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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
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Alimentación

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP (SAG)

Panama City, Panama, 7-8 November 2015

Intersessional activities – review of the WECAFC Work Programme 2014 -2015

1. This document provides brief information on the intersessional activities of the Commission and FAO in the WECAFC area. The document needs to be read in conjunction with WECAFC/SAG/VII/2015/inf.3: Report of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission (Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1069) and particularly its appendix D.
2. The work of the Commission was largely (approximate 80%) conducted as planned in the approved WECAFC Work Programme 2014-2015.
3. The approved Work Programme of WECAFC, was subject to obtaining the required extra-budgetary funding support. Consequently, some of the earlier foreseen activities have not been carried out.

Review of the WECAFC Work Programme 2014 - 2015

4. Under Technical Focus Area 1: "Improve fisheries governance", a range of activities has been undertaken. These activities included:
5. Dissemination of the latest information on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and related instruments and guidelines (activity 1.1), through region-wide dissemination of copies of the CCRF, technical and international guidelines. In addition WECAFC secretariat supported the FAO work related to monitoring of the implementation of the CCRF among the WECAFC membership. Moreover, the fact that OSPESCA was awarded the Margarita Lizarraga award is a clear sign that the CCRF implementation in the region receives wide support from the countries.
6. Promotion of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and Aquaculture (EAA) (activity 1.2), through participation in the CLME project, promotion of the EAF & EAA in various FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects (e.g. Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname) and integration of EAF methodologies and tools in regional workshops, fisheries planning and legislative framework development exercises at national level.
7. Provision of fisheries legal and policy advice in line with the CCRF to WECAFC members (Activity 1.3) was provided under various Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects in Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Nicaragua, and Suriname.

Recommendations in support of national level policy, planning and legislative processes were provided upon request.

8. Facilitate the regional application of the 2008 International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (activity 1.4). The first meeting of the Working Group on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was held in Christ Church, Barbados, from 30 September to 2 October 2014¹. The meeting brought together 31 fisheries experts from 17 WECAFC member States and 4 regional institutions from the region. The Working Group noted that there were international obligations to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the WECAFC area. The Working Group compiled available information on the fisheries in the ABNJ of the WECAFC area and noted that deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ had been and were occurring, and that they were likely to increase in the future. The group also noted with some concern that many of their shallow water fisheries were exploring and fishing in deeper waters. The FAO Deep-sea Fisheries Guidelines were presented to the group, which then applied them to VME elements such as seamounts and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge hydrothermal vents. The Working Group proposed a total of five candidate VMEs within the ABNJ of the WECAFC area. The management of these areas is outside the current mandate of WECAFC and lies with the States operating fishing vessels in the area.
9. Support the national level application of the 2010 FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards by WECAFC members (Activity 1.5). The WECAFC supported the formulation of the GEF project: "Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries (REBYC-II LAC). This 5.6 million USD GEF funded project, in which Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago participate, had its inception meeting in Barbados on 9-12 September 2015. The project is hosted by the WECAFC Secretariat at the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and will contribute to the implementation of the bycatch guidelines in the region.
10. Promote the ratification and implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) among WECAFC members (activity 1.6). In support of this activity the FAO/WECAFC Workshop on Implementing the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (the Agreement), was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 24 to 28 March 2014². The workshop focused on the implementation of the Agreement in regard to law and policy, institutional and capacity development, and operations. The workshop informed participants about IUU fishing in the Caribbean region, including impacts on resources and economic consequences. It considered port State measures in the global context, together with the use of port State measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. A number of WECAFC members also participated in a sister workshop of the one held in Trinidad, which was organized in Uruguay in 2015.
11. The PSMA was also promoted at national level in many WECAFC countries. Dedicated capacity building sessions were held in St Kitts and Nevis in July 2015, after which St Kitts and Nevis ratified as first country in the Caribbean the PSMA. The WECAFC Secretariat also conducted some awareness raising and promotional meetings on the PSMA in The Bahamas and Grenada.

¹ The meeting report (Report 1087) can be found at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4329e.pdf>

² The meeting report (Report 1076) can be found at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3925e.pdf>

