



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF THE SUBREGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND FAO REPRESENTATIVE IN BARBADOS

POSTAL ADDRESS

P.O. BOX 631-C
BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

SECOND FLOOR
UNITED NATIONS HOUSE
MARINE GARDENS, HASTINGS,
CHRIST CHURCH, BARBADOS

TEL: (246) 426-7110/429-2002
CABLES: FOODAGRI BRIDGETOWN
E-MAIL: FAO-SLC@FAO.ORG
FACSIMILE: (246) 427-6075

MAIN OBJECTIVES EMPHASIZED AT FIRST REGIONAL FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP

Bridgetown, Barbados – Wednesday, 16 May 2018: A team of Data and Statistics Experts from 16 Caribbean countries met at FAO's Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean (Barbados) from 14 to 16 May 2018 to officially launch the work of the Working Group on Fishery Data and Statistics recently endorsed by the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The meeting was co-hosted by the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management of Barbados with additional support from the European Union's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), The Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME), the Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries (REBYC-II LAC), and European Union's Horizon 2020 BlueBRIDGE projects.

This initial meeting attracted fishery officers, data collectors, data managers, researchers, stock assessors, policy officers, statistical and information analysts along with fisheries statistics managers. During the meeting, the FDS Working Group (WG) elected its first Convener, Ms. Nancie Cummings, NOAA) and Co-Convener, Mrs. Jeannette Mateo, of the Dominican Republic who would guide the activities of the WG during the coming intersessional period.

In addition, the WG considered and identified four main objectives which it deemed critical to forge science-based evidence for use in monitoring and stock assessment and informed decision making in the region as follows:

- Develop a consensus on the WG Terms of Reference and outline the priorities in supporting fisheries data and statistics in the WECAFC region;
- Review and validate minimum data requirements in support to fisheries management and stock assessment, including a Draft Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) that will lay a foundation for regional data collection and sharing, and related best practices on policies and guidelines for implementation;

FAO --- WORLD FOOD DAY --- 16 OCTOBER
Visit FAO website at: www.fao.org

- Review the functional pilot of a Regional Database developed to collate and share minimum data requirements;
- Identify priorities (in terms of gaps in capacity on a variety of topics, species and ecosystems) for fisheries data collection and statistical analysis in the WECAFC area.

Going forward, the FDS WG, in collaboration with other thematic working groups in the region, will catalyze the actions required for improved fisheries data and statistics in support to better informed policies and strategies for sustainable exploitation of marine resources.

As such, the FDS WG is expected to contribute a variety of needs including informing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and specifically SDG14 “life below water” targets and the Small Island Development States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. Along these lines, through the acquisition of the required minimum data on fisheries statistics in the region, data collection and data sharing will be strengthened providing further capacity to WECAFC to effectively advice on fisheries management in the region.

“The Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group is an important and much-needed mechanism for moving the countries and the region forward in terms of fisheries data collection which is critical in order to evaluate stock status, economic performance of the fisheries, and socio-economic contribution of the fisheries to facilitate informed decision-making towards sustainability of the fisheries resources in the region”, stated Lara Ferreira, Senior Fisheries Officer in the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Fisheries in Trinidad and Tobago.

“It is well known that the shared fishery resources cannot be managed in the absence of quality fishery statistics. Obviously, the national officers present at the meeting are very dedicated to their mission of producing such statistics, despite often very limited resources”, was highlighted by Marc Taconet, Head of Fisheries Statistics and Information Branch (FIAS).

He added, “That through this Working Group and its momentum, we are hopeful to create the dynamic required to equip national authorities and the regional fishery bodies with the information on status and trends which they need. Our role at FAO is to build capacities through the development of data standards, software tools, and training on data collection and information systems”.

Meanwhile, Yvette Diei Ouadi, Incoming Secretary of WECAFC noted, “The consistency of the deliberations is commensurate with the importance of this overarching Working Group. Its effectiveness and sustainability call for joint efforts by all partners in the region as its outputs are essential for a functional Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), a status being contemplated by WECAFC”.