

October 2002



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
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Organisation  
des  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Twentieth Session

Victoria, Seychelles, 21-24 January 2003

Report of the ISM, Rome, Italy, 21-22 March 2002

Author: Secretariat

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**Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting  
of the  
Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics**

21-22 March 2002, Rome, Italy

**Introduction and adoption of the agenda**

1. An inter-sessional meeting of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics was held at FAO on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002 to:
  1. discuss issues arising from the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the CWP, in particular its recommendations for actions by CWP members and the Secretariat; and
  2. to prepare a provisional agenda for CWP-20.
2. The meeting was opened by CWP Vice-Chairman Mr David Cross and was attended by representatives of CWP members and Secretariat staff (Annex 1 – List of participants). Mr David Evans was appointed as Rapporteur. The agenda (Annex 2) was adopted.

**Partnership Agreements for participation in FIGIS/FIRMS**

3. The Secretariat introduced a draft partnership agreement providing for international cooperation in the development and implementation of the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS), which will be part of the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS) being developed at FAO. This draft agreement was based on discussions held with some CWP members. It provides the basis for an agreement between FAO and any institutional party under which the objectives, principles, responsibilities, entitlements and general working relationships of the partnership are defined.
4. The meeting noted that the structure of the draft partnership agreement will provide for a uniform main text that would be common to all partners plus an annex that would define the specific details of the information contributions to FIRMS of an institutional party according to its mandate and capacity.
5. The draft agreement provides for the establishment of a FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) by FAO through which institutional parties would direct the development of FIRMS and the conduct of partnership arrangements. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the procedures for the establishment of an FSC had been discussed with FAO's Legal Office and that the preliminary advice was that establishment could be undertaken relatively simply and quickly. The ASFA partnership agreement could be considered as a precedent for this establishment.
6. The meeting agreed that several issues in the draft agreement required further consideration, including that, inter alia:
  - clear reference to the primary reporting responsibilities, and hence probable information contributions to FIRMS, according to the mandates of institutional parties should be made both in the preamble and in the main text;
  - the article on Principles needs strengthening, notably in relation to future partnerships; and
  - responsibilities for training in the operational aspects of FIRMS needs further clarification.

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7. Participants noted that signing and implementation of the partnership agreement would require higher level consideration by their governing bodies. The meeting agreed that detailed comments on the draft would be delivered to the Secretariat by the end of April 2002 in order to provide sufficient time for revisions to be undertaken and a new draft made available to CWP members for submission to meetings of their governing bodies at the earliest opportunity; and that CWP members should report on progress to CWP-20.

8. The meeting recommended that:

- launching the FIRMS partnership initiative should be limited in the first instance to CWP member organisations in order to limit the initial workload on the Secretariat; and
- following an inception meeting of the FSC at which draft FSC Rules of Procedure would be prepared, States would be informed of progress in the partnership initiative and invited to consider entering into a FIRMS partnership agreement, either directly or through appropriate national institutions.

9. The meeting noted that proof of concept had been successfully achieved and some preliminary training sessions on operational aspects of FIGIS/FIRMS had been conducted. On the basis of these results, a FIGIS/FIRMS Methodological Workshop would be held at FAO in early July 2002 with the following objectives:

- to obtain feedback from FIRMS potential partners on the work undertaken to date to serve the objectives of FIGIS/FIRMS;
- to prepare a workplan for further development of the information content relevant to FIGIS/FIRMS; and
- to discuss ways of adjusting FIGIS/FIRMS design to meet the needs of individual institutional partners.

10. The meeting agreed that participation at the Methodological Workshop would be by technical information specialists in their organisations who would have:

- a broad knowledge of the information available to the organisation for contribution to FIGIS/FIRMS; and
- an understanding of the framework of the partnership agreement under which such information would be contributed.

### **Proposed IPOA on Status and Trends Reporting**

11. The meeting reviewed the general nature and intent of the proposed IPOA on Status and Trends Reporting to be discussed at the Technical Consultation on the issue to be held at FAO from 25th to 28th March 2002.