12. Support to the application of the international Guidelines on securing sustainable small scale fisheries (Activity 1.7), was carried out in close collaboration with CRFM and CNFO, as well as with various national level fisherfolk organizations (e.g. in Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados). Hard copies of the SSF guidelines were distributed widely and made available on-line. During various fisheries planning and management meetings in Bahamas, Barbados, Caribbean Netherlands and Saint Kitts and Nevis awareness was raised on the SSF guidelines.
13. Moreover a Workshop on Strengthening organizations and collective action in fisheries: Towards the formulation of a capacity development programme was held on 4–6 November 2014 in Barbados. This workshop supported the design of targeted interventions that would contribute to the implementation of the SSF guidelines. FAO was also actively involved in the 2nd World Small-Scale Fisheries Conference, which was held in Merida, Mexico in 21-25 September 2014.
14. Improve coordination and cooperation between national and regional organizations / institutions responsible for fisheries-related MCS in support of their common efforts to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (activity 1.8). The Regional Working Group on IUU fishing (RWG-IUU) was established by WECAFC 15, convened by CRFM, and received financial support from the US Department of Commerce/NOAA for an inaugural meeting of this RWG-IUU in 2016. Moreover, in most other working groups under WECAFC IUU issues have been placed on the agenda. Belize and St Kitts and Nevis developed National Plans of Action to combat IUU fishing (NPOA-IUUs) in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Under Technical Focus Area 2: “Increase regional information and collaboration in fisheries” the following activities were undertaken
15. Strengthening disaster risk management capacity in the fisheries sector in the Caribbean (Activity 2.1) was undertaken in close collaboration with regional partners. A regional project was developed for funding by the GEF Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). This project, with the title “Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector” was developed in close collaboration with CARIBSAVE, CRFM and UWI/CERMES and is intended to benefit the following 7 Caribbean SIDS: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. GEF National Focal Point endorsement letters were received in 2012 from all 7 countries. The Project Preparation Grant (PPG) was received in February 2014 and allowed the collection of baseline information, and the participatory design and formulation of a full-fledged project. The GEF CEO endorsed the project in October 2015. Implementation of this 5.4 million USD project will start in January 2016 and the project will be hosted by the WECAFC Secretariat at the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, located in Barbados.
16. Provision of technical and legal advice for the implementation of the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) (Activity 2.2) was carried out jointly with CRFM in June 2015 in relation to the Caribbean Fisherfolk Day. A brochure was produced jointly and the CRFM and WECAFC secretariats increased awareness on the Policy. The CCCFP was approved by CARICOM’s COTED in October 2014.
17. Improved management of reef fisheries and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (activity 2.3) was the subject of the workshop on MPAs as a tool for responsible fisheries and sustainable livelihoods in the Caribbean, which took place in Christ Church, Barbados on 6-8 November, in conjunction with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) 67th Annual Conference. The workshop generated a number of conclusions and recommendations for future MPA planning and management in the region and emphasized the need to include small-scale fishers in planning, implementation and evaluation of MPAs in the region. Moreover, some WECAFC members participated in a Workshop on impacts of marine

protected areas on fisheries yield, fishing communities and ecosystems, which was held in Rome, Italy in the period 16-18 June 2015.

18. Improved fishery and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination at regional and national level (activity 2.4). A regional training workshop on “Strengthening national data collection and regional data sharing through FIRMS to support priority regional fishery management plans in the WECAFC area” is scheduled to take place in Barbados on 18-22 January 2016. The workshop is made possible with support from the DG Mare of the European Union. CRFM and NOAA are actively participating in the organization of this event.
19. Regional resources and fisheries inventories prepared and disseminated (activity 2.5) is an ongoing activity in which the FIRMS Secretariat is actively involved. Tests are being conducted in The Bahamas in 2015 and 2016 and it is anticipated that the CLME+ project and the Blue Bridge project will contribute to this activity in the coming years.
20. Increase the availability of information on the contribution of fish to food security and the social and economic value of the fisheries sector (activity 2.6) received attention particularly in the Central America region. An INFOPECSA study “Fisheries and Aquaculture and food security in Latin America and the Caribbean” was disseminated widely. In addition, FAO and OIRSA organized a subregional workshop in Panama on increasing fish consumption in Mesoamerica.
21. Participate and provide advice and information to activities of partner agencies (activity 2.7) continued between the WECAFC and CRFM, OSPESCA, CLME, IFREMER, CFMC, ICCAT, GCFI, RAA, REDPARQUES, UNEP, WWF, CI, IGFA, IADB, WB, and other partners.
22. Under Technical Focus area 3 “Strengthen regional fisheries management and best-practice approaches for fisheries and aquaculture” many activities were carried out.
23. Strengthen the capacity of the Caribbean Network of Fishers Organizations (CNFO), national and primary fisherfolk organizations (Activity 3.1), received attention through financing the participation of CNFO members at GCFI and through FAO TCP assistance to St. Kitts and Nevis. Moreover, representatives of fisherfolk organizations were invited to participate and benefit from most of the WECAFC and FAO fisheries project activities and workshops carried out in the region.
24. Support the establishment of a regional shellfish hatchery for the Wider Caribbean (Activity 3.2) received follow-up in the form of an updated project proposal with the title “Investment planning study for the establishment of a Regional hatchery for native shellfish species”, which was submitted in September 2015 to the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for potential support, considering the interest of the bank in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development.
25. Establishment of aquaculture demonstration activities (Activity 3.3) did receive attention in the WECAFC region from various FAO projects, including the “Activation of services and consolidation of the Aquaculture Network for the Americas (RAA) Trust Fund Project (GCP/RLA/190/BRA) under the Brazil-FAO Cooperation Programme, as well as through regular program funds in the following countries: Bahamas, Costa Rica, Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras, Paraguay and Antigua and Barbuda. Moreover, FAO TCP project development activities took place in support of aquaculture and aquaponics demonstration projects aimed at aquaculture value chain development in 2016 in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas and St Kitts and Nevis.
26. Development of regional aquaculture Better Management Practices (BMPs), guidelines and Codes (activity 3.4) did not receive attention from WECAFC in this biennium. Under project

TCP/INT/3502 “Reducing and managing the risk of Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (AHPND) of Cultured Shrimp” 2 workshops were organized in Panama in 2014.

