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para la  
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Agricultura

## REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES (RECOFI)

### Eighth Session

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 12 – 14 May 2015

### Review of Intersessional Activities

#### Executive Summary

This document provides a summary of the intersessional work of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and its subsidiary bodies: the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) and the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) as well as activities of the RECOFI Secretariat. The activities are listed, as well as the main outcomes.

#### The Commission is invited to:

- Review the activities performed by the WGFM and the WGA over the inter-sessional period and to provide guidance on issues of particular relevance expressed by the subsidiary bodies, including any follow-up actions that might be deemed appropriate and necessary.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This working document is a summary of the work of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and its subsidiary bodies: the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) and the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA). Activities conducted and progresses achieved are included. A number of activities that had been planned to take place, namely the regional kingfish stock assessment workshop, were unable to be conducted in the intersessional period and the training workshop on introduction to risk analysis for aquaculture development. Additionally, activities of note in which the RECOFI Secretariat were involved are also included.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

### **SEVENTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

2. The seventh meeting of the RECOFI WGFM was held in Kuwait City, the State of Kuwait, from 5 to 7 November 2013. The meeting was attended by 19 delegates from four members of the Commission and three representatives from one observer organization. Four RECOFI members were absent (Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). Details of the seventh meeting of the WGFM are included in RECOFI/VIII/2015/6 and RECOFI/VIII/2015/Inf.5.

3. The WGFM updated the list of priority species. The WGFM revised the socio-economic questionnaire and recommended that it be circulated and presented at the following WGFM. With regards to the RECOFI Recommendation on minimum data reporting, at the time of the meeting, four members, (Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Oman and Qatar) had submitted data, and as well there was notable improvement in reporting by Qatar and Iraq. The four remaining countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) were urged to submit their information. The WGFM reviewed the preparatory work for the regional joint kingfish stock assessment workshop and also approved the objectives, the agenda and data and participant skill requirements.

4. A regional fisheries management framework was discussed, and, recognizing the importance of this, it was agreed that management options should be formulated, which would be led by Kuwait.

### **EIGHTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

5. The eighth meeting of the RECOFI WGFM was held at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa of the Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO) in Cairo, Egypt, from 8 to 10 December 2014. The meeting was attended by three members of the Commission (Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) and two observer organizations (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES], and North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, [NEAFC]). Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq and the United Arab Emirates apologized for their absence; Bahrain and Oman did not attend the meeting. Details of the eighth meeting of the WGFM are included in RECOFI/VIII/2015/6 and RECOFI/VIII/2015/Inf.6

6. A proposal for regional coordination of management of shrimp trawl fisheries in RECOFI was presented and the need for the establishment of a regional shrimp database was agreed. The results of the socio-economic survey were presented and discussed. While socio-economic work was not prioritized in the work plan for 2015–2016, the meeting recognized that further information should be collected by the socio-economic Task Group. The follow-up for the regional joint assessment of the narrow-barred Spanish mackerel was agreed, and the importance to hold the meeting on this matter in 2015 was reaffirmed.

7. The follow-up of the recommendation on minimum data reporting was reviewed, in particular the status of data submission. The insufficient data submitted by some members was discussed and the meeting agreed on the importance of reliable and timely data on fisheries operations, in particular to implement responsible fisheries management in the area. The need for a regional database for marine fisheries data in the RECOFI area was raised and ideas discussed and re-raised the issue for the

Commission to reconsider the possibility of expanding the Regional Aquaculture Information System to accommodate capture fisheries data.

