bodies that are currently operating in a range of APFIC areas and undertaking work that is compatible with Commission objectives and invited the BOBLME Project to report on the Bay of Bengal at its next session;
- The Commission recommended that APFIC should strengthen regional capacity for assessments of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region for the purpose of policy development and management; and
- The Commission recommended that APFIC should review the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture in the region and provide advice to member countries on strategic planning for adaptation and mitigation measures for the sector.

II. Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)

3. The First Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, 19-21 December 2011. Delegations from four FAO member countries attended the inaugural session. Six other FAO member countries attended as observers. In total 15 countries had been invited to participate. The session, being the inaugural session, aimed to adopt the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the Financial Regulations of the Commission, the administrative budget for the first financial period, the scheme and scale of contributions to the administrative budget, a Five-year Regional Work Programme (2011 - 2015) and the acronym and logo of the Commission.

4. The Inaugural session was successfully conducted. The objectives were all met. The session also adopted the following interim scientific and technical advice:

- Guidelines for Sturgeon Hatchery Practices and Hatchery Management for Release;
- Recommendations of the Regional Study on the “Feasibility of Restocking and Culture-based Fisheries in Central Asia”;
- Better Management Practices for Carp Production in Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia; and
- Conclusions and Recommendations of the Regional Workshop on Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics, Information, and Trends: Improving Data Collection, Analyses and Dissemination.

5. CACFish, as a newly established Article XIV Regional Fishery Body under the FAO Constitution, will need to demonstrate itself as a useful tool for fisheries development and management in the region. It is of key importance that the technical advice prepared by the commission continues to be of high quality and valuable to the region. This will enable non-members to better determine the costs and benefits of membership of the Commission. Efforts need to be increased by the Secretariat to increase membership in 2012. The temporary situation with the Secretary of CACFish being based in SLC/Barbados requires urgently a decision from FAO senior management. This new RFB needs a full-time secretary to ensure that the Commission develops rapidly and properly carries out the activities under its mandate.

III. Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC)

6. The Twelfth Session of the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) was held in Cuernavaca, México, 21-24 November, 2011. The meeting was attended by 22 delegates from 15 member countries, as well as observers such as INFOPECSA; The Central America's Isthmus Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA) and the Network of the Aquaculture of the Americas (RAA).

7. Eleven out of twelve recommended activities by the last session were carried out successfully. The only activity still pending is related to assessing ornamental fisheries, which was re-programmed for the current biennium. With regard to the consolidation of the Network of Aquaculture of the Americas, the Government of Brazil donated 2 million USD through a FAO/GCP project to foster the consolidation of the Network. The Executive Secretariat of the Network briefed the Commission on the progress made in this regard. Ten countries have confirmed that they will sign the international convention that formally creates the Network. Activities demanded by member countries through the GCP project are underway.

8. Recommendations of the Commission:

- Support the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region, in particular resource-limited aquaculture and that of the micro and small companies;
- Support to fisheries and aquaculture governance;
- Strengthen national capacities related to CC adaptation for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
- Support to the formulation and implementation of national and regional strategies to increase fish consumption and strengthen internal markets for fishery and aquaculture products; and
- Support the improvement of stock assessment and fishery statistical information systems.

IV. Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)

9. The Sixteenth Session of CIFAA was held in Maputo, Mozambique, 16-18 November 2010. Action was planned on two issues initiated during the 15th Session: the approval of revised Terms of Reference and Statutes for the Committee as well as the expansion of work of the ad hoc Working Group for a Regional Inland Fisheries Strategy. Furthermore, action was anticipated on the termination of the work of the Lake Tanganyika Sub-Committee¹ and the end of the ad hoc Working Group on a "NACA-Like" Aquaculture Network for Africa in favour of a more substantive arrangement with members (i.e., ANAF Partners structure) as recommended by the Working Group and pending the ultimate establishment of the planned ANAF IGO. In addition to these points, three new agenda items were prepared: challenges to improved aquaculture governance, regional concerns involving the production and dissemination of

¹ This now replaced by the Lake Tanganyika Authority

improved aquaculture seed and adaptation strategies for climate change as it relates to inland fisheries and aquaculture. The ad hoc Working Groups on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Networking met outside the Session. It was agreed that both groups continue their efforts. The ad hoc Working Group on Inland Fisheries would continue their deliberations for preparing and implementing a Strategy for Inland Fisheries of Africa. The “ANAF Group” discussed the consolidation of networking activities in the Region.