27. Review of fish supply chain performance and increased application of fish quality and safety measures (Activity 3.5) did not receive attention from WECAFC in this biennium. A subregional project proposal was developed in a workshop in Panama which will aim at improving fish quality in the local markets and increase fish consumption.
28. Sustainable Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish fisheries (Activity 3.6) received significant attention from the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The earlier work by FAO, in collaboration with CANARI, CERMES and CRFM received follow-up and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of the CLME, was endorsed by most of the countries in the region in 2013 and 2014. Strategy 6 of the SAP “Implement EBM/EAF of the Guianas-Brazil continental shelf with special reference to the shrimp and groundfish fishery” will receive support from the CLME+ project “Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems” in the coming years. The WECAFC-FAO has been assigned a leading role in the coordination of the USD 950 000 sub-project on shrimp and groundfish fisheries.
29. The WECAFC also organized a Workshop on Investing in Ecosystem-based shrimp and groundfish fisheries management of the Guianas –Brazil shelf, which was held in Barbados, on 7-8 September 2015. The Workshop was the 1st meeting of the joint Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish of the WECAFC, CRFM and the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Seas (IFREMER). The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) supported the workshop under its programme for Managing Regional Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems for Biodiversity Conservation. The 35 experts attending discussed the status of the shrimp and groundfish stocks, investment options for shrimp and groundfish fisheries in the sub-region - which comprises Brazil, Venezuela, French Guiana, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname - and opportunities to harmonize fisheries management measures that would increase financial and environmental sustainability of the sector. Recommendations were made to increase collaboration in stock assessments of the fish and shrimp resources between the countries, to build capacity to carry out the necessary analyses in support of fisheries management decision making, to develop a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as a sub-regional shrimp and groundfish fishery management plan for the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf countries, to finalize a general investment plan and to assist the countries in conducting the necessary feasibility studies for the preparation of full-fledged, location specific fisheries investment proposals
30. After two project formulation workshops (in Suriname and Costa Rica) in 2014, the GEF funded FAO project on “Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries” (REBYC-II LAC) got approved in April 2015 and held its inception workshop in Barbados on 9-12 September 2015. The countries participating in this 5.6 Million USD project are Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago and the project is expected to collaborate closely with WECAFC and its joint Working Group. The findings and recommendations of this project will be disseminated regionally by WECAFC to allow all members to benefit from the project.
31. Improved transboundary management of Caribbean Spiny Lobster (Activity 3.7) received inputs from the CLME project as well, under a case study led by OSPESCA in the period 2011-2014. The CLME SAP Sub-Strategy 4A “Enhance the governance arrangements for implementing an ecosystems approach for spiny lobster fisheries” provides a list of short

and medium term actions for FAO-WECAFC, UNEP-CEP, OSPESCA, CRFM and their member countries in this respect.

32. A first meeting of the OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster took place in Panama City, Panama, on 21–23 October 2014. It compiled and reviewed national catch and effort data, stock assessment methodologies and management measures for Caribbean spiny lobster. The country presentations and the FAO/CRFM report presented provided important inputs to this discussion. The meeting noted an overall improvement in data collection and management, with most countries now having the capabilities to carrying out stock assessments. The state of the stocks appears to have improved compared with 2006. However, fisheries policy-and decision makers were urged to take concrete action to further improve management practices throughout the region. The meeting recommended that technical management measures be embedded in a broad regional management plan addressing ecological, social and institutional issues for adoption at the sixteenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission. The meeting was in favour of standardizing available data and information for joint assessment and comparison purposes. Joint regional assessments should be made through OSPESCA, CRFM and WECAFC.
33. Improved transboundary management of the Flying fish in the Eastern Caribbean (activity 3.8) was contributed to by the joint CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flying fish in the Eastern Caribbean. This Working Group, convened by CRFM, held various meetings in 2012 and 2013 and discussed the contents and developed a sub-regional management plan. Some support was received from the CLME project for these meetings. This Sub-Regional Fishery Management Plan for the Eastern Caribbean Flying Fish Fishery was approved at the eight meeting of the CRFM council, held in Dominica in May 2014. Currently, the CRFM is supporting the countries in their efforts to implement the plan. The plan would still require endorsement by WECAFC to make it formally valid also for Guadeloupe and Martinique.
34. Increased knowledge of and experience with offshore moored FADs (activity 3.9). This working group endeavored to have a multidisciplinary approach to sustainable development by testing an approach by the fishery (fishing gear, location and targeted species) rather than the resource. The Working Group members provided support for the assessment of exploited resources around FADs. This activity received substantial support from CRFM, IFREMER/MAGDALESA and the JICA funded CARIFICO project in the period 2014-2015. An Excel tool to build and manage moored FADs was developed. A draft Sub-regional management plan for the FAD fishery in the CRFM member states was prepared by the joint working group on FADs, and various manuals on best practices on FADs design and deployment, fish quality and marketing, resources and business management strategies, are under development (by CRFM) as well as an Internet site (<http://wwz.ifremer.fr/carafad>) dedicated to the sustainable development of moored FADs. CRFM organized, on behalf of the working group, a write shop on FAD fisheries management on 23-25 June in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Currently the working group priority is to provide technical support to fishers to build and to set up their FADs safely to better control / record FAD location and improve their data on fishing effort and catches.
35. Strengthened research and management capacity for Queen Conch in the Caribbean (Activity 3.10). The recommendations of the 1st meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch were adopted by the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The second meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch was held in Panama City, Panama, from 18 to 20 November 2014. The meeting followed up on decisions by the

