

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Report of the

WECAFC REORIENTATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

Gosier, Guadeloupe, 29–30 January 2014



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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the report of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop, held in Gosier, Guadeloupe, on 29 and 30 January 2014.

The workshop was requested by the fourteenth session of WECAFC in February 2012 and aimed to review and pre-discuss the outcomes of the WECAFC Performance Review, the options available for reorientation of WECAFC and the draft strategic plan (2014–2020) as prepared by the WECAFC Secretariat and Bureau, with support from FAO Headquarters.

The workshop was made possible through the generous support provided by the Government of France, the Préfecture de Guadeloupe, the European Union (Member Organization) and FAO.

The FAO Secretariat to the workshop consisted of Mr Raymon van Anrooy, WECAFC Secretary and Ms Helga Josupeit, FAO Senior Fisheries Officer. Administrative and logistical support was provided by Mr Romain Guillot, Deputy-Director of the Direction de la mer of Guadeloupe, and various staff of the Direction. Ms Judith Swan, WECAFC legal consultant, assisted the workshop as resource person via skype.

This report contains a short summary of the presentations, discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the workshop.

FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission. 2014.

Report of the WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop, Gosier, Guadeloupe, 29–30 January 2014

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ABSTRACT

The WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop was held in Gosier, Guadeloupe, on 29 and 30 January 2014. The workshop was attended by delegations from nine members of the Commission. The workshop reviewed the preliminary outcomes of the WECAFC performance review and the options for WECAFC's improvement and strategic reorientation. Proposals for amendment of the WECAFC Rules of Procedure and a draft Strategic Plan 2014–2020 were presented and discussed. The Workshop requested the WECAFC Secretariat to present the reviewed and amended documents to the fifteenth session for endorsement. The workshop also recommended to the fifteenth session of WECAFC to identify whether there is scope and support for establishment of a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) in the region and request (if appropriate) FAO to engage with the members in a process of transition of WECAFC from a FAO Article VI Regional Fishery Advisory Body to an FAO Article XIV regional fisheries management organization (RFMO), should the Commission decide to go that route. In addition, various project concepts and proposals, as prepared by FAO, the WECAFC Secretariat and Bureau were shared with the delegations for information and identification of potential funding sources.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At the 14th session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), held in Panama City, in February 2012, the delegations of 12 WECAFC members¹ formally requested FAO to support a strategic reorientation process of the Commission with legal and technical advice, taking into account the following considerations: the limitations of the Secretariat in terms of legal and technical capacity for supporting such a process; the long standing experience of FAO in relation to regional fishery bodies; the neutral role of FAO as a United Nations specialized agency; and the vital importance of maintaining the current momentum for change. This request received informal support from a number of other WECAFC members at and after the 14th session.

2. Reasons provided for the request included:

- the large changes in the institutional environment in which WECAFC operates (e.g. other subregional fishery bodies such as the Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism – CRFM – and the Central American Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector – OSPESCA - got stronger and more efficient in recent years);
- an overlap in mandates with these other regional fishery bodies (RFBs), which requires greater partnerships;
- the current WECAFC mandate is very broad and receives only limited funding from members and FAO;
- the WECAFC Statutes and Rules of Procedure cause less efficient functioning of the Commission in a time of rapid developments and changes in the region.

3. In 2013, an additional reason was provided, which is that WECAFC needs to address the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Strategic Action Programme (SAP) process outcomes and start supporting its implementation.

4. In July 2012, the 30th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) instructed FAO to initiate performance reviews of the RFBs under its auspices that had not already been assessed, including WECAFC. In its 40 years of existence WECAFC never carried out a performance review before, which is considered a serious gap by some of its members. Other RFBs in the region and adjacent regions have conducted performance reviews (e.g. FAO conducted an independent performance review of CRFM in 2012–2013).

5. Unfortunately, the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) was unable to support the requested reorientation process of WECAFC and the FAO regular programme resources allocated to WECAFC were too small to organize the workshop earlier.

6. The workshop objectives were the following:

- Review the outcomes of the performance review and options for WECAFC improvement and assessment of a strategic reorientation.
- Review draft proposals for amending the rules of procedures of WECAFC, on the management and operational structure, procedures and systems.
- Discuss and agree on the WECAFC priorities and draft a mid-term (2014–2020) Strategic plan.

¹ The member states included: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Nicaragua, Netherlands, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

7. The WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop was held in Gosier, Guadeloupe, on 29 and 30 January 2014. On behalf of the Government of France, the Préfecture de Guadeloupe kindly hosted this workshop, which received generous support from the European Union (Member Organization) (EU) and FAO. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Ms Marcelle Pierrot, Préfète de la Région Guadeloupe, Mr Guillaume Perrin, Directeur de la mer de la Guadeloupe, Mr Richard Nebor, Chairperson of the Agriculture and Fisheries Commission of the Regional Council for Guadeloupe and Ms Helga Josupeit, Senior Fisheries Officer, on behalf of FAO. The opening remarks by Ms Pierrot are made available as Appendix D to this report.