10. Recommendations of the Committee:

- With chronic problems regarding participation, FAO should engage a consultant to review the current situation and, in consultation with an ad hoc Working Group convened during the present Session for this task, prepare a paper for CIFAA 17 on options for the way forward (i.e., “future of CIFAA”);
- More countries should join ANAF and that those ANAF Members continue to support the Group;
- The “TIVO Programme” has highlighted critical concerns and should serve as a regional prototype, a regional framework needing to be elaborated for the multiplication and dissemination of improved aquaculture seed, possibly linking this to the work of ANAF;
- In regard to difficulties facing investors in the aquaculture sub-sector, FAO, in collaboration with ANAF, should conduct a regional review on different funding schemes and conditions and disseminate results to Member countries;
- With growing importance of Environmental Impact Assessments in relation to aquaculture investment, but also with the potential financial burden these may impose on smallholders, options should be examined including more frequent use of strategic impact assessments;
- Underlining the importance of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in pushing aquaculture forward, FAO should assist in capacity building for implementing the Code in the Region;
- Members agreed that a strategy on regional and sub-regional collaboration and cooperation was essential and should be pursued in order to address issues of common interest; FAO continuing to provide assistance, again considering a possible role for ANAF;
- Delegates confirmed that the FAO Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa was a suitable model on which to base a CIFAA Strategy for Inland Fisheries of Africa, whilst inland fisheries should be included in national strategies such as the National Mid Term Program Frameworks and in programmes such as CAADP; and
- CIFAA should develop a strategy on climate change which should address short, mid and long term issues. Toward this end an expert consultation was proposed to discuss improved planning and the inclusion of climate change in national strategies. FAO was further requested to conduct an in-depth study on climate change, to identify important fishery and aquaculture resources in relation to the subject, to help raise awareness and to advise Members on measures to adapt to or/and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

V. European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)

11. The Council of FAO in its 140th Session has adopted Resolution 3/140, taking note that the Twenty Fifth Session of EIFAC, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 21 to 28 May 2008 had agreed to change the name of EIFAC, introducing aquaculture in order to recognize the importance of aquaculture to the countries in Europe and to properly reflect the activities of EIFAC, and decided to approve the revised name and Statutes of the Commission, whereby the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) is now called European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).

12. The Twenty-sixth Session of EIFAAC was held in Zagreb, Croatia, from 17 to 20 May 2010. The Session reviewed EIFAAC's activities since 2008 in the fields of fishery biology and management, aquaculture, protection of the aquatic environment and social and economic issues. The Session deliberated on the options for the restructuring and improving of the functioning of the Commission and decided that EIFAAC should continue as a fishery body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution but with an improved structure and modernized Rules of Procedure, subject to endorsement of these decisions by the FAO Council and the Director-General of FAO.

13. An EIFAAC Special Session was held in Rome, Italy, 27 October 2011 for Adoption of the new Rules of Procedure where all Working Parties and Sub-Commissions were abolished and where it was decided to adopt a project approach for future work in relevant fields. The Technical and Scientific Committee shall review and evaluate each project proposal.

VI. Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)

14. The Twentieth Session of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 16 to 18 March 2012. Delegations from nine CECAF members attended the session. Ten partners in the region attended as observers. All the 34 members have been invited to participate. The session aimed to discuss progress made on the implementation of the recommendations of the nineteenth session, main outcomes of the sixth Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC), the CECAF Performance Review Report and report on activities of other projects/programmes and partners in the region.

15. Recommendations of the Committee:

- Deplored the relatively long inter-sessional period but has appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat to facilitate the implementation of recommendations of the nineteenth Session;

