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Organización
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

FISHERY COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

Twenty-first Session

Dakar, Senegal, 20 – 22 April 2016

Action on Recommendations of the Twentieth Session

SUMMARY

This paper summarizes actions taken by the Secretariat to address recommendation directed at the Secretariat at the Twentieth session as well as general observations and recommendations related to the work of the Committee, the Scientific sub-committee and its working groups. The focus of the discussions at the Twentieth session evolved around the report of the scientific sub-committee and the CECAF performance review carried out in 2011/2012.

The Committee is asked to reflect upon the follow up to the recommendations of the Twentieth session in the context of the discussions that will take place at the Twenty-first session. The Committee is also asked to provide any additional relevant information from a national perspective and to comment on the continued relevance and pertinence of the recommendations emerging from the CECAF performance review.

INTRODUCTION

1. At its Twentieth Session (Rabat, Morocco, 14-16 March 2012), the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) made a number of observations and recommendations to the Secretariat and its Members.
2. This paper summarizes actions taken by the Secretariat at the Twentieth session to address these recommendations, as well as general observations and recommendations related to the work of the Committee, the Scientific sub-committee and its working groups. At the Twentieth session, the discussions evolved around the report of the scientific sub-committee and the CECAF performance review carried out in 2011. The relevant paragraph numbers of the Report of the Twentieth Session are given in brackets, as appropriate. Many of the issues and suggested follow-up actions are also considered in subsequent meeting documents of the Twenty-first session, such as CECAF/XXI/2016/3, CECAF/XXI/2016/4, and CECAF/XXI/2016/7.

ACTIONS ON OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN RELATION TO THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC SUB-COMMITTEE

3. The observations and recommendations made by the Committee in relation to the work of the Scientific Sub-committee is synthesised below, together with notes on the actions taken by the Secretariat or other related information. The observations have been grouped into three different categories relating to: i) data, assessment and management advice; ii) the nature of the management recommendations and issues related to their implementation; and iii) fisheries management plans and regional agreements for shared stocks.

Observations/recommendations made by the committee at the Twentieth session on issues relating to data, assessment and management advice

4. The following observations/recommendations were made:
 - i) **Improved data and scientific research:** *The Committee 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. At the same time the continued problems with the limited availability of data to conduct assessments in many countries, particularly, but not limited, to the Southern CECAF region was regretted. The Committee recognized that this situation was leading to limited knowledge on many stocks and making it difficult to apply assessment models. **The need to improve data collection and scientific research** to address this situation was pointed out, as well as **the need to continue and maintain existing data series and ensuring that all data are made available to the Working Groups for the assessments. In the case of non-improvement in the data situation, the Working Groups might have to consider revisiting the list of species/stocks analyzed (Paragraph 28).***
 - ii) **Regional surveys:** *The Committee noted with satisfaction the efforts made by some of the countries in the CECAF North region to ensure the continuation of the coordinated surveys for pelagic stocks. However, it noted with concern the non-participation of one of the partners in this regional endeavour. **An appeal was made***

for all partners to respect this regional commitment, to ensure a complete coverage of the pelagic stocks, traditionally the backbone of the assessments of these species. As a response, the difficulties with obtaining and securing an adequate research budget were highlighted. (Paragraph 29)

- iii) **Cooperation with other organizations and initiatives that work on scientific issues:** Similarly the need to improve linkages between CECAF and other organizations conducting assessments in the region was stressed. (Paragraph 30). The Committee was also informed of an EU initiative aiming at improving the availability of data from the EU fleet to the CECAF Working Groups, including the setting up of a Working Group within the EU to ensure harmonization and timely submission of EU data as well as stimulating discussions on methodological issues. The need to ensure complementarity and not overlap with CECAF activities should be assured (Paragraph 31).
 - iv) **Participation:** *Finally the Committee recognized the importance of ensuring participation of all countries in the SSC and its associated Working Group.*
 - v) **Interactions fisheries and environment:** *The importance of fisheries independent data and the need to continue the scientific surveys was stressed, as well as for improved understanding of the interactions between fisheries resources and the environment.*
5. **SECRETARIAT'S OBSERVATIONS:** In 2014 and 2015, a technical review of the working group outputs was conducted with the aim to improve their functioning and get advice on possible alternative strategies to assessments, in particular for some of the data poor stocks. The work included independent reviews of all of the working groups which were presented and discussed at an expert workshop. The expert workshop produced a proposal for developing alternative assessment approaches and produced a transparent decision-making strategy for the types of analysis possible based on available information. The results of the expert workshop was presented to the 7th Scientific Sub-committee in 2015, and are available in the meeting reports. The planning group for the coordination of acoustic surveys off Northwest Africa met in 2015 with the intention to conduct a joint acoustic survey in 2016. The working groups on the assessment of small pelagic fish off Northwest Africa has been looking at including an environmental index in the assessment models applied.