ATTENDANCE

8. The following WECAFC members attended the workshop: Bahamas, Belize, Colombia (via skype), Dominica, European Union (Member Organization), France (including Guadeloupe, Martinique and St. Barthelemy), Grenada, Netherlands (Caribbean Netherlands), and Saint Lucia. The list of 18 participants can be found in Appendix B.

CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPORTEURS

9. Mr Lionel Reynal, WECAFC Vice-Chairperson, and Mr Romain Guillot, France, agreed to co-share this workshop. They were assisted by two rapporteurs from FAO: Mr Raymon van Anrooy and Ms Helga Josupeit.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

10. The Meeting adopted the agenda as shown in Appendix A.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

11. Mr Raymon van Anrooy, Secretary of WECAFC, presented the background and objectives of the workshop. He started his presentation with some general information about WECAFC's history, mandate, membership, area of competence and activities in which it is involved. The outcomes of the 14th session were discussed as well as the reasons for the request for strategic reorientation and what was expected from this particular workshop.

12. In the discussion that succeeded the presentation, it was stressed that the time available to discuss the range of issues was rather limited, but that it should be possible to validate the findings of the performance review, give guidance on improved resource mobilization, prepare the final draft revised rules of procedure, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of moving from a Article VI body to an Article XIV body, and validate the project concept notes. The EU delegate noted that they cannot give any endorsement nor position on any of the presented documents as the EU would first have to consult its members. Mr van Anrooy explained that this workshop was not intended to make any decisions of a binding nature and that the discussions are mainly at a technical level; he added that decisions on the matters to be discussed can only be taken at the 15th session of the WECAFC.

13. Ms Helga Josupeit presented the key messages from the performance review, which was conducted in November and December 2013. Over 70 stakeholders had taken the time to complete the online survey and provide their opinion on the performance of WECAFC and priorities for future work of WECAFC. She presented draft strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis and the major conclusions of the report based on this SWOT analysis and the online survey. The review noted that the online survey was not responsive with regard to the preference of members in terms of the future status of WECAFC. While a slight majority of survey respondents expressed to be satisfied with the current WECAFC performance and status as FAO Article VI regional fishery body (RFB), a large minority would like to see WECAFC transformed into an FAO Article XIV body, and

function as regional fisheries management organization (RFMO). It was noted however that the respondents responded in their own personal capacity and did not present the viewpoints of their respective governments.

14. There was general appreciation among the delegates attending the workshop for the quality of the performance review, especially in view of the limited resources available to WECAFC and the short time frame allocated to the task. The EU delegate noted that in the SWOT analysis, two main weaknesses of the organization should be underlined. The first weakness being the limited capacity for collation and sharing of information. The scientific advice provision for management is impacted by the lack of reliable information. The lack of financial resources is another large problem and will need to be addressed in the near future. The efforts to attract extrabudgetary funds should be further increased. The dwindling of regular budget funding is not only a problem of FAO, but even the EU, for the first time in history, saw a reduction in the commission budget in 2014 over 2013. The delegate added that the organization of Working Groups should be addressed and rethought in terms of seeking resources that enable all key experts to participate.

15. The delegate from Belize underlined that the staffing of WECAFC is far too low and congratulated Mr van Anrooy for the excellent work, despite the limited resources. He expressed concern about the inability of WECAFC to access international funding to undertake its core activities. He stressed that part of the mobilized resources should support the secretariat to increase its staffing. He further noted that WECAFC as Article VI body has limited chances to get sufficient financial contributions and that therefore Belize supports a transformation into an FAO Article XIV body. The delegate also noted that licensing and registration of artisanal fisheries is a key problem in the region, but Belize managed to improve their licensing and registration systems and at present 92 to 95 percent are licensed fishermen.

16. Mr van Anrooy, on request of some delegates, presented some findings of a recent study on fisheries management and conservation in the WECAFC region, in which 18 countries and overseas territories participated. The study revealed, amongst others, that in many WECAFC member countries hardly any fisheries management plans are in place, that there is limited information shared on the fisheries legislation frameworks, such as close season, and that there are limited efforts for harmonization of fisheries legislation within the membership so far.

17. A delegate from France, expressing appreciation for the review, noted that a lack of data on small-scale fisheries (SSF) is a problem in the WECAFC region and that the improvement of the data collection is a strategic issue that should be addressed by all countries.

18. The delegate from St Lucia recommended that the review should preferably give a time frame in which the next review should be carried out, something like every three or five years. She added that the scientific methodology for assessing the queen conch stocks should be better synchronized and harmonized among the queen conch range countries to review shared stocks, so that the data can be compared in support of better management and conservation.

19. The delegate from Dominica noted that WECAFC should take a more global approach to resource mobilization, including seeking Global Environment Facility (GEF) support. WECAFC has an important role to play and could be essential in advancing on climate change adaptation issues in fisheries. The secretariat should increase its efforts to explore how to get new projects and to get some more staff.