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- Expressed its appreciation for the work done by the SSC, in particular with regards to the results of the assessments carried out, and highlighted the pertinence of this information to managers and policy makers;
 - Recommended to improve data collection and scientific research, to continue and maintain existing data series and ensuring that all data are made available to the Working Groups for the assessments, and to improve linkages between CECAF and other organizations conducting assessments in the region;
 - Reiterated the importance of concerted management for shared stocks, and the need for managers from the different countries concerned to agree on a sharing scheme for these stocks;
 - Made suggestions as to how the adoption of the recommendations by managers could be improved through, for example, ensuring stronger linkages with the sub-regional fisheries bodies and strengthening communication at national level between fisheries research and administration to make sure that the scientific recommendations are taken into consideration;
 - Suggested the need to ensure stronger linkages with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to facilitate funding mechanisms;
 - Highlighted the pertinence of the technical review, and stressed the importance of CECAF to the countries in the region, especially in a time where information from science is increasingly important, given advances in fisheries in the region and the need to ensure sustainability;
 - Recognized the value of the recommendation to expand the Convention Area southward, in order to include the Angolan coast, and considered problematic the possible restriction of the Convention Area to the EEZ of coastal member countries, requiring further analysis and discussion;
 - Emphasized that CECAF members should carefully consider the serious issue of lack of participation by CECAF members in the meetings of the Committee and of its SSC, taking into account the importance of the Committee for the fisheries management in the region;
 - Warned that a way should be found to bring everybody on-board including distant water states that had not participated in any of the Committee meetings for a long time, encouraging people to attend, starting with coastal states;
 - Emphasized the need of a continued support from FAO to the work of CECAF, both technically and financially, agreed that alternatives for having extra budgetary funding secured for the Committee should also be actively pursued, and recommended to member countries to make an effort to secure funding from their national budgets to participate in at least some CECAF meetings;
 - Strongly recommended the Secretariat to soon hold regional meetings for coordination to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the several regional fisheries bodies and projects active in the region, including RECs;
 - Agreed on the need to update the CECAF statutes, in order to incorporate modern concepts of fisheries management, such as the Ecosystem Approach and the Precautionary Approach;
 - Recommended to members to improve the provision of data to have more refined biological information on the species caught, since this was considered essential to allow the use of more sophisticated models to assess the state of the exploited stocks; and
 - Recommended to the Secretariat to prepare an action plan to address the different recommendations of the Performance Review exercise for further review by CECAF members.

VII. General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) (see Annex)

16. The Thirty sixth Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was held in Marrakech, Morocco, 14-19 May 2012. 19 Members of the Commission (out of 24), 17 observers and 2 non GFCM member nations (Russian Federation and Ukraine) (over 130 registered participants) participated.

17. The Commission decided the following:

Functioning of the Commission

- The Commission discussed the report of the Task Force to improve the functioning of the Commission including through a possible amendment of the GFCM Agreement and related procedural and financial rules and agreed to hold an extraordinary session to amend the Agreement;
- In the modernized Agreement, the Commission agreed that the current institutional framework (under article XIV of the FAO Constitution) is the most appropriate and that a large functional autonomy should be given;
- The Commission decided to freeze the position of Deputy Executive Secretary until further notice and to strengthen the human resources of the Secretariat with new recruitments: 1 Legal and liaison officer (P3) and to upgrade the bilingual Secretary G5 to G6;
- Acknowledged the move to the new GFCM HQs in September 2011;
- Agreed that the established ad hoc Working Group on the Black Sea be maintained on a permanent basis and endorsed the activities proposed for the next intersessional period;
- Noted that 1 (out 24) Member has not yet deposited their instrument of acceptance of the revised (1997) GFCM Agreement;
- The Commission endorsed the proposal by the Scientific Advisory Committee to extend the election of its bureau until next session of the Committee; and
- Took note of the offer of Croatia to host next Session

Decisions on fisheries Management

- Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/1 on further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area;
- Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 on mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area;
- Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks, skates and rays in the GFCM area;
- Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1 on guidelines on Allocated Zones for Aquaculture (AZA); and
- Guidelines on a general management framework and presentation of scientific information for multiannual management plans for sustainable fisheries in the GFCM area.

Strengthening collaboration

- The Commission favored the establishment of the first GFCM framework programme to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This will be considered as a platform to enhance synergies with party organizations;
- The Commission acknowledged the valuable support by the FAO regional projects;
- Seven Memoranda of Understanding were signed between GFCM and UNEP-MAP, ACCOBAMS, the Black Sea Commission, MedPAN, Eurofish, RAC/MED and ICES; and
- The Secretariat was requested to undertake the necessary steps to enhance collaboration with ICCAT.

VIII. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

18. The Sixteenth Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) was held in Fremantle, Australia, from 22 to 26 April 2012, Chaired by Mr Daroomalingum Mauree. Delegates from 26 Members of the Commission, 1 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, 18 Observers (including invited experts) attended the Session.

