

**GENERAL
FISHERIES
COMMISSION
FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN**

33



GFCM REPORT 33

GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION

Tunis, 23–27 March 2009

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the final version of the report adopted in Tunis by the thirty-third session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 27 March 2009.

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ABSTRACT

The thirty-third session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was attended by 21 Contracting Parties. The Commission reviewed the intersessional activities of its scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and held the third session of its Compliance Committee. The GFCM adopted binding management decisions on a reduction of 10 percent of fishing effort for demersal trawl fisheries in the competence area, the establishment of a new Fisheries Restricted Area in the Gulf of Lions and the establishment of a minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawlnets. The GFCM also agreed to put into operation a Vessel Monitoring System by the end of 2012 and to establish a fleet register by the end of 2010. The Commission amended its Recommendations on the record of fishing vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area, and on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Regarding data reporting, the Commission adopted new binding Recommendations for aquaculture and the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix. The GFCM further endorsed three Recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on swordfish and bluefin tuna fisheries. The GFCM decided to establish a new Committee on Administration and Finance and agreed on modalities to undertake its performance review in 2009 and 2010. It agreed to create a new professional position within the Secretariat and adopted its 2009 budget and programme of work. The Commission renewed the bureau of its Compliance Committee and acknowledged the use for the first time of Arabic as working language. The GFCM addressed the issue of its new headquarters, in particular the possibility of the Secretariat to move into it preferably before the summer of 2009.

Distribution:

Participants in the Session
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CONTENTS

OPENING OF THE SESSION	1
ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION.....	2
REPORT ON THE INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES 2008	2
ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES	5
MANAGEMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE	8
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE	12
PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2009.....	13
GFCM BUDGET AND MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2009.....	17
ANY OTHER MATTERS	18
DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION	18
ADOPTION OF THE REPORT	18

APPENDIXES

A	Agenda	19
B	List of participants	20
C	List of documents.....	29
D	Terms of reference of the GFCM Committee on Administration and Finance.....	30
E	Resolution GFCM/33/2009/1 on the management of demersal fisheries in the GFCM area.....	31
F	Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical sub-areas in the GFCM area amending the Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2	32
G	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 on the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lions to protect spawning aggregations and deep sea sensitive habitat	37
H	Request for SAC to undertake studies on the protection of spawning aggregations on the continental shelf edge and slope of the Northern Western Mediterranean	39
I	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2 on the minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawlnets.....	40
J	Recommendation GFCM /33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 Statistical Matrix (repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1).....	42
K	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/4 on reporting of aquaculture data and information.....	46

L	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register.....	47
M	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area amending the Recommendation GFCM/2005/2	54
N	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in the GFCM area.....	56
O	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area amending the Recommendation GFCM/2006/4	59
P	Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/9 concerning selected ICCAT Recommendations.....	65
Q	Report of the third session of the Compliance Committee, Tunis, 23 and 25 March 2009	108
R	Guidelines for the GFCM performance review	118
S	Draft Recommendation on the management of fishing capacity	123
T	GFCM autonomous budget for 2009	125
U	Contributions to the GFCM budget for 2009	126

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its thirty-third session in Tunis, Tunisia, from 23 to 27 March 2009.

2. The Session was attended by delegates from 21 Members of the Commission, as well as by observers from the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the International Confederation of Sport Fishing (CIPS), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The list of delegates and observers is provided in Appendix B to this report.

3. The Session was called to order by Mr Mohamed Hadjali Salem, Chairperson of the Commission, who welcomed the participants and thanked the Tunisian Government for hosting the session and for the excellent organization.

4. In the absence of Mr Alain Bonzon, Executive Secretary of the Commission, Mr Abdellah Srouf, Deputy Executive Secretary, acted as the Secretary of the session.

5. Mr Jean François Pulvenis de Séligny, Director, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Economics and Policy Division, welcomed the participants on behalf of Mr Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO, and Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. He thanked the Government and people of Tunisia for their hospitality and stressed the importance of holding this meeting in a country which had been supporting and contributing to the work of the Commission in an active and efficient manner. He recalled FAO's own commitment to provide support to the Commission and made a brief reference to the relevant aspects of the ongoing process for the renewal and restructuring of the Organization. He referred to some of the constraints that the Commission was facing: the fact that some Members had not yet deposited their instrument of acceptance of the amendment to the Agreement, the delays in the payment of some of the contributions to the autonomous budget and finally the need to solve some pending questions linked to the hosting of the Secretariat at the new headquarters of the Commission. He highlighted a number of positive actions to be achieved during this session, both in terms of its structure (establishment of a Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF), implementation of a performance review, adoption of Arabic as an official working language) and of its operation, including the considerable number of intersessional meetings that had been held and the progress made thanks to these meetings on a number of substantial issues. Mr Pulvenis de Séligny stressed the importance and scope of the decisions that the Commission was expected to make during this Session. He finally recalled the important role of the regional projects in GFCM undertakings and thanked once again the donors as well as all those who had contributed to support financially a number of other activities. He wished the participants a fruitful meeting and reiterated his thanks on behalf of FAO to Tunisia for the excellent facilities provided.

