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WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Report of the

SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP (FDS-WG)

Virtual Meeting, 12–16 October 2020, 25–28 May 2021 and 10 March 2022

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ABSTRACT

The second meeting of the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG) was convened on-line in three (3) sessions with the main session on 12–16 October 2020, extended session on 25–28 May 2021 and conclusion session on 10 March 2022. The Regional FDS-WG is a joint working group of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), and Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Central America (OSPESCA). First session in October 2020 was attended by 33 participating experts (51 percent of female participants), representing 21 WECAFC members, during which key documents were presented and discussed, meant to further advance the work of this new working group. Extended session in May 2021 was attended by 44 participating experts (61 percent of female participants), representing 19 WECAFC members. Conclusion session was attended by 39 participants from 15 WECAFC Members (64 percent of female participants).

The second meeting of the FDS-WG contributed to:

- review the FDS-WG first meeting intersessional work and develop consensus and identify remaining work needed for technical session topics (vessel mapping, subarea and divisions, list of main and reference species, WECAFC-FIRMS stocks and fisheries inventory, Small-Scale Fisheries Matrix, and Data Collection Reference Framework and standards);
- review country updates on national data collection systems, vessel registries, continuing challenges and needs;
- identify, prioritize, and develop criteria list of national countries capacity-building projects;
- review FDS-WG Terms of Reference; and
- develop FDS-WG2 Workplan for 2020–2022, including recommendations in preparation of the extended session, and initiate WG recommendations for WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG).

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ABBREVIATIONS

CC	climate change
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFIS	CARICOM fisheries information system
CIHEAM	Centre international de hautes études agronomiques méditerranéennes
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CFMC	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
CLME+	Caribbean and Northern Brazilian Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem
CPCs	contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics
DSS	decision support system
DCF	data collection framework
DCRF	Data Collection Reference Framework
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EC	European Commission
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
ETP	endangered, threatened, protected species
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAD	fish aggregating device
FDS-WG	Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group
FDS-WG1	first meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group
FDS-WG2	second meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group
FDS-WG3	third meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group
FIRMS	Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System
FISMIS	fisheries statistics and management information system
FMP	fisheries management plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HP	horse power
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas
ICM	interim coordination mechanism
iDCRF	interim data collection reference framework
IFREMER	Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer
ILO	International Labor Organization
LME	large marine ecosystem
IWC	International Whaling Commission
LRS	licensing and registration system
NFISI	Information and Knowledge Management team of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division
NFISS	Statistics Team of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSPESCA	Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization
RDB	regional database
RFB	regional fishery body
RFMA	regional fisheries management arrangement
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization
SAG	scientific advisory group
SAMOA	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIRPAC	central american integrated fisheries and aquaculture registry system
SEDAR	southeast data, assessment, and review
SOMEE	state of the marine environment and associated economies
SPA	specially protected areas and wildlife
SLC	Subregional Office for the Caribbean (FAO)
SSF	small-scale fisheries
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TIP	trip interview program
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United National Development Programme
US	United States of America
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WECAFIS	WECAFC Information System
WG	working group
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

BACKGROUND TO THE MEETING

1. The “Review of current fisheries management performance and conservation in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) area” (Singh-Renton & McIvor, 2015) identified a number of challenges collecting data and statistics to support fisheries management in WECAFC, including: inadequate legislation; issues of cooperation with stakeholders regarding the acquisition of routine data and information; in addition to general deficiencies in the data and information base for supporting fisheries management in WECAFC. The need to strengthen and maintain statistical monitoring systems was also considered key to the success in meeting the immediate needs of fisheries management in WECAFC.

2. The 16th Session of the WECAFC Commission (Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016) agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS (Fisheries and Resource Monitoring System - <http://firms.fao.org>) Partnership initiated at Corpus Cristi in 2015. In addition, the Commission also supported the development of a Regional Database (RDB) in collaboration with Members and partners in the region.

3. The FDS-WG is one of the priorities of the Interim Coordination for Sustainable Fisheries through which WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA, with support from the UNDP/GEF CLME+ project, aims to enhance the regional governance for sustainable fisheries.

4. The first part of the second meeting of the FDS-WG convened virtually, 12–16 October 2020, with financial support of the European Commission General Directorate for Fisheries (DG-MARE) and technical support of the WECAFC-FIRMS taskforce representing key ingredients in fisheries research and management in the Caribbean.

5. Presentations were delivered on key topics related to other activities instrumental to the overall improvement of fisheries statistics in the region were also reviewed, including:

- (i) vessel Mappings: National mappings in the context of regional classifications;
- (ii) WECAFC Subarea Proposals in the context of the DCRF;
- (iii) application of the Small Scale Fisheries Matrix (SSF) in the WECAFC region;
- (iv) continued progress in the WECAFC-FIRMS Fishery Inventories;
- (iv) further modifications proposed to the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) initiated by FDS-WG1 and approved by Commission 17 as interim DCRF (iDCRF), towards a final agreed structure; and
- (v) the Regional Database and work towards implementation in the WECAFC region.

A draft roadmap for the activities outlined above was developed and finalized for presentation to an extended session of the FDS-WG2. The roadmap will be further addressed and finalized for presentation to the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and to WECAFC during the 18th Session of the Commission based on the documents reviewed during FDS-WG2.

6. The FDS-WG2 meeting also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and particularly Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources”.

7. The SDG targets that the FDS-WG will specifically contribute to include:

- SDG 14.4: “By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics”;
- SDG 14.7: “By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”;
- The FDS-WG work will also contribute to the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, which was agreed at the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa in September 2014, and which encourages action in article 112 (a) “To strengthen the

availability and accessibility of their data and statistical systems, in accordance with national priorities and circumstances, and enhance their management of complex data systems, including geospatial data platforms, by launching new partnership initiatives or scaling up existing initiatives”;

- 112 (b) “To utilize existing United Nations statistical standards and resources in the areas of social and environmental statistics;” and
- 112 (c) “To improve the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant variables in a systemic and coordinated manner at the national level, through appropriate financial and technical support and capacity-building, while recognizing the need for international cooperation in this regard.”.

8. The outcomes of the FDS-WG work should eventually result in the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the fisheries statistics in support to national evidence-based policy making, in support to the Regional Fisheries Management of key species and/or of shared stocks and to improve the global fisheries statistics database.

9. A primary objective of the FDS-WG is to strengthen the collaboration on fisheries data and statistics matters among the three regional fisheries bodies (WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA) and to reinforce national capacities to improve data collection, processing and dissemination for support to evidence based fisheries policy making.

PART I – FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP 12–16 OCTOBER 2020 MEETING

OPENING OF THE MEETING

10. Ms Yvette DieiOuadi (FAO) welcomed the meeting participants on behalf of the WECAFC, and recalled the importance of fisheries and data statistics in the region by the Commission and the establishment of the FDS-WG during WECAFC-16 ([Annex B](#)). She praised the efforts and contributions from the first meeting of the FDS-WG, as well as the online preparatory technical sessions conducted prior to the second FDS-WG meeting (WECAFC, 2020d). She recalled the ultimate aim of the working group is to facilitate through provisioning for sound scientific information, collected through globally agreed standards, “effective national policy-making and fishery management in the regional context of shared marine resources, and to lay the foundation for a functional Regional Fisheries Management entity/arrangement”. She acknowledged and thanked the continuing financial support from DG-MARE, the technical support from CRFM and OSPESCA, Ms Nancie Cummings as the FDS-WG Convener, as well as the FAO supporting team for the organization of this virtual second FDS-WG meeting.

11. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO and reiterated the importance of comprehensive and reliable fishery statistics for the region and FAO, as Head of the Statistics and Information Branch in FAO ([Annex B](#)). He highlighted the growing commitments of countries to sustainable fisheries, the SDGs, including those on biodiversity and the environment (SDG14.4.1, SDG14.7.1), illustrated by the increasing importance of traceability and certification schemes in the region and the need to monitor the impact of climate change and support disaster risk management.

12. Mr Taconet further highlighted the unique opportunity of the FDS-WG to create a regional framework to support the development of national data collection and information systems, harmonized at the regional level and consistent with the reporting standards of FAO and ICCAT. Noting that setting standards is challenging and requires engagement from all FDS-WG members, Mr Taconet encouraged testing of the interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF) and operationalization of the RDB. He finally thanked the FDS-WG Convener and the FDS-WG task force members for the organization of this meeting.

13. Mr Reinaldo Morales (OSPECA) similarly recalled the importance of statistics in the region and the lack of data in line with the lack of resources dedicated to fisheries data collection ([Annex B](#)). In the case of OSPESCA, there have been particular efforts in streamlining the collection of data, harmonization of data standards and methodologies for the biological sampling of fisheries (particularly in the case of lobster), and deployment of version 2.0 of the Central American Integrated Fisheries and Aquaculture Registry System (SIRPAC). He praised the creation of the Fishery Data and Statistics Working Group as an integral step in the collaboration between the sub-regional and Regional Fisheries Bodies. He thanked the financial support from the European Union through DG-MARE, and encouraged the meeting participants to achieve the proposed objectives of this meeting, for the benefit of the resources management and sustainable fisheries for current and future generations.

ATTENDANCE

14. The virtual meeting was attended by 33 experts from the following 21 WECAFC members: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Commonwealth of Dominica, European Union, the French Republic, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, the Republic of Haiti, the Republic of Honduras, the Republic of Nicaragua, the Republic of Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Suriname, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Montserrat and the United States of America, in addition to OSPESCA, one of the regional partner organizations, as well as representatives from the FAO Shrimp and Groundfish CLME+ Project (Refer to [Annex A](#) for the complete list of participants.)

FDS-WG2 INTRODUCTION: ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEURS

15. In the absence of rules for a virtual meeting and considering the challenge of running such meeting virtually for the first time, the convener of the FDS-WG Ms Nancie Cummings, NOAA, was appointed chair of the meeting. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO), assisted by Mr James Geehan (FAO) and Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) graciously agreed to act as rapporteurs. All Documents for this meeting are available in [Annex C](#).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

16. The meeting adopted the agenda as shown in [Annex D](#).

PARTICIPANTS ROUNDTABLE: PRESENTATION AND COUNTRIES EXPECTATIONS FROM THE 2ND MEETING OF THE WECAFC FDS-WG

17. A roundtable was initiated by the FDS-WG Convener, calling for expressions of expectations from participants of the FDS-WG2 meeting. A summary is provided below:

- Mr Mario Yspol (Suriname) expressed the need for support to harmonized national system for statistics production in support to fisheries management.
- Participants from Trinidad, Ms's Lara Ferreira, Elisabeth Mohammed, Louanna Martin and Nerissa Lucky indicated a desire to obtain guidance to strengthen data collection systems to conduct stock assessment to advise fisheries managers. Furthermore, the need of the harmonization of reports and the categorization of fleets, initiated in 1978, was noted and the wish to restart the discussion on harmonized standards is already a great achievement.
- Mr Sebastien Demanèche (Ifremer/France) recalled the importance for FRANCE of ensuring good quality of data with harmonization of data among Members. The importance to align the WECAFC Data Collection Reference Framework with the European Union Data Collection Framework (EU DCF) to avoid duplication of work was noted and key expectations from this meeting are to gain knowledge on WECAFC DCRF, in order to better answer data calls.
- Mr Kadeem Jacobs (Guyana) indicated similar expectations as Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, regarding gaining support to conduct stock assessments.
- Mr Kenneth Esquivel (Belize) expressed his expectations from this meeting with a focus on strengthening of data collection systems, technical support and guidance.
- Mr Jesús Alfaro Rodríguez (Costa Rica) recalled the importance of fisheries in Costa Rica and of statistics in general to facilitate management of the fisheries in the country.
- Mr Kurt Hilton and Derrick Theophille (Dominica), noted the desire to develop better strategies in support to data collection.
- Mr Stamatis Varsamos (EU) thanked the WECAFC Secretariat and meeting organizers for initiating virtual meeting given the current constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He recalled the importance of the meeting and acknowledged the support by DG-MARE. He recalled that while the DCRF is an important milestone, there is also the need at national level for strong legal frameworks and investment in financial and human resources. He concluded by indicating that the expectations from European Union are the same as those of France, with progress on issues that have not be addressed before.
- Ms Nely Serrano (Panama) indicated that she will also act as delegate of OSPESCA.
- Ms Nikkita Brown (Saint Kitts and Nevis) highlighted the numerous data gaps at national level, and expected to receive support for continuous improvement.
- Ms Joanna Pitts (Bermuda), recalled that her country is relatively isolated from the rest of the WECAFC region and expressed the need to improve connections with the region, including the sharing of data. Bermuda also has a need for additional resources to strengthen their existing data collection systems.

