

**Summary of the Eighth Sustainable Fisheries Interim Coordination Mechanism Meeting  
UN House, Barbados, Wednesday, 27th March, 2019**

**Participants**

Name	Designation	Organization
Mrs. Yvette Diei-Ouadi	Secretary	WECAFC/FAO
Mr. Jeremy Mendoza		WECAFC/FAO
Maren Headley	Research & Resource Assessment	CRFM
Mr. Milton Haughton	Regional Director	CRFM
Mr. Reinaldo Morales	Regional Director	OSPESCA
Mrs. Laverne Walker	Senior Project Officer	CLME+ PCU

**Agenda**

1. WECAFC reorientation process
2. Review, status update and revision of the IFCM workplan
3. Update IUU fishing strategy and action plan
4. Permanent Coordination Mechanism and sustainable financing plan process
5. Update on the SOMEE development
6. Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Ministerial meeting
7. Update of the WECAFC 17 Session
8. Joint meeting calendar
9. Any other business

**Meeting Development**

**1. WECAFC Reorientation Process**

- WECAFC reported that at the Reorientation Workshop, countries expressed the direction they wished this process to go. There is hope that countries will seek an ownership role in determining the feasibility and establishing the proposed entity/arrangement.
- The mandate of an RFMO that will have binding powers in the ABNJ were seen as a concern by Member States. CRFM was troubled by the documentation and pronouncements emanating from FAO alluding country support, and acknowledged the provision of advice and technical assistance should continue. It was recommended to continue work with countries on capacity building, technology transfer and trade-related issues to assist countries assert their rights and obligations under international law. CRFM countries will continue their consultations for the proposed entity/agreement.
- The concept of “shared and transboundary stocks” vary among countries. For some, it is considered to be the same, while for others it is interpreted as different. Further clarification may be needed.
- **A better understanding of the entity/arrangement role and function is needed to avoid misinterpretation all WECAFC countries. As such, it was recommended that WECAFC provide workshop documents also in Spanish and French.** Clarification of the regulatory country areas vs. the regional organization area is needed.
- **The meeting agreed in considering the creation of a technical group with country representation to continue the discussions of the RFMO.**

- This topic would need further discussion with WECAFC countries, where pros and cons of each option being analysed. RFMO need to fit under an Article XIV structure under the FAO constitution and most likely have to be established as an intergovernmental organisation.

## **2: Review, Status Update and Revision of the IFCM Workplan**

### ***Queen Conch***

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of this Working Group took place on 30 October-1 November 2018 in Panama. CRFM will be the new convener. The group revised TORs and developed a comprehensive work program for the period 2019 – 2021, which will be presented at the 17 WECAFC session. **The scientific sub-group, on the three RFMOs stipulated in the regional management plan, was enacted. Its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was planned for April/2019** and shall focus on conversion factor, simplification of CITES-NDF, and priority research as recommended.
- CRFM is going through a process of being endorsed as the convener by the ministers. Jamaica enabled a moratorium due to low stock abundance following a recent fishery independent survey, and other CRFM Member States, such as Belize, The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos, have also indicated a decrease in stock abundance. Honduras and Nicaragua are trying to determine the reason for the negative trends being observed in landings.
- **The group agreed that further data and information was needed to more carefully monitor the stocks and determine the reason for decreases in stock abundance.** Climate change, *Sargassum* influx or IUU fishing were recommended to be further explored. They recognized the need for conducting more surveys.
- In the last few months, there have been two major incidences where foreign vessels (Honduran and Dominican Republic boats) have been arrested and convicted for illegal fishing of conch in Jamaican, Bahamian and Colombian waters.
- GCFI is working on developing a research strategy which is supposed to identify research gaps for important fisheries in the region, including the queen conch fishery. The scientific community/ the species group of experts may be able to provide the region with some answers.
- The traceability standard being designed could be used in enhancing management of the queen conch fishery. This traceability standard is being developed to target the queen conch, spiny lobster and sea cucumber fisheries.
- Two countries are working on exploring if conversion factors could be harmonised and how to better provide capacity to a few countries in the region to work on the issue of the conversion factor.
- A CFMC consultant is working on compiling existing queen conch educational materials.

### ***Spiny Lobster***

- The Spiny Lobster Management Plan is expected to be adopted at the WECAFC 17 session. At present, there are different views in how the regulations should be amended, particularly in relation to the closed season. 27 delegates participated in the stock assessment workshop, including Colombia, Jamaica and The Bahamas, however, they did not sign-on to the Sub-project despite numerous efforts in attempting to engage them. Another workshop, funded by TNC, will be conducted to agree on the software for harmonizing lobster data amongst the OSPESCA countries.

