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منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة للأمم  
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联合国  
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Food and  
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Продовольственная и  
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para la  
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## THIRTY-SECOND FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26 to 30 March 2012**

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF REGIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

#### Executive Summary

- The Regional Technical Commissions play an advisory role in the Regional Conference in matters relating to the livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture subsectors.
- They contribute to defining priorities for technical cooperation and to formulating and validating policies and strategic frameworks for the sustainable development of these sectors in the different countries.
- They broaden the scope of the technical discussion on regional priority thematic areas, facilitate the exchange of information among countries and promote South–South cooperation.

#### Suggested action by the Regional Conference

- The Regional Conference could confirm the importance of the Regional Technical Commissions as advisory bodies, recommend the strengthening of national focal points and the adoption of the technical recommendations of CODEGALAC, LACFC, COOPESCAALC and WECAFC for the sustainable development of the livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture sectors respectively.
- The Regional Conference is invited to confirm FAO's key role in the technical secretariat of each Regional Commission and to recommend that governments give the highest priority to participation by senior officials in their meetings and to the support needed for implementing the respective work programmes.

Any questions concerning the content of this paper may be sent to Mr Tito Díaz, Secretary of the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Tito.Diaz@fao.org).

## I. OVERVIEW

1. As part of the process of decentralization and of strengthening the Regional Conferences as FAO's supreme governing bodies at regional level, it is hoped that the Regional Technical Commissions will play an advisory role for the Regional Conferences and raise the level of discussion on technical issues during the priority-setting process for FAO technical cooperation in the region, as well as serving to promote South–South cooperation, as recommended by the previous Regional Conference in Panama in 2010.
2. Recognizing the crucial importance of the forestry, livestock and fisheries sectors in countries' economic and social development and their contribution to food production, food and nutritional security and environmental protection, the Forestry Commission (LACFC), the Commission on Livestock Development (CODEGALAC) and the Fisheries Commissions (COPESCAALC and WECAFC) have become strategic forums for dialogue where member country governments, the productive sector and cooperation agencies can meet to discuss challenges and priorities for FAO technical cooperation in these sectors and to strengthen policies and strategies for their sustainable development.
3. It is suggested that these Regional Technical Commissions should provide a strong technical basis to underpin the discussion on policy and regulatory issues, in addition to identifying thematic priorities, and should recommend areas of intervention for FAO technical cooperation, which should be reflected in the regional agenda at programme and budget level. The hope is that the chairs of the various commissions will participate actively in the consultation process on priorities for FAO technical cooperation and will attend the technical sessions of the Regional Conference.
4. The Regional Technical Commissions should help to establish a clear relationship between regional priorities and FAO strategic objectives at subsector level, focusing on priority thematic areas and proposed interventions in the forestry, livestock and fisheries sectors, in order to meet institutional targets for food security, poverty reduction and natural resource protection.
5. It is hoped that the commissions will promote the establishment of ad hoc working groups for preparing technical reference documents, which would serve to deepen sectoral discussions and to support processes of consultation with different stakeholders on matters relating to the proposed agendas. The commissions are also expected to conduct communication and information-dissemination strategies to facilitate member country dialogue and participation in the development of strategies for building technical and management capacity.

## II. LACFC report

### A. General information

#### **Establishment, functions and members**

6. The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) was established at the Fourth Session of the FAO Conference (1948). Its function is to serve as a neutral forum for the countries of the region to discuss forestry issues. The Commission has 33 member countries working in subregional groups (Caribbean, Mesoamerica, Amazon and Southern Cone) to prepare their work programmes within the LACFC framework.

#### **Date, place and number of participants at the last meeting**

7. Twenty-two member countries attended the 26th meeting of LACFC (Guatemala City, 24–28 May 2010). The next meeting will take place in Asuncion, Paraguay, from 5 to 9 March 2012.

### B. Introduction and sectoral context

8. Nearly half of the surface area of the Latin American and Caribbean region is covered by forests (an estimated 49 percent in 2010) and the region is home to more than half the world's primary

forests (57 percent). The forest area has declined in Central and South America in recent decades, owing mainly to the conversion of forest to agricultural land. In the Caribbean, the forest area has increased as a result of new forest plantations and the natural recovery of abandoned forest areas.

