


November 2008

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
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## FISHERY COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

### Nineteenth Session

Cotonou, Benin, 4-6 November 2008

### MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC SUB-COMMITTEE

#### OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The fifth session of the Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) was held in Casablanca, Morocco from 4 to 6 December 2007, hosted by the National Fisheries Research Institute (INRH) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Marine Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco.

2. Mr Eduardo Balguerías of Spain chaired the Session. A total of 39 delegates from 17 CECAF Members and representatives from the Agency for Management and Cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (AGC), Subregional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the African Network of Fisheries and Marine Science Research Institutes (RAFISMER) respectively attended the Session. The list of delegates is given in Appendix B of this report.

3. Mr Abdellatif Berraho, Director-General of the National Fisheries Research Institute (INRH) welcomed the participants and gave an introduction of the Network of Fisheries Research Institutes (RAFISMER) created by the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO).

He also appealed to the participants to explore ways and means of better cooperation between RAFISMER and the CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee.

4. On behalf of Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, Mr Habib Halila, FAO Representative in Morocco, thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for generously accepting to host the Session. After outlining the origin of the Scientific Sub-Committee, he reminded the participants of the significant evolution of the coastal fisheries. He emphasized the coastal degradation of ecosystems and the competition within the sector of industrial and artisanal fleets. The artisanal boats use more powerful engines and the number of trawlers increase and these developments cause the heavy exploitation of the fisheries resources from the coast to the deeper waters. He further linked the current exploitation trend to the increasing loss of fisheries resources and its impact on employment.

5. Mr Halila explained the contribution of the small-scale coastal fisheries to the production of high value fish and the selectivity of the gears used compared to the trawlers. He emphasized that its specificities make its contribution to sustainable development more favourable because it encourages rational management of the fisheries resources. He, therefore, appealed to the scientists, researchers and decision-makers to pay more attention to the artisanal and coastal fisheries to safeguard the interest of the fishermen among industrial operators at the national and regional level.

6. The Session was opened by Mr Abdelouahed Bennabou, Director of Cooperation at the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Marine Fisheries. Mr Bennabou emphasized the need for regional cooperation in fisheries management between ATLAFCO, the Subregional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), the Regional Fishery Committee for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP), the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) and CECAF to ensure collective action in managing and developing fisheries resources in the region. That will sustain the resources and the livelihoods that depend on them. He informed the participants of the initiative to address illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through the Lisbon Declaration of October 2007, which has recommendations for future action for decision-makers in the region. He finally confirmed his government's commitment to maintaining the fisheries sector as a major contributor to economic development and poverty reduction.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE SESSION**

7. The Sub-Committee adopted the Agenda, which is given in Appendix A.

8. The list of documents submitted to the Session is reproduced in Appendix C.

#### **MAIN OUTCOMES OF:**

##### **a) Artisanal Fisheries Working Group**

9. This agenda item was discussed on the basis of document CECAF/SCSV/2007/2, which is the result of the fourth Session of the Artisanal Fisheries Working Group held in

Douala, Cameroon, from 17 to 19 September 2007. The main discussion was on activities to be carried out during the intersession. After discussion, the Sub-Committee proposed to carry out in collaboration with the other Working Groups, a complementary study on the impacts of the artisanal fisheries on the ecosystem. The recommendations of the Artisanal Fisheries Working Group are as found in COPACE/SSCIV/2005/2.

**b) Small Pelagics Working Group – CECAF North**

10. A summary of the state of pelagic stocks in the northern area of the eastern central Atlantic ocean (CECAF region), based on the report of the FAO Working Group for the Assessment of Pelagic Fish off North-West Africa, was presented in document CECAF/SSCV/2007/3a.