- Mr Hilroy Simon (Antigua and Barbuda), stressed the limited resources of his country and highlighted the need for more creative solutions to improve data collection.
- Mr Lester Gittens (the Bahamas), highlighted Bahamian’s new Fishery Act, regulations, and the need to adapt the national effort and systems to collect and store fisheries data. The new Act should also reflect and align with WECAFC requirements.
- Ms Patricia Hubert-Medar (Saint Lucia) shared similar concerns expressed by other colleagues regarding the challenges in collecting data. She highlighted the importance of fulfilling regional obligations by ensuring that national databases are up-to-date and can feed directly to the Regional Database.
- Ms Cheryl Jardine-Jackson (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) expected to have their national fisheries data collection system strengthened with support from the FDS-WG. She also recalled the need for a comprehensive fisheries management information system in the country.

RECALLING OUTCOMES FROM THE FDS-WG1 MEETING (2018) AND PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIVITES

18. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA), FDS-WG Convener, recalled the background on the creation of the joint WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA FDS-WG and presented the main outcomes of the first meeting of the FDS-WG (FDS-WG1), including:

- review and consensus of the FDS-WG TORs;
- review and validation of the draft Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);
- review and validation of the regional logbook best practices; and
- review of tools to build a Regional Database on the DCRF proposed tasks.

19. Ms Cummings further recalled the main outcomes of the WECAFC-17 meeting and proposed recommendations to the Commission:

- endorsement of the DCRF as interim (iDCRF), with important comments on the document; and
- recommendations that WECAFC members contribute to the RDB by reporting data according to the DCRF standards, strengthen collaboration between FDS-WG and the thematic working groups to refine and update the DCRF and associated data sharing polices, and take into account the input from all members.

20. Ms Cummings introduced the FDS-WG1 intersessional activities which focused on the finalization of the iDCRF, proposed classifications for regional fleet segments definition and its mapping with national classification, preliminary results of application of the SSF matrix in the WECAFC region, progress on FIRMS inventories, the WECAFC subareas and list of main species; and operationalization of the regional database, especially in the context of enriching the FIRMS inventories.

21. Ms Cummings concluded her presentation with the proposed objectives of the FDS-WG2 meeting:

- i. review the FDS-WG1 intersessional work and identify remaining work needed for future technical session topics;
- ii. review the country updates on national data collection systems, vessel registries, and the continuing challenges and needs;
- iii. identify and develop criteria for the selection and prioritization of countries in terms of support through capacity building;
- iv. review FDS-WG TORs;
- v. develop FDS-WG2 Work plan for 2020–2022; and
- vi. develop WG recommendations for the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG).

22. Regarding the frequency of the FDS-WG meeting, it was highlighted that the current constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic also present an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of virtual meetings in place of, or in complement, to face-to-face meetings.

ONLINE PREPARATORY SESSIONS

23. It was recalled that the FDS-WG 2 was initially planned for Q1 2020; however, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the face-to-face meeting was cancelled and rescheduled as a virtual meeting for Q4 2020. Furthermore, the need to convene a set of preparatory meetings prior to the virtual FDS-WG2 was indicated, with the purpose to further advance the intersessional work activities, of which the pertinent points are raised in paragraphs 24.

SUMMARY OF PREPARATORY SESSION 1: VESSEL MAPPING

24. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) delivered a summary discussions of the 1st preparatory session which focused on the fishing vessel mapping (WECAFC, 2020b). The proposed template for the fleet segmentation was presented, as well as the goal of the matrix, i.e. to identify the different fishing vessel types within each country and their length classes in combination with their gears.

25. Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia and France representatives initiated a discussion about the definition of ‘vessel type’. It was clarified that the vessel type category should be applied to local vessels using a single gear type exclusively or, alternatively, the most predominant gear type in order to address the issue of vessels operating multi-gears.

26. A question was raised regarding multi-gear vessels operating different gears depending on the season. It was proposed that these are considered as different fleet segments if the seasonality in the primary gear occurs over multiple years. It was further clarified that the purpose of the vessel mapping matrix is not specifically to count vessels, but for mapping national vessel types with the standard vessel type categories proposed for the WECAFC region, in order to be able to compare fleet segments among WECAFC countries. Similarly, the concept of active vessels (versus registered vessels, which may include registered but non-active vessels) is also not of relevance to the vessel mapping exercise.

27. A question related to the use of multiple forms of hook and line fishing (e.g. handline, rod and reel, and trolling used to target finfish) was raised by Bermuda, highlighting the need to further review the gear classifications within each country and ensure coherence with the international standards (CWP ISSCFG, 2016) in order to propose a refined mapping.

28. WECAFC Members that had not yet contributed to the vessel mapping were encouraged to provide their mapping(s) for final review of the regional fleet segment classification, scheduled under Agenda item 11.

SUMMARY OF PREPARATORY SESSION 2: WECAFC SUBAREA PROPOSALS

29. Mr James Geehan (FAO) presented a summary of the 2nd preparatory session which addressed proposals for the WECAFC Sub-area and divisional boundaries (WECAFC, 2020c). He recalled the need to review the 1978 legacy proposal, and the consultation process and discussions related to the proposed boundaries prior to the FDS-WG2 meeting.

30. Mr Geehan then presented the general considerations in defining the proposed boundaries, as follows:

- a) maintain consistency of boundaries with marine ecosystems;
- b) implement the UNGA-FSA recommendations and CWP initiative to obtain and maintain distinct separate data between catches taken inside and outside the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of coastal States;
- c) considerations to enable the facilitation of reporting of spatially disaggregated data by WECAFC members;
- d) accounting for references to previous work on FAO areas and discussions for draft WECAFC sub-areas; and
- e) consistency with concentrations of main fishing activity.

31. Two options for the delineation of final subarea proposal were presented to the participants through an interactive map viewer (<https://wecafc-firms.d4science.org/data-viewer/index.html>):

- i. Option 1:
 - o base the statistical limits on officially recognized treaty lines and 200 nautical mile boundary lines; and
 - o in areas where treaties do not exist, the statistical boundaries are to be delimited according to simple longitudinal or latitudinal straight lines, drawn according to the common principles previously described.
- ii. Option 2:
The approach avoids constructing statistical divisions based on treaty lines strictly speaking, and instead:
 - o proposes subarea boundaries to be simple longitudinal/latitudinal statistical limits as close as possible to these treaty lines; in addition to
 - o the 200 nautical mile boundaries.

32. The meeting participants praised the quality of the interactive map viewer, and the Chairperson thanked Mr Emmanuel Blondel (FAO consultant) for the excellent work on the viewer.

33. Mr Geehan provided a summary of the comments received from countries during the WG1 intersession related to the different Options and associated variants. Some comments or issues were successfully addressed (e.g. Trinidad and Tobago EEZ, the Bahamas EEZ), while other comments remained pending, notably:

- i. preferences for avoiding to split the Honduras EEZ (currently split in two according to Options 1 & 2 proposals);
- ii. European Union raised the issue that moving the southern limit of FAO Major fishing area 31 south by 10° (i.e. from 5°N to 5°S latitude) would be more reflective from fish-stock perspective; and
- iii. revising the northern limit of the FAO Major fishing area 31, which currently intersects the EEZ of Bermuda; for example, by reassigning the portion of Bermuda's EEZ currently in area 21 (sub-area 21.6) to area 31.4.4.

34. Other pending issues on subarea topics discussed included, on the initiative of Suriname and EU, the question of the northern part of Brazil in the Guyana shelf with the option to incorporate FAO Major fishing area division 41.1.1 within Major fishing Area 31.

35. Mr Taconet reminded meeting participants that revising the boundaries of the FAO Major fishing areas requires discussions and consensus at multiple levels, between the concerned parties and the endorsement by the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP). Once changes are agreed, considerable work is often required in order to redefine, and in some cases revise, statistics according to the new agreed areas. In order to accommodate the points raised regarding the current boundaries of FAO Major fishing area 31, agreement was reached to define a short- and long-term approach for endorsement by the working group under agenda item 12.

SUMMARY OF PREPARATORY SESSION 3: LIST OF MAIN SPECIES

36. Ms Nancie Cummings provided a summary of the 3rd preparatory session which focused on the list of priority species. She recalled the WECAFC mandate on species: “*All living marine resources, without prejudice to the management responsibilities and authority of other competent fisheries and other living marine resources management organizations or arrangements in the area*”.

37. Ms Cummings recalled that the list of species, in the context of the DCRF, were drafted on the around the foundation of a number of requirements, notably: WECAFC orientation (e.g. towards reducing impact on vulnerable and threatened species) and around core policy priorities agreed by the Commissions of WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA, or other processes such as the ICM (Interim Coordination Mechanism), CITES or the Cartagena Convention (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol) – UN Environment within the

region. Further the need to consider WECAFC Members' capacity to collect data at the species level; the relationship between species and their subareas/ecosystems and the need to minimize the burden in information gathering for the DCRF was noted. The recognition of the interest expressed for the importance of monitoring species of high commercial interest or having relevance to subregional working groups (conch, lobster, flying fish) and/or fisheries (e.g. FAD, deep sea, recreational billfish) was integral in developing the initial list.

38. The species list drafted and approved as the 'interim list of species' by WECAFC 17 was based upon five primary reasons of support:

- i. basis 1: Species of key importance for the region, in terms of regional Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) (conch, lobster, flying fish, recreational billfish) or other FMPs under development;
- ii. basis 2: Species of importance to other regional or sub regional fishery bodies and/or mandatory reporting required by an RFMA/RFMO (e.g. ICCAT tunas, billfishes, commercially targeted or threatened sharks and rays);
- iii. basis 3: High Seas and Deep Sea species falling under the possible mandate of WECAFC as RFMA/RFMO;
- iv. basis 4: Species for which a specific fishery working group has been established in one of the sub-regional or regional organizations; and
- v. basis 5: Species of importance (at sub-regional level, or national level) for any other reason (e.g. based on the 1978 WECAFC list of species of high commercial interest).

39. The list of main species was first reviewed by the FDS-WG1 meeting in 2018 and submitted to WECAFC-17. Comments received after WECAFC-17 suggested a refinement of the 'bases', with elevation of certain species from one basis to another, while the proposal of sub-areas also implies annotation of species per sub-areas. Comments also included identification of important areas for some species by a few members.

40. Ms Cummings concluded her presentation with a list of questions to be considered by the FDS-WG during this working session, notably:

- i. whether the list of main species per subareas is complete; and
- ii. whether the list of species in accordance with the complexity of the region in terms of ecosystems.

41. In the discussion that followed, the European Union recalled the need to align the list of main species to the WECAFC mandate, given the DCRF is not a binding framework. The discussion also clarified the goal of defining a list of species for reporting; for example, as a capacity building tool to support national data collection according to a standardized list of species, as well as an instrument to monitor the evolution of fisheries and changes in species potentially impacted by climate change.