9. Approximately 14 percent of the forest was designated for production. Broadly speaking, while forests are used for their non-timber resources and environmental services (the volumes and costs of which have not been estimated), the fact is that logging will continue to be the main economic activity. In 2005, the estimated value of wood removals was US\$ 6.8 billion. Timber is harvested mainly from natural forests, with more than half used for energy purposes. The total area of planted forests in the region is relatively small and more than 80 percent of reforestation is carried out with non-native species.

10. While it is important to promote the restoration of the forest base, in the region it is essential to:

- Promote sustainable management in view of the region's still abundant forest resources.
- Promote more vigorously the use of the region's non-timber forest products and genetic resources, in view of the biodiversity of its primary forests.
- Promote the valuation and payment of environmental services, in view of the high concentration of carbon per unit area, water availability in major watersheds and natural environments. Forest conservation and sustainable management is extremely important for mitigating climate change.

### **C. Relevant activities during the period**

11. As a follow-up to the agreements reached by the 26th Session of LACFC, a meeting of the Commission's Executive Committee was held (Asuncion, Paraguay, 30–31 March 2011), at which the following was reported.

#### **Caribbean Subregional Group**

12. Some countries are updating their national forest programmes and identifying exemplary cases of participatory forest management with the aim of sharing information. Resources are being sought for country studies on the subject. In order to encourage and promote management, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is assisting countries of the subregion to implement projects and transfer knowledge.

#### **Mesoamerican Subregional Group**

13. With a view to international negotiations on climate change and forests, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Panama are promoting the creation of systems for measuring, reporting and verifying forest carbon. Of particular note is the strategy adopted by a number of countries to implement fire management. All countries have incorporated community forestry as a key element of forest management, and eight countries are implementing community forestry studies.

#### **Amazon Subregional Group**

14. Countries have expressed special interest in exchanging experiences on the payment of environmental services. A number of initiatives have been developed on the basis of experience and in collaboration with Costa Rica and Mexico. Regarding community forestry, some cases in the subregion are being put forward as models for dissemination. Some countries in the subregion are interested in implementing a system for monitoring forest cover developed by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

#### **Southern Cone Subregional Group**

15. The idea of integrating countries into a joint platform is being promoted to enable them to share information on forest health issues. Accordingly, Argentina designed a model system that is available to all countries. The Inter-American Development Bank will finance the implementation of a regional project to support the work of the network of Southern Cone countries on invasive species in

forest ecosystems, whose Secretariat is in Paraguay. In the area of forest fires, a training and extension programme was developed on fire control in forest plantations. With the support of the FAO-administered National Forest Programme (NFP) Facility, national studies on policy and institutional strategies and mechanisms are under way to promote national consultation and linkages between the forestry sector and other national development sectors.

#### **D. Main conclusions and recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

##### **For the attention of FAO (FAO Forestry Department)**

16. LACFC requested FAO to regain its ability to assist countries with forestry education and research issues, given the need to update the forestry education curriculum.
17. Regarding the FAO initiative to identify “exemplary cases of sustainable forest management in Latin America and the Caribbean”, the Commission welcomed the proposal for a second phase of the project and recommended its early implementation in order to increase the number of successful cases.
18. The Commission expressed its concern over the misappropriation and misuse of forest genetic resources in the region and asked for FAO to support countries to avoid this.
19. It recommended that the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) examine mechanisms and identify and mobilize sources of funding to enable FAO to offer more assistance on community forestry to countries in the region, especially those in the Caribbean.
20. The Commission called upon FAO to play an important role in coordinating regional efforts on forests and climate change adaptation. It requested FAO to develop proposals and seek funding to support regional or subregional activities. It also asked FAO to synthesize and disseminate information on the contribution of sustainable forest management to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

##### **For the attention of governments**

21. It recommended strengthening existing forest health organizations in the region, building their capacity to transfer information and knowledge at both academic and governmental levels.
22. It stressed the importance of boosting exchanges of knowledge and experience among countries on the issue of forest genetic resources and, in particular, it mentioned *ex situ* conservation and the development of legal instruments for protecting such resources in countries; it also called for intellectual property to be respected.
23. It expressed concern at the reduction in the FAO work programme and support to countries for community forestry development. The Commission recommended referring its concern to COFO, to enable appropriate priority to be reassigned to the matter in the work programme of the Forestry Department.