12. The meeting noted the concordance of the aims and content of the IPOA with work for which the CWP is mandated, and recognised the importance of the opportunity for CWP to be represented at the Technical Consultation. The meeting agreed that the CWP representative at the Technical Consultation should inform the consultation that the CWP recognises the problems which need addressing and appreciates the potentials of the IPOA. The representative should also point out that the CWP is already involved in several of the proposed actions and would have a role to play in the implementation of the IPOA.

13. The meeting also noted that it had no clear position as to whether an IPOA or some other instrument is appropriate.

### **Advocacy role of the CWP**

14. The meeting reviewed the proposal called for at CWP-19, and undertaken by the Secretariat, on a framework for a possible future advocacy role for CWP, noting that such advocacy in relation to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement had been influential in formally establishing detailed information requirements in that instrument. The proposal offered a framework containing several elements that implied significant changes to the conduct of CWP's work, including probable requirements for increased resources to undertake the identified work.

15. The meeting agreed that with respect to the proposal:

- the paper outlining the proposal should be revised to also include another less ambitious option which would enable the CWP to make advocacy calls when the opportunities arise, and that this proposal should be presented to CWP-20;
- some of the elements were beyond the current capacity of the CWP to undertake them; and
- some of the elements (e.g. enhancement of the CWP website) could be accommodated within current Secretariat activities.

16. The meeting agreed that:

- CWP should keep a general watch for opportunities and use such opportunities to advocate its position and competencies, but that a concerted and proactive advocacy role as described in the proposal is probably not feasible at this stage; and
- CWP members should communicate their own activities in the identified elements (e.g. further statistical classifications and standards, including the issue of metadata) in ways that served the purpose of the proposal but without commitment to separate investigations of the issues.

### **Review of recommendations of CWP-19**

17. The Chairman noted that, in preparing the agenda for the inter-sessional meeting, when reference had been made to the Report of CWP-19 the agreed actions and recommendations of that report as they appear in the Annex had been difficult to interpret. The meeting recommended that future CWP recommendations should be clearly stated in self-standing texts which could be extracted to an Annex and from which the Secretariat and others would take direction.

18. The Chairman noted that there were generally two sets of recommendations: those for which some inter-sessional activities have taken place and could be reported on; and those that should be noted and decisions made on possible action prior to CWP-20.

#### ***A. Reports and discussions of Inter-Sessional Activities***

i) Trade discrepancies: Eurostat, FAO and OECD had identified significant discrepancies in trade data, the origins of which needed to be investigated.

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3. Eurostat noted that EU member States report trade data through EU legislation. FAO uses the Eurostat trade data, as modified by data on landings in foreign ports where available. However, the significant difference between Eurostat and OECD fish trade data is believed to be due to the ways in which the two organisations handled data for fish products in transit.
  4. The meeting agreed that investigations on this issue should continue and be reported to CWP-20.

ii) Elasmobranch data: Previous meetings had recognised that elasmobranch fisheries (including bycatches) require increased attention to information on catches and agreed that this issue should be included in the agenda of CWP-20. The meeting learned that:

- FAO noted that 1) it has increased the number of species identified in its database from 69 to 81 species; 2) it has almost completed work on a new 3-volume catalogue of sharks, the second of which has been published in February 2002; and that 3) this catalogue would be made available on FIGIS so that regions and countries would be able to prepare their own catalogues.
- CCAMLR is reviewing its collection of information on bycatch, including elasmobranchs, and has produced bycatch species information sheets for use by scientific observers.
- ICCAT has mandated its Standing Committee on Research and Statistics to undertake pelagic shark stock assessments in 2004. It is hoped that there will be substantial improvements to the ICCAT Atlantic shark database by then.
- NAFO has increased its attention on elasmobranch species coverage in its data collection. Additionally, it was noted that NAFO will hold a symposium on elasmobranchs in September 2002.
- Eurostat and ICES have increased species coverage. Increased elasmobranch catch reporting in the EU for all fishing areas has been mandated by revised legislation.
- IOTC has mandated its Secretariat to collect elasmobranch catch data.

iii) Integrated Catch Data File: The meeting noted that:

- Eurostat has undertaken the task to maintain the integrated catch data file for Atlantic fisheries, and has updated this with data for 1950-1999.
- Since the completion and availability of ICCAT (Task 1) data for 1999, the integrated catch data file would be updated by replacing the FAO tuna data for 1999.
- Flagging of anomalies in datasets is desirable and FAO will implement this in the next version of FishStat Plus.

iv) ISSCFV: The meeting agreed that in the classification hierarchy of the ISSCFV, the midwater and bottom longliner classifications should be of higher ranking than that of wetfish/freezer vessels. The meeting also requested that fishing technologists be consulted to advise on how relevant the definition of a high level category, 'Multipurpose Vessel', would be.

v) ISSCAAP: FAO reported that:

- the reallocation of species between ISSCAAP groups 33, 34 and 37 had been completed as agreed at CWP-19;
- the revised aggregate species groupings would be included in the next FAO Yearbook of Fishery Statistics; and
- work would be started shortly on the preparation of the hard copy version of the ASFIS list which would possibly include also the ISSCAAP codes for all species items.

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- vi) Description of national statistical methodologies: The meeting stressed that:
- national methodological reports are an important tool in the assessment of data quality and that this topic should be addressed in more detail at CWP-20; and
  - consideration should be given by CWP to developing a template for the format and content of these reports so as to avoid national authorities being faced with differing requests from CWP agencies.
- vii) Handbook of Fishery Statistics: FAO reported that:
- the conversion of the Handbook files to FIGIS/XML format is under way; and
  - comments from CWP agencies on the content of chapters, especially those of areas of their competence, are urgently requested.
- viii) Status of catch discrepancy detection exercises: The meeting noted that:
- the major outstanding discrepancies are between ICES, Eurostat and FAO data for the NE Atlantic; and
  - these agencies recognise the problem which would be studied as soon as resources permit.
- ix) Coordination of statistical programmes on socio-economic indicators: The meeting noted that:
- Many organisations, including the EU, OECD, Commission on Sustainable Development and others, are currently involved in the development of socio-economic indicators, including their use as contributions to the broader issue of sustainability indicators.
  - CWP is not mandated to investigate or define such indicators, but there is a clear role for CWP in identifying the data requirements necessary to quantify them.
  - The Secretariat would look into the prospect of holding a special session prior to CWP-20 to address the statistical issues associated with socio-economic indicators.
- x) Aquaculture: The meeting was informed that:
- the Eurostat Working Group on Fishery Statistics at its meeting in February 2002 had discussed the treatment of data on catches of wild fish subsequently placed in cages for on-rearing; and
  - that Eurostat had agreed that the catch weight component should and could be separately identified from the increase in weight due to this form of aquaculture, but that it was unclear whether national authorities could provide the data separately for the two weight components.
- xi) CWP Newsletter: The meeting agreed that:
- the current website which contains the CWP Newsletter (currently at [http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/david\\_cross/cstart.htm](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/david_cross/cstart.htm)) urgently needs comments on the relevant texts from all agencies represented there; and
  - although FAO is currently revising its website in ways that would give CWP a higher visibility, the Secretariat should seek ways of providing CWP with an individual identity such as [www.cwp.int](http://www.cwp.int).

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**B. *Issues from CWP-19 for attention***

- i) Trade nomenclatures: The meeting noted that:
- international trade and activities' nomenclatures (e.g. ISIC, NACE) are being revised and will come into force in 2007; but
  - it appeared that the fishery components of these classifications are unlikely to be as detailed as fisheries specialists would wish.
- ii) Vessel information and vessel identifiers: The meeting noted that:
- FAO is addressing the problem of integration of vessel information (in particular vessel identifiers) that is provided by countries in accordance with the FAO Compliance Agreement;
  - better ways of exchanging vessel information between FAO and countries, and FAO and regional organizations, are urgently required; and
  - FAO is preparing a background document and proposal that will be available soon, and which would include testing through pilot information exchange cases between FAO and regional organizations.
- iii) Data collection standards: The meeting agreed that this had been sufficiently covered under previous discussion on FIGIS/FIRMS and under agenda item 23.
- iv) Catch and trade certification: The meeting was informed that tuna agencies had met in La Jolla and had concluded that:
- there is confusion about what is involved in catch and trade certification schemes and what are the objectives of such schemes;
  - the scheme adopted by CCAMLR is a Catch Documentation Scheme that is meant to establish the legality of catches in relation to agreed fishery management regimes;
  - the schemes adopted by IOTC/ICCAT were Trade Information Documentation systems primarily designed to identify non-reporting of catch.