11. The Sub-Committee noted that:

- Two meetings of the FAO Working Group for the Assessment of Small Pelagic fish off North-West Africa had been held since the last SSC; the sixth meeting of the group was held in Banjul, Gambia, from 2 to 11 May 2006 and the seventh meeting was held in Agadir, Morocco, from 17 to 26 April 2007.
- The species analysed by the group were: sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*), sardinella (*Sardinella aurita* and *Sardinella maderensis*), horse mackerel (*Trachurus trecae*, *Trachurus trachurus* and *Caranx rhonchus*), chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*) and anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) in the region between the southern border of Senegal and the northern Atlantic border of Morocco. For each of these, information updated until 2006 is given on stock identity, fisheries, abundance indices, sampling, biological data, assessment, management recommendations and future research.
- Total catch of small pelagic fish for the period 1990 to 2006 has been fluctuating around 1.66 million tonnes. There was a decrease of 6 per cent in total catches of the main small pelagic fish in the sub-region from 2.02 million tonnes in 2005 to 1.91 million in 2006. Landings are dominated by sardine, constituting about 37 per cent of overall landings in 2006 followed by the round sardinella (*S. aurita*) and the Cunene horse mackerel (*T. trecae*).
- The Scientific Sub-Committee was informed that although work is ongoing in the region to improve age-length keys for some of the main stocks, statistical analysis of this data indicate problems to follow the cohorts with time. Thus the Working Group used dynamic production models for all stocks. Fishery-independent survey data are available for a number of stocks. Simple medium-term projections of future yields and stock development were made according to predefined scenarios using the

dynamic production model fitted to the historical data in a spreadsheet. A time horizon of five years was used for the projections.

- The Group assessed the status of the small pelagic resources in Northwest Africa and made projections on the development of the status of the stocks and on future effort and catch levels. The advices for the stocks are given in relation to the agreed target reference points  $F_{0.1}$  and  $B_{0.1}$  and on the basis of the projections for the next five years.
  - The results of the assessments indicate that the stocks of sardine in Zone A+B, sardinella and the Atlantic horse mackerel (*T. trachurus*) are overexploited and consequently, a decrease in effort was recommended for these species. Cunene horse mackerel was found to be fully exploited, but given that this species is exploited in a mixed fishery with the other horse mackerel species, it was recommended to reduce effort also on this species.
  - The stock of sardine in Zone C was found to be underexploited. However, given the instability of the stock, particularly evident from the drop in biomass in 1997 and more recently in 2006 as observed by the Research Vessel (R/V) DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN and other research vessels, the possibility of increasing catch should be considered very carefully. Continuous follow up of the structure and abundance of the stock should be guaranteed by scientific surveys, independently of commercial catch data, to detect unforeseen changes which could require urgent management measures.
  - The results of the assessment for chub mackerel were not conclusive, but the working group found no indication that the state of this stock had changed since the 2006 assessment hence the working group maintained that this stock is not fully exploited. It was not possible to reach reliable conclusions from the assessment models applied to bonga and anchovy but, in the case of anchovy, acoustic estimates show a decrease in biomass from 2005 to 2006, thus care should be taken in the management of this stock and as a precautionary measure, the catch level for this species should not exceed the average over the last three years. For bonga, the recommendation from 2006 is maintained as no new information is available on this species.
12. The summary of the assessments and management recommendations for each stock are given in tables in Appendix D.
13. Recommendations for future research included:
- Acoustic surveys and related activities such as coordination between countries and intercalibration should be continued to maintain and improve the time series, when possible, acoustic abundance estimates should be split by zones and age groups.

- Recruitment surveys covering the whole sub-region should be carried out regularly to provide an early estimate of year class strength and to improve the basis for stock assessment.
- Research activities aiming at a better understanding of the effect of environmental changes on the dynamics of pelagic stocks should be encouraged.
- Continue to develop and improve the assessment methods. Further develop the version of the production model used by the group including other versions of the production functions, multiple abundance indices and uncertainty estimates.
- Continue to improve sampling by increasing the numbers of individuals in each sample covering all size ranges. All fleet segments and all quarters of the year should be covered.
- Continue work on age reading of sardine and sardinella.

14. The Scientific Sub-Committee appreciated the work by the Working Group and stressed the importance of carrying out studies on stock identity, resource-environment interactions and ageing. The importance of improving the data available to the group through increased sampling and to continue the work on assessment models applied by the group was also stressed.

15. The considerable database containing fisheries, survey and biological data compiled by the group was commented upon and the group was encouraged to exploit this database also in the inter sessions of the working group to produce specialized analysis on certain topics. The upcoming Symposium on the Small Pelagic Stocks off North West Africa in March 2008 would also provide the scientists with such an opportunity.

**c) Small Pelagics Working Group – CECAF South**

16. A summary of the state of pelagic stocks in the southern area of the Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean (CECAF region), based on the report of the FAO Working Group for the Assessment of Pelagic Fish off North West Africa was presented in document CECAF/SSCV/2007/3b

17. The Sub-Committee noted that:

- The first meeting of the FAO/CECAF Working Group on the Assessment of Small Pelagic Fish (WGASPS), Sub-Group South met in Limbé, Cameroon, from 25 September to 1 October 2006.