20. The delegate from Grenada thanked FAO and WECAFC for initiating the review, which was considered very timely and provided some introspection in terms of the results of the review. He stressed that WECAFC plays a very important role as the region is very diverse. There are a multitude of organizations involved and working together in the region. Main concerns in fisheries also include environmental issues. The lack of resources to undertake a number of programmes and the limited number of secretarial staff cause that WECAFC is dependent on resource mobilization. Other areas

like climate change, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) receive a lot of resources, so it is essential to reorientate the organization towards seeking more project support. The re-prioritizing process and refocusing is essential, taking into consideration that there are also other organizations working in the region, such as the Caribbean Regional Fishery Mechanism (CRFM) and the Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA).

21. Ms Swan, WECAFC Legal Consultant, made a presentation on the reorientation of WECAFC, based on the paper “Background and Strategic Options for the Strategic Reorientation of WECAFC” (Document 3). She stated that the objective was to consider the response of WECAFC members to the performance review survey, together with other relevant matters, and propose options for the way forward in the WECAFC reorientation process. Roles that may be played by WECAFC under its current mandate in accordance with priorities expressed by Members were identified and options for transforming its legal mandate were described.

22. The existing institutional structure of WECAFC was reviewed, including the Commission, SAG, Working Groups, Secretariat, National Focal Points, the Bureau and its Sessions, noting areas where strengthening could be considered, taking into account the needs of the region, the WECAFC Statutes and Rules of Procedure and best practices of RFBs.

23. The financial aspects of WECAFC were described, including the levels of FAO contribution to the Commission, valued at between USD160 000 and 170 000 per year. A dedicated Trust Fund was established in support of the WECAFC Work Programme in 2012, but the contributions received so far were generally in-kind. It was emphasized that although support for the WECAFC Members in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) was estimated at USD1.5 million in the 2012–2013 biennium, much of the funding went to activities with only limited linkage to WECAFC and many of the activities were not carried out under the WECAFC umbrella.

24. The legal, financial and administrative implications of the following options were described:

- continuation as an FAO Article VI body with additional arrangements and authorities;
- transformation into an FAO Article XIV body;
- transformation into an independent non-FAO body.

25. Fourteen recommendations were presented in relation to membership, non-members, the Scientific Advisory Group, the Secretariat and National Focal Points, the Bureau, WECAFC Sessions and relevant FAO developments in the Committee on Fisheries and in other RFBs that have undertaken reform processes.

26. Following the presentation the delegate from Grenada asked whether there are any other regions that have similar geopolitical and cultural differences and which lessons could be learned from. Ms Swan gave as example Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the work they carry out to harmonize the standards for fishing. In the Indian Ocean, the jurisdiction is divided where Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) has jurisdiction over tuna, and South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) over other species and fisheries in the waters under national jurisdiction, between them they are collaborating in terms of establishing rights based fishing and binding management measures.

27. The delegate from St Lucia asked about the experiences from other RFBs-RFMOs on how binding decisions impact on developing countries, including the requirements for certain scientific research and in view of financial constraints in these countries. Ms Swan responded that fisheries enforcement measures might be costly, and that scientific advice would be supported by the RFMO. Wealthier members are generally supporting other RFMO members in these fields, especially to facilitate information generation and exchange to enable informed decision making. Often dedicated

trust funds have been developed countries through which wealthier members support participation of poorer members.

28. The delegate from Dominica asked about potential areas of conflict between the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), CRFM and WECAFC and duplication of effort. The reply by the secretariat was that generally RFMOs avoid conflicts and that the RFBs and RFMO secretariats are in contact frequently and meet biannually in the Regional Fisheries Bodies Secretariats Network (RSN). An example was given of the arrangements between ICCAT and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), where GFCM automatically adopts ICCAT measures. Institutional arrangements in place are generally effective. In the WECAFC region it has been discussed by the secretariats that CRFM subregional recommendations could in many cases be upscaled to the regional level and be endorsed by WECAFC, either as RFB or RFMO. The Secretariat mentioned that this practice would be initiated by the 15th session if members agree with it. Duplication would be avoided, while supplementarity and complementarity would be promoted.

29. The delegate from Grenada recommended to further investigate and inform members about how other RFMO arrangements are functioning. In this context, it was recommended to integrate in future discussions on a transition to an RFMO other partners such as CRFM and OSPESCA. The Secretariat mentioned that the secretariats from CRFM and OSPESCA discuss frequently and are currently collaborating on a range of subjects including in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+ project).

30. The delegate from St Bartholomew highlighted the importance of generating more resource knowledge and conservation efforts to allow sustainable development. He also warned for reduced donor or developed countries interest if progress made in cooperation is too slow. Information exchange is essential for a healthy fishery.

31. The EU delegate congratulated the secretariat for the document prepared and asked detailed questions on the various committees an Article XIV body would need to establish such as a compliance committee, dispute settlement committee, financial committee. It was noted that binding measures are generally few, while technical committees are used to harmonize approaches. The political willingness among members of the commission is often against issuance of binding measures in favour of voluntary arrangements. The secretariat clarified that every regional collaboration depends on the political will in the governments. It was added that members can (if needed) opt out from binding decisions, provided they can give a reason for non-enforcement. Mechanisms are in force in each RFMO on how to handle opt-out cases. The use of finance and administration committees depend on the RFMO agreement negotiated and these committees generally meet in a transparent way. Generally there is budget allocated to cover these meetings, and arrangements are in place for administrative measures, committee and financial regulations; arrangements in line with FAO statutes. Members should however report annually on compliance, and the secretariat assists countries to better comply with regulations.