Observations/recommendations made by the committee at the Twentieth session on issues relating to the nature and implementation of the management recommendations

6. The following observations/recommendations were made:
- i) **Implementation by decision makers and attendance of managers at CECAF:** *The Committee expressed concern that despite the pertinence of the recommendations made by the SSC, their implementation by decision-makers has been deficient and that in most cases little or no action is taken to address the recommendations at management level. The low attendance of fisheries managers at the Committee sessions was also raised, questioning how the scientific advice made available could be brought to their attention for follow-up action (Paragraph 32)*

- ii) **Nature of the recommendations:** *The general nature of the recommendations were also discussed, as well as the importance of translating these into more operational management recommendations, while recognizing the limitations the Working Groups are facing at this stage (Paragraph 33). The Committee also raised the issue of how the species specific recommendations could be addressed in a multi-specific context, giving the example of licenses being issued for species groups. (Paragraph 34).*
- iii) **Collaboration between organizations:** *The Committee 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. The need to ensure stronger linkages with Regional Economic Groupings to facilitate funding mechanisms was also suggested.*

7. **SECRETARIAT'S OBSERVATIONS:** The need for improved discussions and interactions on scientific results at national level between scientists and managers have also been a key topic at working group meetings. The Secretariat, with the support from the EAF-Nansen programme, have also organised specific discussions between managers and scientists at the working groups with the aim to improve the communication and understanding of needs and requirements. An electronic questionnaire addressing the use and consideration of CECAF scientific advice in national management processes have been sent to all coastal States in advance of the 2016 Committee meeting, and the results will be presented in CECAF/XXI/2016/4. One aim with this questionnaire was to understand the exact expectations with respect to management advice. A planned workshop to address how collaboration and linkages with other regional or sub-regional fisheries bodies in the CECAF region could not be conducted as planned and this topic is further discussed in CECAF/XXI/2016/7.

Observations/recommendations made by the committee at the Twentieth session on issues relating to fisheries management plans and regional agreements for shared stocks

8. The following observations/recommendations were made:

- i) **Importance of management plans:** *The Committee pointed out the importance of management plans, and reported on the use and application of the management recommendations made available by CECAF in national management. In this respect some improvement can be seen in the region for the use of the scientific advice. (Paragraph 32)*
- ii) **Regional agreements on shared stocks:** *The shared nature of many of the region resources makes the application of many of the global recommendations for reduction in catch and effort more difficult to address at national level with the absence of a regional agreement. The Committee therefore, 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.*

9. **SECRETARIAT'S OBSERVATIONS:** An electronic questionnaire looking into the use and consideration of CECAF scientific advice in national management processes have been sent to all coastal States in advance of the 2016 Committee meeting, and the results will be presented in CECAF/XXI/2016/4. The contribution and possible role of CECAF in a regional agreement on small pelagic resources off Northwest Africa has been looked into in the discussions facilitated by the CCLME project with the countries in Northwest Africa, in collaboration with the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission and with support from the EAF-Nansen project on the development of a regional framework in accordance with an ecosystem approach to fisheries.

ACTIONS ON OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN RELATION TO THE CECAF PERFORMANCE REVIEW

10. A technical performance review of CECAF was carried out in 2011. This review identified 24 recommendations, all of which are documented in Annex E of the Report of the Twentieth Committee session (FAO, 2012) (CECAF/XXI/2016/Inf.1). The comments made by the Committee at its Twentieth session on these recommendations are reviewed below, as well as actions that were initiated by the Secretariat to address some of the recommendations. While the Committee did not always make a specific recommendation on action to the Secretariat on all issues, in light of the discussions at the Twenty-first session it was thought useful to share, in a summarised form the observations made in relation to the different recommendations at the Twentieth session. For ease of reference and to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding the relevant performance review recommendations are also provided. In addition the full set of recommendations are provided in Appendix 1.