sixteenth COP of CITES and a recommendation from WECAFC 15. The meeting reviewed a draft Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan with 26 potential fisheries management measures, and determined which measures will contribute most to the sustainability of the stocks and livelihoods of those involved in queen conch fisheries in the region. The meeting reached expert agreement on the use of regional harmonized conversion factors for the various degrees of processing of conch meat and on a format for non-detriment findings (NDFs) assessments. The working group meeting was attended by 55 fisheries and CITES authority delegates from 22 countries and territories. The meeting was facilitated by the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council, CITES and FAO.

36. In 2015 the Working Group finalized the draft Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan and informed the CITES 28th Animals Committee meeting (August 2015) of the outcomes of the 2nd Working Group meeting. This work is supported by a CITES - FAO joint capacity building project for implementation of the Decisions on "Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in queen conch (*Strombus gigas*). Moreover capacity was built in some countries (Honduras, St Kitts and Nevis and Colombia) on how to address the trade requirements for queen conch.
37. Improved management and conservation of billfish fisheries in the Caribbean (activity 3.11) was supported by the World Bank/GEF funded Caribbean Billfish Project, component of the Ocean Partnerships for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation – Models for Innovation and Reform. This 1.95 million USD project started in March 2015 and is hosted and coordinated by the WECAFC Secretariat in Barbados. The project organized the 2nd Regional Workshop on Billfish management and Conservation, within the framework of the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries, in Panama City, Panama, 9-11 November 2015. The focus was on the billfish resource and fisheries status, value of billfish fisheries, fisheries legal framework assessment to identify suitable pilot sites for testing rights based fisheries management approaches, and regional management planning.
38. A Consortium for Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC) was established, hosted at IGFA, which is being formalized through a Letter of Intent between the project partners, IGFA, FAO/WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, World Bank, ICCAT and CI.
39. The WECAFC participated also in the 7th World Recreational Fisheries Conference, Campinas, Brazil, September 2014, and contributed to the development of its conclusions and recommendations³.
40. Improved management and conservation of sharks (Activity 3.12). This activity received follow-up in Antigua and Barbuda, where FAO, in collaboration with CNFO and the Fisheries Division, prepared a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and management of sharks (NPOA-Sharks) in April-May 2015. Assessments of sharks with support from FAO are ongoing in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, and in both countries FAO is collaborating with the fisheries divisions on the development of NPOA-sharks. This work is supported by a CITES-FAO collaborative project for immediate actions in support of implementation of the CITES listings for sharks and rays. Moreover, in Honduras FAO supported a national workshop on sharks and rays "TALLER NACIONAL "ESTRATEGIA NACIONAL DE APLICACIÓN DEL APENDICE II CITES PARA ESPECIES DE TIBURONES Y RAYAS" La Ceiba, Atlántida, 6 - 7 de Noviembre 2014.
41. The working group on sharks as established by WECAFC 15 has not met in the intersessional period. However, a proposal was submitted by the WECAFC Secretariat to the US

³ The conclusions and recommendations are available at: <http://www.7wrfc.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/7WRFCCONCLUSOES.pdf>

Department of State and NOAA for supporting a meeting of the working group, to develop a regional plan of action on sharks in 2017.