42. The US recalled the aim of the species list in the context of the DCRF, being to provide the framework for data collection of important species in the region provisioning for sound data for use in stock evaluations, and reminding the participants that the list was formed on this core as opposed to reflecting policies on management.

43. Saint Lucia and Belize recalled the list of main species should take into consideration WECAFC Members' limited capacity to collect and report on an extended list of species. Also, it was recommended liaising with existing regional bodies (e.g. ICCAT) in the case of species where there are already reporting requirements in place. The presenter on this topic (Ms Cummings) further noted the flexibility of the iDCRF to identify specific tasks for which data would be collected for some species in some areas, and also to exclude specific tasks for some species (in some areas). Furthermore, it was noted that this flexibility of identifying specific tasks for some species in some area's shares similar patterns with both the ICCAT and GFCM data collection frameworks.

44. It was further recalled that some WECAFC Members had already submitted their list of species (e.g. the EU, France/French Guiana, the Bahamas, Suriname, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago), while feedback was also received from CRFM. The presenter, Ms Cummings issued a further call for contributions on the list of species, especially countries absent from FDS-WG online preparatory sessions 2 (subareas), 3 (species listings), and 4 (FIRMS inventories). Subsequently further species inputs were received from Costa Rica and Bermuda,

45. During FDS-WG2, discussions continued on the list of species and some modifications to the structure of the list were made taking into account both participants inputs and also to structural refinements that would

facilitate data collection, minimize duplication of efforts and sampling burdens (through identification of species by DCRF task, area), and lead to clearer understandings on species already under sampling mandates by other entities (e.g. tunas by ICCAT). The revisions are presented under Section 13 (Conclusions on List of Species).

46. Finally, all WECAFC Members were encouraged to provide their list of species for review of the list of main species during day 4 session (Agenda item 13).

SUMMARY OF PREP SESSION 4a: SMALL SCALE FISHERIES MATRIX

47. Mr James Geehan (FAO) presented the outcomes of the 4th preparatory session regarding discussions on the FAO Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) Matrix. He recalled the origin of the matrix approach to characterize SSF, which applies a range of different criteria that are assessed and scored against pre-defined fishing units (fishing units can be defined very flexibly including at differing scale levels; these can also be thought of as fisheries according to FIRMS definition). An aggregated score is then calculated and the fishing unit assigned along a relative continuum from small- to large-scale fisheries.

48. Suriname noted that although artisanal fisheries are usually defined as a single group, their Department of Fisheries is moving towards considering economic dimensions such as capital in order to distinguish different groups within their artisanal fisheries sector.

49. Mr Geehan recalled that in the interim since the first presentation of the matrix during FDS-WG1 meeting, seven countries tested the matrix. It was emphasized that feedback and comments are particularly important to refine and improve the matrix, and to ensure the utility of the tool in the context of fisheries in the WECAFC region.

50. Mr Geehan requested additional countries willing to test the matrix do so in the FDS-WG2 intersession, as well as any other comments from countries that have already contributed, in order to draft formal feedback on behalf of WECAFC that can be submitted to FAO to ensure the adaptation of the matrix to the WECAFC regional context.

SUMMARY OF PREP SESSION 4b: FIRMS INVENTORIES

51. Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) presented the second item of the 4th preparatory session, regarding outcomes of the discussions on the stock and fisheries inventories. He recalled the Fisheries and Resources and Monitoring System (FIRMS) which, for the last 16 years, has developed a partnership to facilitate the monitoring of stocks status and fisheries among 17 intergovernmental organizations and 22 Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs). In total, worldwide FIRMS contains an inventory of about 1,500 marine resources and more than 700 fisheries, published fact sheets for 958 marine resources and 269 fisheries, while the status of exploitation is known for about 650 stocks and 160 fisheries with at least one indicator.

52. In the context of WECAFC FIRMS content, 78 reports are published as marine resource fact sheets, of which 29 were published in 2019 and ten countries produced 31 published fisheries fact sheets (for a total of 35 observations) between 2016 and 2020. It was emphasized that the main sources of information for the stock fact sheets include reports from WECAFC SAG, OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC working groups, the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR), and CRFM Continental Shelf Fisheries Working Group. For the fisheries fact sheets, contributions were collated from the Department of Fisheries, National Ministries, Fishery Research Institutes (e.g. Ifremer) and other fishery reports (e.g. FAO, fisheries country profiles, CRFM Fishery Reports).

53. The goal for accessing relevant WECAFC regional information through the WECAFC map viewer was presented and the way forward to implement such convergence into with initial representation of information (FIRMS), statistics (according to DCRF data calls), and publications.

54. Mr Gentile recalled the complementary role of the DCRF and FIRMS (i.e. inventories of stocks and fisheries complementing fisheries statistical data) and suggested that a FIRMS identifier could be added to the relevant DCRF tasks beyond the current fishery inventories presented as reference list in the DCRF appendices. He presented the mechanism to update inventories and recalled the need for a timely update of information. The

need for appropriate capacity to support the update of inventories as part of the outcome of the current WECAFC-FIRMS project was highlighted, perhaps through extended liaising with countries.

55. Mr Gentile concluded by calling for contributions to the FIRMS survey poll shared with FDS-WG participants regarding their opinion and feedback on the stocks & fisheries inventories.

56. The European Union praised and acknowledged the value of the work in addressing gaps in the description of stocks in the WECAFC region, and which the European Union fully supports. Concerns were also expressed by the European Union on the timing of discussing the addition of the FIRMS identifier to the DCRF tasks, given that other priorities are on-going regarding the finalization of the iDCRF framework.

SUMMARY OF PREP SESSION 5: DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE REVIEW

57. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) recalled the background and development of the WECAFC Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), with the interim iDCRF approved by Commission-17 (WECAFC, 2020a) including the main driving principles:

- to establish the foundation for the collection, collation, and submission of comprehensive fisheries data and statistics in the WECAFC region using agreed standards and harmonized protocols;
- to define requirements for the collation of minimum data and statistics provisioning for use in stock assessment and monitoring for supporting evidence-based policy making; and
- to support the needs of developing, monitoring, assessing and reviewing regional fisheries policies required by any relevant sub-regional subsidiary body.

58. Mr Taconet further recalled the objectives of the FDS-WG2 working session:

- to facilitate any additional modifications to the updated version of the iDCRF (Ref. WECAFC/FDSWG/II/2020/3) proposed in response to points raised during the 5th preparatory session;
- to incorporate additional inputs on, e.g. options for the scope of the RDB, annotation of the iDCRF Task by species, structural changes or any other comments related to the revised document received during this meeting; and
- Discuss a plan to move forward, towards recommendation for SAG and the Commission.

59. In response to the comments received during the 5th preparatory session on the DCRF, the following changes were proposed for endorsement by SAG and WECAFC 18 the:

- i. improvement of the fleet topology in the fleet segment classification to address missing vessel types for Trollers, Hand liner Vessels, and Motherships; also adding the definition of decked/undecked vessels;
- ii. address the multi-gear nature of the Caribbean fisheries: adding the definition of multi-gear vessels; adding gear-type in task II.1, II.2; refining the definition of vessel type category to consider the predominant gear in addition to exclusive gears;
- iii. adding fields in the vessel registry to better qualify active vessels, including considering a valid fishing license when relevant to the country;
- iv. it was recalled that in Task I.1, the fleet capacity per segment can result in double counting of some vessels when operating multiple gears and/or in multiple areas. This Task should therefore not be used to indicate the total national fleet capacity, given that multi-gear vessels operating in multiple areas will be counted more than once;
- v. better indications on whether biological measurements and counts of discards are needed at sea or only at landing places requires to revise Task IV.1 and IV.2 with a new description; and
- vi. refinement of socio-economic aspect: definitions added according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) guidelines on Decent Work Indicators (ILO, 2022) for fishers, full-time fishers, part-time fishers, occasional fishers; price definitions were aligned to CWP definitions; objectives and description were refined for Task VI.1, VI.2, VI.2.

60. In addition, following the Preparatory sessions the WECACF-FIRMS Task Force identified the following enhancements and recommended a review of the layout of each Task to better operationalize the DCRF, for consideration by the working group; notably:

- i. add an "Objective" header, a "Scope" header and "Rules" at the end of "Data access and sharing rules";
- ii. revised structures of Task I split in two Tasks I.1 (e.g. similar to GFCM) and I.2 (e.g. CWP Statlant);
- iii. improve alignment of Task IV definitions with SDG 14.4.1;
- iv. more detailed data access and sharing policies, specifying that as a general principle the submitted data should be made publicly available, but also defining the submission steps and validation roles prior to publishing, aggregation levels for publishing and any applicable confidentiality rule; and
- v. the need for improvement of the Appendices by realigning appendices to bring similar concepts within same sections (e.g. Fleet segment, Gear type, and fishing effort units).

61. Mr Taconet requested from the meeting participants the following contributions:

- i. task I – Regional statistics:
 - confirm Task I.1 –WEC AFC “Catch and Capacity by Fleet segment and sub-area; and
 - confirm Task I.2 – CWP Statlant type (CWP,2022) “Catch by species and sub-areas”.
- ii. task II – Catch and Effort:
 - confirm the addition of Gear type (optional) in particular for multi-gear vessels.
- iii. task III – Fleet:
 - confirm the addition in the vessel register of Activity, License Y/N, and main Gear type used during reporting year; and
 - confirm the interest of “Fleet engaged by Fishery”, with focus on the most important fisheries (FIRMS).
- iv. task V – Socio-economics:
 - confirm age groups according to ILO guidelines on "Decent work indicators" (ILO, 2022); and
 - confirm structure of Value of capture fisheries.
- v. scope for the Tasks:
 - confirm the choice of wording between:
 - Option 1 “RDB is mirror of national database”; and
 - Option 2 “RDB serves the strict need for Regional WGs”.
- vi. general revision of the DCRF:
 - confirm modified structure and their purpose: Objectives, Scope, Data access and sharing rules.
- vii. appendices:
 - confirm the revised structure for the Appendices.

62. FAO highlighted that one function of the DCRF includes serving as a capacity building tool by defining standard and harmonized concepts and classifications that could be used to support the development of national systems.

63. The WG noted that operationalizing the iDCRF should not increase the workload on national data managers in terms of additional reporting burdens to RFBs, and that the scope of the DCRF should be aligned with the original aim which was to lay the foundation for data collection in support to WEC AFC assessment and management using globally accepted standards.

64. In conclusion, the roadmap for the finalization of the iDCRF for the coming months was presented and WECAFC Members were encouraged to review and contribute to the iDCRF.

WECAFC MEMBERS STATEMENTS ON NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM, ISSUES, NEEDS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FDS-WG

65. This session of the meeting offered the opportunity to FDS-WG members to present: i.) progress of their national data collection system, what fisheries are being covered, vessel registry information, ii.) issues, iii.) needs, and iv.) contributions to FDS-WG2.

66. The following countries intervened: Bermuda, Costa Rica, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, French Guyana and Antilles, Countries' presentations and outcomes are summarized in [Annex E](#).