19. The Commission adopted 15 Conservation and Management Measures in 2012, consisting of 13 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations, as follows:

- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/01 *On the Implementation of the Precautionary Approach*. This Resolution establishes the general principles that would guide the application of the precautionary approach in the context of the IOTC. The basic tenet being: do not take actions that would have an unacceptably high risk of compromising the health of the resource or its environment in the long term. The provisions also include ecosystem considerations in the form of impacts on non-target and associated or dependent species and their environment, or the effects of unanticipated environmental events;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/02 *Data Confidentiality Policy and Procedures*. This Resolution introduced amendments to a previous Resolution by incorporating certain data collected under the IOTC Regional Observer Program as well as tagging data held at the Secretariat;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/03 *On Catch and Effort Recordings by Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence*. This Resolution simplifies recording requirements and includes a clear list of bycatch species or group of species. These requirements include seabirds and marine turtles as per the IOTC requirements for target species. The Resolution also incorporates minimum recording requirements for gillnets, pole and line, handline and trolling into the existing requirements for longline and purse seine. Specific requirements in the provision of nominal catch data for a number of shark species are also included. Furthermore, this Resolution strengthens the provisions for catch and effort, and size data to be applicable to shark species as well as other bycatch, noting that this data can be derived from logbook and/or observer data;

- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/04 *On the Conservation of Marine Turtles*. This Resolution amended a previous Resolution, by removing the term ‘hard-shelled’ to provide equal protection for all marine turtles in the IOTC area of competence and clarify the data reporting requirements for interactions with marine turtles;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/05 *On Establishing a Programme for Transshipment by Large-scale Fishing Vessels*. This Resolution introduced amendments to an existing Resolution by incorporating sharks and additional elements to be completed prior to a receiver vessel accepting an at-sea-transshipment;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/06 *On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries*. This Resolution introduced amendments to an existing Resolution by simplifying the measure to achieve reductions in the level of seabird bycatch. The amendments harmonise the measure with that adopted by ICCAT in 2011 which lists only three mitigation measures (i.e. night setting with minimum deck lighting, bird scaring lines and line weighting) considered to be effective. This Resolution will commence on 1 July 2014;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/07 *Concerning a Record of Licensed Foreign Vessels Fishing for IOTC Species in the IOTC Area of Competence and Access Agreement Information*. This Resolution requires that information on all vessels operating under private or government-to-government agreements be provided to the Commission;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/08 *On a Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) Management Plan*. This Resolution requires all CPCs fishing on FADs to submit Management Plans for their use by purse seiners and bait boat vessels;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/09 *On the Conservation of Thresher Sharks (Family Alopiidae) Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence*. This Resolution introduced amendments to an existing Resolution that allows observers to collect biological samples (vertebrae, tissues, reproductive tracts, stomachs) from thresher sharks that are dead at haulback;
- The Commission ADOPTED Resolution 12/10 *To Promote Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures Already Adopted by IOTC*. This Resolution establishes a special fund for capacity building in order to ensure compliance with conservation and management measures adopted by IOTC. It also builds upon Resolution 11/01 *Development of a Compendium of Resolutions and Recommendations*;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/11 *On the Implementation of a Limitation of Fishing Capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties*. This Resolution extends the applicability of an existing Resolution for an additional two year period. The Resolution called on CPCs to implement a limitation on their fishing capacity on tropical tunas, swordfish and albacore stocks, while allowing for the inclusion of vessels under construction during specific reference years, and those proposed by the developing States in their fleet development plans was applicable during the years 2012 and 2013;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/12 *To Prohibit the Use of Large-scale Driftnets on the High Seas in the IOTC Area*. This Resolution extends the assessment of this Resolution for an additional two year period. The Resolution banned the use of large-scale driftnets (more than 2.5 km long) on the high seas within the IOTC area of competence;
- The Commission adopted Resolution 12/13 *For the Conservation and Management of Tropical Tunas Stocks in the IOTC Area of Competence*. The Resolution extends the applicability of an existing Resolution for an additional two year period. The Resolution

establishes a closure of a defined area for purse seine vessels from 1st November to 1st December and for longline vessels from 1st February to 1st March in order to reduce the fishing pressure on yellowfin and bigeye tunas. The Resolution also called for a technical committee (the TCAC) to discuss allocation criteria and recommend an allocation quota system or any other relevant measures;

- The Commission adopted Recommendation 12/14 *On Interim Target and Limit Reference Points for the Major IOTC Species*. This Recommendation establishes provisional target reference points that are compatible with the attainment of the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The limit reference points (that indicate high risk to the conditions of the stocks) are set at a biomass reduction to 40%–50% of the MSY level, or a fishing pressure that exceeds by 30–50% the level that would produce the MSY; and
- The Commission adopted Recommendation 12/15 *On Best Available Science*. This Recommendation outlines actions necessary to preserve and promote the independence and excellence of the Scientific Committee and its Working Parties by, inter alia, securing independent and objective input, improving the quality of presentation of the scientific results to the managers, and strengthening peer review mechanisms.

