

**REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES**

**Report of the**

---

**SPECIAL MEETING ON CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Rome, 11–12 May 2010**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report of the Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) that was held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010.

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Report of the RECOFI Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development. Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010.

*FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 960. Rome, FAO. 2011. 32p.

### ABSTRACT

The Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. The objective of the special meeting was to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization. The meeting participants reviewed the preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission. In addition, comparative information was provided on the statutes, budgets and structures of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and RECOFI. The meeting considered the financial status of RECOFI and future scenarios for the consolidation and development of the Commission with particular focus on the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. The history and present structure of the GFCM was presented to the participants who agreed that the future strengthening of their own Commission would certainly benefit from the experience of the GFCM. The meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. The meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs. The proposals and recommendations from the meeting will be for consideration by the Commission at its Sixth Session in 2011.



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## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. The meeting was attended by seven Members of the Commission. The list of participants is attached as Appendix B.

2. The meeting is a follow-up to the Fifth Session of RECOFI held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009, during which the Commission requested the Secretariat to convene an ad hoc intersessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization.

3. The meeting was called to order by Mr Piero Mannini, RECOFI Secretary and Senior Fishery Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt. He invited Mr Jean-François Pulvenis de Séligny, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division, FAO, Rome, Italy, to read a statement on behalf of Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, Rome, Italy. This statement appears in Appendix D. The RECOFI Secretary then invited His Excellency Dr Hamad bin Said Al-Oufi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, in his capacity as the highest ranking delegate, to make a statement on behalf of the other delegates. Dr Al-Oufi highlighted the importance of the fisheries sector in RECOFI countries in many respects, including food security, employment and trade. He stressed that the Sultanate of Oman is a committed supporter of the Commission. Dr Al-Oufi concluded by wishing everyone present a fruitful meeting.

4. The RECOFI Secretary thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for the understanding and cooperation shown in accepting that the meeting be convened at FAO headquarters in Rome instead of in the Islamic Republic of Iran as originally planned. This arrangement permitted the largest possible participation and support of the FAO Secretariat while keeping the cost of the meeting relatively low.

5. In the absence of the current RECOFI Chairperson, the Secretary moved that Mr Jassim Al-Qaseer, General Director, General Directorate for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife, Manama, Bahrain, as the current Vice-Chairperson of RECOFI and the Chairperson of the next plenary session in May 2011, be nominated to chair this meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING**

6. The Chairperson solicited input and suggestions from Members on the provisional agenda, which was adopted without any amendments. The agenda is in Appendix A. The list of documents for the meeting is attached in Appendix C.

## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES**

7. Mr Joseph Catanzano, an independent consultant, introduced document RECOFI:2010/2 addressing preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission. The document is attached in Appendix E. He pointed out that the purpose of the technical review was to make recommendations to enhance RECOFI's role and efficiency. The analysis and preliminary findings of the technical review were based on eight considerations:

- (i) knowledge on the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing;
- (ii) knowledge on the status of aquaculture;
- (iii) regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors;

- (iv) decision-making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy and to assess the results;
- (v) quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis;
- (vi) decision-making process to adopt Commission recommendations and measures;
- (vii) capacity development, training and technical assistance; and
- (viii) communication and information.

8. In his presentation, the consultant highlighted a number of pertinent issues, including that the Commission:

- was heavily reliant on FAO services, both financial and in kind;
- had not yet made recommendations to its Members concerning fisheries management and aquaculture despite having the mandate to do so; and
- had served as a forum for the transfer of knowledge and for strengthening capacity for fisheries research and management and aquaculture development.

9. In addition, the consultant noted that:

- Members lacked the financial and human resources to maximize benefits for the initiatives already being undertaken by the Commission;
- the non-political nature of FAO regional fishery bodies (RFBs) was important in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among Members;
- efforts to overcome Members' constraints identified in the questionnaire should be addressed, including fostering a more participatory approach in the Commission's work and decision-making;
- an assessment of national governance capacities was required;
- criteria and principles to define and develop RECOFI's regional governance priorities was needed;
- weaknesses in raising financial resources to support RECOFI's activities required attention; and
- a new vision was required to guide the Commission.

10. The meeting welcomed the consultant's presentation noting that it provided a fresh approach to strengthening, reorienting and reforming RECOFI's operations. It was agreed that a revised Commission structure would assist considerably in implementing Commission decisions and making it a more dynamic and responsive organization. Moreover, it was suggested that reviews of this type, which were seen to be healthy and productive, should be undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that the Commission's activities were attuned to Member's needs and changing regional and global conditions.

11. Within the scope of the Commission's mandate and as a starting point for further enhancing regional cooperation, the meeting agreed that there would be merit in evaluating the current role and needs of the fisheries sector in Member countries. It was proposed that RECOFI undertake national assessments to identify priority issues and areas for future work. It was agreed also that a more robust and vigorous Commission would assist Members in their efforts to implement RECOFI decisions.

12. The meeting, while noting the considerable amount of work carried out by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during the last biennium as shown in the up-to-date list of RECOFI publications (Appendix F), expressed considerable concern about the lack of follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations from the technical meetings convened by the Commission. Reasons were identified for this lack of follow-up and it was agreed that RECOFI should be involved in assisting Members in implementing decisions. However, it was recognized that such a role had financial implications and that funding would need to be secured if activities to support the implementation of Commission decisions were to be undertaken. To bolster its legitimacy,

the meeting underscored the need for the Commission to achieve tangible results of a quantifiable nature.

13. The meeting reaffirmed the strong basis for cooperation among RECOFI Members. However, it was noted that there were capacity differences among Members and not all countries were in an equivalent position to implement Commission decisions. Furthermore, the meeting recognized that strengthening cooperation with other organizations in the region working on fisheries, fisheries-related issues and aquaculture should be encouraged. It was stressed that the Commission should seek to interact with these organizations, drawing on and learning from their challenges and achievements.

14. The Commission's funding constraints affected its capacity to deliver quality services to its Members. Also affected by this funding constraint are the promotion of regional cooperation and collaboration. The meeting recognized the need for Members to ensure that the Commission had the resources required to fund its programmed activities. Considerable attention focused on the ways and means to secure funding, and it was suggested that FAO should assist RECOFI to prepare well-documented project proposals for donor funding. To reinforce the importance of securing extra-budgetary support for projects, the meeting agreed on the need for a proactive approach.