### **III. CODEGALAC report**

#### **A. General information**

##### **Establishment, functions and members**

24. The Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC) was established by FAO at the request of member countries, by Council Resolution I/92 of 1987. Beginning in 1998, the member countries agreed to hold biannual meetings

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<sup>1</sup> The main conclusions and recommendations of the 26th Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) meeting are presented for the attention of FAO and governments. Updated conclusions and recommendations of the LACFC meeting for the Regional Conference will be prepared at the 27th Meeting (Asunción, Paraguay, 5–9 March 2012) and will be placed at the disposal of participants on the document table next to the Plenary Hall of the Regional Conference.

of subregional chapters in response to differences in agro-ecological, production, trade and socio-economic contexts, in line with regional integration agreements: Southern Cone Chapter (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay); Andean Chapter (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela) and Chapter for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. At present, the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean is conducting consultations with member countries of the subregion regarding the possibility of creating an English-speaking Caribbean Chapter.

#### **Date, place and number of participants at the last meeting**

25. During the last biennium, the 11th meeting of the Southern Cone Chapter was held (Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2010) and the 11th meeting of the Chapter for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic (Panama City, November 2011). The number of participants, including delegates and observers, was 40 and 70 respectively.

### **B. Introduction and sectoral context**

26. The livestock sector contributes 46 percent of Latin America's agricultural gross domestic product and has grown at a higher annual rate (3.7 percent), than the global average growth rate (2.1 percent). During the period, the demand for meat increased by 2.45 percent, with the highest demand for poultry meat (4.1 percent), followed by pork (2.67 percent) while demand for beef fell slightly (-0.2 percent). Meat exports grew at a rate of 3.2 percent, outstripping the 2.75 percent rise in output. Milk exports in the region also grew significantly. Attention was drawn to the increase in meat and milk production in Central American countries, the free trade agreements coming into force in the subregion and the Central American regional integration process, creating opportunities to expand trade in livestock products. However, these favourable prospects for the region are accompanied by concerns over the high cost of animal feed (60–70 percent of total production costs), limited availability of good-quality forage and inefficient use of available food resources, which undermine productivity and increase the risk of pests and transboundary animal diseases, hazards arising from natural resource degradation and the negative impact of climate change on the livestock sector. Moreover, price volatility and its impact on food production and the food security of vulnerable populations, high rates of chronic child malnutrition and undernutrition in some countries and increasing demand from society for safe and healthy high-quality livestock products are important considerations when developing livestock policies.

### **C. Relevant activities during the period**

27. The countries of the Andean Chapter progressed in strengthening their national foot and mouth disease control programmes and joint border activities. At the request of Commission member countries, cooperation resources were also arranged for developing a subregional programme to control classical swine fever. Support was given to the formulation of the National Sustainable Livestock Production Programme in Ecuador and of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project on climate-smart livestock production. Responsiveness to agroclimatic emergencies in high Andean pastoral areas of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru was enhanced, and background papers were prepared on: (a) institutions and policies to meet the challenges of climate change in countries of the Andean Community; (b) the status of extension and technology-transfer systems in selected countries of the Andean, Southern Cone and Central American regions; and (c) the contribution of the livestock component of family farming to incomes and the consumption of livestock products in rural households in three selected countries of Latin America.

28. In the Southern Cone countries, a regional cooperation project was developed to build national capacity for climate change mitigation and adaptation and the recovery of degraded pasture areas. Support was given to formulate policies for the sustainable livestock development of Paraguay's dairy sector and for the 2011–2020 Plan of Action for Chile's dairy sector. In response to the countries' request, a feasibility study was carried out in partnership with the Pan-American Dairy Federation (FEPALE) for a Dairy Regional Observatory. The website on sustainable livestock production and climate change was also updated.

