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Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

### FOURTEENTH SESSION

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### Progress in the implementation of the Code of conduct for Responsible Fisheries

#### 1. Introduction

Article 4 of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) states, *inter alia*, that FAO will report to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) concerning its implementation. Already in seven editions member countries reported back on the implementation. FAO, in close collaboration with WECAFC, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management of Barbados and the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) organized recently a Regional Policy and Planning Workshop on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in the Caribbean: “Achieving Improved Fisheries Management and Utilization in the Wider Caribbean Region”, which took place at the University of the West Indies, Barbados, on 6-9 December 2011. The Workshop brought together 50 participants from 11 Caribbean countries. This workshop discussed in detail the implementation of the Code in Caribbean countries and made recommendations on follow up activities. One background document of this workshop “The Application of the Code in the Caribbean Region: Overview, Challenges and Opportunities”, prepared by Ms. Katherine Blackman, was used for the preparation of this summary for the WECAF meeting. The conclusions and recommendations of the regional workshop are attached as Annex A to this working document.

FAO has a central role in the implementation of the CCRF and supports the implementation of the CCRF through all regional and field programme activities of the Fisheries Department. Along with other entities, FAO has taken a number of steps to promote the implementation of the CCRF worldwide and has played an integral role in the application of the CCRF.

#### 1.1. Implementation of CCRF at a national level in Caribbean countries

Essentially all countries in the region that responded to the COFI biennial self-assessment surveys in 2011 are committed to the implementation of the principles of the CCRF. This commitment is reflected, whereby most of the countries have a dedicated fisheries authority and all have diverse initiatives to secure more sustainable fisheries management approaches and mechanism. Furthermore the CCRF has been critical in supporting national policies and legislation as it encourages States to adopt appropriate policy, legal and institutional frameworks and adopt

measures for long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources<sup>1</sup>. Most countries have fisheries policy and legislation. However, only a few of them are fully consistent with the CCRF; most are partially consistent with the CCRF.

#### 1.1.1. Fisheries management

Long term objectives should be formulated into fisheries management plans<sup>2</sup> and many Caribbean states have implemented fisheries management plans with tangible practices to manage exploitation. Most countries have four or more marine capture fisheries management plans of which only a few are implemented. All countries stated that their fisheries management plans allow depleted stocks to recover, prohibit destructive fishing practices and methods, stakeholder participation in determining management decisions, address endangered species and interests of small-scale fishers.

#### 1.1.2. Fishing operations

Countries reported that they have not adopted a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for any of their fleets. Fishing operations are mostly regulated by licensing and vessel registration and deterrent penalties. Only a few countries have implemented regulations for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS). Most of the countries have indicated that they will improve MCS in the future. Furthermore only two countries indicated that they ensure that fishing activities are reported and monitored through pre-licensing inspection/brief, cooperation with third countries and with Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs), mandatory authorization to operate beyond EEZ, enforcing compliance with laws of States and mandatory logbook keeping and reporting.

#### 1.1.3. Aquaculture development

Aquaculture is generally underdeveloped. Over decades Caribbean countries have been investing in aquaculture; however its success is limited. The survey indicated that three out of 6 of the countries have their policy frameworks partially in place for aquaculture development; only 2 indicated that they have a legal and institutional framework for aquaculture in place.

#### 1.1.4. Integrated fisheries into coastal area management

The policy, legal and institutional frameworks for integrating fisheries into coastal area management vary between the countries. The survey has shown that only a few countries have largely completed an enabling policy, one has the legal framework in place and 3 have a partial institutional framework in place. Most of the conflicts in the countries occur within commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries or relate to port development.

#### 1.1.5. Post-harvest practices and trade

Only two of the countries surveyed indicated that they have an effective food safety and quality assurance system for fisheries products. In these countries consumers and processors could identify the origin of fisheries products. The other countries have partially completed food safety and quality assurance systems. Most countries indicated that providing infrastructure (e.g. fish markets, ice plants, cold storage, ice boxes and smoking facilities) and awareness raising, training

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<sup>1</sup> Article 7.1.1 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

<sup>2</sup> Article 7.3.3 of FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

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and extension programmes were mostly used to reduce post-harvest losses ; however the most effective measures varied between countries. Measures for improving the use of by-catch are limited.

#### 1.1.6. Fisheries research

Fisheries research is progressing in the region. Responsible fisheries require the availability of a sound scientific basis to assist fisheries managers and other interested parties in making decisions. Half of the surveyed countries indicated that their country are collecting timely, complete and reliable statistics on catch and fishing effort. The fifth session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), which was held in Puerto Morelos, Mexico, from 28 to 29 October 2011 drew the attention of WECAFC and its members to the following research priorities aimed at improving current fisheries resource assessment and management:

- comprehensive fisheries assessment;
- building capacity for research,
- assessment and management;
- aquaculture development and management;
- incorporating social, economic and livelihood considerations;
- impacts of climate change and variability on fisheries, and
- governance of marine resources incorporating ecosystem approaches.