IX. Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI)

20. The Sixth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held in Rome, Italy, 10-12 May 2011. The Session was attended by 18 delegates from all the eight RECOFI Member countries (Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates). One observer country (Yemen) and one observer organization (INFOSAMAK) attended the Session. The main objectives of the Session were to: review the work of the Commission since the last session in 2009; review the Commission's administrative and financial reports; consider select issues of particular relevance for the region, such as fish stock status reporting and trends of fisheries production, aquaculture development prospective, regional strategy for spatial planning for marine fisheries and aquaculture; review the functioning of the Commission including its consolidation and development and adopt the work programme for 2011 and 2012.

21. Main outcomes of the Commission:

- The Commission Members recognized that regional dialogue had been facilitated through Commission activities that had helped Members identify national and regional actions required to move forward with the adoption of regulations and policies to support the sustainable management of shared fisheries resources and development of the aquaculture sector;
- The Commission welcomed the comprehensive financial report concerning RECOFI's work over the 2009-2010 biennium and noted the significant FAO Regular Programme contributions to support RECOFI's work;

- The Commission agreed that capacity development remained a critical issue in the region and this was essential to enable fisheries personnel to promote policies aimed at facilitating long-term sustainability including the adoption of the ecosystem approach to fisheries;
- The Commission recognized that the establishment of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) was a significant accomplishment of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and agreed that the next WGA meeting should include one day to enable Members additional time to consider RAIS, including its capacity development requirements;
- The Commission endorsed the FAO/RECOFI joint WGA and Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) regional strategy on spatial planning for marine capture fisheries and aquaculture and decided, within available resources, to provide the necessary support for follow-up action for the strategy's implementation;
- The Commission adopted its first fisheries management recommendation, RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled "Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area". In accordance with Article V of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries, the Commission agreed that the recommendation would take effect on 1 January 2012;
- The Commission endorsed the list of prioritized projects proposed by the WGFM and agreed that the WGFM should meet annually maintaining the current October schedule;
- The Commission endorsed the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, 11–12 May 2010), and acknowledged that the analysis of the results of the survey in relation to the technical recommendations of the report on RECOFI's Consolidation and Development would guide Members to contribute more effectively to the Commission's inputs and decisions;
- The Commission concurred that many fisheries management and developmental challenges faced RECOFI. Members were calling upon the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and for this reason it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid;
- The Commission noted that the current level of Members contributions was only sufficient to fund the implementation of a limited number of priority activities, and resolved that additional funds would be required if a more ambitious work programme was to be implemented;
- In considering options considered by the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development, the Commission decided to continue applying fixed and equal contribution for Members, and agreed on a three-fold increase (i.e. from USD 5000 to USD 15 000) of the Members' annual contributions from 2013 provided that all arrears were liquidated by 31 December 2011;
- The Commission welcomed progress achieved with this initiative on fisheries management cooperation in the Northern area of RECOFI that involved three Members (Iran [Islamic Republic of], Iraq and Kuwait). The Commission stressed the value of such collaboration and requested that FAO and the RECOFI Secretariat continue supporting the initiative; and
- The Commission approved a workplan for the next inter-sessional period and agreed to support activities focusing on: capacity development for aquaculture and fisheries spatial planning and management; stock status reporting; implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries; development of regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and measures for fisheries management; pilot joint assessment of the

shared stock of kingfish; fisheries socio-economic appraisal; risk analysis in aquaculture; environmental monitoring in cage aquaculture; and maintenance and development of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS).

X. South West Indian Ocean Commission for Fisheries (SWIOFC)

22. The Fifth Session of the SWIOFC was held in Male', Maldives from 13 to 16 March 2011. It was attended by all member countries except France, Somalia and Yemen. The Agulhas-Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem (ASCLME) project, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Swedish Board of Fisheries, the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP), and the World Bank (WB) attended as observers.