6. Mr Abdesselem Mansour, Tunisian Minister of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources, addressed the Plenary and warmly welcomed the Delegations to Tunisia. In his opening statement he underlined the challenges being faced by Tunisia in managing its fisheries and gave an overview of the strategy adopted by his country to conserve living marine resources whilst ensuring sustainable development. He explained that a ten-year plan was in place to safeguard pelagic and demersal fisheries resources and promote sustainable use practices, as well as to reinforce scientific research. He added that environment-friendly aquaculture development also featured in Tunisia's priorities. The Minister highlighted the initiatives taken by Tunisia to implement various management measures to protect fisheries resources in national waters and high seas in line with GFCM measures, together with international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. He stressed that economic,

social and ecological aspects must be considered in regional fisheries management plans and suggested that the following four priorities should be kept in view by the Commission: implement a regional temporal closure, strengthen research to improve advice in relation to drawing up management measures, secure a balance between exploitation and the environment and protect the marine environment from anthropogenic impacts. In his conclusion, the Minister stressed that sound fisheries management in the region could only be guaranteed through a spirit of solidarity and stated that the GFCM was the best forum to foster this.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

7. The Chairperson referred to the Statement of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Community and its Member States as provided in document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.7.
8. The Agenda was adopted without changes and is attached as Appendix A.
9. The documents which were before the Commission are listed in Appendix C.
10. The Chairperson invited the Commission's Members as well as its Observers to introduce their delegations.

REPORT ON THE INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES 2008

Activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

11. Mr Henri Farrugio, Chairperson of SAC presented the activities of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/2 and GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.5. He referred to the 18 meetings held during the intersessional period, including the two Coordinating Meetings of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), and summarized the main results of the work undertaken during workshops and by the working groups as follows:

- The Second Meeting of the Working Group of Stock Assessment Methodology identified specific models which should be used in assessments in which trawl survey data are exclusive. Progress on the elaboration of a standard GFCM protocol to undertake surveys at sea was also registered.
- The Workshop on the GFCM Regional Fleet Register drew up and agreed upon a list of fields, definitions, formats, codifications, data submission frequency and standards, and confidentiality issues in relation to the GFCM Regional Fleet Register (RFR), as well as the introduction of a unique vessel identifier in both this register and the already established authorized vessels list.
- The Transversal Workshop on Fleet Segmentation revised the nomenclature of the fleet segmentation and refined the vessel classification criteria.
- The Transversal Working Group on Recreational fisheries identified four categories of recreational fisheries and made progress towards defining an integrated framework for the collection and analysis of biological, ecological, environmental and socio-economic data for use in recreational fisheries management.
- The Transversal Working Group on Selectivity reviewed a number of selectivity studies and concluded that the use of a square mesh of at least 40-mm in the bottom trawl codend needed to be urgently implemented and enforced.
- The Transversal Workshop on Bycatch/Incidental Catches discussed the problems related to these issues and addressed the interaction between fisheries and species of conservation concern, and suggested that data collection schemes and studies in this field should be enhanced.

- The Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic in the Mediterranean focused its work on compiling and reviewing the knowledge on small tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean.
- The joint GFCM/ACCOBAMS Workshop dealt with the interaction between fisheries and cetaceans and reviewed the results of studies carried out on this subject.

12. The Chairperson of SAC also briefed the Commission on the activities undertaken by the Sub-Committees as follows:

- The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) continued reviewing the GFCM Task 1 data entry tool and drew up some guidelines for data reporting. It addressed the implementation of the GSA compatible STATLANT 37A form, as well as the issue of mismatching between the GSA boundaries and the FAO Statistical Divisions. The SCSI also appraised the outcomes of the workshop on the fleet register and that on the fleet segmentation. Furthermore it examined the experiences of some countries in operating a logbook scheme.
- The Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) reviewed the legislative and socio economic status of the recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and identified the relevant information and data to be collected to improve the knowledge on this sector. It addressed the issue of the socio economic impact of the implementation of 40-mm square mesh in bottom trawls and expanded on the use of socioeconomic indicators in fisheries management. The SCESS also tackled fleet capacity and suggested that a transversal workshop should be convened on the matter.
- The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) reviewed options to identify criteria for the identification of essential habitats of relevance for the management of priority species by GSA. It reviewed and discussed a proposal for establishing a new GFCM Fishery Restricted Area (FRA), encompassing marine canyons in the Continental Slope of the Eastern Gulf of Lions (CoSEGoL).
- The Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) reviewed 32 assessments performed by its working groups and formulated management advice for consideration by SAC. The methods to perform assessments by the use of surveys at sea data were identified and a GFCM framework to standardize the various protocols to undertake direct assessments was produced. In addition, the SCSA updated the priority species list.

13. The Chairperson went on to outline the proceedings of the two Coordination Meetings of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) which were held during the intersessional period. He informed the Commission that the first of these meetings focused on fine tuning the 2008 workplan whilst the other one reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Sub-Committees and transversal sessions in order to provide the SAC with consolidated proposals.

14. The Commission thanked Mr Farrugio for his presentation and commended the extensive work carried out by SAC and its subsidiary bodies. It noted that substantial material had been produced which is highly relevant to the monitoring and management of Mediterranean fisheries and should be taken into account during deliberations under agenda item 5.

15. The representative of ACCOBAMS expressed its satisfaction on the strengthened cooperation with GFCM, particularly on the issue of cetacean bycatch and collection of related data.

16. The representative of ICCAT pointed out the importance of the extended cooperation with GFCM on research and statistics, in particular regarding the small tuna fisheries.

Activities of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)

17. Mr Spyros Klaoudatos, Chairperson of the CAQ, reported on the activities of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies during the intersessional period on the basis of documents GFCM:XXXIII/2009/2 and GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.6. He informed the Commission that the activities were carried out in accordance with the programme of work agreed at the thirty-second session of GFCM.