29. The Central America Chapter made progress on implementing a subregional technical cooperation project for the formulation of differential policies for the sustainable development of the livestock sector, with the emphasis on smallholder systems, in response to a request from the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), and prepared four working papers for the Commission's 11th meeting in Panama on: (a) economic outlook for the livestock sector and policy challenges; (b) policy challenges for the environmentally sustainable development of the livestock sector; (c) contribution of the family-based livestock production sector to reducing poverty and food insecurity; and (d) institutional capacity to implement policies for the livestock and related industries in Central America.

#### **D. Main conclusions and recommendations**

30. The Commission highlighted the need to give priority to the design of differentiated policies, instruments and strategic programmes for the sustainable development of Latin America's livestock sector. It identified a number of strategic objectives: to consolidate national markets and exports of livestock products; to strengthen family-based livestock production and increase the livestock sector's contribution to food and nutritional security; to strengthen national veterinary services and reduce risks associated with animal and public health; to reduce the climate change vulnerability of livestock agro-ecosystems; and to facilitate the sustainable intensification of livestock production. To intensify livestock production sustainably, it was recommended to make more efficient use of food resources, increase the availability of good-quality forage, strengthen programmes for technology transfer to farmers and linkages between programmes for the recovery of degraded pasture areas and new support mechanisms for reducing deforestation and mitigating emissions, promoting the payment of environmental services and the access of livestock production systems to carbon funds within the new context of a green economy. Not only will these efforts increase productivity, they will also help to reduce the carbon footprint of Latin American livestock production.

##### **For the attention of FAO**

###### *Southern Cone Chapter (Buenos Aires, 2010)*

31. The Commission requested FAO to prioritize cooperation activities related to livestock sector adaptation to climate change and, jointly with countries, to coordinate the study on the impact of climate change on animal production and the possible occurrence of animal and zoonotic diseases.

32. It called upon FAO to support countries in seeking mechanisms for interaction between the agricultural, livestock and forestry systems and in incorporating technologies that help to enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of such systems, taking into account the needs of small- and medium-scale farmers.

33. It recommended giving support to workshops with national, regional and international experts for defining standard methodologies to be used in studies of greenhouse gases and the carbon footprint to meet the region's specific needs and conditions.

34. It requested FAO to support efforts for technical exchanges among countries of the region in sectoral information and analysis and to facilitate the creation of public-private sectoral information networks that could serve to support regional sectoral observatories such as the Dairy Regional Observatory.

###### *Chapter for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic (Panama City, 2010)*

35. It requested FAO to assist countries in formulating differential policy guidelines for the sustainable development of the livestock sector and in drawing up national agendas for sustainable livestock development, by providing technical information for identifying priority areas and intervention strategies.

36. It recommended that FAO support the development of national policies and strategies to strengthen family-based livestock production systems, with special emphasis on building the technical capacity of services for transferring technology to the livestock sector.

37. It asked FAO to support the strengthening of national veterinary services and regional coordinating bodies for the harmonization of animal health and food safety standards and regulations. The Commission also requested support in estimating costs and optimum investment for the prevention, control and eventual eradication of trade-limiting animal diseases.

38. It recommended supporting the analysis of the level of efficiency of price transmission within the major livestock production chains.

### **For the attention of governments**

#### *Southern Cone Chapter*

39. It recommended that countries should prioritize the livestock sector's climate change adaptation strategies and the integration of crop–livestock–forestry systems and should conduct studies on the implications of the possible risks posed by the intensification of livestock production on animal health and environment.

40. It urged countries to strengthen systems for promoting innovation and technology transfer to small- and medium-scale livestock producers and, to this end, to arrange international cooperation and cooperation among countries of the region.

41. It recommended governments to coordinate sectoral productive development and environmental policies with social policies, to enhance the livestock sector's contribution to food and nutritional security, taking a sustainable approach.

#### *Chapter for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic*

42. It recommended that countries proceed with consolidating a long-term subregional agenda and national agendas that promote the sustainable and competitive development of the livestock sector, and to do this it suggested strengthening forums for public–private dialogue and consultation, promoting the participation of the various stakeholders in drawing up the respective agendas.

43. It recommended that governments increase their level of public expenditure on the livestock sector in line with the sector's contribution to national economies and, in particular, that they increase official budgets for supporting the control of diseases that are transboundary, zoonotic, trade-limiting or incur high production costs.