23. The Commission noted the work undertaken since the 4th Session with satisfaction. Members reiterated the high priority of safety at sea and the related issue of piracy. They suggested that the proposed Conference on the contribution of fisheries development and aquaculture to the Millennium Development Goals should be broadened to encourage funding. The Commission considered the report of the Scientific Committee, reviewed the recommendations of the first working group on small pelagic and demersal fishes, and discussed the status of fisheries resources. The Commission decided to formally ask members with depleted resources to present the measures being undertaken to rehabilitate those stocks. It also reflected on the outcomes of COFI and of the Regional Fisheries Bodies Network, considered and suggested modifications to the performance review of the Commission, and proposed that review results be considered in a special sitting of the Commission, to be held back-to-back with the Steering Committee of SWIOFP in 2011. The Commission was informed of a tool under development by the EAF-Nansen project to monitor the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. The Scientific Committee was requested to integrate this tool with its other assessment responsibilities. Following discussion on the paucity of established management plans, the Commission agreed on providing a framework for SWIOFP and EAF-Nansen to provide training in the development of fisheries management plans. A special SWIOFP Steering Committee had been held immediately before the Fifth Session and the members concerned had reviewed the project. The Commission endorsed a coordinative role in a project proposal to be presented to the African Union-led strategic partnership for an investment fund to promote sustainable fisheries in Africa. It also made a statement expressing concern about the threat of piracy to sustainable fisheries management. A programme of work was considered and agreed.

24. The Special Meeting of the SWIOFC was held in Maputo, Mozambique on the 30 September 2011. It was attended by all member countries except Yemen. The ASCLME project, the Marine Resources Assessment Group (MRAG), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the SWIOFP, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the WB attended as observers.

25. The meeting considered responses to a questionnaire on SWIOFC's performance. It noted that the scores for the evolving context and challenges were variable. It discussed the low level of responses received and recommended that the reviewer make full use of verbal comments received at the Fifth Session of the Commission, Maldives, March 2011. It noted that the scores for the effectiveness of existing arrangements were more consistent and there was concurrence with the observations and summary of the reviewer. There was unanimous support for a significant reinforcement of the SWIOFC and a request for concrete proposals for the strengthening of the Commission to be presented at the Sixth Session in Mauritius, 2012. The Commission also considered a discussion paper prepared for the World Bank on fisheries governance and agreed that it should proceed following further comment by members. It was briefed on the Western Indian Ocean Sustainable Ecosystem Alliance, presented a study on the economic valuation of tuna and was updated on fisheries in Somalia.

XI. Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

26. The Fourteenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was held in Panama City, Panama, 6-9 February 2012. Delegates from 20 FAO member countries and observers from four intergovernmental organizations participated in the meeting. The session aimed to: review the state of fisheries in the region, review inter-sessional activities and guidance from COFI and the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), discuss the relationship with other regional bodies, discuss proposals for amendments to its Rules of Procedure, a WECAFC logo, the WECAFC Programme of Work (2012-13), disaster risk management in fisheries and how to strengthen the implementation of international fisheries instruments in the Caribbean region.

27. WECAFC issued a resolution on strengthening the implementation of international fisheries instruments in the Caribbean region; approved the Programme of Work (2012-13), agreed on the logo, and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Policy and Planning Workshop on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the Caribbean: Achieving Improved Fisheries Management and Utilization in the Wider Caribbean Region, held in Barbados, 6-9 December 2011.

28. As participation of the necessary two-thirds of the membership was not reached, the agreed amendments to the Rules of Procedure could not be formally adopted. Eleven member countries requested FAO assistance for the strategic reorientation of WECAFC, in view of the changing environment and limited financial resources available to WECAFC. In the coming years a decision will need to be taken on maintaining WECAFC as a FAO Article VI body, restructuring it to an Article XIV body, or abolishment, as the commission was not able to carry out its functions properly in the last decade. The use of three official working languages in WECAFC is a burden to the Organization.

ANNEX

THE GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

Introduction

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), a regional fisheries management organization established in 1949 under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, has the mandate to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the connecting waters².