18. He underlined the effort made by the CAQ in implementing the activities of the subsidiary bodies and reported on the main results as follows:

- The Coordination Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG) reviewed the activities of the three Working Groups and SIPAM and focused on the status of the projects supporting the Working groups (WGs). It recalled the importance of the identification of indicators for the sustainable aquaculture and related standard reference points, together with the necessity to integrate the relevant outputs of the CAQ Working Groups into the SIPAM data banks.
- The Project in support of the Working Group on Marketing of Aquaculture Products (WGMA) “Development of a Strategy for Marketing and Promotion of Mediterranean Aquaculture” (MedAqMarket) became operational in April 2008. The structure for data collection including the template for an understanding of the present market situation of each Mediterranean country was finalized and data collection has been implemented in mostly countries.
- The Working Group on Site Selection and Carrying Capacity (WGSC) was organized with the start of the project ShocMed “Developing siting and carrying capacity guidelines for Mediterranean aquaculture within aquaculture appropriate areas” in October 2008. The WGSC identified a minimum list of environmental variables to be monitored and suggested the implementation of an environmental monitoring programme for marine finfish aquaculture.
- The Working Group on Sustainability on Aquaculture (WGAS) organized a workshop on the selection of sustainable indicators within the activities of the project InDAM “Selection of Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guideline for their use in the Mediterranean”. WGSA agreed on the methodology to be applied and on how principles, criteria and indicators should be selected.
- The Annual session of the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) recommended the introduction of a simple format in which a minimum set of data on aquaculture production are requested.

19. The Commission thanked Mr Klaoudatos for his presentation and expressed its satisfaction for the work carried out by the CAQ. It noted the issue raised by some delegations on species diversification and agreed that CAQ should explore this field particularly in relation to meagre. It also acknowledged the desire of some delegations for increased funding for training in aquaculture.

20. The Commission appreciated the fruitful cooperation with IUCN especially on issues related to aquaculture sustainability, siting and carrying capacity.

Report of the FAO regional projects

21. The report on regional projects was presented by Mr Pedro de Barros, Fisheries Resources Officer, FAO, who informed the Commission on the main activities performed by the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects in support of GFCM, on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.9. He recalled that during the intersessional period only AdriaMed, MedSudMed and COPEMED II were fully operational. He highlighted the main activities carried out and the outputs achieved. He reported also on the ArtFiMed project, which started in 2009, as well as

on the status of the MedFisis project, that is awaiting the confirmation of availability of funds to start its third and final year of activity.

22. He reported on the projects that are expected to start within 2009. EastMed, after a delay due to formal procedures, will be starting within the next couple of months, with the recruitment of the Project Coordinator. Also the MED-LME project, a part of the GEF-funded "Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem" has been approved and is expected to start within 2009. The project formulation phase of the BlackSeaFish project funded by Turkey is also expected to commence in 2009.

23. The delegate of Greece stated that the EastMed project was ratified by the Greek parliament on 9 March and will be published on the Greek Government official newspaper shortly, at which time it would enter into force. He added that the expected date of publication is 9 April 2009 and highlighted the sizeable contribution of €400 000 which Greece has already directed towards this project.

24. The Commission welcomed the report on the FAO regional projects and underlined their crucial importance for the work and objectives of the GFCM. However, given the ongoing FAO reform it recognizes the need for FAO-executed projects in the Mediterranean to adopt operational modalities that are in line with this reform and at the same time to respond better to current economic constraints and uncertainties. Furthermore, the involvement of national institutes should be enhanced, the best quality should be ensured through rigorous selection procedures regarding qualifications and skills of experts, and a performance appraisal of the projects should be carried out on a regular basis.

25. Some delegations praised the very important work carried out by the Regional Projects in support to GFCM activities, especially COPEMED II, being a very important complement to their national working programmes.

26. The Moroccan delegation highlighted the support provided to Morocco by this project in the area of Fisheries Statistics. The delegate of Algeria reiterated his country's interest in participating in the ArtFiMed project, as already expressed during the last session.

27. The Commission underscored the importance of ensuring the continuity of the FAO Regional Projects as a major tool to reinforce the region's capacity for sustainable fisheries management and expressed its profound gratitude to FAO and to the different donors that made this work possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

Report of the Secretariat

28. Mr Abdellah Srour, the acting Executive Secretary, introduced this point of the agenda on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/3 "Report of the Secretariat on Administrative and Financial Issues". He addressed issues related to the cost of running of the Secretariat including the support in kind provided by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. He further referred to selected intersessional activities and outputs, including liaison with partners' organizations, publications, meetings and databases. The financial report addressed issues related to the autonomous budget of the Commission, including the status of contributions, arrears, working capital funds as well as the status of expenditures 2008 for each chapter of the budget.

Activities and functioning of the Secretariat

29. The Commission was informed that the intersessional activities of the Secretariat included organizing and coordinating several meetings such as the sessions of the SAC (Scientific Advisory Committee) and CAQ (Committee on Aquaculture) and their subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat produced several technical and administrative documents, available on the GFCM Web site and some

of which are published as “Studies and Reviews”. The support of these activities by the different regional projects executed by FAO (mainly AdriaMed, COPEMED and MedSudMed) was noted.

30. The delegates were further reminded that the activities of the Secretariat on data management were assisted by a consultant recruited on a contractual basis since 2006. In this respect, the attention of the Commission was drawn to the request by the SAC and CAQ to establish a post of data manager within the Secretariat, in view of increasing duties to be assumed by the Secretariat and to guarantee the sustainability of the progress achieved in the fields of data management, information and web site affairs.

31. The Commission expressed its satisfaction for the quality of work achieved by the Secretariat and encouraged it to maintain this positive trend.