44. It called upon countries to build the capacity of technology transfer services for the sustainable management of family-based livestock production systems and to improve the access of smallholder family livestock farmers to food-security and poverty-reduction programmes in every country of the region.

45. It recommended that governments boost the interagency coordination of the agricultural and environmental sectors to enable them jointly to design mechanisms and programmes for encouraging the environmentally-friendly development of the livestock sector.

### **For the attention of the Regional Conference**

46. The Commission invites the Regional Conference to adopt the priorities proposed by the Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean relating to: (a) support for family-based livestock production systems to improve productivity and access to technology and markets; (b) strengthening national animal health and food safety systems to reduce risks to animal and public health; (c) building national capacity for adaptation and mitigation of climate change in the livestock sector; and (d) strengthening systems of information and sectoral analysis for the development of differential policies for the livestock sector.

## **IV. COPESCAALC report**

### **A. General information**

#### **Establishment, functions and members**

47. The Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC) was established in 1976 by FAO Council Resolution 4/70. Its statutes were amended and approved by the 140th FAO Conference in November 2010. The Commission's overall objective is to promote research and development programmes leading to the rational utilization of inland fisheries and aquaculture resources, as well as to assist member countries in establishing science-based regulatory frameworks for the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.

48. At present, the Commission has 21 member countries from Mesoamerica, South America and the Caribbean. A number of fisheries and aquaculture organizations in the region attend as observers.

#### **Date, place and number of participants at the last meeting**

49. The 12th meeting of COPESCAALC (Cuernavaca, Mexico, 21–24 November 2011) marked a new trend with the development of a biennial plan of jointly agreed activities, the implementation of which will be monitored jointly by the COPESCAALC Chair elected for the 2012–2013 biennium and FAO Secretariat. The main focus of the meeting was to define five priority areas for FAO attention and assistance over the next biennium.

### **B. Introduction and sectoral context**

50. After growing steadily for more than a decade, the region's inland catch peaked in 2004, with 536 000 tonnes. Since then, it has declined by 9 percent to 486 000 tonnes. Even though fish production in inland waters is far lower than in marine fisheries, it is a major source of employment, possibly more than marine fisheries and aquaculture. Inland fisheries also make a significant contribution to food security because, for many fishing communities, fish is the sole source of protein.

51. The fact that fishery resources are freely available makes fishing an economically productive activity that becomes a source of food and household income in times of crisis in other agroproductive sectors. As a result, the occasional productive redeployment of crop farmers or smallholder livestock producers as fishers provides thousands of families in the region with access to food and income when their own sector is limited. Such redeployment has intensified since 2007, when food prices began to climb steadily, particularly in parts of Central and South America, where climate-related phenomena have led to crop and livestock production losses.

52. The region's aquaculture continues to grow faster than in any other region of the world. With more than 1.8 million tonnes of aquaculture products in 2009, Latin America and the Caribbean contribute 3 percent of global production, with a sustained average growth of over 8 percent annually over the past five years. Even though production in the region is very uneven, with four countries (Chile, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico) contributing more than 80 percent of the region's aquaculture volume, nearly all countries in the region engage in aquaculture to varying degrees, and it makes a significant contribution to food security, employment and foreign exchange earnings. More than 100 000 families throughout the region practice resource-poor aquaculture (equivalent to family farming), making it an important contributor to the economy and food production in rural areas.

### **C. Relevant activities during the period**

53. During the biennium between the Commission's 11th and 12th meetings, 10 of the 11 activities recommended by the 11th meeting for implementation by the Secretariat were carried out satisfactorily, including the workshops to gauge the size of the resource-poor aquaculture subsector and identify constraints on its development. Other activities included: a regional analysis and workshop on fish stocking programmes in inland water bodies; the identification and mapping of



transboundary river basins; and a policy-making workshop with a multisectoral approach to the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture.

54. Progress was made in consolidating the Aquaculture Network for the Americas (ANA). An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Brazil and FAO, in which the Brazilian government made a 1 million-dollar donation for activities to consolidate the network, implemented through a project managed and assisted by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. A number of activities have been implemented through this project to promote the sustainable development of aquaculture in countries of the region, including training courses, technology transfer and information sharing.