15. Noting that the traditional focus of the Commission had been on statistical and scientific matters, the importance of economic and social considerations was underscored. Some Members expressed the view that financial and economic issues would be more difficult to address nationally because they did not fall within the purview of fisheries administrations. Nonetheless, the meeting agreed that fisheries and aquaculture played an important economic and social role in RECOFI Members and that the Commission should address these issues fully.

16. Recognizing that the consultant's complete report would be made available in the near future by the Secretariat, it was agreed that Members should review the report and provide responses to the Commission's Secretary within a prescribed period of time. A reasonable review period would be required given that a number of national agencies, and not only the fisheries administration, would be engaged in the process.

17. The meeting agreed that there should be clear, solid, and well-structured proposals and recommendations coming out of this meeting for consideration by the Commission's 2011 session. Ultimately, the problems faced to accomplish this will have to be solved by the Commission.

#### **OUTLINE OF SOME EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS AND FINANCING MECHANISMS OF REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BODIES**

18. The Secretariat introduced document RECOFI:2010/3 providing comparative information on the statutes, budgets and structures of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI). The document is attached in Appendix G. GFCM, IOTC and RECOFI are the three regional fishery bodies established under the FAO Constitution with management powers and autonomous budgets. The Secretariat highlighted similarities and differences between the three bodies, including the level of technical support from FAO to the Commissions.

19. Members noted the similarities and differences among these bodies, recognizing that RECOFI was a relatively new organization, especially compared with the GFCM, which was founded in 1949.

#### **FINANCIAL AND ACTIVITY SCENARIOS: PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE OPTIONS**

20. The Secretariat introduced document RECOFI:2010/4 addressing the financial status of RECOFI and future scenarios for the consolidation and development of the Commission. The document is attached as Appendix H.

21. The Secretariat reviewed the financial situation of the Commission as of May 2009 highlighting in particular the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. In the last biennium (2008–2009), the actual total working costs related to RECOFI activities were US\$557 459.91, including the cost of FAO staff members (technical support and travel costs) supporting the Commission. The latter cost is about seven times more than the total national Members' contributions over the same period (US\$80 000). The Secretariat noted that the FAO contribution over the same period represented 73.61 percent of financial commitments. If the Commission were to be fully autonomous and financially self-supporting, the annual contribution of Member countries would need to rise. The independent consultant estimated the amount to be around US\$35 000 per country per year as a minimum.

22. During the Fifth Session of the Commission, the Secretariat informed Members that the accumulated pending arrears were US\$90 187.83 as of May 2009.

23. The Secretariat expressed the view that RECOFI should evolve towards an organization capable of better delivering services to the Members and to broaden the scope of activities and to involve other stakeholders such as other regional bodies and the private sector. The importance of the ways and means of improving the Commission's financial capacity was based on the following utilities:

- more autonomy for the Commission;
- more activities in service of Members;
- more participation of internal and external human capacities; and
- a higher ability to attract partners/donors, as the commitment of the latter was based on the degree and ability of RECOFI to self-finance on an ongoing basis.

24. Looking to the future, three scenarios were presented:

1. a status quo of equal payment with upward adjustment of annual contributions;
2. maintaining the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions by Member countries on a voluntary basis; and
3. replacing equal payments with indexed contributions based on a variety of variables.

25. The meeting noted that, besides the three aforementioned scenarios, other options could also be identified and taken into consideration. Moreover, it was highlighted by the Secretariat that there were two different financial means to support the Commission: (1) directly through agreed contributions by Members; and (2) indirectly and, additionally, through extra-budgetary funding of field projects (national or regional).

26. The meeting remarked, with regret, that it was most counterproductive that some Members had not yet settled their arrears and that they did not pay their assessed contribution to RECOFI on time. This should be taken to reveal the low or, at best, uncertain degree of the Members' commitment to support the Commission.

27. The meeting took note of the very significant financial contribution that FAO has provided to RECOFI during the last biennium, and was informed that this level of support could not be continued indefinitely in the future given the financial constraints faced by FAO.

28. The meeting recognized that the key was to link the budgetary decisions to implement the desired projects with desired outcomes, such as capacity development and other ongoing activities. Needless to say, autonomy of the Commission required a solid and recurrent budget. Relations with other commissions and donors would be that much stronger with an autonomous and self-financing RECOFI.

## THE POINT OF VIEW AND EXPERIENCE OF A STAKEHOLDER OF THE GFCM

29. The Chairperson of the GFCM, Mr Mohamed Hadj Ali Salem, was invited to present in his personal capacity this FAO Article XIV regional fishery body focusing on key historical events that shaped the organization and that led to its present structure. Like other regional fishery management organizations, the GFCM mandate is to focus on the conservation, rational management and appropriate utilization of its living and shared marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and connecting waters. The full presentation of Mr Hadj Ali Salem is in Appendix I.

30. The delegates of the participating RECOFI countries thanked the Secretariat as well as the GFCM President for the informative presentation on the current structure of the GFCM and the evolutionary milestones that have occurred since its existence to strengthen the management role played by this Commission in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The importance of GFCM and its management and regulatory role in the region was noted and well appreciated regardless of the decline in capture landings over the years. The delegates agreed that the future strengthening of their own Commission would certainly benefit from the experience of the GFCM and noted that capacity building in the region is needed and could possibly be supported by existing training platforms operating in the Mediterranean area such as the Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes (CIHEAM; [www.ciheam.org](http://www.ciheam.org)).

## OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SIXTH SESSION OF RECOFI ON THE CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMISSION

31. The meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. However, it was recognized that the movement towards a stronger and more dynamic Commission should be achieved in a phased, stepwise approach. It was stressed that Members should lead the Commission's work and activities, both in the period of reorganization and strengthening and afterwards as RECOFI takes on its role as a fully functional and operational regional fisheries management organization. Under this scenario, the Commission, as an FAO body, would continue to benefit from support and guidance provided by the Organization.

32. The meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs:

**Technical:** RECOFI:2010/2 made a suite of technical recommendations that should be considered as Members move to strengthen RECOFI. It was agreed that Members would review the document in their countries and provide written comments on each of the eight points raised in RECOFI:2010/2 to the Secretariat before 30 September 2010. The Secretariat would collate and analyse the national responses to develop a paper and recommendations for consideration and decision at the 2011 session of the Commission.

**Institutional:** The meeting noted that the RECOFI operated with a part-time Secretariat. This situation limited the scope and depth of the Commission's work. Members should consider whether the services provided by FAO at the current level were sufficient and adequate to meet the fisheries needs and challenges of the region. If this was not the case a decision concerning a permanent Secretariat would have to be faced as an option. Decisions relating to the Commission's structure and other institutional considerations were needed. Members were specifically directed to paragraph 14 of RECOFI:2010/2 in relation to these matters.