- The stocks analysed by the group were: sardinella (*Sardinella aurita* and *Sardinella maderensis*), bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*), anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), cunene horse mackerel (*Trachurus trecae*), false scad (*Caranx rhonchus*) and other Carangidae in the region between the northern border of Guinea-Bissau and the southern border of Angola. For each of these, standardized information updated until 2004 is given on stock identity, fisheries, abundance indices, sampling, biological data, assessment, management recommendations and future research.
- The Working Group agreed on the existence of four stocks in the southern CECAF area. The northern stocks (Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia), western stocks (Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Ghana and Benin), central stocks (Nigeria, Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea) and southern stocks (Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola). As all countries were not present at the meeting, hence the stock assessments were based on the data from the countries present.
- There was a decrease of 18 percent in total catches of the main small pelagic species analysed by the Working Group, from 447 000 tonnes in 2003 to 368 000 tonnes in 2004. However, despite the observed decrease for 2004 the general upward trend observed since 1999 continued. Total catches of the main small pelagic fish analysed by the Working Group for the period 1990 to 2004 have been fluctuating around 300 000 tonnes. The round sardinella (*S. aurita*) constituted nearly 32 percent of the catches of small pelagic species, and is the most important group in the region.
- A dynamic version of the Schaefer model was used to assess the current state of the stocks. To ensure consistency in the management advice, the 2006 Working Group decided to use the same Biological Reference Points (BRPs) as those adopted by the FAO Working Group on the Assessment of Small Pelagic Fish off Northwest Africa.
- The results of the assessments indicate the overexploitation of *S. aurita* (northern and western stocks) and *S. maderensis* (northern stock); *S. maderensis* (western stock). The *Ethmalosa fimbriata* (southern stock) is underexploited while *Trachurus trecae* (southern stock) is fully exploited.
- The model did not provide reliable results for *Ethmalosa fimbriata* (northern stock), and *Engraulis encrasicolus* (western stock).
- It should be noted that the results of the model depend strongly on the quality of the data (fisheries dependant and independent) that the Working Group have at its disposal. The results of the assessments should therefore be interpreted with caution.

18. The summary of the assessments and management recommendations for each stock are given in tables in Appendix E.

19. Recommendations for future research included:

- continuation of acoustic surveys and related activities;
- improvement and harmonization of statistics;
- improvement and intensification of biological sampling;
- continue to develop and improve the assessment methods;
- further develop the version of the production model used by the group including other versions of the production functions, multiple abundance indices and uncertainty estimates;

20. The Scientific Sub-Committee appreciated the work by the Working Group and stressed the importance of improving the data available to the group through increased sampling and to continue the work on assessment models applied by the group.

21. The Scientific Sub-Committee agreed that the outcomes of the Group should be considered preliminary. The Scientific Sub-Committee decided not to accept the results of the assessment for the *Sardinella* spp. (southern stocks) and *Trachurus trecae* (Southern stocks) due to problems with the data, and furthermore that the data will be reviewed before the next meeting.

**d) Demersal Species Working Group**

22. The state of the demersal stocks in the northern area of the eastern central Atlantic Ocean (CECAF region), was presented in document CECAF/SSCV/2007/4.

23. The Sub-Committee was informed that:

- The FAO/CECAF Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Resources. Sub-group North met in Banjul, Gambia, from 6 to 14 November 2007.
- For reasons of heterogeneity the species and stocks of the Working Group were divided into four sub-groups: hake, other demersal fish, shrimps and cephalopods. A total of 24 species/species groups were analysed by this group.
- The working area of the Working Group is the northern CECAF zone between the southern border of Senegal and the northern Atlantic border of Morocco.