- The OSPESCA region has observed a decrease in spiny lobster landings for the past two years and there have been attempts to investigate why. Increase data collection and testing of a new methodology for data collection in Nicaragua are envisioned to be adopted by other countries.
- **In light of the apparent decline observed in both conch and lobsters stocks, the meeting reiterated the need to strengthen data collection, stock assessments and monitoring of these two stocks in an attempt to obtain a better understanding for the observed decline and develop appropriate responses.**

### ***Flyingfish***

- The following activities have been accomplished by the Flyingfish Sub-Project: a) revision of the subregional management plan, b) data policy, and c) the regional database which needs to be populated upon the go ahead from countries. The Working Group met and the revision of the subproject outputs are expected to be completed by August 2019. Additional work is needed to ensure buy-in of sub-project outputs and so a four-month extension has been requested (until December 2019). It was indicated that the Agreement with France has continued to be problematic, and a draft Agreement is being reviewed. A possible meeting with France in Saint Lucia to work on the document is possible in the coming weeks.
- CRFM should be receiving funds from the Canadian Government, channelled through UNDP and the CLME+ Project to work on issues pertaining to gender, youth and decent work, as outlined under the CRFM's Policy Statement on Gender and Youth. The proposed timeline for the implementation of activities under this grant is 18 months.

### ***Sharks and Rays***

- Belize is the current Convener of this Working Group. A Regional Plan of Action was developed by an independent consultant and shared with countries for their feedback. However minimal responses have been received. Additional funds are required to continue this process.
- WECAFC can provide assistance in finalizing the plan. ICCAT is developing an action plan without WECAFC engagement. The sharks and rays regional action plan is not limited to oceanic species, and will engage with ICCAT in the future. At the WECAFC reorientation workshop, the US delegate indicated of an ICCAT Convention Agreement, which includes the species list (under revision), meaning that shark species could possibly be amended in the near future. The group discussed approaches for enhanced integration between the three RFBs and ICCAT, such as individual MOUs between an RFB and ICCAT, or amends in the Fisheries ICM to include ICCAT, or both. **The next meeting of the ICCAT Commission is scheduled to take place in November in Curacao and representation from the region will be important.**

### ***Shrimp and Groundfish***

- The data and statistics workshop was held with the participation of sub-project countries in October 2018, and provided an update to the FIRMS inventory. Data repositories were also discussed. A Stock assessment training workshop (22 – 25 January 2019) was held in Trinidad, and utilized data-limited methods, with the technical support from Jason Cope, University of Washington. The FAO consultant assessed the fisheries information management system. The same assessment is being undertaken for Suriname with support from the REBYC II Project. The development of Regional and National Shrimp and Groundfish Management Plans, EAF training, NIC strengthening, and gender assessment work is expected to commence soon with CERMES. An initial EAF training workshop was undertaken

already in Brazil. A stock assessment workshop is planned for July 2019 (date yet to be confirmed). A meeting of the Shrimp and Groundfish Working Group will also be planned after the development of a sub-regional management plan and stock assessment workshop.

### ***Spawning Aggregations***

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Spawning Aggregations Working Group meeting took place in March 2018, and recommendations were presented to the SAG. The regional plan was not endorsed; it will be amended and re-submitted for the next SAG meeting.

### ***Fish Aggregating Devices***

- **Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) working group was held on 30 April – 2 May, in Puerto Rico.** The previous meeting was in 2013. OSPESCA has now joined the working group. The Convener is Mr. Manoel Cifuentes from Guatemala. The Group reviewed the management plan and manuals, and developed new Terms of Reference.
- The FAD management plan for CRFM countries was approved and it can be accessed on the CRFM website. Grenada and Dominica are examples of the benefits received from FAD fisheries. It was agreed that fisherfolk need to participate in the next Working Group meeting to share experiences and be informed of the process.
- The final report of the CARIFCO project was shared.