**Financial:** Based on the information contained in document RECOFI:2010/4, the meeting recognized that RECOFI's financial needs, including the level of Members' contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was also recognized that the current contribution level (US\$5 000 per year) was quite inadequate, particularly when the amount of arrears were taken into account. After having assessed and agreed on the Commission's technical and institutional

requirements to address fisheries and aquaculture issues in the region, RECOFI should determine how the work programme would be funded. The Commission's core functions and activities should be covered at least by Member contributions while other activities of a project nature could be funded by extra-budgetary funding.

33. Members were aware that a major challenge for delegates attending this meeting would be how to present its recommendations and outcomes to relevant national authorities after returning to their respective capitals. This would be important to ensure that solid decisions could be made at the Commission's 2011 session. The meeting underscored the fact that RECOFI was vital to the region if regional fisheries cooperation was to be enhanced further and if problems such as overfishing, resource depletion, environmental damage and adverse impacts on wildlife were to be mitigated or avoided and if food security in the region is to be enhanced.

#### **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

34. The Secretariat distributed to meeting delegates a CD-ROM with the updated series of RECOFI capture production statistics (1986–2008) compiled by the FAO Statistics and Information Service (FIPS).

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

35. The report was adopted on 12 May 2010.

**APPENDIX A****Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the meeting
3. Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries
4. Outline of some existing arrangements and financing mechanisms of regional management bodies
5. Financial and activities scenarios: present situation and future options
6. The point of view and experience of a stakeholder of the GFCM
7. Options and recommendations to the Sixth Session of RECOFI on the consolidation and development of the Commission
8. Any other matters
9. Adoption of the report

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**List of documents**

RECOFI:2010/1	Agenda
RECOFI:2010/2	Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries
RECOFI:2010/3	Outline of some existing arrangements and financing mechanisms of regional management bodies
RECOFI:2010/4	Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options
RECOFI:2010/Inf.1	List of documents
RECOFI:2010/Inf.2	List of participants
RECOFI:2010/Inf.3	Statement by the Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, Rome
RECOFI:2010/Inf.4	Report of the Fifth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009)
RECOFI:2010/Inf.5	Report of the third meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009)
RECOFI:2010/Inf.6	Draft report of the Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status (Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), 26–29 July 2009)
RECOFI:2010/Inf.7	Review of Fisheries Laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1049 (Arabic version)

**Opening statement**  
**by**  
**Mr Ichiro Nomura**  
**Assistant Director-General**  
**FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department**

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department at the FAO headquarters in Rome to participate in this Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development and to extend to you all a warm welcome to Rome and to FAO on behalf of the Director-General.

Regional fishery bodies play a unique role in facilitating international cooperation for the conservation and management of fish stocks. This is particularly true when dealing with highly migratory fish stocks and straddling or shared stocks. Regional fishery bodies also promote regional and global cooperation toward sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture by providing advice and common fora to exchange views and information.

In the RECOFI region, fisheries may appear of little relevance in economic terms. In 2007, however, marine fisheries production amounted to about 700 000 tonnes, therefore contributing to food security in the region, employing more than 100 000 fishers and generating around 400 000 jobs in secondary activities, including post-harvest, and assuring the livelihoods of probably more than one million people.

Regional fisheries management organizations such as the RECOFI are the cornerstones of international fisheries governance. A great challenge facing the RECOFI countries is the development and management of their living aquatic resources in a responsible and sustainable manner. The firm path to sustainable fisheries development within the RECOFI region must include cooperation among the countries. By working together, RECOFI Member States can improve cost-effectiveness in planning and implementing fisheries programmes by joint resource mobilization and greater sharing of expertise and institutional resources. Contrastingly, experience has shown that non-cooperative management of fisheries almost always leads to overexploitation.

In the region covered by RECOFI, significant additional investment is needed in research, human resource development and institutional strengthening, and reforms to create the capacity needed for sustainable fisheries development and conservation. In this regard, it is noteworthy to stress that the need for capacity development was underscored by all Members in the questionnaires circulated by the Secretariat.

Since the responsibility of regional fishery bodies is increasing, as well as the expectations vested in them, their further strengthening and the improvement of regional and global fisheries governance is continuously required, and RECOFI is no exception to this trend. I would like to remind you that RECOFI was established in accordance with Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. In Article III (b) of

the Commission's Agreement, I want to underscore that RECOFI is empowered to formulate and recommend measures for the conservation and management of living marine resources. In this regard, the Commission has effective management powers and should start to exercise them forthwith.

It is my understanding that RECOFI Members recognize the extent of the potential role and increasing responsibility of the Commission. Paragraph 76 of the adopted report of the last RECOFI session (Dubai, May 2009) clearly states the Members' willingness to explore ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, also recognizing "the need to streamline the work of the Commission to make it more efficient and to accelerate its growth".

The Agenda of this meeting is focused on RECOFI consolidation and development. In particular, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the activities planned for both the Working Group on Aquaculture and the Working Group on Fisheries Management to support the sound work of the Commission will require funding and Commission Members will need to bear this consideration in mind when envisaging the future of RECOFI. The process of such consolidation and development of RECOFI constitutes an opportunity to steer the region's fisheries to a sustainable path. It is my strong conviction and that of my colleagues that such an opportunity should not be lost, even if it has costs that Member countries should be prepared to bear fully, for their own benefit as well as for the benefit of the region as a whole.

In this respect, the RECOFI technical performance review can be a powerful tool for identifying possible directions for change and strengthening the motivation for Member countries of RECOFI to undertake change. As a consequence, this Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development provides to the Members the occasion to lay the foundation of a strengthened and more viable Commission, which will be able to deliver services and assistance to its Members and their respective fishing communities.

I wish you all a very successful meeting. I assure you that my colleagues and I will follow your deliberations with keen interest. The recommendations that you develop, discuss and adopt this week will be very important for the future of the Commission and will be transmitted to RECOFI's Sixth Session in Bahrain in May 2011 for consideration and review.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Preliminary findings on the operations of the Regional Commission for Fisheries****INTRODUCTION**

1. The purpose of the analysis is to respond to the Commission's recommendation to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth. This document presents the preliminary findings of the analysis. It is based on literature review, a survey questionnaire, and interviews conducted at FAO headquarters and in the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO/RNE). The analysis was carried out by an independent, external international consultant. The opinions and views contained in the document are those of the consultant.

