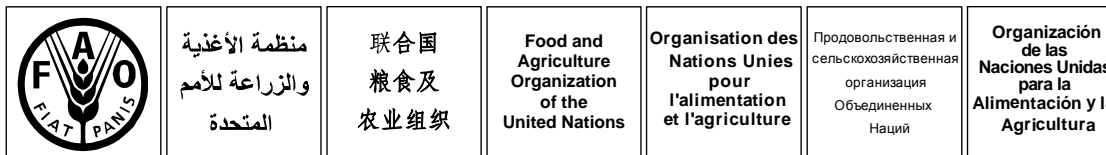


October 2012



# REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

## Sixth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Doha, Qatar, 5-8 November 2012

### MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE RECOFI WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

#### Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Regional Commission on Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on the outcomes of the fifth session of the Working Group that was held in Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 9 to 12 October 2011.<sup>1</sup>

#### The WGFM is invited to:

- consider the outcomes agreed at the fifth WGFM meeting and to comment, as appropriate; and
- provide information in relation to issues where national action was required.

## I. BACKGROUND

1. RECOFI's WGFM fifth meeting was attended by 16 delegates from Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, and by 12 observers. The WGFM reviewed the main outcomes of RECOFI's sixth session (Rome, Italy, 10–12 May 2011) and the WGFM's fifth meeting (Tehran, Iran [Islamic Republic of], 9–12 October 2011), updated the WGFM's programme of work and budget for the 2011–2012, reconsidered a proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the RECOFI region, specifically with respect to the establishment of a database of violations considered progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI

<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2011. *Report of the fifth session of the Working Group on Fisheries Management*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 986. Rome. 60 pp.

recommendation on minimum data reporting, undertook a preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI fisheries management database, considered a RECOFI scientific working group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management, reviewed RECOFI cooperation with the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) and considered other matters (revision and updating of the list of priority species supporting fisheries of common interest in the RECOFI area).

## II. MAIN OUTCOMES AND DECISION

2. In relation to the workshops to be undertaken in 2012 and 2013, the WGFM agreed that the:
  - Workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries (February 2012): there would be merit in extending the coverage of the workshop to include industrial fisheries, as appropriate, while recognizing that a strong focus on small-scale fisheries was needed because of the importance of small-scale fishing in the RECOFI region. (paragraph 31)
  - Workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management (June 2012): the workshop should focus primarily on addressing the development of regional fisheries management plans. (paragraph 31)
  - Workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management: issues to be included in the terms of reference (TORs) are in Appendix 1. (paragraph 31)

Pilot joint assessment of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data (February 2013): the workshop's TORs should address biological parameters, distribution patterns, status of stocks, catch capacity, etc. In addition, it was stressed that a good understanding of fishing operations and regulations in force was required in order to ensure that there was an appropriate interpretation and utilization of fishery-dependent information. To facilitate consistency in reporting, the WGFM **agreed** that Members would prepare a country report prior to the workshop along the lines of a template to be provided by the Secretariat. (paragraph 31)
3. With respect to the suggested actions by the WGFM concerning the review of the regional strategy and prioritized activities, review of proposed projects in the list of projects, inclusion of additional projects and reduction in the number and scope of projects, the WGFM **agreed** that these issues should be addressed again in depth at the sixth meeting of the WGFM scheduled for October 2012. (paragraph 32)
4. Members further agreed that they should carry out a survey on the status and extent of IUU fishing in their respective countries. The delegate from the Sultanate of Oman **agreed** to draft a questionnaire that would be circulated to Members for their review and comment prior to the sixth meeting of the WGFM in Qatar in 2012. Furthermore, the WGFM **agreed** that Members would make a brief presentation on IUU fishing in their respective countries at the sixth session of the WGFM. (paragraph 36)
5. The WGFM was advised that, at the present time, there was no standard data collection protocol to fulfil minimum data reporting requirements. Although it was recognized that Members were responsible for establishing suitable data collection and monitoring systems as well as for the quality assurance of data submitted, the WGFM **agreed** it was useful for Members to describe their data collection procedures as a means of facilitating better and more accurate interpretation and analysis of information submitted. The WGFM **agreed** that the exchange of size composition data could be deferred until such time when the utilization of this information would be reviewed and defined more clearly. (paragraph 46)
6. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed an interest in hosting the capture fisheries information system, similar to RAIS, as part of the main RECOFI Information Network. The