67. Discussions and questions regarding WECAFC Members outcomes are the following:

- i. Costa Rica further develop their data collection system with collection of number of trips and value of landings as well as strengthen their capacity for stock status reporting, in order to meet the requirements for Costa Rica's accession to OECD membership.
- ii. The Bahamas indicated that they would consider to take an active role in the FDS-WG and that a new representative will be nominated for the coming sessions of the FDS-WG.
- iii. Dominica's involvement in the FIRMS inventories was praised by the FDS-WG Convener.
- iv. Statistics systems in WECAFC Members such as Saint Kitts and Nevis rely on one person. This poses a great threat to the sustainability of the system in place currently and highlights the need for institutionalization of fisheries monitoring systems. It was further noted by the Convener that this problem is central to many of the WECAFC members.
- v. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have four tuna vessels fishing in the High Seas, not within their EEZ. Parrotfish fishing was important before the banning of two fisheries.
- vi. Some WECAFC members, such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, are still using CARIFIS to manage vessel registries, even older software such as LRS for vessel management and the NOAA, Southeast Fisheries Science Center Trip Interview Program (TIP) for catch/effort, as in the case of Saint Lucia.
- vii. The need for simple analytical tools was raised by Suriname. Given the relatively steep learning curve for R, the use of alternative tools such as Jamovi (<https://www.jamovi.org/>) should be explored. It was noted by the Convener, that although Jamovi has been used successfully in Suriname, this software platform does not provide the functionality of a structured relational database, the latter being recommended for long term data support.
- viii. Collecting data for recreational fisheries is a common challenge as pointed by Trinidad and Tobago. In their new Fishery Act, Trinidad and Tobago could have provisions to better monitor recreational fisheries. Presently, tournament data are obtained sporadically in Trinidad and Tobago. Questions of the definition of "subsistence fisheries" were raised, and Trinidad and Tobago commented that their new Fishery Act defines the subsistence sector as "fishing without a vessel for personal consumption and not for commercial purposes, pleasure or competition", and that the bill doesn't seek to regulate those."
- ix. The lack of proper legal framework hampers data collection processing with no reporting obligation in many existing, or older Fishery Acts as highlighted by European Union and Trinidad and Tobago.
- x. The difference between monitoring fisheries in the Caribbean and in the Pacific was raised by Costa Rica.

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF COUNTRIES FOR PRIORITY SUPPORT WITH CAPACITY BUILDING

68. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) summarized the key issues raised by WECAFC Members during the discussions on the main challenges for collecting, processing and dissemination of fisheries data and statistics and also from the member countries template submissions (See [Annex E](#) for all Country submissions):

- i. limited human and financial resources;
- ii. the need for modern supporting tools (e.g. centralized database, automated processing, mobile based data collection);
- iii. inadequate legal frameworks;
- iv. highly manual work in terms of the collection, input and processing of data;
- v. lack of basic data to feed stock assessment, and the need expressed by countries with more advanced capacities to learn how to better use collected data; and
- vi. need for capacity building and training is a recurring issue.

69. Mr Taconet recalled that the current WECAFC-FIRMS phase III project supporting the second meeting of the FDS-WG also has financial resources to support capacity building in up to two countries in the next FDS-WG intersession, and requested contributions from the participants on the objectives and criteria. He emphasized that FAO usually base criteria on factors such as motivation, technical level (e.g. existence of good technical capacities), and political and institutional priority considerations (e.g. the presence of an FAO Country Programming Framework). He also highlighted the need to balance support from different groups (e.g. CRFM / OSPESCA) and the existence of on-going or completed projects related to capacity building. The impact of the project must also be measurable, and the feasibility of the implementation must be taken into consideration. Finally he recalled the request made by OSPESCA during the intersession to include as criteria the need to match WECAFC priorities in particular regarding the Fishery Management plans.

70. Mr Yann Laurent shared with the WG a list of criteria prepared by the FDS-WG task force for consideration for the wrap-up session in day 4:

- i. Is this support identified at national level as a top priority?
- ii. Are fisheries statistics a priority in the FAO Country Programming Framework?
- iii. Is the country already receiving support on data collection and statistics from FAO, or another technical agency? If yes, the country will not be eligible as a first priority country, but possibly as a second priority country to receive a co-funding component.
- iv. Has the country capacity to receive support in terms of human resources and infrastructure to ensure the long-term sustainability of the action (e.g. data collection activities as routine budgeted activities for instance, available human resources to conduct data collection activities)?
- v. How to balance selected countries between subregional fishery bodies (CRFM / OSPESCA)?

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VESSEL MAPPING

71. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) wrapped-up the discussions held during day 1 on the vessel mapping highlighting the following points:

- The proposed extended definition for fleet segments incorporating predominant gear allows the vessel mapping to accurately capture the diversity of artisanal vessel types from the WECAFC region.
- Furthermore, the current fleet segment classification generally aligns with the actual WECAFC fleet topology in all its diversity.

72. The European Union representative expressed the need to add the 10 meters length as length class limit in order to align the vessel mapping with the DCRF.

73. Saint Lucia requested that any new addition to the fleet segment classification does not create additional, and unnecessary burden to WECAFC members in terms of reporting, while the WG requested that the WECAFC Task Force ensures that the proposed extended definition be available in the iDCRF.

74. The final Recommendations related to the Vessel Mapping were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUBAREAS

75. Mr James Geehan (FAO) recalled the main discussion points of the previous working sessions regarding proposals for the WECAFC Sub-areas and divisional boundaries, and driving principles for delineating the proposed boundary lines:

(a.) Utilize EEZ boundary lines (where they exist), in combination with

(b.) Simple longitudinal and latitudinal or oblique straight lines in the case of statistical areas where there is no clear demarcation of the maritime boundaries to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces.

Locally, and in specific cases, other considerations such as Members' data collection capacity or important ecosystem boundaries, could constitute decisive criteria for proposals on the final boundaries.

76. It was emphasized that the driving principles for proposing the WECAFC sub-areas and divisional boundaries are not a hierarchical sequence but rather a combination, with the flexibility to adapt the criteria at the local level according to specific and justified considerations and agreement among countries directly concerned (e.g. national data collection capacities, or important ecosystem boundaries).

77. Mr Geehan summarized the issues that remain outstanding in order to finalize the proposed boundary definitions; notably the Honduras EEZ, and the southern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 31. Honduras expressed the need to review the two options and recommended that OSPESCA and neighboring countries reach a common agreement for the proposed boundaries in this sub-region.

78. A two-step approach was presented to address the comments from WECAFC Members regarding proposals for changes to the FAO Major fishing areas, as follows:

i. short term:

- Catches for French Guiana and Bermuda are assigned to the single, predominant, sub-area division (i.e. to simplify data reporting). In the case of Bermuda, minimal impact on time-area catches by reassigning all catches within area 31.4.4 (as little or no fishing activity in the EEZ area currently north of 5°N; no foreign vessel activity since 1994).
- Statistics needed for assessment of stocks of the Brazil-Guyana ecosystem are provided for Sub-area 31.5 and for division 41.1.1.

ii. long term:

- Proposals are developed for revision of the current FAO Major fishing area boundary lines (i.e. area 31 northern boundary line (35°N) and the southern boundary line (5°N)) to better accommodate EEZ boundaries or ecoregions in the WECAFC region.

79. The final Recommendations related to the Subareas were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIST OF SPECIES

80. Ms Cummings presented the main outcomes of the discussion during the meeting related to the list of reference species. A revised list of species slightly modified from the initial list approved as the 'interim list' at WECAFC 17 was presented. The presentation focused on the recommendations for the SAG, specifically:

- i. recommendation to adopt the revised structure of the list of species, as follows:

The species Bases were reviewed and the following changes proposed:

Group 1 Species: to be formed of:

- basis 1 remains unchanged;
- basis 2 is now built on former basis 4;
- basis 3 remains unchanged; and
- while basis 4 now contains species from the former basis 5.

Group 2 Species: to be formed of:

- basis 5 (formerly basis 2) containing species already under the mandate of neighboring RFMOs (tunas, billfishes).

- ii. recommendation to continue to work intersessionally on the remaining items of:

- the elevation of species;
- annotation of subareas by species;
- assignment of DCRF tasks by species and subareas; and
- liaising with WECAFC species working Groups on the above tasks as relevant, and in particular for the validation of species by area submitted by countries.

81. The European Union commented the new proposal recognizing an effort to capture some of their suggestions, however still recalling that the new basis 5 needed to better reflect the concerns expressed during the Commission 17 meeting.

82. The working group discussed the addition of mammals and other endangered species, and while it was recalled that other organizations exist with a mandate on mammals (e.g. International Whaling Commission - IWC <https://iwc.int/inicio>), options for collaboration in the future should be explored. The working group was also asked to consider the addition of invasive species in the future.

The final Recommendations related to the List of Species were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRMS

83. Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) summarized the outcomes of the discussions related to FIRMS. The need for inputs by countries was highlighted for new fisheries submissions as well as for updates. To ensure a timely update of the inventory, e.g. two options were proposed: (i) instituting data calls for updates, and (ii) conducting interviews/visits by expert consultants for initiating developments and inventories compilation.

84. To enrich the information collected in the DCRF, the addition of fishery IDs in DCRF relevant tasks (optional) and adding the list of inventoried Fisheries as a DCRF appendix were proposed. The possibility to disseminate fishery and stock status fact sheets in national/regional websites was recalled, as well as publishing new services (also ref. WECAFC maps viewer).

85. During the discussions the need for a FIRMS data call principle was again raised by FDS-WG Convener as an immediate need, not excluding the possibility of a support by expert consultants.

86. The European Union raised concerns again on the addition of a FIRMS identifier in the tasks of the DCRF as being too premature at this stage of the document review and consolidation. It was recalled by the WG convener that the main workload relating to the FIRMS was conducted through the FIRMS staff and WECAFC members thus should not introduce any significant added burden on further refinements of the iDCRF by the WG.

87. Saint Lucia recommended to prioritize in the short term only the statistical data part, and for the medium term expressed the need to integrate the creation of FIRMS inventories to the national capacity development strategy, by integrating fact sheets creation as additional features to the national Fisheries Statistics and Management Information System.

88. The final Recommendations related to FIRMS were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SSF MATRIX

89. Mr James Geehan (FAO) recalled the main outcomes of the discussions of the SSF matrix in the context of the feedback received from the seven countries testing the matrix.

90. The general consensus of the FDS-WG was that:

- The SSF Matrix is relevant to the fisheries in WECAFC and has value in characterizing the fisheries in the region.
- Most of the categories used are generally understandable and straightforward.
- The matrix questionnaire did not require an unduly amount of time to complete and in most cases can be easily applied to specific fleets/fisheries within each country.

91. However, while noting the utility of the matrix, there were also a number of comments or suggested improvements to better tailor the matrix to the fisheries in the WECAFC region. Notably:

- i. The need to refine the definition of the “fishing unit”, which remains somewhat vague and can be defined at almost any level. This heterogeneity – which is equally an advantage in terms of the flexibility of the tool – can pose a problem of objectivity and comparability of the scores between fishing units defined at very different levels of scale.
- ii. Some elements should be flexible to require the selection of more than one option (and then taking the average score across the multiple categories selected within the individual element, for example).
- iii. Consideration as to whether certain elements should be allocated a higher weighting in the overall score (currently all categories are assigned an equal weight). For example, whether vessel length or engine size should be given higher importance than the type of storage or refrigeration on board.
- iv. Refining the current categories for some elements: notably vessel length or engine size, in order to better accommodate the characteristics of vessels in the Caribbean as well as existing classifications of artisanal and non-artisanal fisheries. This is particularly important in the case of Trinidad and Tobago where concessions may be granted based on these classifications. Bermuda suggested that as FAO uses 6 m length increments (up to 30 m), whether it would be more appropriate to use these length categories, especially as the matrix is attempting to capture small scale fisheries that will presumably have greater variation across the smaller size ranges.
- v. Consideration of a ‘region-based’ SSF matrix in order to accommodate fisheries at the regional or sub-regional level, but still broad enough to enable comparability of fisheries across numerous countries.