**PURPOSE OF THE RECOFI TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

2. At the Fifth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) that was held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009, the Commission agreed to hold a special meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Delegates recognized the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth.

3. An external international consultant was recruited to analyse the operations of RECOFI and to consider options to strengthen and develop the Commission. The analysis was conducted in two parts. The consultant, firstly, interviewed the FAO Secretariat and other FAO resources persons and reviewed relevant literature. The consultant, secondly, developed a questionnaire to collect the views from the ministries responsible for RECOFI at country level. The outcomes of the questionnaire are not discussed in this document. They will be presented at the special meeting session.

4. Because the core objective is "to make the Commission more efficient", the analysis focused on the relevance of the strategy and pursuant activities. However, it also addressed how well RECOFI elaborates, pursues and implements the strategy. The issues addressed in the analysis are listed below:

- (a) knowledge about the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing;
- (b) knowledge about the status of aquaculture;
- (c) regional dimensions of the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- (d) decision-making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy and to assess the results;
- (e) quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis;
- (f) decision-making process to adopt Commission recommendations and measures;
- (g) capacity development, training and technical assistance; and
- (h) communication and information.

Each of the issues listed above are elaborated in some detail (i.e. activities and experiences, assessment and recommendations) in the appropriate section of the main consultant's report (in preparation).

## COMPENDIUM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THESE FINDINGS

### Knowledge about the status of resources and fisheries, data collection and sharing

5. At the Commission level, no systematic, common or standardized evaluations are yet available; there are no common fleet registries, no data concerning standardized fishing effort indicators, let alone ecosystem indicators.

6. The Commission should consider the following recommendations (A being the most relevant):

- A) Working on the definition of management units for regional and strictly national stocks from a RECOFI perspective.
- B) Supporting national technical capacity related to the harmonization work already completed.
- B) Widening the set of ecosystem-wide data to include economic data specific to the fisheries sector.

### Knowledge about the status of aquaculture

7. The early decision to create a Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) has greatly contributed to the development of a set of coordinated and technical studies to support cooperation between Member countries. The WGA benefited from the permanent involvement of the FAO technical Secretariat and of the national staff. In addition, the WGA had at its disposal extra-budgetary funding, targeting Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) activities (Kuwait funds). There is no doubt that aquaculture has benefited from this active process because of the resources, the motivation and the human capacity available. Nevertheless, the work accomplished so far is not sufficient to meet the objectives assigned to the Commission.

8. The WGA work programme and *modus operandi* correspond to RECOFI's ambitions, but they lack a strong commitment from Member countries and sufficient financial autonomy. At this stage, it is necessary to pursue and consolidate RAIS through the facilitation, within RECOFI, of a network of experts and potential decision-makers in order to contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region. The WGA should seek increased commitment from RECOFI Member countries through appropriate programmes. The Commission is invited to:

- B) Pursue and consolidate RAIS.
- B) Promote a strategy for the development of aquaculture programmes according to environmental standards, minimizing risk and strengthening economic, commercial and food interests in the area.
- C) Engage RECOFI as a forum to exchange lessons learned from past experience, knowledge and operational capacity.



## **Regional dimensions of the fishing sector**

9. The shared nature of many of the stocks could make national fishery resources assessments and management initiatives of limited use in developing effective management plans. As a consequence, RECOFI should constantly address the regional dimension of issues related to fisheries offering practical and functional solutions. To commence implementing fully the Commission's fisheries mandate, Members should consider appropriate harmonized fisheries management measures that could be adopted and implemented in a coordinated way for stocks of common interest.

10. Recommendations produced during the third meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009), and the conclusions of the “Review of Fisheries Laws of Certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries”, (FAO, FIEL/C1049, Rome, 2009), have confirmed the well-oriented strategy of RECOFI to develop and to strengthen knowledge, policy and cooperation to address the regional dimension of fisheries management issues. Sessions IV and V reports, as well as all the technical studies undertaken between sessions, show clearly the awareness of the regional dimension of fisheries management within RECOFI. This should be the basis for strengthening national and international motivation to provide RECOFI with the financial and technical resources and capacity to address the issues that have been identified.

11. There is a need to pool national knowledge and to develop a regional network of experts, also, RECOFI has no current work programme that leads to a protocol and common criteria for the identification and prioritization of regional issues. For these reasons, RECOFI has to become increasingly the leading mechanism for promoting regional cooperation in fisheries management in this part of the world. RECOFI should endeavour to integrate measures to control illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing with its other basic missions, such as successful resource conservation, efficient harvesting of resources, effort monitoring, effective fishing capacity management, sound scientific research, and reliable fisheries data collection, compilation and dissemination. The achievement of these objectives necessarily requires the availability of adequate financial and human resources.

In particular, the Commission may consider the following recommendations:

- A) Accord flexibility to the national experts invited to technical workshops according to the skills required.
- A) Define criteria and set protocols to identify common issues and priorities actions.
- A) Set up a process for the programming and the operationalization of cooperation in defined areas (research, surveillance, legislation, international cooperation, fiscal arrangements, economics, and trade, etc.).
- A) Emphasize the regional dimension of issues related to fisheries while offering practical and functional solutions to address them.
- B) Integrate measures to control IUU fishing into its other functions and basic mission.
- B) Facilitate, by means of operational measures and by evolution of its structure, a stronger involvement of Member countries as, hopefully, will be evidenced by the empowerment of RECOFI.

### **Regional dimensions of the aquaculture sector**

12. The regional dimension of aquaculture depends, of course, on sharing lessons learned and the accumulated knowledge. This dimension is also dependent to the degree to which economic production modes and demand for protein are similar (or dissimilar) within the region.

13. Member countries, under the aegis of countries with a major interest in aquaculture development, should use RECOFI as a forum to exchange lessons learned from past experience, knowledge and operational capacity in order to plan and drive the development of investments in the aquaculture sector. In particular, Member countries, collectively, could:

- A) Engage RECOFI as a forum to exchange lessons learned, as well as knowledge and operational capacity.
- A) Develop a regional approach, as it will lead to harmonization of laws and regulations and thus facilitate regional trade of aquatic animals and aquaculture products.
- B) Open a dialogue with commissions that have investment resources and with private economic operators.