32. The delegate from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya supported by some delegations took note with satisfaction of the effort made by the Secretariat to ensure the availability of all working documents in the required languages including for the first time in Arabic.

Headquarters of the Commission

33. In relation to the question of the new headquarters of the Commission, the Acting Executive Secretary reported briefly on the present situation as a result of the discussions between the government of Italy and FAO, as called for in paragraph 120 of the report of the last session. Two questions remained to be solved, that of the equipments and that of the running costs. After short statements by the representatives of Italy and FAO, the Commission welcomed the progresses that had been achieved in this respect and reiterated its wish that the Secretariat be able to move to the new headquarters as soon as possible, preferably before this summer. It took note of the shared responsibilities of the government of Italy, of FAO and of all the Members of the Commission in actively reaching a solution which would allow the Secretariat to do so. After noting that the question of the equipments had been basically solved, the Commission expressed its interest for the possibility of a transitional formula with regards to the running costs, for an initial period which should not exceed three or four years and invited the government of Italy and FAO to explore this option and continue and conclude at the earliest their discussions, in close contact with the members of the Commission, in order to reach an agreement on a practical and acceptable scheme both for the initial period and for afterwards.

Status of ratification of the amendments to the GFCM agreement

34. The Commission was informed on the status of acceptance of the 1997 amendments to the GFCM agreement, the situation being similar to that in 2008, i.e. 21 Members had deposited their instruments of acceptance, and Members that have not yet done so are Egypt, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic .

Member contributions to the autonomous budget

35. The Secretariat informed the Commission that the “Call for funds letter” was sent in April 2008 and that by October 2008 most Members had settled their contribution. In total sixteen Members deposited their instruments of acceptance and remitted their contributions; five Members (Bulgaria, Italy, Lebanon, Malta and Slovenia) deposited their instruments of acceptance but have not paid their contribution for 2008. Egypt has not yet deposited its instrument of acceptance but has paid its contribution. Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have neither deposited their instruments of acceptance nor paid their contributions.

2008 financial status: autonomous budget, arrears and trust funds

36. The Commission was informed on the main chapters of the budget of the intersessional period, during which the Secretariat managed the expenditure according to the priorities and work plan adopted by the Commission. At the end of 2008 the financial status showed a negative balance of US\$203 464.45 (for the “income” based budget) which consider the pending contributions of five Members.

37. Information on the status of GFCM extra budgetary resources (i.e. voluntary contribution from Members) received from EC and Spain in support of the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the CAQ was given.

38. The delegate from Slovenia informed the Commission that the contribution of her country to the GFCM budget will be deposited shortly.

39. The delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic informed the Commission that the Ministry of Agriculture has recently asked the Government to accelerate the procedures related to the ratification of the GFCM agreement together with the payment of their contribution. He added that these issues will be resolved in due course.

40. The delegate from Bulgaria informed the Commission that necessary action had been taken in order to ensure payment of the 2008 contribution. He also referred to the pending amount related to a previous contribution, which will be settled in due course.

Establishment of the Committee on Administration and Finance

41. The acting Executive Secretary, recalled that the establishment of the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) was requested during the thirty-second session and that its functions will mainly focus on reviewing administrative matters, compliance with the rules of procedures and financial rules and the implementation of the budget adopted.

42. He further introduced the “draft terms of reference of the CAF as reported in document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.12 in accordance with Article VII of the GFCM Agreement which refers to the establishment of temporary or special committees and working parties.

43. Several delegations highlighted the relevance of the establishment of CAF as an additional instrument at the disposal of the Members to monitor the use of the autonomous budget and to enhance efficiency in the functioning of the Commission. The financial and practical implications of the creation of the new Committee were addressed.

44. The Commission unanimously decided to establish the Committee on Administration and Finance and agreed on its terms of reference (TORs) as attached in Appendix D. These TORs will be revisited at the first session of the CAF.

45. It was agreed that the CAF sessions should be held annually and back-to-back with the annual session of the Commission. It was further agreed to apply this scheduling to the Sessions of the COC.

46. The Commission agreed to look into the feasibility of shortening its Session to four days.

47. The bureau of the CAF was unanimously elected. Mr Mohamed Fathy Osman (Egypt) was elected Chairperson while Ms Constantina Karlou-Riga (Greece) and Mr Hachemi Missaoui (Tunisia) were elected first and Second Vice-Chairpersons respectively.

MANAGEMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Management advice emanating from SAC

48. Mr Henri Farrugio, Chairperson of the SAC, presented the main conclusions and advices emanating from the SAC on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/4.

49. He underlined that most of the stocks that had been assessed were fully exploited or overexploited, and that management measures needed to be taken urgently. The specific advice put forward by the SAC was the following:

- For sardine in GSA 17, reduce fishing effort without increasing capacity and establish a closed season of 45 days.
- Establish a recovery plan for *Parapenaeus longirostris* in GSA 6.
- Unless proven unnecessary by sound scientific advice, a reduction of at least 10 percent of fishing effort on demersal species in all GFCM GSAs as a precautionary measure.

50. The Commission was further informed that SAC agreed to include six new species to its list of priority species: *Octopus vulgaris*, *Auxis rochei*, *Sarda sarda*, *Euthynnus alletteratus*, *Orcynopsis unicolor* and *Katsuwonus pelamis*.

51. In the field of data collection and statistics, it was reported that the SAC suggested the following:

- Proceed with the establishment of the Regional Fleet Register (RFR) by 1 January 2010.
- Include a GFCM unique vessel identifier in the Authorized Vessels List and RFR.
- Adopt the proposed revised fleet segmentation and vessel classification criteria.
- Purvey data on Tasks 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 mandatory as from 2009.
- Adopt the proposed revisions of the GSA boundaries and introduce a statistical grid.