### **3: Update IUU Fishing Strategy and Action Plan**

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the IUU Fishing Working Group took place in 26-28 September 2018. The regional plan of action is focused on four basic principles: a) capacity development requirements, b) policy and legal framework, c) regional cooperation, and d) MCS, compliance and enforcement. Four sub-groups in alignment with these principles were proposed. A meeting (6-7 March 2019) with two representatives from each of these sub-groups analysed various topics including the port state measures, requirements in relation to flag states, and others.
- A FAO consultant is now working on the IUU fishing topics provided by the subgroups and is expecting to have the first draft by 30 April, and will then submit it to the IUU Fishing Working Group. A second draft is expected to be submitted to the SAG for their review, and then to the WECAFC 17 session. The baseline assessment of IUU fishing for the region was not undertaken, the RPOA will be a framework document.
- **The impact of IUU on certain economically important fisheries needs to be assessed and the RPOA should provide guidelines which would assist countries undertake such an assessment.**
- Fisheries enforcement personnel from CRFM Member States have been receiving training from the Caribbean Regional Security System (RSS)/ CRFM led the training workshops. The third training workshop is scheduled for July 2019, targeting primarily the OECS sub-region.
- The Shrimp and Groundfish Sub-project is interested in supporting the participation of individuals from Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Guyana for the July training session.
- OSPESCA received support from FAO to develop a *“Regional Strategy to Prevent, Discourage and Eradicate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing with emphasis on Jurisdictional Waters and Fishing Communities.”* At present, they are working with the Security Commission to combat IUU

fishing and is paying special attention to areas within the Caribbean region. OSPESCA is preparing documentation to be shared with WECAFC, and this Sub-Regional Strategy will be presented to the WECAFC 17 session.

#### **4: Permanent Coordination Mechanism and Sustainable Financing Plan process**

- The reorientation of WECAFC was discussed in order to reduce confusion regarding the function of the proposed permanent Coordination Mechanism (PCM) and how it relates to this reorientation process.
- The PCM should complement whatever entity the region agrees for regional fisheries management by linking the ocean-related sectors. PCM is innovative, but it is up to the region to agree on something that is practical and feasible, otherwise it would not work. The regional organisations would also need to determine what changes would be required once these new arrangements become functional. **It was also recommended that the CLME+ PCU prepare a one-pager which would help countries understand the linkages and differences between the proposed PCM and proposed entity/arrangement to replace WECAFC.**
- A draft report on Phase II of the PCM Consultancy was shared with the ICM members for their consideration and is now being revised to be submitted to the CLME+ PCU in mid-April, and to CLME+ countries for further review and consultation. The second regional consultation is expected to take place on 30 July -1 August in Panama.

#### **5: Update on the SOMEE Development**

- A decision to downscale ambitions of SOMEE and focus on Chapters 1, 2 and spiny lobster has been made. the PCU has received drafts of the State of Convention Report of land-based sources of Pollution and the State of Habitats Report prepared by UNEP-CEP to be integrated into SOMEE Chapter 2. OSPESCA is working on the development of the spiny lobster chapter, which will be used as a guidance chapter for the remaining SOMEE chapters.
- **CRFM is willing to work on the flyingfish chapter, but they would need a template.** They asked for access to the spiny lobster chapter in order to begin their work on the flyingfish chapter. The CLME+ PCU will get in touch with CRFM in this regard.

#### **6: Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Ministerial Meeting**

- **The Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Ministerial Meeting originally planned for early May 2019 needs to be postponed (probably October) until the CARICOM's COTED meeting,** considering time availability from the two organizations. Funds allocated under the CLME+ project has to be spent in 2019.

#### **7: Update of the WECAFC 17 Session**

- **The WECAFC 17 session will take place in Florida 15-18 July,** invitations will be sent out in April. The agenda has been developed and the second draft is now available. Some issues still need to be included on the agenda: PCM, Caribbean Spiny Lobster Regional Management Plan, IUU, queen conch, climate change, etc. The second draft of the WECAFC 17 session agenda will be shared with the Fisheries ICM.

## **8: Joint Meeting Calendar**

- The importance of coordinating the scheduling of meetings of the Regional Fisheries Bodies to ensure there is no overlap was highlighted.
- The CLME+ PCU created a joint events calendar, which all members of the CLME+ Project Executive Group has access to, and which allows them to include information on upcoming meetings. The CLME+ Project representative indicated that the link to the calendar should be shared to the IFCM.  
[https://clmeplus.org/events/2019-04/?tribe-bar-date=2019-04&tribe\\_eventcategory%5B%5D=61&tribe\\_eventcategory%5B%5D=218&tribe\\_eventcategory%5B%5D=207&tribe\\_eventcategory%5B%5D=222&tribe\\_eventcategory%5B%5D=64](https://clmeplus.org/events/2019-04/?tribe-bar-date=2019-04&tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=61&tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=218&tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=207&tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=222&tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=64)

## **9: Any Other Business**

- Setting-up a WhatsApp chat group was recommended to facilitate that members of the IFCM stay in contact and up-to-date on certain fisheries related issues.