### **Decision-making, transparency, participation and methods to define the Commission strategy, to implement the strategy, and to assess the results**

14. The non-political nature of FAO regional fishery bodies is instrumental in providing a forum for dialogue and cooperation among their Members. From a legal point of view, the RECOFI Agreement is in compliance with the RECOFI missions, objectives and stakes. In the current state of the Commission structures and bodies, the functioning and internal decision-making mode of the Commission appears to work and has yet to meet any significant difficulty. Nevertheless, it is clear that several issues remain if the Commission is to evolve in its structure and in its functioning. In particular, this evolution is best oriented towards greater appropriation by Member countries and a better balance between FAO and RECOFI resource persons. RECOFI should give due consideration to the following:

- A) Develop capacity to assess the state of governance in each national sector and capacity for managing fisheries and developing the aquaculture sector.
- B) Provide a forum for dialogue and cooperation among their Member countries.
- B) Solicit external advice that is independent of the Secretariat and session participants in the formulation of action plans, terms of references and the national resources.
- B) Amend the RECOFI Agreement to incorporate modern fisheries management principles as well as established and emerging international conventions (Flag State duties, Port State measures, the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture).
- B) Review and update RECOFI's Rules of Procedure.
- C) Rethink the location and the funding of the Commission headquarters to one of the Member countries for reasons of proximity, ownership and physical appropriation of the Commission by the Member countries.
- C) Rebalance the involvement of FAO and the Member countries through the nomination and the financial support of staff from Member countries.

### **Quality and provision of scientific advice and economic and social analysis**

15. To date, the Commission has not issued recommendations to Member countries. This is due in part to its work plan since its creation, which focuses on strengthening knowledge and exchanging data before embarking on the preparation of technical, economic, legal or environmental recommendations. The Commission should consider:

- A) Developing criteria and technical protocols to improve cooperation between national institutions with a view to their participation in the RECOFI activity plan (research, monitoring, control and surveillance).
- B) Developing a framework to take action in the face of uncertainty and weakness in scientific advice.
- B) Taking into account economic analysis (rent assessment) and fisheries management plans (target species and high-value species) as well as current principles of fisheries management, including ecosystem based approach, biodiversity protection, etc.
- B) Developing capacity to assess the state of governance in each national jurisdiction and the capacity for managing fisheries and developing the aquaculture sector.
- B) Addressing management questions at the regional level, not simply in the quest for harmonized technical measures, but also to resolve at the appropriate geographical scale, certain problems that face the sector (e.g. fishing capacity or trade).

### **Decision-making process to adopt Commissions recommendations and measures**

16. Given the fact that RECOFI has not yet produced recommendations based on recognized scientific work related to fisheries management on a regional scale, it should:

- B) Target the dissemination and exchange of reports focused on specific issues and work projects.

### **Capacity development, training and technical assistance**

17. RECOFI has served as a forum for the transfer of knowledge and for strengthening the capacity in fisheries research and management and aquaculture development addressing the national, regional and international level.

18. Given the context and the activities undertaken by RECOFI until now, albeit such structures and initiatives require further work, it is clear that what is lacking are resources and financial and human capacities to really maximize the benefit of initiatives already under way. RECOFI should consider:

- A) Seeking increased financial support (including extra-budgetary contributions) to augment the output from, and impact of, capacity-building initiatives.
- A) Prioritizing the needs of Member countries in a more operational way in order to prepare a plan to build national capacity.

- B) Strengthening the human and financial capacity of the Secretariat to support the focal points in the dissemination and the facilitation of national actor networks concerned with fisheries and aquaculture problems.
- B) Giving focal points the resources and an action plan to disseminate RECOFI achievements as well as to mobilize the technical human capacities required to execute the terms of references.
- C) Giving focal points the resources, through financial and technical support of the Secretariat, to encourage and articulate the demands from Member countries consistent with RECOFI missions.
- C) Continuing with the comparative national thematic review work, and soliciting the more advanced countries to build capacity, to develop partnerships within RECOFI in order to benefit from their achievements and their technical skills.

### **Communication and information**

19. RECOFI activities, through the Working Groups' technical workshops, sessions and ad hoc meetings are always reported in published documents that are available on the FAO RECOFI Web site. All these FAO/RECOFI standard publication materials and the RECOFI Web site can be used as a basis for information with other institutions and partners. However, efforts are still required regarding cooperation with other organizations likely to contribute to, or act upon common issues. RECOFI should:

- B) Prepare a communication and information plan to deal with relations of Member countries with non-member countries in the same geographic area and with all partners likely to bring financial, technical and operational support to RECOFI workshops.

### **Additional suggestions by the consultant**

20. The Commission mandate should evolve towards a more ambitious policy-oriented, knowledge-production programme. A Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee could help with the formulation, the structuring of an institutional framework and the management of a project or an action plan related to the production of information required to formulate policy recommendations. The Commission should consider:

- A) Creating a Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee.

### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE SPECIAL MEETING**

21. The delegates to the Meeting are invited to:

- consider the outcome and recommendations of the preliminary findings. Review and comment on them, as appropriate;
- propose ways and means to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken at the national and regional levels; and
- provide guidance to the Secretariat on further steps to address the issue of RECOFI consolidation and development.

**RECOFI publications (2008 to present)***Information note prepared for the Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development  
(Rome, 11–12 May 2010)*

- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries.** 2008. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 6–10 April 2008. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 876. Rome, FAO. 119p.
- FAO.** 2009. Report of the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 889. Cairo, FAO. 65p.
- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries.** 2009. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 25–26 January 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 892. Rome, FAO. 135p.
- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries.** 2009. Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 27–28 January 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 895. Rome, FAO. 44p.
- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries.** 2009. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 30 March–2 April 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 903. Cairo, FAO. 30p.
- FAO/Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa.** 2009. Report of the Fifth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 915. Cairo, FAO. 70p. [Bilingual version English/Arabic].
- FAO.** 2009. Report of the Third Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 922. Cairo, FAO. 63p.
- FAO.** 2010. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status. Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. xxx. Cairo, FAO. xxp. In preparation
- Regional Commission for Fisheries.** Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production (1986–2006). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. CD-ROM prepared for and presented at the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, 27–30 October 2008. Cairo, Egypt.

**Stamatopoulos, C.** 2008. Improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members. Regional Commission for Fisheries, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo. 56p.

**Swan, J.** 2009. Review of Fisheries Laws of Certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. 81p.

**Swan, J.** 2009. Review of Fisheries Laws of Certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular. No. 1049. Rome, FAO. [Arabic version]. In press.