92. Mr Geehan indicated that the feedback from WECAFC members will be compiled and submitted to FAO, as part of the on-going consultation and wider testing of the SSF matrix, while also addressing the following two issues:

- To what extent are the comments related to generic improvements in the design or wording of the current matrix questionnaire, as opposed to specific characteristics of the fisheries in the WECAFC; and
- What distinguishes artisanal fisheries in WECAFC from small-scale fisheries in East/West Africa, or the Indian and Pacific Oceans (e.g. Panama’s Pacific vs. Caribbean small-scale fisheries).

93. Mr Geehan highlighted the importance of additional feedback from countries, especially in terms of identifying characteristics that distinguish small-scale fisheries in the extended Caribbean region. Bermuda

subsequently offered to test the matrix, while France indicated that the matrix could also be tested for the three European Union French outermost regions (Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana).

94. Bermuda also shared a specificity of artisanal fisheries in their country, concerning two banks located respectively 20km and 40km from shore. Artisanal boats are sailing to both these banks on a daily basis, however the current cut-off in the matrix for the variable related to distance from shore does not match the reality of the fisheries in Bermuda.

95. Mr Geehan praised this comment as an excellent example of the type of feedback that can be collated and reported back to FAO, as an illustration of the specificity of artisanal fisheries in WECAFC that should try to be incorporated into the next version of the matrix.

96. Saint Kitts and Nevis expressed high appreciation of the tool and indicated they might – after some internal discussion – want to discuss the limit for engines below 100 HP, considering that some outboard engine move up to 300 HP.

97. Mr Marc Taconet also highlighted that the work on the vessel mapping matrix could be used to inform the SSF matrix – both in terms of the definition of fishing units, but also improvements in the current matrix list of elements and associated categories.

98. The final Recommendations related to the SSF Matrix were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DCRF

99. Mr Taconet (FAO) presented the outcomes of discussions related to the iDCRF and recalled the purpose of the DCRF as a data and statistics standard framework, harmonized with other reporting frameworks (e.g. FAO, ICCAT, EU, NOAA) while encompassing supplementary provisions for the region. As such, the DCRF serves a minimum of two purposes:

- i. capacity building tool, which can be used by Members' as a reference standard to set-up national data collection and information systems for all aquatic marine species; and
- ii. an instrument to support the scientific mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM, by implementing: a modular task-oriented structure articulated currently around clear supporting bases for reference list of species, and an incremental approach to implementation of the DCRF for some Members'.

100. Mr Taconet emphasized the importance of gathering feedback on the iDCRF from member countries during the FDS-WG2 meeting, given that the development and consultation phases of the DCRF have been on-going for two years.

101. Suriname requested that a clear format be produced before proceeding with the DataPrep workshop.

102. The Bahamas indicated that a table of measure of effort would be worth to develop. It was agreed that a e-TWG should work on developing such a table.

103. The European Union requested additional time in order to comprehensively review a number of the recommendations drafted for the FDS-WG2 which, in some cases, have implications beyond the FDS-WG and may need to be discussed at the level of the Commission. In response, participants were encouraged to focus on the technical aspects of the DCRF during the meeting, such as aiming for a consensus of the minimum data fields/tasks, while other more strategic aspects could be considered over a longer time-frame.

104. Mindful of the constraints imposed by limited resources within member countries, the FDS-WG acknowledged the need for an incremental approach to the full implementation of the DCRF as an instrument to support the WECAFC-ICM scientific mandate and its FMP priorities. In this respect, the FDS-WG agreed to a first stage of implementation as follows:

- **“Species Group 1 basis 1 and 2 Species”** sets the Scope for countries focused efforts on data collection and reporting to WECAFC-ICM.

Option 1:

- **“Species Group 1 basis 1 and 2 Species”** sets the Scope for national submissions to the WECAFC RDB.

Option 2:

- **“Species Group 1 basis 1 Species”** sets the Scope for national submissions to the WECAFC RDB.

105. The WG further noted that, in this staged approach, the working group agreed to Tasks III (Fleet), II (Catch by species and Effort), and IV (Biological data) as the priority tasks for implementation during stage 1, and Tasks I (Regional statistics) and V (Socio-economics) as secondary priority tasks for implementation during stage 1, to be done on a ‘best effort’ approach. The addition of gears in Task II was also endorsed by the FDS-WG.

106. Mr Taconet proposed that in order to enable a proper review of the new version of the iDCRF and to finalize outstanding issues, an extended session of this FDS-WG2 could be decided by this meeting to be held around the end of Q1 2021. With this proposal, the roadmap for the finalization of the iDCRF over the coming months was presented, with the next version of the iDCRF (v.7) available for review by working group members by end-January 2021, prior to adoption by the extended session of FDS-WG2 by end-March 2021.

107. The final Recommendations related to the DCRF were endorsed as per agenda item 21 and can be found in [Annex I](#).

CONCLUSION ON: CRITERIA/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SELECTION OF COUNTRIES FOR PRIORITY SUPPORT WITH CAPACITY BUILDING

108. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) recalled the challenges expressed by WECAFC Members during their statements, and the proposed criteria to prioritize support through capacity building presented earlier during the meeting. Only one feedback was received, from Saint Lucia, while Mr Taconet also recalled one criteria proposed during the intersessional work by INFOPECSA. The proposed criteria are the following:

- i. Is this support identified at national level as a top priority?
- ii. As a complement to item i., are fisheries statistics a priority in the FAO Country Programming Framework?
- iii. Is the country already receiving support on data collection and statistics from FAO or another technical agency? If yes, the country will not be eligible as a first priority country, but could be considered as second priority country to receive a co-funding component.
- iv. Has the country capacity to receive support in terms of human resources and infrastructure, and also ensure long term sustainability of any support or interventions (e.g. there is routine budget in place data collection activities, as well as human resources available to conduct data collection activities)?
- v. The need was identified to balance selected countries between other stakeholder groups (e.g. CRFM, OSPESCA, CLME+, WWF, TNC)?
- vi. The need was identified to match WECAFC priorities in particular in terms of positive contribution to the Fishery Management plans.

109. In absence of additional comments, the above criteria were endorsed by the WG as a baseline for the selection of up to 2 countries to receive support from the WECAFC-FIRMS project.

110. The need to address staff turn-over was highlighted during the discussion, and The Bahamas shared the common need in the region for tailored training materials related to sampling and data collection in order to maintain minimum levels of skills within countries. FAO mentioned the joint FAO-CIHEAM¹ online training scheduled for November, as well as the regional training course on fisheries statistics in Trinidad in January 2020,

¹ <http://edu.iamz.ciheam.org/FisheriesStatistics/en/>

and suggested that a response to a tailored training material could be to enrich the generic material with case studies concerning countries of the region.

UPDATE ON STATUS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REGIONAL DATABASE

111. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) provided an update on the status of progress of the WECAFC RDB, including the historical background, and main objectives. He recalled that the RDB is:

- i. a set of tools to collate statistics from the WECAFC Members according to the DRCF;
- ii. a dissemination tool for the statistics collated under each of the DCRF Tasks;
- iii. a tool for the collation and dissemination of the FIRMS inventories of stocks and fisheries and of other relevant statistics (e.g. FAO capture statistics) within the WECAFC region; and
- iv. a tool for implementing data and access sharing policies for any information (including the confidentiality and provisions for sharing of data).

112. Mr Laurent highlighted that the WECAFC RDB is a functional software developed within the marine infrastructure, with co-funding of the EU, that now requires to be populated with data in order to be fully operational.

113. He also recalled that the RDB is, among other features, a regional datahub collating aggregated statistics submitted by countries. As such it is not a national fisheries information system with mandate to produce national statistics (e.g. Fisheries Statistics and Management Information System - FISMIS, CARIFIS or any other national data base), and is neither meant to produce ICCAT or FAO reports or any other reporting system on behalf of the country.

114. The RDB publication workflow was recalled, including the implementation of strict data access and sharing policies. Data in the RDB can be browsed through the WECAFC map viewer, an enriched data viewer to access all regional data and information related to the region at a glance (e.g. in line with CMLE+ DSS in support to SOMEE, <https://clmeplus.org/somee-content/>).

115. It was noted that the name “Regional Database” no longer appears to adequately describe the variety of features covered by the platform. A call for a new name was sent to the working group Participants who suggested, among other names: WECAFC Data Portal, WECAFC - FishInfo, WECAFC Fisheries Information Portal, and WECAFC - FishInfo Portal.

116. In terms of WECAFC Members’ need to update/upgrade their National FISMIS, Mr Laurent described related FAO services including (i) training material to build capacity on statistical methodologies and (ii) a new platform ‘Calipseo’ (<https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/statistics/software/calipseo>) aiming at supporting countries to develop their technical capacity. The FAO Calipseo system, is a central web-based application to manage classification, administrative data (Registries), Fisheries data (artisanal sampling data, logbook), to compute indicators and provide dashboards, and reports in response to data calls (e.g. for ICCAT, FAO, WECAFC to feed the RDB). Calipseo does benefit from the central IT management and has long term support from FAO. To date, the software has been deployed in Trinidad and Suriname in 2020 and planned for Grenada in 2021. In near future, it is planned to be deployed in Saint Lucia and Lebanon..

117. Mr Laurent concluded by recalling the WECAFC-17 recommendation to its Members to contribute to the Regional Database and called for contributions to feed the regional database.

118. European Union representative requested clarification about ownership and responsibility for the management of the RDB, as well as confidentiality of data. Mr Taconet indicated that the WECAFC-FIRMS Task Force acts as a steering committee to the RDB, management and responsibility of the RDB will lie with the WECAFC Secretariat with technical support from FAO HQs, Mr Laurent currently serving in the interim role of RDB regional data manager. He recalled that only authorized users have access to the publication workflow on both sides (national and regional). He also indicated that only data and statistics marked as public in the DCRF

task will be made publicly available. Mr Taconet highlighted the importance to review these data access and sharing policies aspect for the DCRF tasks, not excluding confidentiality aspects which can limit the access to specific sets of data. He indicated that the data viewer is already an interesting product with relevant data and can be published and integrated within the WECAFC website. It is considered mature enough for its release and the viewer is capable of hosting additional layers upon request.

119. A discussion took place on the different layers and data that could be disseminated through the WECAFC map viewer, following the Bahamas proposal that IUCN assessments providing information on the status of fisheries could be disseminated. Also making national official statistics available through this channel is seen by the Bahamas as an asset for example, in support to certifications, to ensure certain processes (e.g. certifications) don't refer to unofficial and biased sources.

120. Mr Taconet indicated that the access and sharing policy for what sources of information the WECAFC viewer can disseminate should be reviewed by SAG and approved by the Commission. It was requested that the WECAFC and the WECAFC-FIRMs will explore further the options.

121. The risk of duplication of effort to populate this RDB was raised by several WECAFC Members and attention should be taken to ensure that the burden to report to many regional and international organizations is not increased.

FDS-WG INTERSESSION ACTIVITIES 2020–2022 – REVIEW AND VALIDATE FDS-WG ANNUAL WORK PLAN

122. Ms Nancie Cummings (Convener) presented the FDS-WG 2018–2019 intersessional work ([Annex F](#)) and its performances. The FDS-WG praised the work done with many of the activities fully achieved. It was acknowledged that some activities will continue into 2021 due to a number of factors or mitigating circumstances.

123. Ms Nancie Cummings next presented the FDS-WG proposed intersessional work for 2020–2022, including the convening of the extended session of this second FDS-WG by the end of March in order to finalize in time for presenting to SAG few decisions which this meeting could not make. Following clarifications on some pending topics at the end of this 2nd meeting by France and the EU, the proposed plan was adopted as presented in [Annex G](#).