42. Collaborative efforts to combat the lionfish invasion in the Caribbean (activity 3.13). Following the endorsement of the regional lionfish strategy by WECAFC 15 a regional “Workshop on lionfish and sea cucumber” was held in Havana, Cuba, from 29 to 30 April, 2014. The workshop was kindly hosted by the Government of Cuba and organized by FAO and WECAFC with INFOPECSA. The workshop was attended by 52 experts from the region. The workshop drafted a “Resolution on sea cucumber fisheries management and aquaculture”, for consideration by WECAFC 16. In Panama city FAO supported on 26-27 June 2014 the development of a lionfish strategy -“Hacia el desarrollo de una estrategia para el control del pez león en la ecoregión del Caribe Sur Occidental (Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá)”. Some lionfish tastings were also supported by FAO in various WECAFC countries.
43. Improved management and conservation of spawning aggregations of grouper and snapper (activity 3.14). Under this activity the CFMC/WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Working Group on Spawning Aggregations advised in 2014 the reviewers under the USA Endangered Species Act (ESA) process, where Nassau Group is listed for inclusion, on the status of the stocks and its fisheries.
44. Under Management Focus Area 4 “Create an enabling environment within the WECAFC Secretariat to support the achievement of the goals and objective of the Commission”, the following activities were undertaken.
45. The organization of the fifteenth session of the Commission in 2014 and the 7th SAG meeting in 2015 (Activities 4.1 and 4.2) has been carried out successfully. The support provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the session was excellent. The number of countries attending WECAFC 15 was higher than ever with 29 out of 34 members around the table. The report of WECAFC 15 was prepared and sent to all members in a timely manner. Recommendations of WECAFC 15 have received followed-up from the Secretariat and many of the WECAFC members.
46. The preparation for the organization of the sixteenth session of the Commission in 2016 (Activity 4.3) started in December 2014. Formal confirmation from the Government of France regarding hosting the session in Guadeloupe (in June 2016) was obtained in July 2015 and in close collaboration with the Fisheries Department and the Prefecture of Guadeloupe the session is being organized.
47. The WECAFC Performance Review (activity 4.4) and improved functioning and resource mobilization through strategic planning (activity 4.5) have been completed in 2014 through endorsement by WECAFC 15 of the report of the performance review and the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2015 -2020. Both documents, as well as the amended Rules of Procedure were published in 2015 in FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1096.
48. The Strategic Reorientation of WECAFC (activity 4.6) received follow-up by the executive committee of WECAFC following the decisions by WECAFC 15. A proposal was submitted to the DG Mare of the European Union for “An independent cost-benefit assessment of the options for strategic re-orientation of WECAFC”, which was approved in early 2015. An Expert meeting to assess the opportunities for a regional fisheries management organization in the Western Central Atlantic, was held in Barbados on 1-2 September, in which the WECAFC Executive Committee, some key experts, as well as the CRFM, OSPESCA and NEAFC secretariats participated. A 2nd WECAFC Strategic Reorientation Workshop, is scheduled to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 1-2 December 2015, which should:
 - 1) Create awareness and build capacity on the international legal framework for fisheries

- and role of regional fisheries management organizations.
- 2) Discuss and review the findings of the cost-benefit assessment of the three options for WECAFC re-orientation
 - a. Continue as FAO Regional Fishery advisory Body (RFB).
 - b. Transform into an FAO Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) under article 14 of FAO's constitution.
 - c. Transform into an independent RFMO – Inter Governmental Organization (IGO).
 - 3) Discuss the current regional fisheries governance framework and the interim coordination arrangement between the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Central America (OSPESCA) and WECAFC.
49. Facilitate the organization of (joint) Working Group meetings and workshops (activity 4.7). The WECAFC Secretariat together with partners and members organized over 20 regional level technical meetings, workshops and capacity building events in the period 2014-2015.
50. Develop projects and seek funding for long-term effective functioning of the Commission, implementation of its biennial programmes of work and prioritized projects (activity 4.8). The mobilization of resources got assigned high priority by WECAFC and its secretariat at WECAFC 15 and the efforts are beginning to bear fruit.
51. The assistance by FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects to the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the WECAFC member countries added up to some 3.2 million USD in the 2014-2015 biennium. The portfolio of regional Trust Fund projects on fisheries and aquaculture that are relevant for the WECAFC membership added up to 11 million USD and the national level fisheries trust fund project portfolio managed by FAO in the WECAFC region totaled some 8.7 million USD, including some projects that are multi-sectoral.
52. Establish and manage the WECAFC website (activity 4.9). The website was established in 2014 and is available at: www.wecafc.org. It was maintained well for the first few months after development. After that period the limited staffing of the Secretariat made it impossible to update the site. Moreover, it is FAO's policy that Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) under its mandate should not have their own website separate from the website from FAO.
53. Partnerships established with institutions in the environment and other sectors (activity 4.10). Collaboration with institutions from other sectors has increased through participation by the WECAFC Secretariat and some members in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, as well as in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) programme and CLME+ project. The latter will support the development of a MoU with UNEP/CEP in 2016.

Projects

54. A number of FAO projects have been carried out in the WECAFC region in the period 2014 - 2015. The most notable projects are described in summary below.