52. The Chair of SAC informed on the proposals of the Committee to implement the 40-mm square mesh for the trawlers operating outside territorial waters as from 2009 and to establish a Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) in the Gulf of Lions region. He also presented three selected decisions from the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and invited the Commission to consider it for possible endorsement.

53. The Commission thanked Mr Farrugio for the presentation and congratulated the Scientific Advisory Committee for the extensive work carried out during the intersessional period and its high quality and praised the Committee for the relevant outcomes presented to the Commission.

54. After an extensive discussion on the advice on the sardine stock in GSA 17, the Commission agreed that the SAC should provide further information on the basis of new analysis on the state of the stock and the fishery.

55. The Commission further requested SAC to ensure follow-up on this issue.

56. The delegation from Croatia informed that a closed season for sardine was already in force in Croatian waters, from 15 December to 15 January.

57. The Commission agreed that the stock of *Parapenaeus longirostris* in GSA 6 was in a critical condition, and that the advice from the SAC for preparing a recovery plan was appropriate. However, it was noted that this fishery also captures other species of commercial interest, and that an analysis on the state of these stocks and its effect on the resources of *Parapenaeus longirostris* would be necessary

before the recovery plan could be devised. The Commission decided to request the SAC to carry out this analysis during the next intersessional period, extending it to adjacent GSA's.

58. The EC delegation recalled that there might be close links between stocks fished in mixed fisheries in GSA 5, 6 and 7 and therefore suggested that an analysis at a wider spatial scale should be carried out.

Aquaculture management advice emanating from the CAQ

59. The Chairperson of the CAQ reported on the advice put forward by the CAQ on the management of Mediterranean aquaculture on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/4. He focused on the proposal to set up an annual data reporting system through the SIPAM information system. He recalled that since the fifth Session of CAQ, there was general agreement that currently available aquaculture statistics underestimate the actual production of the Mediterranean and that reliability of aquaculture data is essential when assessing aquaculture activities, including marketing aspects.

60. Several delegations agreed on the importance of the availability of aquaculture statistics and that data should be submitted to the Commission on a mandatory basis.

61. The Commission fully supported the proposal to establishing the aquaculture data reporting scheme which would allow for the generation of regional dynamic statistics contributing sounding management processes. It noted that the marketing difficulties being faced by the aquaculture sector in the Mediterranean could be attributed, *inter alia*, to the lack of reliable statistics.

62. The Commission discussed a proposal related to the reporting on aquaculture data and agreed to adopt it as binding recommendation.

63. The Commission also discussed the frequency of the sessions of the CAQ and agreed to maintain biannual sessions and to establish the length of mandate of the CAQ bureau for four years.

64. On the basis of the management advice drawn up by the SAC and the CAQ, together with further proposals put forward by some Members, the Commission adopted the following decisions:

Decisions on fisheries management

Resolution on the management of demersal fisheries in the GFCM area

65. The Commission thoroughly discussed the advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee for an overall reduction of at least 10 percent in bottom trawling fishing effort and decided to adopt the related Resolution GFCM/33/2009/1 as reproduced in the Appendix E.

66. The delegate from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya stated that his country will be in the position to implement this measure when the necessary scientific information regarding the status of fishing resources in Libyan waters is available.

67. The Commission requested that necessary data to assess the status of stocks in this area be made available to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) in the near future.

Recommendation on the establishment of a Fisheries Restricted Area in the Gulf of Lions

68. As a follow-up to the SAC advice, the Commission decided to establish a new GFCM Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) in the Gulf of Lions, with freezing of fishing effort at the current level as the unique restriction measure. The related proposal presented by the EC delegation was adopted as Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1. This new FRA is located in area of the eastern Gulf of Lions as

bounded by lines joining the following geographic coordinates: 42°40'N, 4°20'E; 42°40'N, 5°00'E; 43°00'N, 4°20'E; 43°00'N, 5°00'E. The endorsed Recommendation is reproduced in Appendix G.

69. The Commission further requested the SAC to ensure follow up of this area according to the terms of reference presented in Appendix H and through the analysis of the fishing activities performed by the vessels less than 15 metres length (LOA) in the area as well as on the likely biological and socio-economic consequences of extending this FRA.

70. In relation to the scope of this Recommendation, the Turkish delegate expressed his reservation for the establishment of Fisheries Restricted Areas or Protection Areas in the High Seas without full consensus of all relevant coastal states.

Recommendation on a minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawlnets

71. The Commission discussed extensively the proposed recommendation tabled by the EC. Several delegations, noting that implementation of this measure would require important technical and financial effort from the Member countries, expressed their concern about the strategic date proposed for the implementation of this recommendation. The support from the FAO regional projects to carry out the necessary research work was requested.

72. After a thorough debate, the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2 on a minimum 40-mm mesh size in the codend of demersal trawlnets was adopted as reproduced in Appendix I.

Decisions on fisheries and aquaculture data reporting

Resolution on establishment of geographical sub-areas in the GFCM area

73. The Commission decided to endorse the SAC proposal to change the boundaries of GSA 7 to conform to the FAO statistical divisions. It also adopted the proposal of establishing a grid of 30'x30' geographical grid for statistical reporting purposes.

74. This decision adopted as Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 is reproduced in Appendix F.

75. The delegate from Turkey reiterated the reserve expressed by his Government at GFCM thirty-first session concerning the name of GSA 24.