GFCM operates through its Secretariat and a number of subsidiary bodies, including:

- Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), established in 1997 and supported by four Sub-Committees (and their respective Working Groups) established in 1999 namely:
 - Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystem (SCMEE)
 - Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)
 - Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)
 - Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)
- Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), established in 1995 and supported by three Working Groups:
 - Working Group on Marketing of Aquaculture Products (WGMA)
 - Working Group on Sustainability in Aquaculture (WGSA)
 - Working Group on Site Selection and Carrying Capacity (WGSC)
- Compliance Committee (COC), established in 2006
- Committee on Administrative and Finance (CAF), established in 2009

Conservation and management

GFCM has adopted a series of measures related to the management of bottom fisheries and the protection of the Mediterranean marine ecosystem³. Recent measures include the following:

- The regulation of the red coral exploitation (REC.CM GFCM/35/2011/2);
- The implementation of fisheries management measures that strongly mitigate or eliminate the risk of incidental taking in fishing operations (and/or the mortality associated with

² See Article III of the GFCM Agreement.

³ The full arsenal of measures adopted by GFCM can be consulted in the e-Compendium, which is available on the GFCM website for downloading and installation: <http://151.1.154.86/GfcmWebSite/e-Compendium/info.html>.

- those incidental takings) of seabirds (REC.CM GFCM/35/2011/3), sea-turtles (REC.CM GFCM/35/2011/4) and Mediterranean monk seals (REC.CM GFCM/35/2011/5);
- The reduction of bottom-trawling fishing effort by a minimum of ten percent (10%) in the GFCM area (RES-GFCM/33/2009/1);
 - The establishment of a Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) in the Gulf of Lions to protect spawning aggregations and deep sea sensitive habitats (REC.CM-GFCM/33/2009/1);
 - The adoption of a 40 mm square mesh as a minimum size for the codend of demersal trawlers (REC.CM-GFCM/33/2009/2);
 - The protection of three deep-sea sensitive habitats where fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets is prohibited, namely: a) “The Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca⁴”, in order to protect the deep water coral reefs located in international waters; b) “The Nile delta area cold hydrocarbon seeps⁵”, characterized by an exceptional concentration of cold hydrocarbon seeps which has favoured the development of a unique living community; and c) “The Eratosthemes Seamount⁶” in order to protect the deep sea sensitive habitat (REC.CM-GFCM/30/2006/3);
 - The prohibition of towed dredges and trawlnets fisheries at depths below 1000 meters (REC.CM-GFCM/29/2005/1); and
 - The adoption of a multi-annual recovery plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (endorsement of ICCAT Recommendations).

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS)

GFCM has focused, over the last few years, on developing and strengthening the MCS frameworks, including for deep-sea fisheries in international waters. In particular, the GFCM Control and Enforcement Scheme (RES-GFCM/29/2005/2) provides guidelines on: Flag State duties, obligations of Contracting Parties and Cooperating non- Contracting Parties, compliance and enforcement (including High Seas inspections), port inspections and observer programmes. Since then, GFCM has adopted a series of measures related to:

- The procedures and criteria for the acceptance of entities as Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (REC.MCS-GFCM/30/2006/5);
- A Regional Scheme on Port State measures to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing in the GFCM area (REC.MCS-GFCM/32/2008/1);
- The minimum standards for the establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) (REC.MCS-GFCM/33/2009/7); and
- The establishment of a GFCM Logbook for fishing vessels larger than 15 meters in overall length (LOA), authorized to fish in the GFCM area and registered on the GFCM Record of Vessels (operational by 2013) (REC. MCS-GFCM/34/2010/1 as amended by REC. MCS-GFCM/35/2011/1).

⁴ Fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets shall be prohibited in the areas bounded by lines joining the following coordinates: 39° 27.72' N, 18° 10.74' E|39° 27.80' N, 18° 26.68' E|39° 11.16' N, 18° 04.28' E|39° 11.16' N, 18° 32.58' E

⁵ Fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets shall be prohibited in the areas bounded by lines joining the following coordinates: 31° 30.00' N, 33° 10.00' E|31° 30.00' N, 34° 00.00' E|32° 00.00' N, 34° 00.00' E|32° 00.00' N, 33° 10.00' E

⁶ Fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets shall be prohibited in the areas bounded by lines joining the following coordinates: 33° 00.00' N, 32° 00.00' E|33° 00.00' N, 33° 00.00' E|34° 00.00' N, 33° 00.00' E|34° 00.00' N, 32° 00.00' E

In terms of records of fishing vessels, the following have been adopted:

- A Regional Fishing Vessel Register, including all sizes of fishing vessels (REC.DIR-GFCM/33/2009/5);
- The GFCM Record of Vessels over 15m authorised to fish in the GFCM Convention area (REC.MCS-GFCM/33/2009/6); and
- A list of vessels presumed to have carried out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the GFCM area (REC.MCS-GFCM/33/2009/8).