(sub) Regional TCP projects

- Establecimiento de un Programa de Cooperación para el Manejo Sostenible de las Pesquerías Fluviales en los Tramos Limitrofes de los Ríos Paraná y Paraguay. (TCP/RLA/3302).
- Alimentación acuícola alternativa de bajo costo para fortalecer la sostenibilidad de los medios de vida de los acuicultores de recursos limitados en países de AL (TCP/RLA/3504) – 250 000 USD
- Reducing and managing the risks of Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (AHPND) of cultured shrimp (TCP/INT/3502) - 422 000 USD. Coverage: Colombia, Guatemala)
- Mecanismo de Coordinación Regional de Salud, Sanidad e Inocuidad para el Desarrollo de la Producción Agropecuaria, Pesquera y Forestal (TCP/SLM/3502) -461 000 USD. Coverage: Nicaragua.

National level TCP and TCP facility projects

Antigua and Barbuda

- Fisheries Component - Zero Hunger Challenge (TCP/ANT/3401 facility component 2) - USD 99 000

Bahamas

- Strengthening Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in the Bahamas (TCP/BHA/3501) - USD 469 000

Belize

- Review and validation of draft fisheries regulations for Belize (TCP/BZE/3401 facility component 2)

Brazil

- Para la Promoción de la implementación de las Directrices Voluntarias de la Tenencia de la Tierra, la Pesca y los Bosques en el Contexto de la Seguridad Alimentaria Nacional en el Brasil (TCP/BRA/3401) -34 000 USD

Colombia

- Apoyo Técnico y estratégico de la FAO al Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural en la formulación e implementación del Plan de Desarrollo Agropecuario y pesquero de la Región de La Mojana en Colombia (TCP/COL/3401 facility component 1) 62 000 USD

Costa Rica

- TCP/COS/3401 facility -Apoyo a la gestión de mercados agrícolas del PIMA
- Asistencia para el desarrollo de las bases de la planificación del sector acuícola. (TCP/COS/3501) -47 000 USD

Cuba

- Desarrollo del Programa Nacional sobre Genética para peces de agua dulce (TCP/CUB/3501) – 297 000 USD

Dominican Republic

- Asistencia para la formulación de una propuesta de desarrollo pesquero-acuicola del Lago Enriquillo (TCP/DOM/3401 facility) 46 000 USD.

Guyana

- Assistance in support of Building Capacity in Agro-Processing and Upgrading of Fisheries Studies programme at the Guyana School of Agriculture (TCP/GUY/3401 facility component 3) -25 000 USD
- Promotion of Small Scale Aquaculture in Guyana for Food Security and Rural Development (TCP/GUY/3501) -122 000 USD

Honduras

- Desarrollo de capacidades técnicas para el cumplimiento de los compromisos en temas de pesca por el Gobierno de Honduras (TCP/HON/3401 BABY03)

Jamaica

- Capacity building in resource assessment and management of the Jamaican sea cucumber fishery and potential for aquaculture development (TCP/JAM/3502) – 288 000 USD

Nicaragua

- Technical assistance for the implementation of a Strategy for artisanal fisheries development in the RAAN (TCP/NIC/3305).

Panama

- Intervención piloto para la elaboración y validación de una propuesta de asistencia técnica integral dirigida a la mejora de la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional en las comarcas indígenas Gunayala y Ngäbe Buglé en Panamá (TCP/PAN/3401).

St. Kitts and Nevis

- Strengthening Fisherfolk Organizations in St. Kitts and Nevis (TCP/STK/3401 facility component 1) –USD 60 000
- Strengthening Fisheries Legislation in St Kitts and Nevis – focus IUU (TCP/STK/3502) USD 91 000

St Lucia

- Strengthening the National Standards and Certification System for Major Agricultural Products in St Lucia (TCP/STL/3401 facility component 2) – includes aquaculture code of practice

Suriname

- Strengthening Aquatic Animal Health Protection Systems in Suriname (TCP/SUR/3401)- USD 425 000.
- Updating Suriname`s capture fisheries legal framework” (TCP/SUR/3502) - USD 116 000

Regional and National level Trust Fund activities supported by FAO

Regional

- Activación de los servicios y consolidación de la Red de Acuicultura de las Américas (RAA) (GCP/RLA/190/BRA). The beneficiary/signatory countries of the Aquaculture Network for the Americas are: Argentina, Brasil, Bolívia, Colômbia Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay.
- FAO participated actively in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project of GEF, as well as in the CLME+ project “Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action

Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems”, under which the FAO coordinated shrimp and groundfish component has a budget of 950 000 USD.

- Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries (REBYC-II LAC). (GCP/RLA/201/GFF) – 5.8 million USD. The project beneficiary countries include: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago.
- Caribbean Billfish project (component of the Ocean Partnerships For Sustainable Fisheries And Biodiversity Conservation – Models For Innovation And Reform) (GCP/SLC/001/WBK) - 1.95 million USD. Coverage: all Caribbean countries.
- Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (GEF Special Climate Change Fund supported) (GCP/SLC/210/SCF) 150 000 USD (Project Preparation Grant Phase) The project beneficiary countries include: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.
- CITES - FAO joint capacity building for implementation of the Decisions on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in queen conch (*Strombus gigas*). (EP/SLC/003/UEP) – 90 000 USD. Coverage: Regional –all Queen Conch producing Caribbean countries.
- Supporting Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management in the North Brazil-Guianas Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (GCP/SLC/004/IADB) - 75 000 USD. Coverage: Brazil, Suriname, Guyana, French Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.
- Lobster Conservation and Management in the Wider Caribbean (GCP/RLA/197/USA) -62 000 USD. Coverage: Regional –all lobster producing Caribbean countries.
- An independent cost-benefit assessment of the options for strategic re-orientation of WECAFC (GCP/SLC/006/EC) -90 000 Euro. Coverage: Regional – All WECAFC member countries.
- Strengthening national data collection and regional data sharing through FIRMS to support priority regional fishery management plans in the WECAFC area (GCP/SLC/007/EC) 110 000 Euro. Coverage: Regional.
- Support to the Caribbean Regional Working Group on Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing (RWG-IUU) (GCP/SLC/008/USA) - 40 000 USD. Coverage: CRFM countries.
- Fortalecimiento de la resiliencia de la agricultura familiar y para la prevención y respuesta efectiva frente a las enfermedades fito y zoo sanitarias (GCP/SLM/002/SPA)
- Programa Mesoamérica sin Hambre: marcos institucionales más efectivos para mejorar la agricultura familiar y la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional (GCP /SLM/001/MEX)

Antigua and Barbuda

- Technical assistance in support of a sharks NPOA for Antigua and Barbuda (EP/INT/227/UEP) – 20 000 USD
- Development of a tilapia hatchery and aquaponics training and demonstration centre in Antigua and Barbuda (GCP/RLA/190/BRA) - 30 000 USD

Brazil

- Increasing the national aquaculture competitiveness (UTF/BRA/084)

- Activación de los servicios y consolidación de la Red de Acuicultura de las Américas (RAA) (GCP /RLA/190/BRA) – 2 million USD

Colombia

- Cooperación técnica para la adaptación y validación del Programa Nacional de Extensionismo en Acuicultura, como escuela de formación y fortalecimiento para AREL y AMyPE (UTF /COL/063/COL) -125 000 USD

Haiti

- Initiative OMD - programme d'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire en Haiti (GCP/HAI/030/EC) – includes some fisheries and aquaculture activities - 5 million USD
- Mer Sud Project - Marine Environment Regeneration in the South of Haiti (EP/HAI/034/UEP) -100 000 USD

Mexico

- Assistance to the Government of Campeche, Mexico in the formulation of the State Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy (UTF/MEX/099/MEX) -147 000 USD
- Asistencia para la formulación del Programa Nacional de Pesca y Acuicultura 2014-2018 y diagnóstico técnico-operativo de los centros acuícolas operados por la CONAPESCA (UTF /MEX/116/MEX) -468 000 USD

Trinidad

- Improving forest and protected area management in Trinidad and Tobago (FSP). (GCP/TRI/003/GFF) 2.7 million USD. This project contains a Marine Protected area management component.

Global Trust Fund Projects with relevance to the WECAFC region and WECAFC membership

- Various WECAFC members have supported FAO fisheries projects in the WECAFC region and at global level.
- The **Government of France** is financing a global project on “Development of a data base on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems of the high seas”, 2011 -2014 (GCP/GLO/309/FRA) -400 000 USD. Moreover, the Government of France provided support to the REDPARQUES workshop in Cuba on Marine Protected Areas.
- The **Government of Spain** is supporting FAO Globefish (MTF/GLO/625/MUL) -563 000 USD, which supports also activities of INFOPECA in the LAC region.
- The **Government of Japan** has been financing various global FAO programmes and projects in recent years, of which some are of relevance to the fisheries sector in the WECAFC area. Those with most relevance are the following:
 - Project “Promotion of sustainable fisheries: support for strengthening functions of and coordination among Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)/ Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)”, 2008 -2012 (GCP/INT/069/JPN), supported amongst others the development of the Regional Fishery Body Network (RSN) in which the WECAFC Secretary participates.
 - Project “Fisheries management and marine conservation within a changing ecosystem context”, (GCP/INT/253/JPN), - 3.2 million USD, included two focus areas with activities of interest for the WECAFC region. Moreover, the project financed in June 16-18 2015 a Workshop on impacts of marine protected areas