- Total landings of demersal resources have fluctuated with an average of around 166 000 tonnes for the period 1990 to 2006. A general decreasing trend has been seen since 2000. Total catch in 2006 was 155 000 tonnes. The most important group of species in the region is cephalopods and octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) makes up on average around 40 percent of the catches of demersal resources.
- A dynamic version of the Schaefer model was used to assess the current state of the stocks. To ensure consistency in the management advice, the 2007 Working Group decided to use the same Biological Reference Points (BRPs) as those adopted by the FAO Working Group on the Assessment of Small Pelagic Fish off Northwest Africa. For the white hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in Morocco and some of the fish species, for which length frequency data from the fisheries were available, analytical models (LCA and Y/R) were also applied.
- Of the 24 stocks analysed, one is depleted: the thiof (*Epinephelus aeneus*) stock in Mauritania, Gambia and Senegal.
- Thirteen stocks were found to be overexploited, including all the stocks of octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), the cuttlefish stocks (*Sepia* spp.) in Senegal-Gambia and off Dakhla, the rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in Morocco, the southern pink shrimp (*Penaeus notialis*) in Senegal and Gambia, the white hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in Morocco, the black hakes (*M. polli* and *M. senegalensis*) in Mauritania and Senegal, the red pandora (*Pagellus bellottii*) in Mauritania, Senegal and Gambia, the axillary seabream (*Pagellus acarne*) in Morocco and the bluespotted seabream (*Pagrus caeruleostictus*) off Senegal and Gambia.
- Three stocks were found to be fully exploited: the rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in Mauritania, the southern pink shrimp (*Penaeus notialis*) in Mauritania and the croakers (*Pseudotolithus* spp.) in Senegal-Gambia.
- For seven of the stocks assessed no conclusive results were obtained from the models with the data available thus highlighting the problem of the quality of the data available to the working group. The stocks concerned were *Pagellus* spp. in Morocco, *Dentex macrophtalmus* in Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal, *Sparus* spp. in Morocco, *Arius* spp. in Senegal and Gambia and the stock of *Parapenaeus longirostris* in Senegal-Gambia. It should be noted that although the model did not provide reliable results for these stocks other information from the fishery and scientific surveys indicate that many of them are overexploited.

- The Working group stressed to its members the need to engage discussions with managers of their countries to raise their awareness on the serious state of the demersal resources and to know their expectations in relation to management advice from scientists. Working papers on these matters should be presented at the next meeting.

24. The summary of the assessments and management recommendations for each stock are given in tables in Appendix F.

25. In terms of overall recommendations for priority areas of future research the following were noted:

- All the data required for the assessments must be prepared and sent to all participants one month in advance of the next meeting.
- At the next meeting one day should be devoted to discuss alternative assessment models for demersal resources and to discuss how to present management advice.
- The scientists should ensure awareness amongst managers about the serious state of the demersal stocks in the various countries in order to ensure application of the recommendations made by the FAO/CECAF Working groups.
- Improve the data collection and reporting system through amongst others improved species identification.
- Study the effect of environment on the abundance of demersal species.
- Carry out regular national and/or regional scientific surveys with the aim to obtain reliable abundance indices for the demersal stocks.
- Organize regional thematic seminars for the members of the working group (shared stocks, environmental effects etc).

26. Discussions of the Scientific Sub-Committee centred around the formulation and applicability of the management recommendations proposed by the working group and on possible ways of improving the advice to ensure the acceptance and adoption by managers. Sensitization of managers with respect to the serious state of the demersal resources in their respective countries was seen as a key step to ensure acceptance of the management recommendations of the working group. In this respect the need for scientists to engage in discussions with managers of their countries to know their expectations in relation to management advice provided by the working groups was deemed essential. The members of the Sub-Committee were informed that this question had been discussed at length by the working group and that reports should be presented by the different countries at the next working group.

27. Nevertheless, the members of the Sub-Committee stressed the importance of the management recommendations made by the working group given the serious situation for most of the demersal stocks.

#### **FORMULATION OF ADVICE ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN THE CECAF REGION**

28. Management advice from working groups was presented to the Scientific Sub-Committee in documents CECAF/SSCV/2007/3a, CECAF/SSCV/2007/3b and CECAF/SSCV/2007/4. A summary of the recommendations is given in Appendixes D, E and F.

#### **THE VALIDATION OF THE RESOURCES AND FISHERIES INVENTORIES AVAILABLE IN FIRMS FOR THE CECAF REGION – FIRMS ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DATA PROVISION**

29 The Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS) was presented and the inventories describing the resources and fisheries in the CECAF region was discussed based on Document CECAF/SSCV/2007/5. Paper copies of the fisheries inventories were distributed to each participant during the CECAF meeting.

30 It was specified, as a principle, that the sources referred to in the Resources Inventory are the reports of the committees and working groups of CECAF eventually completed by national reports and other relevant sources.