Recommendation on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 Statistical Matrix

76. Some delegations expressed concern with respect to the technical and financial implications of this requirement and requested additional support to achieve the desired results. It was noted that the FAO regional projects could assist in alleviating this problem. However, the FAO project staff informed that although the FAO has the technical capacity and the will to provide this support, through the Mediterranean regional projects, especially MedFisis, the funds currently available to these projects are insufficient to carry out this task.

77. The Commission agreed on the importance of the Task 1 Statistical Matrix and decided to adopt the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 as reproduced in Appendix J.

Recommendation on reporting of aquaculture data and information

78. The Commission discussed a proposal related to the reporting on aquaculture data and agreed to adopt it as binding recommendation quoted GFCM/33/2009/4 (Appendix K).

Recommendation on the establishment of the GFCM Regional Fleet Register

79. The Commission extensively discussed the EC proposal to establish the GFCM Regional Fleet Register, and decided to adopt it as a Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/5, as reproduced in Appendix L.

80. Some delegations expressed that, in order to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation, a technical and financial assistance will be needed.

Decisions related to the monitoring and control

Recommendation concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area

81. The Commission noted SAC's proposal to introduce the GFCM unique vessel identifier as a data field in the GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres and subsequently agreed to amend Recommendation GFCM/2005/2 accordingly. The Recommendation, as amended, is quoted GFCM/33/2009/6 and reproduced in Appendix M.

Recommendation concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in the GFCM area

82. The Commission revisited the draft Recommendation concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a VMS in the GFCM area which had originally been presented at the thirty-second session.

83. After accepting some amendments related to the implementation dates, the Commission adopted this proposal as Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a VMS in the GFCM area. The Recommendation is reproduced in Appendix N.

84. Concerned countries are ready to implement this recommendation as of 31 December 2012 on condition that necessary financial and technical assistance are provided.

85. The EC delegate called for close cooperation among all GFCM Members to prepare for implementing this recommendation by the set deadline and stated the EC and its Member States are ready to assist non EU/GFCM Members who so wish in setting up of their VMS system through technical cooperation concerning training and, where possible, and financial support for the choice and purchase of technical equipment. All GFCM Members were invited to contribute to this technical and financial assistance according to their possibilities.

Recommendation on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area, amending Recommendation GFCM/2006/4

86. With reference to document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.11, introduced by Ms Judith Swan, the Commission adopted the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area, thereby modifying Recommendation GFCM/2006/4. The adopted recommendation is reproduced in Appendix O.

Pending decision

Draft recommendation of the management of fishing Capacity

87. The EC proposal for a Recommendation on the freezing of fishing capacity was discussed at length but no consensus was reached on its adoption.

88. The Commission therefore decided to re-examine this proposal during its next session. This draft Recommendation is reproduced as Appendix S.

89. In relation with the GFCM workshop on fleet capacity, scheduled to be held in the next intersessional period, the Commission called for a great and active participation of national experts and for the furniture of relevant analysis and data to this workshop (fleet development plans, state of the exploited resources, etc.) in order to ensure his success.

Recommendations from ICCAT of relevance for the Mediterranean

90. On the basis of document GFCM/XXXIII/2009/Inf.8, as presented by the SAC Chairperson, The Commission decided to adopt three ICCAT recommendations relevant to Mediterranean fisheries, namely:

- 1) Recommendation [08-03] by ICCAT on Mediterranean Swordfish;
- 2) Recommendation [08-05] by ICCAT amending the Recommendation by ICCAT to establish a multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean;
- 3) Recommendation [08-12] by ICCAT amending Recommendation [07-10] on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna catch documentation programme.

91. The Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/9 reproduces the three above mentioned decisions (Appendix P).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE (COC)

92. The third session of the Compliance Committee of the GFCM was held in Tunis, on 23 and 25 March 2009 during the plenary session. The Committee unanimously elected Mr Boudjelida Khatir (Algeria), to serve as Chairperson, and Mr Aleksander Joksimovic (Montenegro) and Mr Haydar Fersoy (Turkey) as First Vice-Chairperson and Second Vice-Chairperson respectively, for a term of two years.

93. The Chairperson of the Committee reported that the COC addressed the status of implementation of GFCM decisions by Members, the management of the list of vessels authorized to operate in the GFCM area, the conclusions of the Working Group on VMS, as well as the Compendium of GFCM decisions.

94. The Committee noted that most of national reports on the implementation of GFCM measures had been not received, as requested by Resolution GFCM/32/2008/1. Members were reminded of the value of such reports as a basis for discussion and were encouraged to provide them in future.

95. The Commission noted that references to the regulations within national legislation were not always provided and that this information would also be useful in the summary table where it could be easily consulted.

96. The Committee noted the progress made by countries in the submission of data and information, particularly in relation to Task 1 and the Authorized Vessels List (AVL) and commended the progress made by the Secretariat in the development of the related databases and electronic applications, as well as in the management of data and information submitted.

97. On the establishment of VMS in the GFCM area, the Committee noted potential constraints in relation to timing and financial commitments, and decided to forward the issue for discussion at the plenary session of the Commission.

98. The Committee supported the use of the Compendium of GFCM decisions as the basic reference document for monitoring compliance with GFCM decisions and congratulated the Secretariat for the work carried out in compiling it.

99. The Secretariat was requested to take the necessary action to set up the interactive database on GFCM decisions through the web site.

100. The Commission acknowledged the offer made by the EC delegation to use its relevant services for possible translation of the Compendium of GFCM decisions to Arabic.

101. The Commission endorsed the report of the Compliance Committee that is included as Appendix Q to this report.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2009

Programme of work of the Scientific Advisory Committee

102. With reference to documents GFCM:XXXIII/2009/6 and GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.5, the Commission was presented with the draft programme of work, suggested by the eleventh session of SAC.