32. The delegate of Belize recommended that the three options (Article VI, Article XIV and Intergovernmental organization - IGO) should be clearly spelt out for the directors of fisheries in the region. In the same spirit the EU delegate requested a road map for the way forward; a draft roadmap for a transition from an FAO Article VI RFB to an Article XIV RFMO was presented by the secretariat on day two.

33. The delegate of St Lucia stressed that in the workshop no preference for Article VI or Article XIV could be given, as this was an important political decision of relevance for the whole country. At the moment the document presented focused on the legal aspects. In order to go forward, other aspects had to be clarified such as scientific assessments, socioeconomic implications, and food security.

34. The delegate from Grenada indicated that the information package to be prepared by the secretariat should in fact integrate the issues as mentioned by St Lucia, and give a logical structure for presentation to member countries.

35. The delegate from the Caribbean Netherlands indicated that the Netherlands is very much in favour of WECAFC becoming an Article XIV body, but that they will have to refer to the EU for any decision to be taken in this regard, as decisions of this nature are taken jointly within the group of EU members in WECAFC.

36. Ms Swan made a presentation on proposed revisions to the WECAFC Rules of Procedure, based on the paper "Draft Revised Rules of Procedure" prepared for the Workshop and 15th session. Considerations by the fourteenth session of WECAFC of draft revisions to the WECAFC Rules of Procedure were explained, and the Commission's agreement "in principle" to the proposed revisions. It was noted that the required two-thirds majority of members at the fourteenth session of WECAFC was not present to allow adoption of the revisions, but the Members considered that they should be implemented on a de facto basis.

37. It was explained that the Commission did not make a decision on the various proposals relating to the use of working languages in Working Groups and other WECAFC activities. The Secretariat had explained to the fourteenth session of WECAFC that reduced funding for the region under the FAO Regular Programme would not allow translation and interpretation services to be supplied at past levels.

38. The key proposed revisions considered by the fourteenth session of WECAFC were presented, including those relating to the Commission Officers, Executive Committee, National Focal Points, Technical Advisory Committee (to replace the SAG), Secretariat functions and duties, intersessional decisionmaking, strengthened cooperation and transparency with non-members and international organizations, participation by observers, records, reports, recommendations and information and procedures for the conduct of meetings.

39. New proposed revisions (in addition to those considered at the fourteenth session of WECAFC) were introduced, relating to: membership; observers and broader cooperation; and languages of the Commission.

40. The Workshop discussion on the Rules of Procedure continued along the same lines of the discussion at the fourteenth session of WECAFC. The three main changes compared to the fourteenth session of 'WECAFC de facto adopted Rules' were explained and further discussed in detail. Various innovative options for dealing with non-attendance by members in the sessions (delegation to other countries, teleconferencing, special session in Rome) and voting were discussed in detail, provided that the legal office in FAO Rome agrees to these. Issuance of more personalized invitations addressed to the focal points of WECAFC was indicated as a way forward, while acknowledging that also official channels of communication would need to be followed. On the aspect of resource mobilization and the article in the rules on the Trust Fund, the secretariat explained that the already established trust fund has only a 5.9 percent FAO service fee (to cover administrative and operational costs), which is significantly lower than most other organizations and NGOs active in the region apply currently.

41. The text of the paper and the proposed revisions to the WECAFC Rules of Procedure were endorsed by the Working Group for final review and adoption by the fifteenth session of WECAFC. The delegate of the EU asked whether the Technical Advisory Committee would only be established if WECAFC became an Article XIV RFMO. He added that there may be some problems with wording if WECAFC remained as an Article VI body. He raised concerns about the wording of some functions of the future TAC. The Secretariat addressed the concerns and confirmed that the TAC would not be given any management decision power in either an Article VI or Article XIV structure.

42. The Secretary of WECAFC presented the Draft WECAFC Strategic Plan (2014–2020). He started with some historical background and why WECAFC would need a plan now, while it never had such a strategic plan before. He gave the following reasons for the strategic plan and entering into a planning process:

- To guide the mid-term functioning of WECAFC and support sustainable development and management of the sector;
- To provide consistency in approaches and continuation of the priority work requested by members;
- To communicate to members and other stakeholders what WECAFC aims to do in the mid-term;
- To increase transparency and accountability for the work undertaken in the coming years; and
- To increase member and donor support to the work of the Commission.

43. He added that members requested the FAO-WECAFC Secretariat to assist in prioritization of WECAFC activities and in the preparation of a strategic plan, stressing that the strategic plan belongs to the members of WECAFC and should therefore be developed by the members. He noted that the secretariat, in close cooperation with the Bureau, can provide assistance and guidance, particularly in aligning the strategy to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, to the work of other institutions and to other international instruments and agreements, but that Members have to decide on the plan and what they want inside and with it. The secretary stressed that implementation of the Strategic Plan takes money, time, effort and long-term commitment from both the Members and the FAO-WECAFC Secretariat.