11. Performance Review Recommendation 1 (PRR 1): *“CECAF should expand its area of competence to formally include the Angolan coast (besides the Cabinda Province). Fisheries resources present on the northern part of the Angolan coast have already been included in the analyses and recommendations done by the Committee. The inclusion of Angola in CECAF area of competence would thus just formalize a “de facto” situation”*

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS TWENTIETH SESSION:** *With regards to the Convention Area, there was a general recognition of the value of the recommendation to expand it southward, in order to include the Angolan coast.*
- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** No formal legal action has been taken by the Secretariat to include Angola under the competence area of FAO. However the scientific working groups for small pelagic and demersal resources, sub-group south, continues to include the fisheries resources present on the northern part of the Angolan coast that are shared between Angola and the countries to the North in the assessments. CECAF consequently provides management advice for these stocks.

12. PRR2: *“CECAF should restrict its area of competence to the Economic Exclusive Zone of its members. The exclusion of the area beyond national jurisdiction from CECAF mandate is justified by the different nature of the present legal regime applied to the high seas and to the EEZ, in regard of the exploitation and conservation of living marine resources. The*

present statutes of CECAF, as an FAO Article VI body, do not allow it to have enforcement (regulatory) powers, which are essential for the management of high-seas stocks”.

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS TWENTIETH SESSION:** *The possible restriction of the Convention Area to the EEZ of coastal member countries, however, was considered problematic, requiring, therefore, further analysis and discussion.*
- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** At the last session of the Scientific Sub-Committee the issue of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction was introduced, and a Workshop on Deep-sea fisheries (including high seas fisheries) and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems is planned this year, with support from the FAO Deep-sea fisheries programme.

13. PRR 4: *“CECAF inactive members should be identified and requested to either participate more actively in the activities of the Committee or else to formally withdraw from it. The lack of participation or interest by many CECAF members in the work of the Committee jeopardizes its credibility and compromises its legality”.*

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT IT’S TWENTIETH SESSION:** *It was noted that many of these countries (that had not participated in any of the Committee meetings; Secretariat addition) were distant water states who were probably only members for historical reasons. Such a process would have to be launched by the FAO Director-General. In case those absent members confirm their willingness to continue their membership of CECAF, however, a higher degree of participation by them should be requested and stimulated.*
- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** Many of the distant water country members of CECAF are now members of the European Union. In the context of the Committee and the Scientific Sub-Committee they participate as part of the EU delegation. The Secretariat has identified members that have not been active for some time, and a process to contact them to confirm their continued interest in membership is under development.

14. PRR 5: *“The infrastructure, as well as human and financial resources, available to CECAF Secretariat should be reinforced, and, at least, the CECAF Secretary should deal exclusively with CECAF issues”* and **PRR 6:** *“CECAF should seek alternatives to secure more extra-budgetary resources to supplement the resources made available to it under the FAO Regular Programme Budget, including through self-financing by its members. This should be achieved, nevertheless, in a pragmatic, gradual and well-planned manner, taking full account of the different socio-economic realities faced by the different members”.*

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS TWENTIETH SESSION:** *The Committee emphasized the need of a continued support from FAO to the work of CECAF, both technically and financially, highlighting the importance of the Committee as a regional reference for fisheries management and scientific advice. It was also noted that FAO assistance would be important for the countries to also provide their support to the Committee. The Committee, however, agreed that **alternatives for having extra***

budgetary funding secured for the Committee should also be actively pursued. In this respect, it was noted that this would need to be a collective effort, and not only up to FAO, with countries taking responsibility as well.

- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** Although the resources available to the Secretariat have been limited during the intersessional period, FAO has continued its support to CECAF, principally through ensuring technical support to the conduct of the scientific working groups and to follow-up on scientific work, FAO has raised funding from projects and donors to support the functioning of the scientific work as well as in support of the statutory body meetings. A model for cooperation and country contributions have been developed through the small pelagic North Working group. This issue is further discussed in relation to meeting document CECAF/XXI/2016/7 of the Twenty-first session.

15. **PRR 7:** “A more structured coordination between CECAF and other Regional Fisheries Bodies (ATLAFCO, SRFC, FCWC, and COREP), as well as the major ongoing field projects (e.g. the EAF- Nansen Project, Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project- GCLME, and the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project- CCLME), active in the same geographical area, is urgent in order to clarify individual roles, to avoid duplication of efforts and undesirable competition, to prevent the waste of resources and to maximize synergies and cooperation. To this aim, CECAF should organize a joint meeting with all stakeholders, including RFBs and Field Projects, to develop strategies for a more structured and formal cooperation, including through the drafting of specific Memoranda of Understandings (MOU)” **PRR 12:** “A more structured and formal cooperation among CECAF, the other RFBs active in the area (ATLAFCO, SRFC, FCWC, COREP), the major ongoing projects (EAF-Nansen, GLCME, CCLME, etc.), and Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, UEMOA), should be pursued to improve coordination (see recommendation 7)”.