Iranian delegation **agreed** to provide a proposal for such a system at the sixth meeting of the WGFM for its consideration. (paragraph 50)

7. The WGFM **agreed** that FAO would take steps towards hosting the main components of the RECOFI Information Network, including maintenance of formal document registries and the shared database, to the extent that funds permitted. (paragraph 51)

8. The WGFM recalled the general requirements for the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and the importance of defining proper operational objectives, reference points to trigger management actions and corresponding indicators to monitor the status of targets and implementation of actions. The WGFM also recognized the importance of careful analysis of basic information, including consolidated catch and efforts statistics, biology and ecology of targeted resources, operational aspects of fisheries, the relationship between possible indicators and targets, potential noises and biases, and procedures to consolidate multiple indicators to select an effective set of indicators. The WGFM **agreed** to incorporate the indicators into the TORs for the workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management. (paragraph 53)

9. The WGFM **agreed** that the proposed multidisciplinary scientific expert group would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development for fisheries management and aquaculture. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran **agreed** to draft TORs for a multidisciplinary scientific expert group that would be submitted for consideration at the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012. (paragraph 56)

10. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran **agreed** to draft TORs for a multidisciplinary scientific expert group that would be submitted for consideration at the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012. In the meantime, the Secretary of RECOFI was requested to contact the Technical Secretary of the WGA, requesting that the WGA consider the establishment of such an expert group.

11. The WGFM **agreed** that species not relevant to a Member's fisheries would be removed from the FIRMS fisheries inventory. Members agreed to revise the graphs, ensuring the introduction of the three or four most important species in the catches. (paragraph 61)

12. As corporate owner of the aggregated inventory, RECOFI would ensure, in collaboration with the FIRMS Secretariat, that **agreed** conventions and harmonized rules were applied. Without RECOFI's agreement, no information under RECOFI's ownership could be published by FIRMS. (paragraph 63)

13. The WGFM **agreed** that, with the assistance of the FIRMS Secretariat, Members would develop the inventory content in an Excel template with reference to the harmonized framework (3D diagrams). During this process, any harmonization issue that could not be resolved would be recorded and the next meeting of the WGFM would examine the regionally aggregated inventory and decide on reported outstanding harmonization issues. (paragraph 64)

14. The WGFM **agreed** that FAO statistical subarea 51.3 "Western Arabian Sea" should be divided into two divisions: 51.3.1 for the Oman Sea and 51.3.2 for the Arabian Sea (South Western). The approximate limits of the two divisions were indicated and agreed on the map. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman **agreed** to provide geographic coordinates for the proposed delineation. (paragraph 70)

15. The WGFM **agreed** to revise and update the list of priority species supporting fisheries of common interest in the RECOFI area at the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012. (paragraph 77)

**Appendix 1****Issues to be included in the terms of reference for the workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management**

The following issues should be included:

- 1) obtaining up-to-date information on the fisheries management systems adopted by Members;
- 2) reviewing current fisheries management plans and management measures enforced by Members, including threats to management posed by IUU fishing;
- 3) compiling available information in accordance with Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, including the preliminary compilation of indicators;
- 4) assessing the suitability and applicability of the proposed indicators;
- 5) presenting and sharing information acquired by Members through the implementation of fishery appraisal surveys, including those recently carried out by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Iran [Islamic Republic of] and Oman in the Arabian Sea;
- 6) taking account of the outcomes of the social and economic workshop; and
- 7) taking due consideration of management needs from the conservation viewpoint.