44. The draft outline, contents, vision, goal, mission and focus areas were presented. The four technical and management focus areas are the following:

1. Improve regional fisheries governance;
2. Increase regional information and collaboration in fisheries;
3. Strengthen regional fisheries management and best-practice approaches for fisheries and aquaculture; and
4. Create an enabling environment within the WECAFC Secretariat to support the achievement of the goals and objective of the Commission.

45. The draft Strategic Plan was reviewed and endorsed for submission to the fifteenth session of WECAFC with some minor changes. These included changes to the goal of the Strategic Plan, minor changes in the order of focus areas, the inclusion of conservation and marine diversity aspects including marine bioperspectation under focus area 2. With regard to additional activities to prioritize, the delegate of Belize requested that WECAFC should monitor closely the developments in the USA in relation to ongoing processes that may lead to inclusion of Queen Conch on the list of endangered species of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The secretary noted that the Working Group on Queen Conch could be convened virtually to create clarity, act proactively on this subject, prepare a resolution or recommendation for the fifteenth session of WECAFC and in such way support the interests of the fishing communities in WECAFC member countries concerned.

46. The secretariat presented on request of the Workshop a draft road map for a potential transition process of WECAFC from an FAO Article VI RFB to an Article XIV RFMO. This roadmap was amended by the participants and is reproduced in Appendix D of this report. Dominica requested that the road map should be sent to OSPESCA and CRFM to get these organizations involved in every next step in the process.

47. It was noted that financial support would be required from the CLME+ project, EU, FAO and other WECAFC members to carry out a transformation process. The delegate from the EU mentioned

that some limited EU funding may be accessible for WECAFC in 2015 if a proposal is submitted by June 2014.

48. The Secretariat provided information on a range of project concepts and proposals that were under preparation, including some that had been submitted to potential donors already.

49. These included the following:

- Supporting Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management in the North Brazil-Guianas Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (USD75 000 - funding approved by Inter-American Development Bank – project to start in 2014)
- Caribbean Billfish Project (component of the Ocean Partnerships for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation – Models for Innovation and Reform) (USD2.1 million World Bank funding under the GEF international Waters) – project to start in July 2014.
- Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (GEF Special Climate Change Fund supported) – USD5.4 million GEF grant. For the Project Preparation phase in 2014 some USD150 000 is available. The full project is expected to start in 2015.
- Port State Measures – developing best-practices for SIDS and overseas territories. Concept note/draft proposal has been prepared and is ready for sharing with donors to seek interest- a USD350 000 budget is required.
- Strategic role of WECAFC regarding fishery statistics and information. This project would support FIRMS implementation in the region. A USD109 000 budget is required. A concept note is ready and it was suggested to propose the project to the EU in June 2014.

PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT TO WECAFC

50. The Workshop discussed and agreed on a recommendation to the fifteenth session of WECAFC by the delegations participating in the WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop, which is presented in Appendix C to this report.

CLOSURE OF THE WORKSHOP

51. Mr Romain Guillot, co-chairperson to the workshop, thanked the WECAFC member delegates and other participants, his co-organizers (Direction de la mer, Préfecture de Guadeloupe, European Union [Member Organization] and FAO), the FAO/WECAFC workshop Secretariat, his co-chairperson, and interpreters for their contributions to the success of the workshop. Mr van Anrooy thanked the host and all participants for their active participation and wished all a safe and smooth travel back home.

52. The workshop was declared closed by Mr Guillot, on Thursday, 30 January 2014 at 16:00hrs.

Agenda

1. Opening of the Workshop
2. Election of the Chairpersons and rapporteurs
3. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the Workshop
4. Background and objectives of the Workshop
5. Draft report of the WECAFC Performance Review
6. Options Paper with “Background, guidance and strategic options for the strategic re-orientation of WECAFC
7. Draft revised Rules of Procedure
8. Draft Strategic Plan (2014–2020)
9. Recommendations to the 15th session of WECAFC
10. Draft concept notes and project proposals
11. Closure of the Workshop

APPENDIX B

List of participants

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APPENDIX C

Recommendation to the fifteenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) by the delegations participating in the WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop

The WECAFC members attending the workshop,

On the WECAFC Performance Review and WECAFC Options Paper

Recalling that at the 14th session of WECAFC, held in Panama City, in February 2012, twelve WECAFC Members formally requested the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to support a strategic re-orientation process of the Commission with legal and technical advice;

Further recalling that the 30th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), July 2012, requested FAO to initiate performance reviews of the RFBs under its auspices that had not already been assessed;

Appreciating the efforts made by the WECAFC Secretariat and FAO in 2013 and 2014 on the first performance review in WECAFC's 40 year history and implementation of the strategic planning process;

Thanking the Government of France, the Préfecture de Guadeloupe, the European Union and FAO for the financial and technical support provided, which made it possible to organize the WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop, in Guadeloupe on 29 and 30 January 2014, and acknowledging the attendance of the following WECAFC members: Bahamas, Belize, Colombia, Dominica, European Union, France (including Guadeloupe, Martinique and St Barthelemy), Grenada, Netherlands (Caribbean Netherlands), and Saint Lucia;