103. The Commission endorsed the programme of work proposed by SAC including the new approach to the functioning of its Working Groups on Demersal and Small Pelagic Resources, with special emphasis on the following:

Stock assessment

- pursue activities on stock assessment using both commercial data and surveys at sea;
- agree on a set of biological parameters of growth and natural mortality;
- improve biological indicators and further develop reference points;

Marine environment and ecosystems

- finalize a common standard for selectivity studies and initiate studies related to artificial reefs;
- continue developing pilot studies to implement the EAF, including through the involvement of stakeholders;
- develop monitoring schemes on the implementation of the prohibition of demersal fisheries activities below 1 000 m;

Statistics and information

- update the Task 1 Statistical Bulletin as required and continue with the development of the new software to be used by countries as to report Task 1 data needed as from 2009;
- initiate the implementation of a test period for reporting data related to the Regional Fleet Register (RFR);

Economic and social sciences

- develop studies on the socio-economic impacts of implementing the 40-mm square mesh in trawl fisheries;
- pursue studies on recreational fisheries;
- analyse the structures of economic incentives and mechanisms in national fisheries;

Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species

- follow-up to the recommendations of the eighth session of the Joint Working Group concerning small tunas;

Updating of the SAC Glossary

- proceed with the updating of the SAC glossary

104. The Commission also discussed on the importance to promote the age reading for some species of interest notably to set up appropriate methodologies and to compare results obtained by various research institutions.

105. The regional projects were invited to collaborate in carrying out some activities in this field.

Meetings of the SAC and its subsidiary bodies

106. The Commission agreed to convene the following meetings during the intersessional period.

Meeting	Place/Date
SCSI/SCSA Transversal Workshop on the GFCM Logbook	Rome, Italy 29 June–1 July 2009
SCMEE/SCSA/SCCESS Transversal Workshop on Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction	Tunis, Tunisia 23–25 September 2009
SCSA Working Group on Stock assessment of Demersal Species	Ancona, Italy 19–23 October 2009
SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species	Ancona, Italy 26–30 October 2009
Session of the SCCESS	Malaga, Spain 30 November–3 December 2009
Session of the SCMEE	Malaga, Spain 30 November–3 December 2009
Session of the SCSA	Malaga, Spain 30 November–3 December 2009
Session of the SCSI	Malaga, Spain 30 November–3 December 2009
CMSC	Malaga, Spain 4 December 2009
Twelfth session of the SAC	Montenegro 25–29 January 2010
SCCESS/SCSA/SCSI Transversal Workshop on Fishing Capacity	Rome, Italy 17–19 February 2010

107. The representatives of ACCOBAMS and RAC/SPA stated that they were pleased with the strengthened collaboration with the GFCM during the intersessional period and looked forward to take it further during the forthcoming period of work, particularly on issues related to bycatch, selectivity and sensitive habitats.

Programme of work of the Committee on Aquaculture

108. The Chairperson of CAQ presented the programme of work for the forthcoming intersessional period. These activities are mainly based on the continuation of the projects supporting the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the CAQ.

Aquaculture and marketing

- preparation of a regional synthesis and qualitative assessment of the Mediterranean Market;
- identification of a medium term strategy for the development of marketing of aquaculture products;
- design and incorporation in the SIPAM Information System, of a Regional Marketing database on finfish marine aquaculture products;
- publication of the review entitled “Market Study on Mediterranean Meagre (*Argyrosomus regius*)” and identification and preparation of other special studies on commodities such as amberjack, turbot, mullets and octopus.

Siting and carrying capacity

- review the existing procedures for site selection and evaluation of the effectiveness of regulatory schemes and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures;
- design and implement a data management tool to store available (or published) environmental data, as well as data referring to the environmental monitoring of the marine fish farms surrounding.

Aquaculture sustainability

- finalize the principle, the criteria and preliminary list of multidisciplinary indicators and reference points in relation to agreed methodology;
- develop and implement pilot studies to test and refine, as appropriate, the methodological framework and sets of indicators;
- establish synergies and cooperation with other projects or Mediterranean initiatives, related to the sustainable development of Mediterranean marine aquaculture;
- prepare draft guidelines for the use of indicators and reference points, including feasibility, practicability, expertise requirements and cost-effectiveness.

SIPAM

- improve the databases on “Production Statistics” and “Production Centres”;
- develop new sections, respectively on Marketing, Siting and Carrying capacity and on Sustainable indicators in the SIPAM information system;
- continue the management and maintenance of the system, including the consolidation of the SIPAM portal.

Meetings of the CAQ and its subsidiary bodies

109. The Commission agreed to convene the following meetings in 2009.

Meeting	Place/Date
WGSC – Meeting on National legislation on Siting, monitoring programmes and EIA regulatory framework for finfish marine aquaculture (ShocMed)	Vigo, Spain 13–14 July
IUCN/FEAP/CAQ – Workshop on Diversification of Production on Aquaculture	TBD/ September
WGMA – Meeting “Development of a Strategy for Marketing and Promotion of Mediterranean Aquaculture” (MedAqMarket)	Tangier, Morocco 27–28 October
WGSC – Multistakeholder Workshop on Siting and Carrying Capacity (ShocMed)	Tangier, Morocco 29–30 October
WGAS – Workshop on guidelines and application on sustainable indicators in aquaculture (InDAM)	TBD/ 18–19 November
SIPAM – Workshop on harmonization standards for Mediterranean aquaculture data collection (back to back with 11 th Annual Meeting of SIPAM)	Trabzon, Turkey 8 December
SIPAM – Eleventh Annual Meeting	Trabzon, Turkey 9–10 December
CMWG – Coordination Meeting of the Working Groups	Rome, Italy 17–18 December

110. The Commission noted CAQ’s request to revitalize its work on lagoon management, particularly in view of the strong interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture in these areas. The CAQ also advised that regional projects currently dealing mostly with capture fisheries should also include a component on aquaculture.