FDS-WG TOR REVIEW AND UPDATE IF NEW MANDATES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED DURING MEETING

124. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) recalled FDS-WG Terms of Reference (ToRs) endorsed during the first FDS-WG meeting in May 2018, Barbados (see information document WECAFC/FDSWG/II/2020/Ref.9). Several amendments to the TORs were proposed related to the management of the sessions in order to adapt to convening the meeting online.

125. A revised version of the TOR was proposed and endorsed by the FDS-WG notwithstanding an intersession review proposed by the Bahamas Representative (see [Annex H](#)).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FDS-WG MEMBERSHIP)

126. No other business was raised by the FDS-WG2.

FDS-WG DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SAG (SPRING 2021) \ COMMISSION (2022) – REVIEW AND ADOPTION

127. Ms Nancie Cummings presented a draft list of recommendations stemming from discussions held during the various “Conclusion and recommendation” agenda items, covering both the short term work necessary in preparation of the extended session of this FDS-WG2 and the recommendations to the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). For the later, she noted that a consolidated recommendation with a comprehensive preamble should be drafted by the FDS-WG for approval of the SAG, before submission to WECAFC-18.

128. The WG reviewed and annotated the proposed recommendations, and expressed the need for further review at the planned extended session of the FDS-WG2 (Q1 2021) before final endorsement. The document was further reviewed post meeting by FDS-WG participants on 21 December 2020, before inclusion in this report as [Annex I](#).

ELECTION OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

129. The FDS-WG thanked the Convener, Ms Nancie Cummings, and welcomed her continuation of the work at least until the venue of the extended session. Ms Cummings provisionally accepted the assignment, clarifying that her formal acceptance will be confirmed upon approval by her institution (NOAA).

130. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic uncertainties of face-to-face meeting, it was proposed that the extended session of the FDS-WG2 meeting will be held virtually. The WECAFC Secretariat will launch a poll in order to provide options to FDS-WG members to select the most suitable date for the next online meeting.

CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

131. In closing the meeting Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi highlighted some of the main achievements of the FDS-WG2 meeting, including the discussions and recommendations on sub-areas, priority species list, the latest iteration of the iDCRF, and revised TORs.

132. She thanked the WECAFC Member delegates and partners (EU, OSPESCA) for their commitment and hard work during the meeting. She also warmly thanked Ms Nancie Cummings, the FDS-WG Convener, a very competent and enthusiastic professional for the preparation, facilitation of the meeting, as well as the FAO supporting team, FAO colleagues and resource persons. She finally extended her thanks to the interpreters for their patience and professionalism.

133. The meeting was adjourned on Friday 16 October 2020 at 14.15 hours.

PART II - FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP SECOND MEETING EXTENDED SESSION 25–28 MAY 2021

INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING

134. FDS-WG2 agreed during the October 2020 sessions to reconvene for an extended session to review conclusions and reach consensus of the following key topics:

- (i) FIRMS – WECAFC Regional Database data viewer;
- (ii) WECAFC Subarea Proposals ;
- (iii) WECAFC List of Reference species;
- (iv) DCRF body and Appendices review; and
- (v) vessel Mappings/ Small Scale Fisheries Matrix.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

135. Mrs Yvette DieiOuadi (FAO) welcomed the participants on behalf of the WECAFC (Annex B). She recalled that these sessions are the follow-up of the October 2020 FDS-WG2 meeting. Since then, good progress was made relating to the data viewer, the update of DCRF and its appendices, the scoring matrix for capacity building, and lastly she highlighted key discussions held between different Members related to WECAFC subareas. She reminded participants of the importance of reviewing the WG TORs during the meeting, which were prepared through an intersessional Commission-driven process, according to the new WECAFC standard template. She highlighted the importance of having solid data and information management in the process of WECAFC reorientation towards the Regional Management Agreement / initiative. She warmly thanked EU DG MARE for the continuing financial support to this working group, the WECAFC Secretariat, and other WGs, as well to the reorientation process. She expressed her hope to see this collaboration continuing in the coming years. She expressed her sincere appreciation to the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture for Central America (OSPESCA) contribution to the FDS-WG and WECAFC-FIRMS partnership activities. She thanked the FDS-WG convener, Nancie Cummings (NOAA), for her dedication and involvement to the success of FDS-WG activities, as well as FAO colleagues for their continuing technical support to the WG and the Commission. She concluded by wishing a good meeting to all participants.

136. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) recalled the actual momentum in the region, highlighting that this meeting is a window of opportunity to breakthrough and address and approve a solid data collection framework, supporting analysis, trends, reporting and dissemination. He took the opportunity to announce that FAO is preparing a regional training on the SDG indicator 14.4.1, with the second part of the year focusing on English French and English-Spanish translations. To facilitate this work, FAO is actively looking for partnerships to best tailor this training. He further noted that improved data collection is key to improving country reporting on this indicator. He thanked the FDS-WG convener, Nancie Cummings (NOAA) for her great continued work, and noted the importance of identifying new candidates for the role of convener for this working group. He stressed that involvement in this task could be daunting, and the consideration of co-conveners, as well as the mentoring provided by the current convener is imperative in assisting with this transition.

137. He concluded by thanking all the FAO, CRFM and OSPESCA supporting teams.

ATTENDANCE

138. The virtual meeting was attended by 44 experts from the following 19 WECAFC members: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Brazil, European Union, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Montserrat and the United States of America, in addition to OSPESCA, one of the regional partner organization and to FAO / Sub-regional FAO office for the Caribbean (SLC). The complete list of participants is available in [Annex A](#).

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPORTEURS

139. In the absence of rules for a virtual meeting and considering the challenge of running such a meeting, the convener of the FDS-WG Ms Nancie Cummings, NOAA, was appointed chair of the meeting. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO), assisted by Mr James Geehan (FAO), Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) and Ms Bracken van Niekerk (FAO) agreed to act as rapporteurs.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

140. The tentative agenda was presented to the group and adopted after minor modifications as shown in [Annex D](#).

RECALLING OUTCOMES FDS-WG2 (OCTOBER 2020 VIRTUAL SESSION) AND PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIVITIES

141. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA), the FDS-WG convener, recalled the outcomes of the FDS-WG2 October 2020 meeting, and presented the expected contributions from these extended sessions.

Some conclusions reached during these sessions include:

- vessel mappings;
- Small Scale Fisheries Matrix - it was acknowledged as aligned with the region, with some additions requested; and
- capacity building initiatives - to be reviewed during the meeting this week and it was noted that recommendations will be presented during this meeting.

142. Regarding the FIRMS stocks and fisheries, logical linkages between certain tasks of the DCRF and the FIRMS fisheries were acknowledged, and it was recognized that once further developed and mature, the two parallel initiatives have a potential to enrich each other. The facilitation of the update of the WECAFC-FIRMS inventories of stocks and fisheries was further encouraged, including the need for implementing regional data calls, and liaising with regional / sub-regional focal points.

143. The achievements following the October 2020 meeting, relating to subareas, were recalled and the two step approach proposed to address this complex matter was presented. These included two intersessional meetings that had previously been organized to open the discussion between WECAFC Members, with two areas identified for further discussion to take place during this meeting. It was noted that further discussions might be needed in order to identify final preferred options on statistical limits (i.e. areas) for data collection/reporting.

144. The next item presented related to the list of species. The principle for updating the Species list was recalled, that take into consideration previous comments from the initial external reviews in 2018 and 2019, the September FDS-WG2 Preparatory sessions, the October 2020 FDS-WG2 virtual session, and a number of criteria, such as country capacity for reporting. Recommendation was made for reporting on task II (catch by species) and task IV (biological data) for basis 1 species (i.e. species in the region for which a fishery management plan was in place or being developed). It was recognized that benefits would be realized for members from implementing data collection/reporting harmonized with other regional/local frameworks.

145. The last outcome from the initial FDS-WG2 presented was on the DCRF. It was noted that the DCRF serves at least two purposes: capacity building and being an instrument to support scientific mandates and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM. The different proposals for updates of the DCRF and its

Appendices, presented in October 2020, were recalled, which have been applied to the current version 0.6 shared with the group during this extended session.

PARTICIPANTS INTRODUCTIONS (EXPECTATIONS/AFFILIATIONS)

146. A round table was conducted where the 44 participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves and share with the group their expectations for the meeting. The outcome of this round table highlighted the importance of this working group and meeting, which will contribute to the finalization of iDCRF. It was also noted that this is an excellent opportunity for learning for junior staff, and the continuation of the work to provide guidance in data collection and ensure good quality data that is both reliable and harmonized. This was also an opportunity to learn from the Bahamas that the new Fisheries Act passed recently (Dec. 21 2020) with important provisions for data collection.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

147. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) recalled the 5 primary objectives to review:

- WECAFC-FIRMS Data Map viewer ;
- WECAFC Area proposals for reporting ;
- list of reference species ;
- interim DCRF ; and
- revised Appendices.

And, further to review an additional 7 other supplemental objectives:

- review propose capacity building selections;
- update on Vessel Mappings, SSF Matrix / FIRMS / Data preparatory workshop;
- review WECAFC Standardized WG TORs in context of FDS-WG focus;
- review interim Work plan for FDS-WG3 (2021–2022);
- other business relevant to FDS-WG;
- develop WG recommendations for WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG); and
- election of Convener, vice-convener, set time and venue FDS-WG3.

FIRMS – WECAFC RDB DATA VIEWER

148. Mr Yann LAURENT (FAO) recalled the context of the WECAFC RDB data viewer and underlying tool Regional Database (RDB). He presented the expected workflow for data submission to the RDB, from creation of data calls based in DCRF tasks to validation of metadata and dissemination. He encouraged WECAFC Members to contribute to the operationalization of the RDB by providing data according to task II.1, II.2, III.1, and task IV.2. He also highlighted the need to rename the Regional Database to avoid confusion with tools in support to national fisheries statistics and proposed / called for name. Finally, with the coming publication of an upgraded WECAFC Website, he presented the possibility to embed the data viewer in the WECAFC website to increase visibility of fisheries in the region

149. A clarification was made by FAO on request of European Union representation regarding the question of validation of submitted data: it is recalled that submitted data are officially validated data by the submitting Member. This validation step is at metadata level, and should be renamed validation in respect of compliance to task format (or structure).

150. Some names for the regional data base proposed by WECAFC members were:
- i. Bermuda: WeCAAtFiSH - West Central Atlantic Fisheries Statistics Hub;
 - ii. FDS-WG convener (Ms Cummings)- Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Statistics Catalogue; and
 - iii. EU: FAO West Central Atlantic Statistics Hub:
 - (1) FAO WECAF Statistics Catalogue; and
 - (2) FAO WECAF Information System: WECAFIS.

WECAFC SUBAREAS

151. Mr James Geehan (FAO) presented an update on proposals for WECAFC statistical subareas and divisions by first providing a summary of the process developing the proposed subareas. It was noted that the subarea proposals are a product of the FDS-WG and are directly associated with the DCRF in the reporting of data and statistics.

152. The FDS-WG noted that proposals to update and revise the draft 1978 WECAFC legacy subareas (WECAFC, 1978) were first initiated in 2018 at the FDS-WG1 meeting. A background document further detailing the approach and options for the subareas was prepared in May 2020 (WECAFC, 2020c) for the FDS-WG2 Preparatory meetings, convened virtually in July 2020 in preparation for the FDS-WG2 meeting. Additionally consultations were conducted with the FAO Legal Office, CRFM, OSPECA and the WECAFC species working Groups, prior to the FDS-WG2 Preparatory meetings and presentation of the subarea proposals at the October 2020 FDS-WG2 meeting. Since October 2020, two intersessional meetings were convened to discuss the remaining statistical limits that remain unresolved, in particular relating to Central America region (Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua) and the Amazonian region (French Guiana/Brazil).