#### 1.1.7. IPOAs

Progress regarding National Action Plans in support of IPOAs implementation remain limited in the region. A few countries have conducted a preliminary assessment of fishing capacity but only one has developed or started to implement an NPOA-capacity. Countries generally indicated that there is intention to conduct assessments on sharks and whether a problem exists with respect to sea birds. On the other hand most countries indicated that IUU fishing was a major problem. Only one country has prepared an NPOA-IUU; however other countries intend to develop an IUU plan in the future.

### **1.2. Implementation of CCRF at a regional level**

In the Caribbean region there are a few regional organizations and non-governmental organizations/supporting institutions that have interests in fisheries management and development.

#### 1.2.1. Fisheries management

There were no regional Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) for marine fisheries and/or inland fisheries; however regional FMPs are being developed for lobster and flying fish.

#### 1.2.2. Fishing operations

Two RFBs have taken steps to ensure that only fishing takes place with fisheries management measures within their area of competence. The steps taken included developing a declaration related to IUU. There is also some work with countries regarding ICCAT membership to deal with matters related to fishing operations. One RFB has developed a regional registry of industrial vessels and a regional code of ethics for fisheries and aquaculture, updated fisheries laws and

regional agreement on the gradual implementation of the VMS system, promotion of a regional network on monitoring, control and surveillance. Fish aggregation devices have been popular in the Caribbean as it allowed small-scale fishers to obtain offshore resources at relatively low cost. Currently a scientific and technical research project 'Moored Fish Aggregating Device in the Lesser Antilles' is being undertaken.

### 1.2.3. Aquaculture development

Only one RFB has taken steps to ensure responsible aquaculture development including monitoring aquaculture operations and minimizing effects of alien introductions. An assessment was made of the specific needs for improvement of these measures. It was found that it is necessary to:

- Improve Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and have a better coordination between fisheries and environment authorities
- improve for monitoring operations including zoning of land for aquaculture development, and
- develop a standard for fish farms

### 1.2.4. Fisheries research

RFBs have developed ad hoc working groups for species such as Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*), Caribbean Spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*), flying fish and Nassau Grouper to assist in transferring knowledge and to improve and support policy and management at the national and regional levels.

### 1.2.5. Integrated fisheries into coastal area management

Greater awareness for integrated fisheries data collection and building the capacity of stakeholder groups and implementing training programmes have been addressed through the Socio-economic monitoring in selected countries. The issue of collecting socio-economic information was addressed by one RFB which developed a generic approach to data collection in the region.

### 1.2.6. IPOAs

The implementation of IPOAs is a national level decision but some RFBs have provided assistance to countries as required by their mandate. There has also been advice on ICCAT requirements which now developed measures that promote the adoption of IPOAs. ICCAT commits to the CCRF through the promotion of the IPOAs for sharks and seabirds.

## **1.3. Non-governmental organizations**

### 1.3.1. Activities to implement CCRF

The type of activities conducted by NGOs to implement the CCRF over the past two years included a national workshop, regional workshop in the Eastern Caribbean and fishers exchanges to examine techniques. Top priority within the CCRF was given by the NGOs to fisheries management. The NGOs agreed that marine capture fisheries management plans only addressed prohibited practices and protected endangered species. Regarding aquaculture development NGOs indicated that no procedures were available for EIAs, monitoring aquaculture and/or minimizing harmful effects of alien introductions. There were no efforts to support implementation of the IPOAs by the non-governmental organizations. However it was indicated that student research

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may assist in drafting an NPOA for one country. One NGO indicated that it has registered its concerns about IUU fishing with an RFB.

#### **1.4. Constraints**

The CCRF is comprehensive and complex, making it challenging for countries, especially small islands states to implement. Fisheries Authorities in the Caribbean have been confronted by various constraints hampering the implementation of the CCRF at national level, including:

- Lack of or insufficient resources
- Incomplete policies and legislative frameworks for fisheries and aquaculture
- Inadequate/insufficient MCS arrangements
- Institutional weaknesses
- Inadequate scientific research, statistics and access to information
- Limited awareness of the CCRF, its purpose and content among staff of Fisheries Authorities
- Fisheries Authorities and other stakeholders do not see the CCRF as central to their own missions and mandates
- Many competing instruments and initiatives divert attention from CCRF implementation
- Existing fisheries management structure and practices appear difficult to amend
- Unsustainable practices in traditional and established fish harvesting appear difficult to rectify

#### **1.5. Solutions**

Caribbean states suggested the following solutions to promote more effective implementation of the CCRF:

- More access to human resources
- Access to more budgetary means for the management of the fisheries sector
- Align policies and legislative frameworks with the CCRF
- Give additional attention to, and support for, national and local level communications that are appropriate to the specific fisheries situation
- A communication strategy is required to sensitize main actors in fisheries
- Emphasize the practical benefits of the CCRF through additional communication
- International agencies should reduce the tendency to develop more and more instruments and initiatives and instead focus on consolidating efforts on a few vital and comprehensive ones within the implementation capacity of authorities and stakeholders
- Develop and implement strategies to incorporate CCRF objectives into existing fisheries management, while creating avenues to adopt more appropriate management regimes
- Fishers must be exposed to more sustainable gear and practices, linking them to livelihood security
- Improvement in MCS arrangements

## **2. Conclusions**

The CCRF is endorsed and well appreciated by Caribbean States on the national and on the regional level, however its level of implementation varies and is generally deficient. Steps have been taken towards sustainable fisheries on a national and regional level but there are still many gaps that need to be addressed. Caribbean States also require stronger political will to achieve

responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. This will begin with having the appropriate policies and legislations in place that are consistent with the CCRF.

Regional organizations and non-governmental organizations play an integral role in supporting the implementation of the CCRF through facilitating the national level processes and fostering awareness among fisheries stakeholders, respectively. However, the national governments possess the main ability to change and influence decision-making with respect to fisheries management. Other stakeholders are often supportive of participatory processes to implement the CCRF, but governments are expected to take a lead. Countries need to address the current constraints and focus on solutions, taking advantage of the opportunities available to them to achieve the objectives of the CCRF.

### **3. Suggested action by WECAFC**

The Commission is invited to:

- Endorse the conclusions and recommendations from the Regional Policy and Planning Workshop on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in the Caribbean: “Achieving Improved Fisheries Management and Utilization in the Wider Caribbean Region”. (see Annex A)
- Provide further guidance on how to continue to broaden and deepen the implementation of the CCRF
- Note, in particular, the need for Members to continue to develop fisheries management planning frameworks for key fisheries, and to continue to address IUU fishing in the region.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The Regional Policy and Planning Workshop on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in the Caribbean: Achieving Improved Fisheries Management and Utilization in the Wider Caribbean Region, was held at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados in the period 6-9 December 2011. The workshop was co-organized by FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management of Barbados Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC).

The workshop was attended by participants from:

Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and the United States of America (USA), as well as the following organizations: Barbados Boat Owners & Fishers Association (BOFA), Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organization (BARNUFO), Bellairs Research Institute, CARIBSAVE, Cape Eleuthera Institute (CEI), Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), CLME, Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO), CRFM, Fisheries Advisory Committee of Barbados (FAC), FAO, NOAA, OECS-ESDU, SICA/OSPESCA, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), WECAFC and WWF-Guianas.

### Conclusions

The workshop recognized the important contribution of fisheries to the social and economic development and food and nutrition security in the Caribbean Region and the need to strengthen existing frameworks by implementing relevant provisions of the CCRF to ensure long-term sustainable use of these valuable resources. The workshop also noted with respect to the implementation of the CCRF in the Caribbean Region, that the following regional constraints and solutions require attention from all stakeholders:

Constraints	Solutions
Limited human, technical and financial resources	Increase access to human and budgetary resources for fisheries (through increasing awareness on the socio-economic and ecological value of fisheries) and promote further collaboration and technology transfer among countries in the region
Incomplete and outdated policy and legislative frameworks for fisheries and aquaculture	Align policy and legislative frameworks (under development) with the CCRF and its technical guidelines and a common regional policy framework
Institutional weaknesses of fisheries authorities and other relevant stakeholders	
Low overall priority given to fisheries and ocean resource management and development	Increase commitment and political will for development of more sustainable practices in the fisheries sector and responsible fisheries management processes

Uncoordinated research efforts and access to information on responsible fisheries and its management	Increase collaboration between regional and international fisheries bodies (CRFM, WECAFC, OSPESCA, ICCAT) and others (CITES, OECS, UNEP, FAO) to avoid overlap and focus on consolidating efforts, and establish regional priorities for research
Inadequate/insufficient Monitoring Control and Surveillance arrangements	Mainstream fisheries management, in line with the CCRF, in existing MCS programmes of related sectors (customs, navy, coast guard, port authorities, trade and tourism).
Lack of awareness of the CCRF among Fisheries Authorities staff and other sector stakeholders, including fisheries policy makers	Communicate better the practical and economical benefits of implementing the CCRF and establish cross-sectoral linkages to further awareness
Lack of attention paid to the CCRF in fisheries management.	Develop & implement strategies to incorporate the CCRF's objectives into existing fisheries policies, laws, management plans and activities
Limited participation (and implementation) of Caribbean States in existing international fisheries instruments such as the UNFSA and Compliance Agreement	Review and ratify, accede or accept and implement relevant international fisheries treaties such as UNFSA, Compliance Agreement and Port States Agreement