31 The Sub-Committee agreed on the need of a first validation step at the national level coordinated by the SSC delegates acting as focal points, subject to FAO providing the guidelines. As a second step, it was proposed that the CECAF working groups will dedicate some time to review the inventories. A one-year period would be necessary for reaching this validation.

32 The Sub-Committee agreed that the issue of data ownership was not within its competence. The latter issue should be raised at the next CECAF meeting.

33 The Sub-Committee took note of the solutions developed on the formatting of the country information and the trends of the resources managed by CECAF. However, it did not feel competent at this stage to assess the appropriateness of the proposal and suggested to FAO to continue the publication according to the existing mechanisms. It would be convenient if the format of the FIRMS fact sheets of CECAF would be compliant with the standardized formats used by the Working Groups to report their work.

34 Regarding the update mechanism for FIRMS, the Sub-Committee recognized that, at the current stage, it was not in a position to recommend how to organize decentralized contributions in the CECAF area, and accordingly this responsibility must remain at the

FAO level. In addition, the problem of updating data was raised considering that the Sub-Committee only meets every two years.

35 It was agreed that, for the moment, CECAF, through its scientific Sub-Committee, must be the institutional entity for the review and approval of the inventories published in FIRMS. The Sub-Committee agreed to systematically include an agenda item on the above.

## **FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK**

36 Information on the future research work of the Working Groups as endorsed by the Sub-Committee was provided in the respective Working Group sections.

37. In addition, the Sub-Committee approved the working group sessions proposed for 2008 for the Small Pelagics North (1<sup>st</sup> half May 2008, Senegal), Demersal South (2<sup>nd</sup> half September 2008), Small Pelagics South (December 2008, Congo/Angola). The Artisanal and Demersal North Working Groups are expected to meet in Agadir, Morocco, in the second half of March 2009 and in Malaga, Spain, in September 2009 respectively.

## **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

### **a) Report by other projects in the CECAF region**

#### **i. *Nansen Programme***

38 The activities of the Project “Strengthening the Knowledge Base for and Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Marine Fisheries in Developing Countries (EAF Nansen, GCP/INT/003/NOR)” carried out in 2007 and some preliminary plans for 2008 were presented. The Project objectives, components, main outcomes and organizational setup were also briefly described.

39. Several activities had been undertaken in 2007 under the various project components. At the policy level a review of available international instruments relevant to EAF and case studies on the “Application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries in Africa” had been initiated. A Regional Workshop on Ecosystem Approaches for Fisheries (EAF) management combined with a Steering Committee meeting for the Gulf of Guinea had been also been organized.

40. On the scientific level, several surveys had been carried out in 2007 in collaboration with BENEFIT, GCLME and Mozambique and work on the Nan-Sis software is progressing and a test version is now available. The Sub-Committee was further informed that work on scientific and socio-economic indicators had been initiated in collaboration with other initiatives within FAO. The project had provided technical assistance to the running of the 2007 coordinated pelagic survey off Northwest Africa carried out by the research vessels of the sub-region. The small pelagic working group–north and the Planning Group for the Coordination of Acoustic Surveys off Northwest Africa had also been organized.

41. Preliminary plans of activities for 2008, include amongst others EAF meetings, follow-up to the EAF work initiated in the Gulf of Guinea, surveys in collaboration with project partners, a survey data analysis meetings in the Gulf of Guinea, the small pelagic working group off Northwest Africa, the planning group for the coordination of acoustic surveys as well as the organization of Steering Committees and possibly an Annual Forum where all partners to the project are invited to discuss and share experiences.

42. The Scientific Sub-Committee was also informed of the Symposium: Science and the challenge of managing small pelagic fisheries on shared stocks in Northwest Africa that will take place in Casablanca, Morocco, from 11 to 14 March 2008 and the members of the Sub-Committee were encouraged to participate and to contribute with papers for consideration by the symposium organizers. The symposium is the final activity of the project “International Cooperation with the Nansen Project – Fisheries Management and Marine Environment” (GCP/INT/730/NOR).

*ii. Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME)*

43. The activities undertaken by the Project during the intersessional period was presented to the Sub-Committee by a National Fisheries Expert of GCLME. He briefly described the Project’s objectives and collaboration activities with FAO on fisheries resources surveys and related activities.