153. Mr Geehan recalled the two options for the WECAFC subareas presented at the October 2020 FDS-WG2 meeting, both of which aim to maintain, as far as possible, consistency with the marine ecosystem/ecoregions in the WECAFC region (See WWF Maritime ecoregions database: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/marine-ecoregions-of-the-world-a-bioregionalization-of-coastal-and-shelf-areas>):

option 1

The approach used for Option 1 proposes to base the statistical limits on officially recognized treaty lines and 200 nautical mile limits. In areas where no treaties exist, the statistical limits have been delineated according to simple longitudinal, latitudinal, or oblique straight lines, drawn according to a number of priority criteria or common principles (WECAFC, 2020c).

option 2

The approach used for Option 2 is to avoid constructing statistical divisions based on treaty lines, strictly speaking, and instead:

- i. proposes simple longitudinal/latitudinal/oblique statistical limits as close as possible to these treaty lines; in addition to
- ii. the 200 nautical mile limits. Here also, straight lines are drawn according to the priority criteria or common principles.

154. Mr Geehan noted that the ‘ecoregion classification’ relates primarily to coastal and shelf biotas up to depth of 200m depth; while the ‘ecoregion shapefile’ – as presented using the WECAFC-FIRMS interactive map viewer (see <https://wecafc-firms.d4science.org/data-viewer/index.html>) – has been artificially extended by the authors outwards 200 nautical miles from land (or from the 200m depth) primarily to improve the visibility of

ecoregions in global and regional scale maps. In other words, the extent to which the proposed subareas and ecoregions correspond, are more relevant for the continental shelf than for the offshore marine areas.

155. The interim recommendations from the October FDS-WG2 meeting on the subareas topic were recalled, including the preference for subareas and divisions delimited proposed by Option 1:

11. The FDS-WG endorses and recommends to SAG and the Commission the following general principles for the delineation of WECAFC sub-area and divisional sub-area boundaries:

As the overarching principle, maintain consistency with the major ecosystems in the region as the starting point for defining the boundaries.

For the definition of statistical limits, utilize EEZ boundary lines (where they are formalized through treaties and are not disputed) and other default limits (e.g. 200 nautical miles) as the prevailing principle, in combination with, where required or preferred, simple longitudinal, latitudinal or oblique straight lines in the cases where:

(a.) There is no clear demarcation of the maritime boundaries, to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces.

(b.) There are locally recognized and important ecosystem boundaries, together with other considerations such as countries' data collection capacity that would limit adequate reporting.

The WG further recommends that the above general principles constitute decisive criteria and should be followed for further proposals on the final statistical limits, subject to agreement of the WECAFC Members directly involved.

12. The WG recommends the use of Option 1 of the proposed limits for sub-areas presented at the FDS-WG2 meeting, with the understanding that consultations need to continue under the OSPESCA umbrella and between European Union and Brazil, with /in order to finalize the proposal to be presented at the extended session of the FDS-WG2.

156. For the statistical limits that remain unresolved, proposals for short and long-term options were recalled, as detailed in the interim report of the October 2020 FDS-WG2 meeting and also during intersessional WG meetings (convened in March 2021) between the WG, OSPESCA countries and France and Brazil. These cases were specifically in relation to:

- i. Honduras EEZ (subarea/division 31.8 and 31.7.4); and
- ii. Amazonian Basin / French Guiana and Brazil EEZs (subarea/division 31.5 / 41.1.1).

157. In addition, Mr Geehan noted the following proposals by Brazil (submitted during the intersessional discussions convened by the WG in March 2021), regarding additional changes to the northern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 41 for the purposes of reporting:

- extending the northern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 41 northwards, following the EEZ line of Brazil/French Guiana up to the 200 nautical mile limit, in order to fully align with the current EEZ limit; and
- similarly, modifying the north-east limit of FAO Major Fishing area 41 northwards in order that the EEZ of the islands of Sao Pedro and Sao Paulo islands in the Atlantic Ocean be fully enclosed within area 41.

158. Mr Geehan concluded the subareas presentation with the expectations for this session:

- i. to review and finalize the draft (interim) FDS-WG2 WECAFC subarea recommendations, including endorsement of the driving principles and preferred option for the consideration of SAG and WECAFC18; and
- ii. for statistical limits that remain unresolved:
 - a. agree short-term proposals during FDS-WG2 in order to finalize the interim subarea and division definitions required to progress the finalization and endorsement of the DCRF by SAG and WECAFC18; and
 - b. for long-term solutions (which continue to remain outstanding), agree the next steps required to finalize the proposals prior to SAG.

159. While the FDS-WG reiterated their preference in favour of the principles and statistical limits proposed in Option 1, reservations were raised by a small number of WECAFC members (including Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) on the relative merits of Option 1 and Option 2. In particular, support was indicated for areas defined by straight longitudinal/latitudinal lines in accordance (i.e. Option 2) with other FAO major fishing areas, that also avoid issues in cases where no treaty lines exist or, alternatively, areas where there are disputed boundaries. Trinidad further noted that they opted for the straight line proposed in Option 2 because it made more ecological sense from the context of separating Trinidad and Tobago, as Trinidad is part of the North Brazil shelf and Tobago is connected with the Lesser Antilles.

160. The FDS-WG2 recalled that Option 1 proposes statistical limits based, in the majority of cases, on well-established and officially recognized limits established through State treaties and that also facilitates the reporting of data by member states according to the proposed subareas and divisions. In addition, Option 1 also proposes straight lines locally, where preference is given to consistency with ecoregions or areas where maritime boundaries may be undefined or disputed.

161. Mr Taconet (FAO) further recalled that previous comments or concerns expressed by countries had been reviewed and addressed directly or through meetings during the period of consultation between the 2018 FDS-WG1 meeting, the September 2020 Preparatory meetings, the FDS-WG2 October meeting, and this extended session of FDS-WG2. The decision to split Trinidad in subarea 31.5 and Tobago in subarea 31.4 was highlighted as an example of the flexibility of the current approach to adapt to local and specific cases, while still adhering to the prevailing principles for delineating subareas or divisions (i.e. ensuring consistency with the ecoregions). It was also noted that in case of an absence of treaty lines or disputed areas, other straight delineations should be considered.

162. The FDS-WG2 reiterated their support for Option 1, while acknowledging the reservations of some WECAFC members expressed during the meeting. Given the complexities – and potential sensitivities – of the need for clear delimitations for certain countries or subareas, it was requested by Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago that additional information on the justification and rationale be provided in the case of limits that deviate from the general principles when finalizing the proposal.

163. The United States raised questions regarding the terminology used in the DCRF, specifically related to the description of ‘boundaries’ and ‘officially recognized lines’, in particular relating to the boundary between United States and the Bahamas, and agreed to work with the FDS-WG Task Force intersessionally to address the points raised during the meeting, in addition to providing comments or suggested amendments to the statistical limits concerning the United States EEZ subregion.

164. The FDS-WG also noted a late intervention by Mr Freddy Arocha (FAO Consultant) on behalf of the WECAFC Secretariat, concerning amendments to the proposed (Option 1) statistical limits for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Mr Arocha followed with a presentation that outlined the proposed amendments as follows:

- i. move the eastern limit of subarea 31.6 (division 31.6.1) eastwards from 64.5 degrees West to 63 degrees West, to facilitate reporting for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's longline fishery over the Aves ridge (which operates largely within the Venezuelan EEZ) to a single subarea; and
- ii. move the northerly point of the eastern limit of subarea 31.6 (division 31.6.1) north to ensure that reporting for all Venezuelan small-scale activities operating over the continental shelf is enclosed within this area.

165. The European Union questioned to what extent the WECAFC statistical area limits should take into account ICCAT fisheries. Trinidad and Tobago also expressed interest in further reviewing with FAO the proposal by the Venezuelan expert. It was agreed that the proposal be further elaborated during the meeting. Mr Taconet responded that additional clarification by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would be needed to inform on the target species by longline fleets.

166. Mr Geehan thanked the FAO consultant for the useful additional information and background on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's fisheries. Due to the late submission of the proposal, meeting participants were unable to provide formal feedback and WG participants requested that in the future sufficient time be allocated for consideration of any new or amended proposals prior to discussion at the FDS-WG.

167. Secondly, noting that the intervention was proposed by an FAO consultant on behalf of the WECAFC Secretariat, rather than from an official representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (who were not in attendance for the extended session of the FDS-WG2 meeting), the FDS-WG recommended further consideration of the proposal be undertaken by the WECAFC/FAO Secretariats, in consultation and close collaboration with the FDS-WG, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and other WECAFC member states in the region.

168. In concluding the agenda item, the FDS-WG noted that – regarding the statistical limits that remain subject to further discussion – there was an agreement on the following short-term options, including the list and numbering of subareas and divisions required to advance and inform the DCRF. Specifically:

Honduras EEZ (subarea/division intersection 31.8 and 31.7.4): short-term proposal

- a) The western limit of 31.7.4 is modified, following an oblique line (approximating the median line between Honduras, Belize and Guatemala), in order that Honduras EEZ is enclosed entirely within 31.7.4, and separated from Belize and Guatemala.

From an ecological point of view, this option ensures that the relatively deep seas (and less productive waters) from the extended shelf north-east of Honduras are distinguished from the more productive coastal waters along the coast of Belize and Guatemala. The Bahamas also expressed support for keeping 31.8 and 31.7.4 separate from an ecological viewpoint, for example based on scientific literature concerning lobster in this subregion (Cough & Butler IV, 2013).

Amazonian Basin (subarea/division intersection 31.5 and 41.1.1): short-term proposal

- a) Catches within the EEZ of French Guiana (coinciding within area 31.5) are assigned to the predominant areas 31.5, in order to simplify data reporting.
- b) Catches within the EEZ of Brazil (coinciding within area 31.5) are assigned to the predominant areas 41.1.1, also for the purposes of simplifying data reporting.

169. The FDS-WG requested that longer-term proposals for unresolved statistical limits, or other additional inputs on the current subareas proposal, be discussed and finalized intersessionally by the WECAFC members concerned *prior to SAG*, including exact coordinates with narrative justifications as required. Specifically:

- i. Honduras EEZ: Following the intersessional meeting in March 2021, a dedicated meeting of the OSPESCA countries is in progress in order to review the proposed subareas and divisions in the Latin America sub-region and provide consolidated feedback on the preferred long-term options for the Honduras EEZ/Guatemala subregion. An update will be provided to the WECAFC Secretariat and member states prior to SAG.
- ii. United States: Discussions with the United States and the FDS-WG Task Force should continue intersessionally regarding feedback and review of the current proposal for subareas and divisions.
- iii. Amazonian Basin: Intersessional discussions regarding preferences for long-term options for the Amazonia Basin should continue between Brazil, European Union and France, including a review of final draft proposals for the potential modification to FAO Major Fishing Areas 31 and 41.
- iv. the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: FAO and the WECAFC Secretariat to liaise with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and other relevant member states in the region regarding possible alternative options for statistical limits in this subregion, taking into account the new information presented during the meeting.

170. The FDS-WG noted that WECAFC members will be duly informed and consulted of the outcomes of each of the intersessional discussions, prior to the finalization of the subareas proposal to be presented for the consideration and endorsement of SAG and the WECAFC Commission.

WECAFC LIST OF REFERENCE SPECIES – DISCUSSION ON PROPOSALS AND REACHING CONSENSUS

171. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) presented the status of development of the list of reference species (aquatic), and any further additions and requests to the participants. She recalled that the document was shared one month ago in its English version and 3 weeks ago in its Spanish version, in order to allow sufficient time for Members to review. She encouraged participants to provide comments as European Union already did.

172. The chronology of development for the list of reference species was recalled to the participants, which began some 4 years ago, to the current v 0.6. Major milestones include presenting this list of species at FDS-WG1, SAG, and WECAFC 18 at the FDS-WG2 for iDCRF review.