**All RECOFI publications are available at [www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en)**

**Outline of some existing arrangements and financing mechanisms of regional  
management bodies**

The purpose of this paper is to provide, *inter alia*, comparative information to RECOFI Members on the statutes and structures of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI). GFCM, IOTC and RECOFI are the three regional fishery bodies with management powers formed under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

The comparative analysis is in the attached table.

Delegates are invited to review and comment on the information provided in this paper with special consideration to the case of RECOFI.

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<sup>1</sup> The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), which is also an Article XIV under the FAO Constitution, does not have management powers. For this reason, it is not analysed in this paper.

**COMPARISON OF RECOFI STATUTES AND STRUCTURE WITH OTHER ARTICLE XIV FISHERY BODIES**

	<b>General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</b>	<b>Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)</b>	<b>Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI)</b>
<b>Date Agreement approved</b>	1949 (Amendments were approved in 1963, 1976 and 1997)	1993	1999
<b>Amendments to the Agreement</b>	Must be approved by FAO Council/Conference	Must be approved by FAO Council/Conference	Must be approved by FAO Council/Conference
<b>Objective of the Commission</b>	To promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters	To promote cooperation among its Members with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of stocks covered by this Agreement and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks	To promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area
<b>Number of Member countries</b>	23 Member countries along with the European Union	28 Member countries along with the European Union	8 Member countries
<b>Date trust fund opened</b>	August 2004	April 1997	April 2003
<b>Accounting managed by</b>	FAO	FAO	FAO
<b>Annual budget 2009 (US\$)<sup>2</sup></b>	1 478 986 (incl. 63 688 FAO servicing cost) + 157 500 FAO contribution	1 815 937 (incl. 78 564 FAO servicing cost)	40 000 (0.00 FAO servicing cost) + 205 197 FAO contribution
<b>Annual expenditure 2009 (US\$)</b>	1 346 500.39 <sup>3</sup> (incl. 58 280.23)	1 609 655 (incl. 69 315 FAO servicing)	92 925 (0.00 FAO servicing cost)
<b>Secretariat</b>	Supported fully by the autonomous budget	Supported fully by the autonomous budget	Supported fully by FAO

<sup>2</sup> The reported budgets do not include cooperative projects in support of specific activities of the Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Some expenses were allocated to the 2010 budget in order to adjust the total expenditure to the income.



	<b>General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</b>	<b>Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)</b>	<b>Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI)</b>
<b>Secretariat location</b>	Rome, Italy	Mahé, Seychelles	FAO/RNE, Cairo, Egypt
<b>Number of (fixed term) staff<sup>4</sup></b>	5 professional staff + 3 general staff	7 professional staff + 6 general staff	Part-time Secretary
<b>Appointment of staff</b>	Secretary appointed by FAO, with the approval of the Commission	Secretary appointed by FAO, with the approval of the Commission	Secretary appointed by the Director-General
<b>Organizational framework</b>	In conformity with FAO Constitution and Financial Regulations	In conformity with FAO Constitution and Financial Regulations	In conformity with FAO Constitution and Financial Regulations
<b>Rules of Procedure</b>	Established by the Commission	Established by the Commission	Established by the Commission
<b>Financial Regulations</b>	Established by the Commission; FAO Finance Committee has a limited power of veto	Established by the Commission; FAO Finance Committee has a limited power of veto	None. The FAO Financial Regulations apply
<b>Committees</b>	Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), the Compliance Committee (CoC), the Committee of Administration and Finance (CAF) and their respective subsidiaries	The Scientific Committee, the Compliance Committee, the Standing Committee, Working Parties as required	Working Group on Aquaculture Working Group on Fisheries Management
<b>Planning and financial cycle (practice)</b>	Annual	Annual	Biennial

<sup>4</sup> Staff is greater if one counts staff on cooperative projects (extra-budgetary funds).

**APPENDIX H****Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options****INTRODUCTION**

1. The purpose of the analysis is to respond to the Commission's need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth. The present document deals with the current challenges the Commission faces, including its budgetary assets and options to improve its viability. The document is based on the preliminary findings of the analysis with particular focus on the financial and budget scenarios. The analysis was carried out by an independent, external international consultant. The opinions and views contained in the document are those of the consultant.

**FINANCIAL AND ACTIVITY SCENARIOS: PRESENT SITUATION AND FUTURE OPTIONS**

2. At the Fifth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) that was held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009, the Commission agreed to hold a special meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Members recognized the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth.

3. An external international consultant was recruited to analyze the financial assets of RECOFI and to consider options to strengthen and develop the Commission. The analysis was conducted in two parts. The consultant firstly interviewed the FAO Secretariat and other FAO resources persons and reviewed relevant literature. The consultant secondly developed a questionnaire to collect the views from the ministries responsible for RECOFI at country level. The outcomes of the questionnaire are not discussed in this document. They will be presented at the special meeting session.

4. The review of the RECOFI budgetary assets and financial capacity provides a crucial opportunity for Members to lay the foundation of a new phase supporting a more viable Commission able to increasingly deliver services and assistance to its Members, collectively to regional fisheries and to fishing communities.

**BUDGETARY ASSETS AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY SCENARIOS**

5. As of 31 December 2008, the income from contributions for 2008–2009 amounted to US\$29 995 (equivalent to 75 percent of the expected annual total contribution). As of 31 December 2009, the income from contributions for 2009–20105 amounted to US\$20 000 (equivalent to 50 percent of the expected annual total contribution).

The status of contributions (as of 31 December 2009) is as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> RECOFI fiscal year is from the 1 May to 30 April.

- Three Members (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) deposited their instruments of acceptance and have paid their contribution in full.
- Five Members (Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) deposited their instruments of acceptance but have not yet fully paid their contribution.

6. During the Fifth Session, the Secretariat informed the Commission that the total of accumulated pending contributions amounted to US\$70 187.83. This represented a 17 percent increase in comparison with the previous biennium. The Commission took note of its budget from 2003 to 31 December 2008. The Commission also noted the financial delivery by main activity during the period from 2007 to May 2009.

7. As shown in Table 1, the accumulated pending contributions against the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 RECOFI fiscal years, as of 31 December 2009, amounted at US\$90 187.83. This represents a 50 percent increase compared with the previous biennium (outstanding 31 December 2007).

