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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Seventh Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 5-7 November 2013

Main outcomes of the seventh session of RECOFI and implications for the WGFM

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on the outcome of the Seventh Session of RECOFI that was held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 14 to 16 May 2013.

The WGFM is invited to:

- consider and comment on the outcomes of the Seventh Session of RECOFI, with particular consideration to the implications for the WGFM work to be implemented during the intersession period.

BACKGROUND

The Seventh Session of RECOFI, was held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 14 to 16 May 2013. The Session was attended by 20 delegates from five of the eight RECOFI Member countries (Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar; Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates did not attend). Eleven observers (GCC, KISR, IFRO, COFI Chairperson) attended the Session...

The Commission reviewed the work carried out since the last session in 2011 including the Commission's administrative and financial reports; considered select issues of particular relevance for the region, such as the state of the aquaculture, fish stock status reporting, regional strategy for spatial planning for marine fisheries and aquaculture, and fisheries management advices formulated by the WGFM; review the financial situation and its consequences on the functioning of the Commission, and adopt the work programme for 2013 and 2014.

Mr Ali Mojahedi, Acting Deputy for Fishing and Fishing Harbours, Iran Fisheries Organization (SHILAT), Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture, Islamic Republic of Iran, was unanimously elected RECOFI Chairperson.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS

The main outcomes of the session and decisions taken by the Commission were the following:

- The Commission **noted** the rich programme implemented over the intersessional period, **appreciated** the support and efforts of the Secretariat for facilitating this, and **reaffirmed** that priority should be given to work on shared stocks, in particular giving due consideration to migratory and species supporting fisheries of common interest.
- The Commission **reiterated** the relevance of aquaculture as a priority, including marine cage culture and **agreed** that a long-term regional strategy for aquaculture development, including the involvement of the private sector, needs to be established.
- The Commission **welcomed** the opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Fishery Resources Committee of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other relevant regional partners including the execution of joint activities of fisheries and aquaculture.
- The Commission **acknowledged** the comprehensive financial report concerning RECOFI's work over the 2011-2012 biennium.
- The Commission **reiterated** the importance of Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) as an information tool supporting the aquaculture sector and **decided** not to expand RAIS to accommodate data and information from marine capture fisheries.
- The Commission **noted** that the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) called for an urgent need to formulate a regional management plan for the narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, taking into account results obtained through the work undertaken by the Member countries and relevant regional entities and the joint research project to be designed by all Member countries.
- The Commission **acknowledged** the WGFM advice on a reduction in shrimp trawling effort, effective implementation of regulations and management measures, as well as the consideration of socio-economic factors in the decision making processes and advised the WGFM to further develop the concrete management procedures.

- The Commission **did not endorse** the WGFM advice related to the freeze on new fishing licenses.
- The Commission **noted** with approval the establishment and ongoing work of the RECOFI Task Group for fisheries socio-economics, in particular that this is the first instance in RECOFI where the initiative to develop and implement a Task Group has come from Member countries themselves.
- The Commission **commended and further encouraged** the general and genuine commitment by Members to implement the Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting, that entered into effect 1 January 2012, and recognized the need to establish a RECOFI regional database and information system maintained by the Commission in order to support regional fisheries management in the long term.
- The Commission **expressed its preference** to maintain the status quo in terms of its participation in FIRMS in that it will participate through FAO membership for the present time.
- The Commission **expressed its support** for actions taken to minimize the impacts of fishing to the environment, including the utilization of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD) at national and regional level, and encouraged knowledge and experience sharing in the RECOFI region that would lead to develop a regional management measure to reduce bycatch in the future.
- The Commission **commended** the RECOFI Secretariat for its role in finalizing the northern area tripartite initiative project document which was endorsed by the three countries (the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, and the State of Kuwait) and for its efforts in seeking financial support from regional institutions.
- The Commission **reiterated** Member countries would have to ensure adequate funding for the Secretariat in order to preserve the work of the Commission, as this is becoming increasingly essential for the sustainability of shared fishery resources and aquaculture development in the region.
- The Commission **approved** a workplan for the next intersessional period and agreed to support activities focusing on: joint assessment of the narrow-barred Spanish mackerel; establishment of a regional fisheries management framework; development of a regional programme to address UU fishing; formulation of national/regional strategy on aquatic animal health; aquaculture recirculation technologies; risk analysis in aquaculture.
- The **eighth session** of RECOFI will be hosted by the Republic of Iraq in May 2015.