In terms of fishing capacity, the levels of the overall fishing capacity in the GFCM area are to be determined based on a Regional Plan of Action considering the national and regional fishing capacity management plans and scientific advice (REC.MCS-GFCM/34/2010/2).

GFCM also adopts a series of Recommendations on “data and information reporting” aiming at establishing Regional Databases for management purposes:

- Aquaculture production statistics, production centers and market information (REC.DIR-GFCM/35/2011/6); and
- Qualitative and quantitative information on the fishing activity by Fleet Segment and Operational Unit (REC.DIR-GFCM/33/2009/3).

Finally, GFCM, through its Compliance Committee (REC.MCS-GFCM/30/2006/6), reviews each year the compliance of Members or Cooperating non-Members with their obligations under the GFCM Agreement (especially the binding Recommendations in force) and/or international law. GFCM requests the Members and/or Cooperating non-Members to take remedial actions to address the act or omission identified so as not to diminish the effectiveness of GFCM management measures. Other Members and non Cooperating non-Members are encouraged to cooperate (REC.MCS-GFCM/34/2010/3).

Cooperation mechanisms

GFCM enjoys the support of FAO Projects at sub-regional and regional level (AdriaMed, ArtFiMed, CopeMed, EastMed, MedFisis and MedSudMed) which enhance, in particular, scientific cooperation and capacity building in participating countries. GFCM cooperates also closely with a number of regional and international organizations, such as: ICCAT, ACCOBAMS, Oceana, RAC MED, Pelagos Sanctuary, Eurofish, Black Sea Commission, IUCN, GEF, CIESM, MedPan, EBCD, Greenpeace or WWF. Among them, there is also UNEP-MAP. In this very connection, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been recently prepared by UNEP-MAP and GFCM, focusing on the following five areas of cooperation: (i) promoting ecosystem based approaches for the conservation of marine environment and ecosystems and the sustainable use of marine living resources, (ii) mitigating the impact of fisheries and aquaculture activities on the marine habitats and species, (iii) identifying, protecting and managing marine areas of particular importance in the Mediterranean (e.g. hot spots of biodiversity, areas with sensitive habitats, essential fish habitats, areas of importance for fisheries and/or for the conservation of endangered species, coastal wetlands), (iv) integrated maritime policy and (v) legal, institutional and policy related cooperation. Activities relating to each and every single

area of cooperation have been also identified and are expected to be jointly carried out by UNEP MAP and GFCM in accordance with the clauses of the proposed MoU.

The way forward

For the past sixty years GFCM has been building a partnership framework that established effective management cooperation for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. After 60 years it is now time to consolidate achieved results and GFCM is moving towards a new legal and institutional frameworks as well as towards improved sustainability, based on the best scientific knowledge, as a firm foundation for new challenges in synergy with its partners, various stakeholders and Member countries. To this end, two initiatives have been launched in 2011:

- The “Task Force aimed at improving and modernizing the GFCM legal and institutional framework”: following upon the review of GFCM performances, this instrument is expected to lead to the amendment of GFCM Agreement and the rules of procedures, consistent with decisions that will be taken at the 36th session of the Commission (14-19 May, Marrakesh, Morocco); and
- The “GFCM Framework Programme (FWP) in support to the Task Force to promote Sustainable Development and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (2013-2018)”: conceived as a dynamic platform, the FWP is intended, through multi-annual and multi-donor arrangements, to build up a GFCM regional holistic vision of management of fisheries and aquaculture. Five thematic areas (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, Improving data collection and reporting capacity, Aquaculture, capture fisheries and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Marine Protected Areas and artificial reefs, Enhancing artisanal fisheries) and two geographical areas (Strengthening fisheries management in the Black Sea area, and Supporting capture fisheries and aquaculture in the Southern Mediterranean Sea) have been identified and will be addressed through the implementation of specific work packages. In this regard, it is foreseen that under the umbrella of the FWP, and as relevant within the remit of the said identified areas of intervention, specific initiatives can be carried out by the GFCM together with partner organizations thus creating synergies, optimizing the use of resources and avoiding duplications consistent with the current need for a strengthened and more rational environmental governance.