#### **D. Main conclusions and recommendations**

##### **For the attention of FAO**

55. Assistance should be given to countries to enable them to begin formal experiences of applying an ecosystem approach to the management of inland fisheries and aquaculture.

56. The Commission felt that it would be very useful for countries in the region to prepare a study to compile and disseminate successful experiences in developing multisectoral dialogue mechanisms for expanding inland fisheries and aquaculture in the region.

57. FAO cooperation was requested for formulating a regional strategy to support the development of resource-poor fish farmers and for improving mechanisms for communication and the dissemination of technical information between the Secretariat and countries, via the FAO website.

##### **For the attention of governments**

58. The Commission stressed that the appointment of COPESCAALC National Coordinators was a matter of utmost importance and proposed that national coordinators should be appointed by their governments within three months.

##### **For the attention of the Regional Conference**

59. For the 2012–2013 biennium, the Commission agreed to divide the most important issues for immediate FAO action in the region into the following five regional priority groups:

- Sustainable development of aquaculture, particularly the resource-poor sector and micro- and small enterprises.
- Management of aquaculture and inland fisheries.
- Building national capacity for the climate change adaptation of the inland fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- Formulation and implementation of strategies to stimulate consumption and develop the market for fishery and aquaculture products.
- Evaluation of inland fisheries resources.

## **V. WECAFC report<sup>2</sup>**

### **A. General information**

#### **Establishment, functions and members**

60. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in 1973 by FAO Council Resolution 4/61 and currently comprises 32 member countries and the European Union. Most Caribbean and Central American countries are WECAFC members.

61. The Commission's overall objective is to promote the conservation, management and development of living marine resources in the WECAFC area of operation, in line with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and to address common fisheries management and development problems faced by WECAFC members.

#### **Date, place and number of participants at the last meeting**

62. The Commission's 13th meeting was held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 21 to 24 October 2008. The 14th meeting will take place in Panama City, Panama from 6 to 9 February 2012. The 13th meeting was attended by 17 delegates from most WECAFC member countries and observers from several regional institutions and non-governmental organizations.

### **B. Introduction and sectoral context**

63. The fisheries and aquaculture sector in the Wider Caribbean Region is in crisis. Catches are currently around 1.3 million tonnes per year. One of the main causes for the decline in catches in recent years is overfishing, although in some cases another reason may be the administration's response to the risk of overfishing by limiting catches. The destruction of coastal fish habitats by tourism, pollution and urban development has been widely reported by fishers and fisheries authorities, in addition to the general degradation of the ecosystem, particularly coral reefs and reef fish populations. Nevertheless, these habitats form the basis of small-scale fisheries, which play an important economic, social and cultural role in the region.

64. Governments continue to give low priority to the region's fisheries and aquaculture sector and, in many countries, legislative frameworks and development policies for the sector require revision and improvement. Two of the main constraints on the responsible management of the sector include the institutional weakness of fisheries authorities and other major stakeholders, and the limited human, technical and financial resources available to several WECAFC members.

### **C. Relevant activities during the period**

65. The WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) held its fifth session in Puerto Morelos, Mexico, from 28 to 29 October 2011, where it called for renewed attention from governments to the decreasing trend in catches of some important populations of commercial marine species, including the valuable Caribbean spiny lobster and several important reef species. It urged countries to take action to support the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. To increase the effectiveness of WECAFC, SAG recommended enhancing cooperation among a variety of fisheries organizations, both regional and subregional, by forming joint working groups and strengthening the activities and operation of a number of existing working groups of regional experts. These include: establishing a Working Group on the Caribbean Spiny Lobster, comprising WECAFC and the Central American fisheries and aquaculture organization OPESCA (Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano) and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM); and strengthening the WECAFC Ad Hoc Flyingfish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean comprising CRFM and WECAFC.

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<sup>2</sup> The Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) will meet in Panama City (6–9 February 2012), and the conclusions and recommendations will be placed at the disposal of LARC 32 participants on the document table next to the Plenary Hall.

66. The WECAFC website (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/wecaft/en>) was updated and is accessible in three languages (English, French and Spanish). More than 40 WECAFC reports and publications were scanned and placed online in 2011.

67. WECAFC also co-organized 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”.