The meeting noted that:

- the measures adopted by the EU to identify sources of fishery products is designed to offer a consumer protection function;
- there may be a useful role for CWP to identify standard statistical practices within catch and trade certification schemes that could be applied across all schemes in order to avoid duplication; and
- this issue should be referred to CWP-20.

### **CWP-20**

19. **Provisional agenda:** Based on discussions held at this inter-sessional meeting and comments on previous agenda items at CWP-19, a provisional agenda for CWP-20 to be held in Seychelles from 21 to 24 January 2003 was prepared (Annex 3). As noted in section 5.1.9 above, it is proposed that there should be a preliminary session on 20 January 2003 to address the statistical issues associated with socio-economic indicators.

20. **Arrangements:** IOTC outlined some of the arrangements for CWP-20 to be held in Seychelles from 20-24 January 2003.

**Any other business**

None.

***List of Annexes.***

Annex 1 – List of Participants

Annex 2 – Agenda of Inter-sessional meeting

Annex 3 – Provisional Agenda for CWP-20

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*Annex 2 – Agenda of Inter-Sessional meeting*

**Inter-Sessional Meeting of CWP Agencies**

**21-22 March 2002**

**Rome**

**AGENDA**

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Partnership Agreements for participation in FIGIS/FIRMS
3. Proposed IPOA on Status and Trends Reporting
4. Advocacy role of the CWP [190]
5. Review of recommendations of CWP-19
  - Reports and discussions of Inter-Sessional Activities*
    - Trade discrepancies [9]
    - Elasmobranch data [120]
    - Integrated Catch File [142]
    - ISSCFV (longliner classification and fleet statistics [159/162]
    - ISSCAAP (code groupings and criteria) [165/172/173]
    - Description of national statistical methodologies [187]
    - Handbook of Fishery Statistics
    - Status of catch discrepancy detection exercises
    - Coordination of statistical programmes on socio-economic indicators
    - Aquaculture [107]
    - CWP Newsletter [109]
  - Issues from CWP-19 for attention*
    - Trade nomenclatures [8/156]
    - Vessel information [18]
    - Data collection standards [20]
    - Catch terminology [139]
    - Vessel identifiers [152]
    - Catch and trade certification
6. CWP-20
  - Provisional agenda
  - Arrangements
7. Any other business

Note: numbers in square brackets refer to the paragraph numbers in the Report of CWP-19

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*Annex 3 – Provisional Agenda for CWP-20*

**20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics**

**Seychelles**

**21-24 January 2003**

**Provisional Agenda**

1. Opening of session and adoption of agenda
2. Appointment of Chairperson
3. Changes in membership of CWP
4. Review of recommendations from CWP-19
5. Reports of Inter-sessional meetings
6. Reports of Inter-sessional developments in agency programmes in fishery statistics
7. Elasmobranch statistics
8. National data collection methodologies and data quality criteria and indicators
9. Proposals for an advocacy role for CWP
10. Catch and trade certification schemes
11. Catch terminology
12. Vessel identifiers
13. FIRMS partnerships
14. FIRMS/FIGIS developments
15. Proposed FAO Strategy on Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
16. Report of the inter-sessional workshop on Statistical Aspects of Socio-economic indicators<sup>1</sup>
17. Agency data collection programmes, including STATLANT issues
18. Handbook of Fishery Statistics
19. Any other business
20. CWP-21 Arrangements
21. Adoption of the Report

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<sup>1</sup> This agenda item will include a report of a preliminary meeting on this topic to be held on 20 January 2003.