8. The possible cooperation of RECOFI in CITES was discussed, and the state of IPOA-IUU and the Port State Measures Agreement in the RECOFI area was discussed. The meeting welcomed the convening of a capacity development workshop on Port State Measures. A work plan for the 2015–2016 biennium was proposed, which included the regional joint assessment of kingfish stock, a regional fisheries management framework workshop, and a workshop on the enhancement and standardization of fishing gear selectivity in the RECOFI area.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON AQUACULTURE**

### **SIXTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON AQUACULTURE**

9. The sixth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was held in Muscat, Oman, from 21 to 23 October 2014 and was attended by representatives from seven member countries (Kuwait did not attend). Details of the sixth meeting of the WGA are included in RECOFI/VIII/2015/4 and RECOFI/VIII/2015/Inf.4

10. A draft recommendation on the minimum reporting of aquaculture data and information was discussed, and formulated, to be presented at the eighth session of RECOFI. The WGA agreed that, if adopted by the Commission, the aquaculture data and information would be best submitted by the individual countries through specifically designed and dedicated templates accessible from the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) website. The meeting discussed the RAIS following the presentation of the web analysis report, which indicated a steady interest in the information system particularly among the Arabic-speaking countries. Actions to further consolidate and expand the system were discussed, along with the need to improve the overall communication outputs at the national and regional levels.

11. The WGA finalized its proposed programme of work for the next intersessional period, based also on the WGA programme adopted by the Commission at its seventh session (Tehran, Iran, I.R., May 2013). The main activities identified for the next work plan included: a training workshop on aquaculture risk analysis; a technical workshop on aquaculture recirculation technologies; a training workshop on aquaponics; hands-on training in marine hatchery technologies; and a technical meeting to share regional experiences in the use of GIS and spatial analysis in coastal zone management and marine aquaculture planning and development. In view of emerging aquatic animal health issues, the WGA further agreed that, during the implementation of the workshop on aquaculture risk analysis, the technical experts from the member countries would also discuss priority issues related to aquatic animal biosecurity and identify activities that required action.

12. The WGA discussed the current level of financial contribution and that the Commission might not have the required budget to implement a comprehensive aquaculture programme. Therefore the WGA recommended that some activities could be implemented with extra budgetary funds.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE RECOFI SECRETARIAT**

### *Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC-32)*

13. The Secretary of RECOFI presented the activities of RECOFI at the thirty-second session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East which was held from 24 to 28 February 2014, in Rome, Italy.

14. The Regional Conference made a number of recommendations regarding RECOFI, in particular:

- a. acknowledged the role of RECOFI in effectively promoting cooperation among its Members for the development of fisheries and aquaculture, and requested FAO to continue ensuring its technical support to the Commission;
- b. encouraged RECOFI members to ensure adequate funding to preserve the work of the Commission, as this was becoming increasingly essential for the sustainability of shared fishery and aquaculture resources in the Region;
- c. appreciated the joint efforts made by the Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq and Kuwait with the support of FAO to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the northern area of RECOFI; and
- d. noted the offer of the State of Kuwait to host the Tripartite Committee under the auspices of RECOFI in the new FAO office to be established shortly in Kuwait.

#### *Fifth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network*

15. RECOFI Secretariat participated in the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN-5) was held in Rome, Italy, on 7 and 13 June 2014. Prior to the meeting, all regional fishery bodies (RFBs) were asked to contribute data on how the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) was being applied within their organizations.

16. The meeting fostered collaboration and cooperation among the participating RFBs, and gave consideration to a number of matters that merit the attention of all RFBs, governments and FAO. The meeting concluded with a discussion on future directions for the RSN

#### *RECOFI cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*

17. The relevance of the mandate of CITES to the work of RECOFI was noted at the eighth meeting of the WGFM, and in particular the emphasis on legality, sustainability and traceability of trade in CITES-listed marine species. It was also noted at the meeting that CITES provisions for managing and controlling international trade in listed species were complementary to measures required under the Port State Measures Agreement, and as well as the RECOFI Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the case of sharks. Four Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members had as well endorsed a recommendation to ban targeted shark fishing from the Permanent Committee of Fish Resources of the GCC.

#### *RECOFI participation in activities of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

18. At the eighth meeting of the WGFM (December 2014), the meeting was informed of the regional workshop organised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) in the North-West Indian Ocean and Adjacent Gulf Areas (Dubai, 20–25 April 2015), which would be preceded by a training session on EBSAs (19 April 2015).

19. The RECOFI Secretariat upon request of and in cooperation with the CBD Secretariat, and in consultation with the Chairperson, assisted with the designation of a scientist from the RECOFI region to attend the CBD regional workshop.