44. In the Area of Management of Fishery Resources, the Project has developed a template Management Plan for Small Pelagic Fishery, Demersal Fishery and Shrimp Fishery. Stakeholders meetings to discuss these plans had been held in some countries on the region. The Project has also funded two Sub-Regional Workshops on the Management of the Shared Sardinella stocks off Gabon–Angola.

45. As a way of the building capacity of local scientists, the Project organized a series of workshops for scientists in the region.

46. The Sub-Committee was informed that at the Ministerial Meeting of the Project in December 2006 it was agreed to transform the Project into the Interim Guinea Current Commission and create Advisory Bodies.

47. Plan of activities for 2008 of the Project include Training Workshop on Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management using EwE software, Workshop on Management of the Shared Sardinella Stocks off Gabon – Angola, Survey Data Analysis in collaboration with FAO and EAF-Nansen Project.

*iii. Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME)*

48. The Sub-Committee was informed of the current status of the CCLME Project. The main activities and outcomes of the preparatory phase of the Project (PDF-B Phase)

were presented as well as the full size project objectives, organizational set up, main components and expected outcomes.

49. The project objective is to “enable the countries of the CCLME to address priority transboundary concerns on declining fisheries, associated biodiversity and water quality through governance reforms, investments and management programs”.

50. The Project has three components: 1) a *process* component for frameworks to understand and address priority transboundary concerns; 2) a *marine living resources*; and 3) a *biodiversity, habitat and water quality* component entitled. The project also includes a series of demonstration actions to address initial priority transboundary concerns.

51. The CCLME Project Brief was submitted to GEF in June 2007, and was approved for Work Programme inclusion in July 2007. It is anticipated that the fully detailed project documents (FAO and UNEP) will be submitted to GEF in December 2007 for final approval. A start date in 2008 is envisaged.

*iv. ISTAM*

52. The Scientific Adviser of the Subregional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) informed the Sub-Committee of the activities conducted in the partner countries in the SRFC subregion of the project on the Improvement of Scientific and Technical Advices for Fisheries Management (ISTAM). He presented the state of progress in the work of the Work Packages (WP) of the project. He also informed the Sub-Committee that the SRFC wants to take advantage of a subregional information system in order to ensure certain functions: the maximum dissemination and understanding of scientific advices on the state of resources and on the state of fisheries and inform the decisionmakers. The provider of the information can be CECAF or potentially working groups hosted by sub regional projects (ISTAM, FIAS, etc.).

53. The representative of the French Institute for Research and Development (IRD) presented an analysis of the compatibility of national and global (FAO) statistical information systems. This subject was discussed particularly on the CECAF zone (FAO Area 34). He reminded the meeting that the statistical zone actually used by the Area 34 in the official catch declarations (Statlant Form 34) is a zoning based on the wide geographical areas and the more biogeographical nature than the legal. The spatial limits of the FAO zoning cannot be super imposed on the defined ones in the national systems which are based on the exclusive economic zones (EEZs). This difference of zoning makes the statistics produced by the two systems hardly compatible despite the often common source of the data and an obvious complementarity.

54. The CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee recommends to the Committee to submit this issue to the Coordinating Working Party (CWP) on Fishery Statistics to study the solutions for the zoning used in submitting the fisheries statistical data of the countries of the CECAF region to be harmonized and made compatible with the areas in the EEZs.

55. The President of RAFISMER expressed a desire to create a partnership between RAFISMER and CECAF, which is involved in the same geographic area, to provide synergy and complementarity of activities conducted by the two bodies.

56. The Scientific Sub-Committee noted the request and encourages CECAF to establish a partnership with RAFISMER.

**b) Report of work of research institutions or scientific groups in CECAF member countries**

57. The delegates presented the new research activities conducted in the management of stocks and the fisheries statistical data problems in their respective countries in 2006 and 2007. Some countries also informed the Scientific Sub-Committee of the stock assessment surveys conducted in their respective waters and the partnerships established with foreign institutions.

58. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee thanked the delegates for their presentations and suggested that the practice of sharing knowledge among researchers and decision makers be maintained.

**ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

59. The Sub-Committee unanimously re-elected Mr Eduardo Balguerías of the Spanish Institute of Oceanography as Chairperson and Mr Kossi Sedzro of the Department of Fisheries of Togo as Vice-Chairperson.

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE SIXTH SESSION**

60. The Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson of the Scientific Sub-Committee will decide the date and place of the sixth session.

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

61. The report of the fifth session of the CECAF Scientific Sub-Committee was adopted on 6 December 2007.