Recognizing the outcomes of the on-line WECAFC Performance Review survey which indicated, *inter alia*, that:

- the Commission has performed well in terms of promotion of fisheries management measures, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and small-scale fisheries;
- current activities (including working groups, technical advice generation, data and information analysis and exchange, development of best practices, resource mobilization, promotion of international instruments, institutional and policy framework strengthening) should continue to be priorities; and
- all Members and stakeholders considered that WECAFC was needed in the region, and none recommended its abolition;

Further recognizing the diverging viewpoints of Members and stakeholders concerning the future of WECAFC, where nearly 40% of the respondents to the on-line survey favoured the transformation of WECAFC into a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) and some 60% expressed satisfaction with the current situation. Paradoxically, a large majority of the respondents considered transformation of WECAFC into a fisheries conservation and management authority for transboundary and straddling stocks, high seas and deep sea fisheries a priority;

Having learned about the background and options for strategic orientation of WECAFC, changes in FAO's strategic objectives and the processes and commitments required for a future transition of WECAFC from a regional fishery body (RFB) established under Article VI of the FAO Constitution to an FAO Article XIV RFMO, as well as about the situation in other regions where responsibilities and duties are shared between various RFBs and reinforce each others' impact;

Noting the recent region-wide endorsement of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project, which called for “Review and reform of WECAFC as needed to clarify and strengthen its mandate and relationship with Regional Fisheries Bodies such as CRFM, OSPESCA and ICCAT”;

Having extensively reviewed and discussed the draft “WECAFC Performance Review” and the working document on “Background, Guidance and Strategic options for the strategic re-orientation of WECAFC”;

CONCLUDE that both documents are of value and importance to the strategic reorientation process and should be presented for endorsement to the 15th session of WECAFC in March 2014.

RECOMMEND the finalization of the draft Performance Review report, taking in consideration the main points raised at the workshop, including that:

- The SWOT analysis outcomes should be emphasized to the 15th Session.
- The limited financial and human resources available to the WECAFC Secretariat at present needs to be addressed by innovative approaches and resource mobilization strategies.
- The collection and sharing of data and information on fisheries is a continuous weakness in the region and should be prioritized. Strengthening collaboration between the WECAFC members on this subject is essential and donor assistance should be sought as priority.
- The identified weakness in terms of legal framework harmonization in fisheries and standardization of fishing license schemes should be addressed with urgency with project assistance from members.
- Scientific methods that are used in stock assessment and fisheries inventories by the members should be harmonized.
- WECAFC should try to collaborate more closely with institutions and donors that work on climate change adaptation, marine protected areas and reef conservation issues and refocus its programme of work towards these issues where possible.

Recognizing that the delegations attending the workshop could not endorse on behalf of the members a transition of WECAFC into an FAO Article XIV RFMO;

REQUESTS the WECAFC Secretariat to:

- Develop with the WECAFC Bureau and FAO staff:
 - A clear and comprehensive and short information package for the members, which should add to the currently offered legal and institutional analysis and focus on the practical implications and costs and benefits of a transition of WECAFC into an FAO Article XIV RFMO.
 - A draft roadmap for a transition of WECAFC into an FAO Article XIV RFMO.
- Involve the other relevant Regional Fishery Bodies (CRFM, OSPESCA, ICCAT, CFMC) and projects (particularly CLME+) in the further preliminary discussions on the transition process and work on the practical modalities of collaboration to inform the members at the 15th session.

RECOMMEND the 15th session of WECAFC to identify whether there is scope and support for establishment of an RFMO the region and request (if appropriate) FAO to engage with the members in a process of transition of WECAFC from an FAO Article VI Regional Fishery Advisory Body to an FAO Article XIV Regional Fisheries Management Organization, should the Commission decide to go that route.

On the proposals presented for amendment of the WECAFC Rules of Procedure

Considering the discussions and the “in principle” approval of various amendments to the 2008 Rules of Procedure of Commission by the 14th session of WECAFC, held in Panama City, in February 2012;

Noting the request from the 14th session that the (draft) revised Rules of Procedures should be implemented on a *de facto* basis, pending endorsement by two-thirds of the WECAFC Members at the 15th session;

Recognizing the efforts made by Members and the Secretariat to implement the (draft) revised Rules of Procedures, such as the appointment of National Focal Points and increasing the role of the WECAFC Bureau;

Further recognizing that strengthening the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of WECAFC contributes to revitalization of the Commission and its work, will enable the commission to incorporate emerging best-practices of other FAO bodies and will improve procedures and decisionmaking to achieve clearer and more effective administration;

Addressing the overwhelming support by Members and other Stakeholders in the on-line WECAFC Performance Review survey for further improving the functioning of WECAFC through various additional amendments to the 2008 RoP;

Having extensively reviewed the draft “revised Rules of Procedure” as presented to the Workshop by Ms Judith Swan, WECAFC legal consultant;

CONCLUDE that the “revised Rules of Procedure” will bring significant improvements to the functioning of WECAFC and its institutions and should be passed for endorsement to the 15th session, incorporating the comments that were made by the workshop.