The workshop also recognized that:

- The Caribbean countries and regional organizations have made major efforts in the implementation and monitoring of the CCRF; such efforts have been successful in many cases and deserve recognition.
- The CCRF is highly regarded and being used as main framework for fisheries policy development and planning at regional level, as demonstrated in important recent initiatives such as the formulation of Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy.
- The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) is highly relevant to fisheries in the region, which requires additional capacity building and awareness raising.
- Governance of the sector is taking place at different levels and is complicated in terms of the number and wide variety of authorities and stakeholders involved.
- In context of the International Plan of Action for the conservation and management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) it was regarded that the eastern Caribbean sharks are generally caught within a multi-species, multi-gear fishery, often untargeted. Nevertheless, it is important to note that shark catches are not discarded as they are sold and consumed, without waste, by the locals.



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## Recommendations

In recognition of above conclusions and the intensive discussions that took place at the workshop, the regional workshop participants endorsed the following recommendations:

### To Governments in the Caribbean Region:

- Increase commitment to the sustainable management of fisheries and follow-up on the implementation of binding /non-binding fisheries instruments.
- Fishery and aquaculture legal and policy frameworks that are being developed should be based on the principles and consistent with the objectives of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, whilst being in line with the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy and the St Lucia Declaration on IUU fishing.
- The absence of updated legal frameworks should not delay efforts to promote the implementation of the CCRF.
- Governments (including Fisheries authorities) should be mindful of the international binding and non-binding agreements related to fisheries and work towards their adoption and implementation, as appropriate; the latter may be converted into a binding nature at regional level to ensure and enhance their effectiveness.
- Political will for and commitment to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, its ancillary instruments and other relevant international agreements and conventions, be increased in the region.
- Linkages and collaboration be improved between the fisheries sector and other sectors in terms of implementation of certain aspects of the CCRF, such as the integration of fisheries into coastal zone management.
- Linkages and collaboration be strengthened among fisheries authorities and other government ministries and departments to improve a general understanding of the CCRF and facilitate its implementation.
- Fisherfolk organizations, in particular those of small-scale fishers, at local, national and regional level be strengthened in order to become true partners in the implementation of the CCRF and responsible fisheries management in general.
- Efforts be made to better document the features and contributions of the small-scale fisheries sector in the region, capturing in particular the socio-economic aspects.
- Efforts be increased by fisheries authorities and other stakeholders to mainstream fisheries into national poverty reduction and development plans, strategies and programmes.
- Fisheries Authorities should aim to incorporate the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), including adaptive management concepts in the management of their fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Special attention should be given to valuing traditional fisheries knowledge in the EAF processes.
- NPOAs-Sharks be developed in Caribbean countries that catch substantial quantities of sharks in their fisheries and that all Caribbean countries improve their data collection on shark catches and landings, as well as the skills to identify different species, in line with the FAO Technical Guidelines on the IPOA sharks and ICCAT recommendations.
- The precautionary approach be applied for deep sea sharks fisheries, in order to avoid fishing to depletion of stocks we do not know enough about as yet.
- Priority be given to certain social-economic and ecological objectives in the region, as resources are limited.

**To Others (International and Regional Organizations as well as NGOs):**

- That FAO supports, through relevant national and regional bodies, fisherfolk representatives and other regional stakeholders in regional processes to develop the SSF guidelines and in the implementation of the guidelines afterwards.
- That FAO considers feedback on specific tools of the EAF toolbox and makes efforts to add examples of how tools are used by countries and projects for information.
- That biennial monitoring of the CCRF implementation in the Caribbean Region should be continued by the FAO Secretariat in close cooperation with the WECAFC secretariat and the countries in the region, to report on specific developments in the region.
- The role of national, regional and international NGO's (e.g. TNC, WWF, IUCN, CARIBSAVE, CANARI, CERMES, CNFO) in the implementation of the CCRF should be increased through better use of their relationships with fisherfolk communities and media, as well as involving these organizations in awareness raising and capacity building efforts in the region.
- CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC and OECS collaborate more closely on the implementation of the CCRF, by organizing joint capacity building activities that target their constituency and by regularly sharing information, including on best practices and successful experiences.
- CLME, ACP Fish II and other projects and programmes active in the region adopt the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and the precautionary approach in their activities and ensure that policies, strategies, plans and legal frameworks developed with support of these projects adhere to the principles of the CCRF.
- Awareness raising and information campaigns for consumers, including in particular the tourism sector, should be conducted to sensitize the regional market on issues related to sustainable fisheries.