111. The Chairperson of the GFCM recalled that the new Recommendation concerning the transmission of aquaculture data will imply a new commitment for the activities of the Commission through the CAQ and the SIPAM Regional Centre in Tunis. He stated that an additional extension of the Centre until December 2009 will be advisable for a proper and complete technical handing over to the GFCM Secretariat. The new commitment will also imply additional work for the Secretariat.

112. The representative of the IUCN underlined his appreciation for the results achieved through the work carried in a short time, and for the Recommendation made on data collection. He also recalled that on the basis of the agreement between the IUCN and GFCM there are many lines of cooperation established, namely on the subject of aquaculture siting and carrying capacity and sustainable indicators. He added that he was looking forward to discussions in the near future on other aquaculture sensitive issues, such as environmental impacts, sustainability and interaction with capture fisheries.

113. Some delegates suggested that in the future the CAQ programme should include also some other technical subjects on aquaculture, such as pathology, for which expertise is lacking in some countries.

114. The delegate from Croatia expressed his appreciation for the programme presented including some new components such as sustainability indicators and carrying capacity. He stressed that in the coming years, a much closer link with coastal environmental assessment, the interaction of aquaculture and coastal fisheries and synergies with tourism and its related activities should also be considered.

115. The Chairpersons of SAC and CAQ commended the great efforts of the Secretariat in conducting a large amount of high quality work in a short period.

Meeting of the Compliance Committee (COC)

116. The Commission confirmed that the fourth session of the COC will take place before the next plenary session of the Commission (back to back).

Performance Review

117. The acting executive Secretary presented the draft guidelines for the GFCM Performance Review on the basis of document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf.13.

118. The Commission endorsed the draft guidelines and agreed that the performance review will take place during 2009 and 2010, with the results being presented to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission.

119. The guidelines for the GFCM performance review including the related criteria are provided in Appendix R.

GFCM BUDGET AND MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2009

120. Mr Abdellah Srour, the acting Executive Secretary presented this point of the agenda on the basis of document GFCM/XXXIII/2009/7 which draws upon the short and medium term budget of the GFCM. He informed the Commission that the budget has been drawn up in accordance with the proposed draft workplan for 2009.

121. Detailed information on the main chapters of the budget for the financial periods 2009 and 2010 was delivered. The shares of the autonomous budget to be financed by each Member were also presented, along with the estimated contribution of the FAO Regular Programme and from voluntary contributions made by Members in support of cooperative projects administered by the Secretariat.

122. The Commission expressed some concern for the substantial increase of the proposed budget for 2009. Additional information was requested on the additional cost in relation to administration, staff and consultancy. Mr Srour provided the Commission with complementary details and explanation on these issues.

123. In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that the amount related to the running costs of the new Headquarters, should not be included in the 2009 budget and that this issue should continue to be discussed with the involved parties. Furthermore the Commission decided that the budget should not be increased by more than 5 percent.

124. Italy confirmed its readiness to support, during a transition period and on a voluntary basis, the start-up costs for the new GFCM headquarters. The amount of this voluntary contribution will be equivalent to the contributions to the GFCM autonomous budget, paid by Italy from 2005 onwards.

125. The Commission noted that offer and that discussion among all parties concerned would resume in the coming weeks.

126. The Secretariat was requested to take the necessary steps in order to follow up on all pending matters related to the move to the new GFCM headquarters during the 2009 intersessional period.

127. The Commission further agreed to establish a new position (P2) within the Secretariat and adopted the budget for 2009 for a total amount of USD 1,478,986 as indicated in Appendix T as well as the contribution of the members to the GFCM budget (Appendix U).

ANY OTHER MATTERS

128. The delegate from Montenegro highlighted the importance of organizing a high level International Conference on Mediterranean Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2010 with the involvement of the different stakeholders. The aim of this Conference is to address issues on sustainable Mediterranean fishery and aquaculture such as governance, protection of sensitive habitats and the effect of climate change on the Mediterranean fisheries and ecosystems.

129. The delegate from Tunisia made reference to the publication N. 75 “Studies and Reviews” (by Philippe Cacaud). He underlined that a paragraph on the Tunisian legislation contains some mistakes which should be corrected when possible.

130. The Commission stressed that in the future overlapping of meetings of the GFCM and those of other international partner organizations should be avoided.

131. The Commission unanimously expressed its great satisfaction for the excellent work and the remarkable effort made by the Secretariat to organize this session properly, despite of the limiting unforeseen circumstances.

132. Mr Srour thanked all delegations for their encouraging words and underlined that this success could not have been achieved without the substantial work done by the staff of the Secretariat led by the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Mr Alain Bonzon.

133. Furthermore, the Commission thanked FAO for the continuous support to GFCM and expressed its sincere gratitude to the Government of Tunisia for the hospitality and the excellent organization of the meeting.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

134. The Commission decided to hold its thirty-fourth session in March 2010. The Commission welcomed the offer made by the delegation of Greece to host the next session of the Commission in Athens subject to confirmation by the relevant national authorities. The exact date and the venue will be agreed in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

135. The report was adopted on Friday 27 March 2009.