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT IT’S TWENTIETH SESSION:** *The Committee agreed that a better coordination with the different regional and sub-regional fisheries bodies, and projects active in the area, including Regional Economic Communities (RECs), was essential, inter alia by means of formal agreements. To this aim, the recommendation from the performance review to hold regional meetings for coordination, so that the roles and responsibilities of the several regional fisheries bodies and projects in the region could be clarified, was supported with the understanding that this should be organized soon.*
- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** The other Regional and sub-regional fisheries bodies in the CECAF area are always invited to the CECAF statutory meetings where they commonly provide contributions under “other issues”. A regional Workshop to discuss improved coordination was planned under the Nepad FAO Fish Project (NFFP), however, for various reasons this activity could not be conducted. While the regional projects that FAO contributes to or are responsible for (e.g. EAF-Nansen and CCLME) are well aligned and both contribute to and make use of CECAF’s results, the formal collaboration between other regional and sub-regional bodies and regional economic groupings and fisheries under other agencies responsibilities is often limited to the exchanges in the context of the CECAF statutory meetings and on a case by case basis. Hence,

more effort is needed to achieve this recommendation in the upcoming period to better understand the needs and exigencies of the different organisations and their member states.

16. PRR8: *“CECAF Statutes and Rules of Procedure should be revised and modernized, in order to incorporate the modern concepts of fisheries management, reflected in international fisheries instruments”.*

- **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS TWENTIETH SESSION:** *The Committee agreed that there was a need to update the CECAF statutes, in order to incorporate modern concepts of fisheries management, such as the Ecosystem Approach and the Precautionary approach. A concern was however expressed that some of the recommendations made in the review made implied an enlarging of CECAF activities and that, therefore, under present circumstances, it might be better to focus on certain issues where no other organizations work, such as on scientific aspects, and improve collaboration with other organizations on other aspects. The fact that any change of CECAF statutes would have to follow a strict and rather long legal process was also noted. The session recalled that the possible transition from Committee (Article VI-2) to Commission (Article VI-1 or Article XIV) was previously discussed, and that the countries had agreed to maintain the status quo of the Committee for various reasons.*
- **SECRETARIATS OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS:** This review is still necessary to make CECAF more aligned with modern concepts of fisheries management. The Secretariat is consulting with the FAO Legal Office on this matter.

17. The recommendations of the performance review related to the need to improve the provision of data were broadly supported (see PRR9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15), with the importance of having more refined biological information on the species caught being particularly highlighted (PPR15), since this was considered essential to allow the use of more sophisticated models to assess the state of the exploited stocks. The Secretariat continues to stress the importance of biological data, and all of the scientific working groups make recommendations on key issues to address in relation to data as well as research for each of the species or stock units assessed. These recommendations are primarily directed at national institutions or potential partners that may be able to support the follow-up of these recommendations.

18. The other recommendations from the performance review were not all explicitly addressed by the Committee, although some of them had already been addressed indirectly through the discussions in relation to the SSC report. All of the Performance Review recommendations are provided in Appendix 1.

The Committee at its twentieth session also noted that the report of the performance review should be considered as the beginning and not the end of the process, since it was meant to initiate a debate that should be followed by concrete actions from the Committee, aiming at improving its performance. In this context, it was agreed that an action plan to address the different recommendations should be prepared by the Secretariat for further review by

CECAF members. This action plan still needs to be finalised and agreed upon by the Committee and would need to include realistic targets for achievement.

REQUESTED ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

19. The Committee is asked to reflect upon the follow up to the recommendations of the Twentieth session in the context of the discussions held at the 21st session.
20. To complement information provided in this document. Countries are also asked to share any additional information in relation to the actions taken at the national level to address the recommendations of the Twentieth session of CECAF.
21. In particular, the Committee is asked to comment on the review recommendations, with the aim to feed into the development of an action plan as proposed by the review at the end of the Committee meeting.