On the draft WECAFC Strategic Plan 2014 -2020

Confirming the need for a mid-term Strategic Plan and appreciating the draft prepared by the WECAFC Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau and FAO staff;

Recognizing that the draft Strategic Plan is firmly based on the latest adopted programmes of work of WECAFC and addresses the main priority and focus areas as have been identified by members and stakeholders in the online performance review survey;

Noting that the presented activities under the Focus Areas were all considered to be priorities, the following activities should deserve special attention in the plan:

- Increase attention to marine biodiversity in the region, including bioprospection of marine resources;
- Closely monitor the queen conch stock status, the ongoing review process being done by NOAA Fisheries in relation to a petition to list this species as endangered or threatened under the United States Endangered Species Act (ESA) and work on the development of a regional management plan.

REQUESTS the WECAFC Secretariat to pass the draft Strategic Plan to the 15th session of WECAFC for final review and endorsement, amending the plan as necessary.

On the concept papers and project proposals presented to the workshop

Thanking the WECAFC Secretariat, bureau and FAO staff, as well as partner agencies, for the preparation of the various concept notes presented;

Recognizing the importance of the project proposals shared (FIRMS, Regional Database, Port State Measures, Climate change adaptation in fisheries, Shrimp and groundfish investment and the Caribbean blue revolution) for the WECAFC region as a whole and for specific members in particular;

RECOMMEND the WECAFC Secretariat and bureau to continue follow-up on the proposals developed with potential donor agencies and to try to involve all relevant members in the further formulation and implementation of these projects.

APPENDIX D

Draft roadmap for a transition of WECAFC into an Article XIV RFMO

Jan 2014	Re-orientation Workshop requests the WECAFC Secretariat to investigate interest among members in a transition of WECAFC into an FAO Article XIV RFMO
14 Feb 2014	WECAFC Secretariat prepares short information package on the transition option and submits this formally to all members and the secretariats of relevant sub-regional bodies (OSPESCA, CRFM)
14 March 2014	Members review the information and give a preliminary indication of interest in this option (Yes/No) to the Secretariat before the 15 th Session. The positions should be substantiated and shared among members.
28 March 2014	Members review the options at the 15 th Session and agree/not agree to a transition to an FAO Article XIV organization. If members agree, a roadmap outlining the steps and timeframe for the process of transition will be discussed with a view to agreement.
	IN CASE IT WILL BE DECIDED BY THE SESSION TO CREATE AN ARTICLE XIV RFMO, THEN THE NEXT STEPS ARE SUGGESTED
April 2014	One member on behalf of the members attending the 15 th session, submits a request to FAO expressing the desire to establish the RFMO and that FAO support the process to this effect
May 2014	Report of the 15 th session is sent to all members and observers
June 2014	The WECAFC Secretariat submits a project proposal for shared funding of the transition process to the European Union, CLME+ and FAO
Sept 2014	FAO formally informs the WECAFC members of the request for establishment of an Article XIV RFMO and, when it enters into force the abolition of WECAFC as Article VI RFB
March 2015	Special Session of WECAFC/1 st Preparatory Meeting to prepare and negotiate the:
	- Agreement
	- Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations, including the Scheme and scale of contributions to the administrative/autonomous budget of the RFMO, to be adopted by the Article XIV body after its entry into force
Nov 2015	Special Session of WECAFC/2 nd Preparatory Meeting to further negotiate and finalize/preliminary endorse the:
	- Agreement
	- Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations, Budget for the 1 st financial period of the RFMO, Scheme and scale of contributions to the administrative/autonomous budget of the RFMO, 1 st Programme of Work of the RFMO, and proposals for establishment of sub-commissions or other subsidiary bodies.
Dec 2015	One member on behalf of the members attending the 2 nd Preparatory Meeting, submits the final Agreement to the Director General of FAO and requests the Organization to review and endorse it at the appropriate levels
March 2016	16 th Session of WECAFC – an update on the status of the process is provided to the members
June 2016	The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) of FAO reviews the proposed Agreement and passes it to the FAO Council or FAO Conference for endorsement. All WECAFC members are member of the FAO Conference, and some of the FAO Council. In either of the two the decision to dissolve WECAFC as an Article VI body by Council Resolution, and establish as an Article XIV body is made. The dissolution would take effect upon entry into force of the Article XIV body.

Sept 2016	The FAO Director General notifies the WECAFC members of the endorsement of the Agreement and invites them to become member of the Commission through depositing an “instrument of acceptance” of the agreement
Oct 2016/ 2017	The members follow internal processes of ministerial/cabinet approval of the Agreement and inform the WECAFC Secretariat on progress made
Oct 2017	Inaugural Session of the new RFMO/Final session of WECAFC as Article VI body
	- The inaugural session can be organized after a minimum number of members have accepted the agreement – e.g. seven members as will be determined in the Agreement
	- Those WECAFC members that have not accepted the agreement by this session will participate as observers in the RFMO sessions until they accept the agreement

**Opening remarks
(only available in French)**

Ms Marcelle Pierrot, Préfète de la Région Guadeloupe

Je suis heureuse de vous souhaiter la bienvenue en France pour participer à l'atelier de réorientation et de planification stratégique de la COPACO (Commission Pêche de l'Atlantique Centre-Ouest)

Il m'a été très agréable que la Guadeloupe ait été retenue par le Ministre des affaires étrangères et le Ministre de l'écologie pour accueillir vos travaux.