**Table 1: Status of contributions as of 31 December 2008**

Members	Outstanding 31/12/07	Due for 2008– 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Received up to 31/12/08	Outstanding 31/12/2008	Due for 2009– 2010 <sup>1</sup>	Received up to 31/12/2009	Outstanding 31/12/2009
Bahrain	5 000.00	5 000.00		10 000.00	5 000.00		15 000.00
Iraq		5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00	5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00
Iran, Islamic Republic of	15 076.57	5 000.00		20 076.57	5 000.00		25 076.57
Kuwait	0.00	5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00	5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00
Oman	15.00	5 000.00	4 995.00	20.00	5 000.00		5 020.00
Qatar	25 035.22	5 000.00	5 000.00	25 035.22	5 000.00		30 035.22
Saudi Arabia,	0.00	5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00	5 000.00	5 000.00	0.00
United Arab Emirates	15 056.04	5 000.00	5 000.00	15 056.04	5 000.00	5 000.00	15 056.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 182.83</b>	<b>40 000.00</b>	<b>29 995.00</b>	<b>70 187.83</b>	<b>40 000.00</b>	<b>20 000.00</b>	<b>90 187.83</b>

Source: Doc. RECOFI Fifth Session, May 2009 and Trust Fund No. 119814 – MTF/REM/001/MUL (RECOFI).

8. Table 2 provides an overview of the financial statement of the Commission's budget since 2003 and as of 31 December 2008<sup>6</sup>, and the liquidation of total expenses as of 31 December 2008. Total expenses (US\$260 958) include expenses up to the end of December 2008 (US\$168 283), existing commitments (US\$60 357) made until the end of April 2009, and a provision of US\$32 318 earmarked as a forecast for the cost of the fifth RECOFI session (interpretation, in-session translation of report, travel, printing and miscellaneous expenses).

**Table 2: Financial status in United States dollars (2003–May 2009)**

<b>Income (contributions)</b>	<b>303 822</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>260 958</b>
Expenses ( <i>up to end-December 2008</i> )	168 283
Commitments ( <i>2009</i> )	60 357
Forecast ( <i>2009 Fifth Session</i> )	32 318
<b>Balance</b>	<b>42 864</b>

Source: Doc. RECOFI Fifth Session, May 2009.

9. The financial delivery by main activity during the period from 2007 to May 2009 is provided in Table 3. Expenditures can be divided into three broad categories:

- (i) expenses related to the functioning of the Secretariat (51 percent of total expenses, 52 percent of which are related to the Commission's plenary sessions in 2007 and 2009);
- (ii) activities in support of the Working Group on Aquaculture (30 percent); and
- (iii) activities in support of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (19 percent).

**Table 3: Financial delivery by activity during the intersessional period (United States dollars)**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b> (provisional)	<b>Total</b>
Working Group on Aquaculture	18 574	22 234	16 342	57 150
Working Group on Fisheries Management		8 765	26,623	35 388
Secretariat	24 493	23 391	49 710	97 594
<b>Total</b>	<b>43 067</b>	<b>54 390</b>	<b>92 675</b>	<b>190 132</b>

Source: Doc. RECOFI Fifth Session, May 2009.

10. The main expenditure chapters, based on the FAO/Oracle trust fund standard budget line allocations, are summarized in Table 4.

<sup>6</sup> Funds deposited for the implementation of the aquaculture legal and policy framework project is not included.

**Table 4: Expenditures met during the intersessional biennium (United States dollars), including 2009 commitments and forecast up to May (inclusive)**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>2007–2009</b>
Staff costs (General Services)	23 821
Consultancies	54 824
Travel	75 329
Contracts	3 713
General operating expenses	5 084
Charge backs ( <i>interpretation and reporting</i> )	19 585
Other miscellaneous	7 776
<b>Total</b>	<b>190 132</b>

Source: Doc. RECOFI Fifth Session, May 2009.

11. Expenditures by FAO in support of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, including the implementation of the work plan activities, are given in Table 5 and amounted to US\$410 394.91 during the period 2008–2009.

**Table 5: FAO RECOFI staff members' time activity and costs 2008/2009 (United States dollars)**

<b>Name of FAO member</b>	<b>No./days</b>	<b>Travel costs</b>	<b>Total</b>
David Doulman	72	13 351.00	59 935.00
Gaëlle Hermanus	44	13 761.00	26 081.00
Heba Fahmy/Mona Hafez	180	2 000.00	18 380.00
Judith Swan	21	4 459.00	12 628.00
Luca Garibaldi	61	280.00	37 204.00
Piero Mannini	180	5 000.00	93 380.00
Alessandro Lovatelli	71	14 739.78	54 783.00
Florence Poulain	60	3 000.00	43 200.00
Pilar Arocena	1.5		420.00
Raschad Al-Kafaji	9	3 024.00	7 155.00
Sachiko Tsuji	21	9 215.00	22 802.00
Valerio Crespi	45	7 140.91	24 285.91
Yimin Ye	3	8 200.00	10 141.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>768.50</b>	<b>84 170.69</b>	<b>410 394.91</b>

Source: FAO data, March 2010.

12. During the Fifth Session, the Secretariat submitted a statement of the extra-budgetary resources provided by Members to support projects executed by the Secretariat. These projects included, for example, a Kuwait-supported information system for regional aquaculture. With respect to the aquaculture legal and policy framework project, RECOFI was informed that the Secretariat was unable to proceed further. This project was to be funded by RECOFI Members on an equal-share contribution basis. Four Members had confirmed their commitment to FAO to fund the project. However, contributions were deposited only by two Members.

13. Looking at 2008 and 2009 (last biennium), the working costs related to RECOFI activities were US\$557 459.91, including the cost of FAO staff members supporting the Commission. This is

about seven times more than the total national contributions from Member countries over the same period (US\$80 000). The FAO contribution over the period represents indirectly 73.61 percent of financial commitments. If the Commission were to be autonomous and financially self-supporting, then the annual contribution would have to rise to around US\$35 000 per country.<sup>7</sup>

14. In the budget forecast of the activities to be undertaken in 2009–2010 (cf. RECOFI Fifth Session, RNE/FIEL/R915, p. 11), the indicative costs were US\$385 000, exclusive of the cost of the third meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management in Qatar (October 2009), as well as other operating costs for the Secretariat and the financial support of external participants. This outcome assumes continued current working arrangements, in particular, sessions and workshops that exclude non-conventional RECOFI partners.

15. It seems reasonable to posit that in a strategy to broaden activities to other themes and other actors, this evaluation is only a guide to the minimum budget and that this will require a substantial upwards revision. It is important, therefore, to consider ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity in order to develop adequately its contribution to achieving its objectives and its role of influence within the region to promote good fisheries governance and the development of the sectors for which it is responsible. Its dynamism and future are at stake and it is necessary for the Commission to ameliorate its financial and operating capacity. The commitment of partners is also certainly related to its self-financing capacity.