APPENDIX I: Main recommendations of the 2011 CECAF Technical Review

1. CECAF should expand its area of competence to formally include the Angolan coast (besides the Cabinda Province). Fisheries resources present on the northern part of the Angolan coast have already been included in the analyses and recommendations done by the Committee. The inclusion of Angola in CECAF area of competence would thus just formalize a “de facto” situation.
2. CECAF should restrict its area of competence to the Economic Exclusive Zone of its members. The exclusion of the area beyond national jurisdiction from CECAF mandate is justified by the different nature of the present legal regime applied to the high seas and to the EEZ, in regard of the exploitation and conservation of living marine resources. The present statutes of CECAF, as an FAO Article VI body, do not allow it to have enforcement (regulatory) powers, which are essential for the management of high-seas stocks.
3. Efforts to identify discrete stocks of marine species exploited under CECAF mandate should be strengthened and the management measures should have a comprehensive regional or sub-regional scope.
4. CECAF inactive members should be identified and requested to either participate more actively in the activities of the Committee or else to formally withdraw from it. The lack of participation or interest by many CECAF members in the work of the Committee jeopardizes its credibility and compromises its legality.
5. The infrastructure, as well as human and financial resources, available to CECAF Secretariat should be reinforced, and, at least, the CECAF Secretary should deal exclusively with CECAF issues.
6. CECAF should seek alternatives to secure more extra-budgetary resources to supplement the resources made available to it under the FAO Regular Programme Budget, including through self-financing by its members. This should be achieved, nevertheless, in a pragmatic, gradual and well-planned manner, taking full account of the different socio-economic realities faced by the different members.
7. A more structured coordination between CECAF and other Regional Fisheries Bodies (ATLAFCO, SRFC, FCWC, and COREP), as well as the major ongoing field projects (e.g. the EAF- Nansen Project, Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project- GCLME, and the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project- CCLME), active in the same geographical area, is urgent in order to clarify individual roles, to avoid duplication of efforts and undesirable competition, to prevent the waste of resources and to maximize synergies and cooperation. To this aim, CECAF should organize a joint meeting with all stakeholders, including RFBs and Field Projects, to develop strategies for a more structured and formal cooperation, including through the drafting of specific Memoranda of Understandings (MOU).
8. CECAF Statutes and Rules of Procedure should be revised and modernized, in order to incorporate the modern concepts of fisheries management, reflected in international fisheries instruments.
9. Although the collection of fishery and biological data is under the responsibility of CECAF members at a national level, the Committee should try to enhance and facilitate efforts to improve data collection, analysis and sharing through the adoption of standardized formats, development of methodologies adapted to the reality of the artisanal fisheries sector, establishment of long-term sampling programs and implementation of more effective mechanisms for data sharing and processing.

10. Although significant progress has been achieved in regard of stock identification including their geographical delimitation, efforts in this direction should be strengthened.
11. A mechanism to follow-up the research activities conducted by member countries between meetings in relation to what has been planned should be implemented. Without a follow-up mechanism, it is difficult to assess the progress achieved in the past and consequently to adequately plan future activities.
12. A more structured and formal cooperation among CECAF, the other RFBs active in the area (ATLAFCO, SRFC, FCWC, COREP), the major ongoing projects (EAF-Nansen, GLCME, CCLME, etc.), and Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, UEMOA), should be pursued to improve coordination (see recommendation 7).
13. CECAF should start to gather information on fishing capacity in the region, since this kind of information is essential for an adequate planning of fisheries management.
14. The periodicity of CECAF SSC meetings, if possible, should be made annual, but, at least, should be kept biennial, avoiding longer periods which make the monitoring of the status of the stocks extremely difficult. The data available are normally one year old, at least, due to the difficulties associated to the time-consuming process of collection and preparation of the statistical information to be used in the assessments. This fact, associated to the long time elapsed between assessments, renders the management recommendations, in many instances, outdated and, therefore, much less effective or even useless.
15. Efforts should be developed to improve the data available on the biology of the main species, so that more sophisticated models could be eventually applied, including estimation of the uncertainty associated to the assessments. The lack of variance and uncertainty indicators in the assessments weakens the capacity to formulate adequate management advice. The biological reference points used and the format to present management advice should also be better standardized.
16. CECAF should adopt a mechanism to monitor the extent of implementation, by member countries, of the management measures adopted by the Committee.
17. Environmental, social and economic concerns should be taken more into account in the formulation of CECAF management advice.
18. CECAF should incorporate the ecosystem approach to fisheries in its management efforts, in a more comprehensive manner.
19. CECAF should develop clear guidelines/framework for the incorporation of the precautionary approach in the formulation of management advice.
20. CECAF should have a more proactive role in the coordination of MCS measures and capacity building initiatives in the region.
21. CECAF should have a more proactive role in the coordination of capacity building initiatives in the region.
22. CECAF Secretariat should improve its communication with members, particularly between meetings.
23. All documents used during the Committee Meetings and the Meetings of the Scientific Sub-Committee should be posted in the homepage of the Committee in FAO website.
24. The infrastructure, human and financial resources available to the Secretariat should be reinforced, either through FAO formal channels or alternatively, if possible, by means of direct contributions from member countries.