C'est pour notre archipel un grand moment que d'accueillir les experts reconnus que vous êtes et je peux vous assurer que les guadeloupéens et les guadeloupéennes sont fiers, qu'aujourd'hui et demain, chez eux, vous échangerez sur la coopération régionale en matière de conservation et d'utilisation rationnelle des ressources vivantes dans l'Atlantique Centreouest.

Je suis heureuse que la commission européenne soit représentée, preuve de l'intérêt qu'elle porte à notre zone géographique et au champ des travaux sur lequel elle exerce, pour notre compte, une compétence juridique exclusive, notamment pour la négociation d'accords de pêche avec les pays tiers.

L'objectif assigné à votre atelier est ambitieux, en ce qu'il a à conduire un tel processus de rénovation à forts enjeux à la fois écologique, économique et de santé publique, à mettre en place des procédures pour garantir la performance de la COPACO et à élaborer un projet de plan stratégique. Votre feuille de route est précisée dans la lettre d'invitation qui vous a été adressée.

La FAO garantit sa mise en œuvre dans une approche de pêche responsable qui lui est chère. Je serai très attentive à vos travaux qui vont avoir intérêt pour toute la zone Ouest atlantique et conforter la coopération entre les États sur leurs préoccupations communes.

Ils seront donc bénéfiques à la Guadeloupe. Nous avons intérêt à nous inscrire dans une dynamique de pêche responsable. Notre situation archipélagique favorise une activité de pêche artisanale pratiquée par quelques 900 navires et 1200 marins tout le long de notre littoral.

La production est estimée à 10 000 tonnes. Le secteur de la pêche maritime et des élevages marins constitue un des axes forts de l'activité économique primaire du territoire et doit répondre à une forte demande sur l'archipel. J'ajoute que la population est grande consommatrice de produits de la mer.

La réorientation de la COPACO vers une plus grande activité nous sera profitable à tous. Sur le plan économique, car en l'absence de mesures de gestion fortes des droits de pêche dans la région caribéenne, nos pays pourraient devenir la plaque tournante d'un trafic conséquent de produits de la mer portant sur les espèces les plus emblématiques pour la pêche locale (lambi, langouste), facteur de déstabilisation du marché local au détriment des producteurs.

Sur le plan sanitaire, car il est à craindre que d'importantes quantités de poisson pêchées dans les zones contaminées par la ciguatera soient importés illégalement puis vendus sur les marchés comme étant de la production locale. Si l'on n'y prend pas garde l'essor nouveau que pourrait prendre ce type de trafic comporte de surcroît le risque de voir un nombre non négligeable de pêcheurs dériver vers des trafics plus lucratifs (drogue, immigration clandestine...). L'analyse que vous ferez sur l'évaluation des zones de pêches pourrait ouvrir des perspectives sur des coopérations sur les zones de pêche. Je vous renouvelle ma fierté d'accueillir au nom du Gouvernement français les membres des délégations de nos éminents voisins en cette circonstance.

Il est à noter que de par leur nouveau statut, les collectivités de Saint Barthélemy et Saint Martin exercent depuis 2007 déjà la compétence de gestion et de réglementation des pêches maritimes dans les eaux maritimes sous souveraineté ou juridiction française qui baignent leur littoral. Nul doute qu'elles ne suivent avec beaucoup d'attention l'évolution des échanges qui vont intervenir ici.

Je veux à présent vous souhaiter de fructueux travaux. Nul doute que les débats permettront d'intensifier l'action de la Commission des Pêches pour l'Atlantique Centre Ouest dans notre grande région.

Un patrimoine commun qu'il nous appartient collectivement de préserver et de transmettre aux générations futures dans un meilleur état que celui dans lequel nous l'avons reçu.

Je vous en remercie.

The WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop was held in Gosier, Guadeloupe, on 29 and 30 January 2014. The workshop was attended by delegations from nine members of the Commission. The workshop reviewed the preliminary outcomes of the WECAFC performance review and the options for WECAFC improvement and strategic reorientation. Proposals for amendment of the WECAFC Rules of Procedure and a draft Strategic Plan 2014–2020 were presented and discussed. The Workshop requested the WECAFC Secretariat to present the reviewed and amended documents to the 15th session for endorsement. The workshop also recommended to the 15th session of WECAFC to identify whether there is scope and support for establishment of a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) in the region and request (if appropriate) FAO to engage with the members in a process of transition of WECAFC from a FAO Article VI Regional Fishery Advisory Body to a FAO Article XIV RFMO, should the Commission decide to go that route.