16. The option of a status quo of member contributions as they stand now would mean the end of the Commission as one of the active and recognized organizations working on regional issues.

## SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

17. In seeking ways and means to improve the Commission's financial capacity, the following alternatives are proposed:

- (i) Maintain an equal payment (excluding all criteria other than being a RECOFI Member country) with an upward readjustment of annual national contributions.
- (ii) Maintain the principle of equal and compulsory minimum contribution supplemented by extra-budgetary contributions decided by Member countries according to their involvement in work programmes where they take on the leadership; this was successfully accomplished in the case on the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) supported by Kuwait. On the other hand, the equal and imposed extra-budgetary cofunding of Member countries proved to be inappropriate and did not lead to the work that was planned for aquaculture. This process should therefore be abandoned.

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<sup>7</sup> For comparison purposes, the level of annual contributions established within the framework of the Subregional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) is US\$50 129 for the poorest countries of the subregion (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone) and US\$100 258 for the (relatively) more wealthy countries (Mauritania, Guinea, Senegal). However, it is true that the contributions also cover the financial cost of national experts invited to working groups. Moreover, the arrears are more than one million United States dollars.

- (iii) The ending of an equal payment and replacing it with indexed contributions based on a variety of variables, such as the wealth of the country, the shares of fisheries and aquaculture in the economic growth or the contribution level of the sector to food security, to trade balance, to employment or other physical parameters related to marine or inland activities (length of coastline, exclusive economic zone size, surface area available for aquaculture, etc.). This solution should then be studied with a view to achieving a target total budget which may not lead to more resources but would introduce a differential which would only work on the basis of a strong and secure agreement written into the RECOFI basic Agreement. More than the process, it is this commitment which would illustrate a political change in the RECOFI working context.

18. Depending on the budget forecast and expectations from other recommendations, a budget of around US\$400 000 to US\$500 000 per biennium (i.e. US\$25 000 to US\$30 000 per year per Member country) would be a significant step towards the Commission's autonomy and would signal its long-term commitment to regional work programmes which support good fisheries governance and aquaculture development. This budget could constitute a working capital and would hence be a visible guarantee that national and international donors (stakeholders in the region's marine and inland interests) would notice. Partners and donors pay increasing attention to the self-financing capacity of Member countries of regional organizations and to their own capacity regardless of their access to extra-budgetary funds.

19. The Commission, while maintaining the current *modus operandi* in recovering FAO and Member country staff expenses, could progressively prepare projects covering some thematic work programmes that may then be submitted to external donors or partners (e.g. Gulf Cooperation Council funding, Member country or donor unilateral funding to support development, environmental protection, public investment concerning research, monitoring, control, surveillance, etc.).

20. Should the status quo be maintained, that is, the zero increase scenario of both budgetary and extra-budgetary resources, then it can reasonably be anticipated that no more than one technical meeting and the plenary session could be supported during each biennium.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE SPECIAL MEETING**

21. The delegates to the Meeting are invited to:

- consider the outcome and findings of the review regarding RECOFI's financial viability and activities scenario and comment on it, as appropriate;
- identify and propose ways and means to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken at the national and regional levels; and
- provide guidance to the Secretariat on further steps to address the issue of RECOFI consolidation and development.

**APPENDIX I****Brief outline of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean**

The structure of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM; [www.gfcm.org](http://www.gfcm.org)) with its committees, subcommittees and working groups was presented outlining the role and functions of each of the subsidiary bodies. The GFCM, which entered into force in 1952, evolved over the years with new subsidiary bodies established when required with the latest addition of a Compliance Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance. The foremost function of such subsidiary bodies, highlighted in the presentation, is the provision of technical and scientific advice and recommendations to the Commission for it to adopt and monitor compliance of management regulations or binding decisions for fisheries conservation and management in its Convention Area. A few examples of binding decisions taken by the Commission were presented.

The Commission at present has 24 active members – 19 Mediterranean countries, three Black Sea countries, the European Union and Japan. Membership is open to regional economic organizations and Members of the United Nations, particularly those coastal States whose vessels engage in fishing activities in the waters of the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The Commission holds its regular session annually and implements its policy and activities through a permanent Secretariat currently based at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, while it operates during the intersessional period by means of its committees and their respective subsidiaries. Furthermore, the Commission convenes special sessions, as appropriate, at the request and approval of its Members.

With regards to the financial inputs into the GFCM, the presentation indicated that there has also been an evolutionary process that led to a decision by the Commission to adopt an autonomous budget for the functioning of the body as an amendment to the GFCM Agreement in 1997. The current scale of contribution to the autonomous budget was agreed following years of discussions. Three components contribute to the calculation of the current share contribution of each Member country: (i) a “membership” component equally shared by all Member countries and equivalent to 10 percent as a fixed proportion of the budget; (ii) a “wealth” component based on the per capita gross domestic product as measured and published by the World Bank and equivalent to 35 percent of the overall budget; and (iii) a “catch” component based on the fishery and aquaculture production of each Member and equivalent to 55 percent of the budget. The current annual budget amounts to approximately US\$1.6 million.

The delegates were additionally informed that the Commission benefits from the work and outputs of a series of regional projects operating in the area and funded either by the European Union or by some of its Member countries. Although most of the projects are not directly managed by the Secretariat, the Commission enjoys the support of such cooperative projects at subregional and regional level which enhance, in particular, scientific cooperation and capacity building in participating countries in line with GFCM priorities and strategies. A few projects currently in operation in the region were presented indicating the geographical area covered, the funding countries and institutions and the financial support received, which in some cases amounted to several million United States dollars.



The Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 12 May 2010. The objective of the special meeting was to consider ways and means to enhance the role of RECOFI as a regional fisheries management organization. The meeting participants reviewed the preliminary findings of a technical review on the work and operations of the Commission. In addition, comparative information was provided on the statutes, budgets and structures of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI). The meeting considered the financial status of RECOFI and future scenarios for the consolidation and development of the Commission with particular focus on the significant difference between Members' contributions and the total expenses of the Commission. The history and present structure of the GFCM was presented to the participants, who agreed that the future strengthening of their own Commission would certainly benefit from the experience of the GFCM. The meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. The meeting agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the future technical and institutional work of RECOFI and its financial needs. The proposals and recommendations from the meeting will be for consideration by the Commission at its Sixth Session in 2011.

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