



COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

Tel: (767) 266-3282
Fax: (767) 448 7999
E-mail: agriculture@dominica.gov.dm
Website: www.dominica.gov.dm

Government Headquarters
Kennedy Avenue, Roseau
Commonwealth of Dominica

June 10, 2016

Christine Chan A Shing
Chairperson of WECAFC,

Dear Christine Chan A Shing,

We are pleased to refer to your letter dated 20 May 2016 referring to the "CLME+ additional study to the cost-benefit assessment of an RFMO in the WECAFC area", in which members of WECAFC are requested that submit their preliminary opinion on the next steps in the process of strategic reorientation of WECAFC.

On behalf of the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries presents its opinion:

1. Whether the member considers the establishment of an RFMO necessary (yes/no, and why).

Yes, the Government of Dominica understands the value an RFMO may add to the stability of fisheries stocks and sustainability of fisheries resources in the region. Dominica is an active member of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and regards it important to increase collaboration in fisheries management with all relevant countries in the region. The independent cost-benefit assessment of the options for strategic reorientation of WECAFC, as prepared by Dr Kjartan Hoydal, is clear on the potential benefits in terms of stocks, fisheries production, value generation and conservation of the high seas areas. Dominica sees also a specific role for the RFMO in capacity building and fisheries sector development and investments.

2. If yes, what are the areas and stocks that should be covered by the RFMO.

The Government of Dominica considers it important that the RFMO covers the high seas in Area 31 and the northern part of area 41. Straddling stocks, deep sea fish stocks and highly migratory species that are not covered by ICCAT require regional management under an RFMO.

In terms of shared stocks with our neighbouring countries that occur within our EEZ, such as several shrimp species, dolphin fish, wahoo, sharks and rays, an RFMO can provide opportunities to improve management of these stocks. However, stock assessments are required to determine which stocks are shared regionally.

Dominica agrees with the statement in the CLME+ additional study that "The RFMO would be able to make recommendations concerning fisheries of shared stocks, straddling stocks and highly migratory species conducted within the EEZs of members, provided that the members in question request such recommendations".

3. Whether the member has a preference for one of the options presented in the cost-benefit assessment study

Dominica prefers to develop WECAFC into an RFMO, with linkages with CRFM and ICCAT. Whether the RFMO should be established under FAO constitution or outside its legal framework requires further discussion at the 16th session.

Dominica is already contributing to CRFM annually. We would like to emphasize that the option in the independent cost –benefit study, which regards our contributions to CRFM as in-kind contributions to the RFMO is preferred. It cannot be expected from Dominica, in these economically challenging times to contribute much to a new RFMO, especially as the financial gains and other benefits of an RFMO will likely come only after some 8 to 10 years.

Dominica appreciates the work carried out by authors of costs and benefits study and the additional study of CLME + with regards to the options for strategic reorientation of WECAFC. We would like to thank also the Secretariat and the Executive Committee for their assistance to the membership on these matters.

Best regards



HAROLD GUISTE
PERMANENT SECRETARY

“Our Public Service: Transforming, Modernizing, Positively Changing!”