- on fisheries yield, fishing communities and ecosystems, as well as the GCFI Fishers forum.
- Project “Improved fisheries management for sustainable use of marine living resources in the face of changing systems” (GCP /INT/228/JPN) -2.6 million USD
- The **European Union** is supporting various global projects that incorporate various WECAFC members.
- BlueBRIDGE - Building Research Environments for fostering Innovation, Decision-making, Governance and Education to support Blue Growth (GCP/GLO/646/EC) - 780 000 USD
 - Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and supply Vessels (GCP /GLO/316/EC) – 111 000 USD
 - Marine Investment for the Blue Economy - MARIBE (GCP /GLO/622/EC) - 221 000 USD
- The **United States of America** is assisting also in various global activities of relevance for the WECAFC membership.
- Cooperative Agreement on U.S. Support for Fisheries and Aquaculture Department Activities (GCP/GLO/576/USA) – 230 000 USD
- The **UNEP/CITES Secretariat** supports from a global level project the region.
- CITES-FAO collaborative project for immediate actions in support of implementation of the CITES listings for sharks and rays. (EP/INT/227/UEP) – 100 000 USD. Coverage: activities in Barbados, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Regional and National level activities in the WECAFC region supported by the FAO Regular Programme

55. The FAO regular programme financially and technically supported the following fisheries and aquaculture activities and events in the WECAFC member countries:

- Preparation of a special session on recreational fisheries governance for the 7th World Recreational Fisheries Conference (WRFC) and background paper preparation.
- Annual compilation of catch statistics for area 31 (WECAFC) and dissemination to the member states.
- A Workshop on lionfish and sea cucumber, Havana, Cuba, 29- 30 April, 2014.
- A study to review the impact of rising cost factors such as capital, labour, maintenance and energy costs on fishing operations in the CRFM Member States and propose appropriate strategies for dealing with the resulting issues
- A workshop on Strengthening organizations and collective action in fisheries: Towards the formulation of a capacity development programme, Barbados, 4–6 November 2014
- Simulation exercise on EMS organized by OIRSA in Guatemala.
- National workshop on small-scale aquaculture in Panama.

- National workshop on small-scale aquaculture in Guatemala.
- Regional workshop on Red Tides in El Salvador.
- Co-funding of regional workshop on safety of fish products and fish consumption.
- Lionfish tasting with MarViva in Panama.
- Study on the monitoring and evaluation of Caribbean spiny lobster stocks in WECAFC countries and a review of methodologies and the development of a common methodology.
- Formulation of the National Programme for integrating Aquaculture into Family Agriculture.

Some FAO Publications with relevance for WECAFC and its membership

56. In the last few years a number of FAO publications and joint publications with partners of relevance to the WECAFC members have been published. These include the following:

- Singh-Renton, S. & Mclvor I. 2015. Review of current fisheries management performance and conservation measures in the WECAFC area. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 587, Bridgetown, Barbados, FAO. 293 pp.
- Salas, S.; Chuenpagdee, R.; Charles, A.; Seijo, J.C. (eds). Coastal fisheries of Latin America and the Caribbean. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper. No. 544. Rome, FAO. 2011. 430p.
- Somerville, C., Cohen, M., Pantanella, E., Stankus, A. & Lovatelli, A. 2014. Small-scale aquaponic food production. Integrated fish and plant farming. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 589. Rome, FAO. 262 pp.
- Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, FAO, Rome, 2015.
- Report of the FAO/WECAFC workshop on implementing the 2009 FAO agreement on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 24–28 March 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1076. Rome, FAO. 45 pp.
- Report of the fifteenth session of the Commission, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26–28 March 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report N° 1069. Bridgetown, Barbados, FAO. 132pp.
- Report of the first meeting of the WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries, Christ Church, Barbados, 30 September – 2 October 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1087. Bridgetown, FAO. 61 pp.
- Report of the first meeting of the OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster, Panama City, Panama, 21–23 October 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1095, Bridgetown, Barbados. 112 pp.

- Report of the Regional Workshop on Marine Protected Areas as a Tool for Responsible Fisheries and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Caribbean, Barbados, 6–8 November 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1096. Rome, FAO. 35 pp.
- Report of the second meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch, Panama City, Panama, 18–20 November 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1097, Bridgetown, Barbados, FAO. 495 pp.
- Report of the Workshop on Investing in Ecosystem-based shrimp and groundfish fisheries management of the Guianas –Brazil shelf, Barbados, 7-8 September 2015. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1125, Bridgetown, Barbados. 150 pp.
- WECAFC Performance, planning and procedures. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1096. Bridgetown, Barbados, 2015. 150p.
- Contribución de la pesca y la acuicultura a la seguridad alimentaria y el ingreso familiar en Centroamérica. Panamá. FAO, 2014.
- Headley and Seijo in press. Monitoring and evaluation of Caribbean spiny lobster stocks in WECAFC countries: a review of methodologies and the development of a common methodology. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1103. Rome, FAO. XX pp.

Suggested Action by the Session

57. The SAG is invited to review and comment on the inter-sessional activities and progress made on the implementation of the Work Programme for 2014–2015.
58. The SAG is also requested to:
- 1) Identify trends and emerging issues from the intersessional work that should be addressed by the Commission in its next session.
 - 2) Identify specific regional activities and conferences for 2016 and 2017 in which WECAFC as Commission or its Working Groups should be involved in