173. It was recalled that this reference list of aquatic species is an integrated element of the DCRF, as well as being an important instrument for scientific monitoring. The species list needs to account for identifying species/subareas for minimum data reporting according to DCRF tasks, as well as for species identified as of other importance to the regional fishery bodies and respond to criteria that would make the sub-regional list distinct from the ICM criteria. The need to develop (intersessionally) a staged approach for implementation of species collections/reporting, according to DCRF task and species priority basis of support was stressed.

174. Ms Cummings presented the final proposal for list of species, organized by group and subgroup:

group 1: all species of interest to WECAFC members, excepting those species in Group 2:

- sub group basis 1: species of key importance for WECAFC, under FMPs;
- sub group basis 2: species of interest to historical WG of regional bodies (WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, including their ICM);
- sub group basis 3: species in high seas (areas beyond national jurisdictions) / straddling / shared / migratory / demersal / deep seas stock unchanged from previous version; and
- sub group basis 4 former basis 5.

group 2: other species with international mandatory reporting requirements (e.g. tuna / tuna like species).

175. Ms Cummings proceeded by presenting to the participants the recent work done since the October FDS-WG2 virtual session, which led to the new and updated content in the list of Species:

- annotation of DCRF task by subareas and species (new); and
- elevating species (this work ongoing: moving species from basis 4 to a high basis).

176. It was recalled that thanks to contributions from WECAFC Members, the species list is evolving, pointing out that during the interim, a few species were noted as missing.

177. Finally, participants were requested to:

1. endorse revision in species Group 1 / 2 and the staged approach for implementation of data collection; and
2. endorse new / initial work on annotation of DCRF task by subareas / species.

178. France representative asked why in the document, ‘the subareas are not reported in the appendix’, to which Ms Cummings responded that ‘the subarea column is for the time being indicated as WECAFC and is abbreviated as ‘WCA’- Western Central Atlantic. She further noted that the group should start refining in this column by subarea once this addition has been endorsed by the WG and the statistical reporting areas are identified and endorsed’.

European Union representative-Mr Varsamos thanked the taskforce for the effort made in accommodating the comments made in previous meetings by the European Union regarding the main list of reference species. He proceeded by asking what was involved for a species to be in the different groups/subgroups and whether there was any obligation for data collection.

179. FDS-WG convener reminded the participants of the requirements of a species being in Group1, noting that in group 1, Subgroup 4 was formerly basis 5 (groundfish and shrimps were elevated here) according to the 1978 WG party on the fisheries statistics proposal. She stressed that the elimination of the subgroup does not remove the need to collect data on those species. Regarding the data collection/reporting obligation question raised by the EU, there was reporting requested for Subgroup1, and it is encouraged for the other subgroups.

FAO further explained that basis 1 and basis 2 are of interest at a regional level, basis 3 is beyond national jurisdiction, and basis 4 is all other species identified and flagged for commercial interest including legacy ones. FAO concluded that the elevation of species from one subgroup to another was at countries' requests.

180. FDS-WG convener added that for basis 2, 3, and 4, they have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible to ensure that all species of interest have been included. She further reached out to the group intersessionally for their continued input regarding any additional species as relates elevation.

181. United States representative commented that ICCAT species (sharks included) were also under CITES. She stressed the importance of including these species, as well as having the information on these species collected, as they are of high importance to the members.

182. FAO recalled the importance of having a scope by task which will refer to these species groups while remarking that it was not clear where the ETP species should be listed. FAO also added that a rationale will be elaborated in the next version, to provide guidance for the clearance/elevation of species from subgroup 4 to other subgroups, for approval by Members and implementation as an appendix where these are listed separately.

183. European Union commented that the initial suggestion was not to have included any species that were under the mandate of another organisation.

184. Convener added that the species of concern from European Union (tunas and billfishes) were now placed in the second group of species with added recognition that these species were to be sampled according to guidelines of their managing body (ICCAT)

INTERIM DCRF UPDATE

185. Marc Taconet (FAO) presented the updated version of iDCRF v 0.6. He recalled that the document was shared one month ago in its English version and 3 weeks ago in its Spanish version, in order to allow sufficient time for Members to review. He encouraged participants to provide comments as European Union already did.

186. He first recalled the main outcomes of FDS-WG2 October virtual session, which recognized that DCRF serves minimum two purposes, a capacity building tool for use at national level and an instrument to support the scientific mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM. He indicated that this new version incorporated changes supported by the FDS-WG2 October meeting for recommendations to SAG and the Commission, including better addressing multi-gear nature of the Caribbean fisheries, better qualifying active vessels, better describing biological data and refinement of socio economics aspects. He recalled that FDS-WG supports the modular and incremental approach with an agreement to put priority on Task III (fleet), Task II (catch by species and Effort) and task IV (biological data). Task I (regional data) and Task V (socio eco) come as secondary priority. To recall the tasks of the DCRF are as follows:

DCRF Tasks
Task I – Regional figures of national fisheries
Task II – Catch and effort (landing data, catch data per species)
Task III – Fleet statistics
Task IV – Biological information

187. Mr Taconet presented more in depth the main modification of the DCRF after recommendations from FDS-WG2 October session as

i) updated chapter I ii) refined Chapter II (now Appendix 9 Glossary) regarding definitions (multigear, predominant gear, active vessel definition, and some other Vessel related definitions) and iii) Chapter 3 thoroughly revised with integration of summary tasks tables and for each task, addition of objective, scope and rules for data sharing and access, as well as reviewed tasks with major changes in task I and task IV. Task I.1 and Task II.2 additional changes were introduced to the participants highlighting some level of similarity with FAO's Fleet questionnaire for Fishing capacity (Task I.1), and an alignment with FAO's Statlant questionnaire for Catch by subarea (Task I.2). Mr Taconet called for a recommendation for a minimum size of vessels which should be included in a national vessel registry (Task III.2). The Biological Task IV is now supported by a newly proposed appendix 6.2 to define standard measurements and compile validated biological parameters. Regarding Task V on ETP species, participants were requested to propose a way to identify ETP species in Appendix 3.

188. Mr Taconet introduced the actions expected from the participants of the extended session of the FDS-WG2:

1. provide comments / changes and responses to the "Notes for reviewers";
2. recommended endorsement of iDCRF for SAG / WECAFC 18;
3. promote use and contribution throughout the other working group; and
4. confirm october 2020 FDS-WG2 recommendations for the proposed staged approach for implementation by WECAFC Members.

189. France thanked the Task force for this new version which clarifies scope for the tasks, and indicated that few comments were provided prior to the meeting.

- i. There is a need for further aligning Table 1 and Task descriptions.
- ii. The concept target species also requires a definition and the development of a list of target species should be envisaged in order to facilitate data collection, as most of the time, fisheries are multispecies and large groups of species are caught together (e.g. small pelagics or reef fish instead of individual species).
- iii. Target species at Fleet registry level (Task III.1) might not be relevant as target species can change.

190. OSPESCA recalled that at national level target species in the boat registry is needed in some countries. Bermuda specified that they do not have fishing vessels with primary/secondary gears and when licensing there could be special permits for e.g. Queen Conch, Lobster, making it difficult to assign vessels to fleet segments. Antigua highlighted that the concept of target species can't be applied for their type of fisheries being multigear / multispecies. Barbados advocated that there is no concept of hierarchy among the gears and that there should be a way to indicate "if applicable" for primary/secondary/...

191. France further highlighted that reporting by quarter for the fleet task will not be possible, and stated that referring both to national and regional levels in the tasks adds complexity and creates confusion, pointing to the need for focusing on the regional level with a strong connection between DCRF and its appendices, and to simplify such as removing reference to national level or having another table separated for the national level.

192. Mr Taconet indicated that DCRF being both in support to regional and national levels, it is important to align and harmonize tasks definitions between both levels and to remain flexible in accommodating specific needs at national level where those contribute to the regional aggregates. For the Vessel register, it was remarked that the fields added beyond the Global Record standards are essentially for consideration at national level. Mr Taconet also concurred that a simplified presentation separating better the regional and national levels can be worked out and will be proposed in the next version.

193. Upon request for guidance on vessel minimum length for inclusion in national and regional vessel registers, it was agreed to apply the 12 meters length.

194. The Convener requested whether beyond the specific comments provided, the current version received general support. Brazil expressed on behalf of the meeting participants a general support for the DCRF structure and tasks components.

195. Before closing the agenda item and upon request of Trinidad and Tobago and the United States, the Convener invited the Members to provide additional comments by mid-June, at which point the task force will work on a new version of DCRF for endorsement and bring any outstanding issue to the Members for clarifications and eventually for final recommendations.

DCRF APPENDICES UPDATE

196. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) introduced participants main changes in appendices in the v 0.6. She first recalled the history of changes of DCRF and appendices.

She summarized the work done related to appendices addressing FDS-WG2 October 2020 meeting comments:

- a. re-grouping appendices with similar concepts;
- b. informing content in appendix 6 which had not yet been populated and revision of appendix 3;
- c. adding two new appendices for socio economic aspects; and
- d. removing the appendix FIRMS list of stocks and fisheries, and moving this list into a separate document.

197. Ms Cummings shared with the participants work done to address European Union comments received at the beginning of the extended session related to appendix 3 species: moving pelagic sharks from Group 1 to Group 2.

198. She presented requests to participants related to the revision of appendices and summarized the expectations for this topic:

- c) support for reorganization of Appendices as recommended in FDS-WG2 (October session) and as presented in v0.6;
- d) support reorganization of Appendix 3.1 as presented in v0.6 for this meeting, reflecting two groups of species for reporting;
- e) support List of national fisheries (3.2) and stocks (national and shared) (3.3) in the iDCRF v0.6 and recommendation to update the list with new stocks based on the stock assessments formally reviewed and endorsed by the SAG; and
- f) continue work to populate Appendix 6 during the intersession and update Appendix 6.

199. Ms Cummings concluded with presenting the next steps to moving to SAG review including:

- a. incorporating additional textual edits as noted by European Union during this session; and
- b. incorporate further discussion content from this meeting.

200. United States representative praised the work done on the Appendices in general and further initiated a discussion on inclusion of pelagics not being under ICCAT mandate in Group 2, with the example of dolphinfish / wahoo. Also, the United States has an interest to monitor these other pelagic species, supporting the new working group.

201. Bermuda concurred with United States on the importance of wahoo, further welcoming inclusion at WECAFC with a greater focus.

202. Mrs Diei Ouadi, WECAFC Secretary clarified that for species such as sharks, dolphinfish and wahoo, the Commission is working on establishing a MoU with ICCAT. She recalled that a joint working group will be soon created with ICCAT for sharks.

203. European Union acknowledged effort to address concern and to move ICCAT species that were previously in Group 1 (basis 2) now to a standalone Group 2. He further recalled that since the beginning European Union recommended not to include these species in WECAFC, especially with the limited resource but want to be constructive. Some additional textual wording was proposed for Group 2 during this meeting and the European Union is requesting to have this taken into consideration.

204. A discussion was held regarding the five WECAFC members not being ICCAT CPCs (Contracting parties) and the need for group 2: Bermuda representative highlighted benefits for ICCAT having WECAFC collecting data from around the region on ICCAT species - especially if it is in a similar, and therefore useful, format that could be provided for collaborations, recognizing that ICCAT would obviously retain primary management responsibility

205. FDS-WG Convener noted that the DCRF is an instrument for scientific purpose not for management. Group 2 in that regards is important to be kept as recognized by several members here.

206. Barbados representative highlighted that proposed list of species represents WECAFC as it is now. If WECAFC evolves as a RFMO, list of species will change and will certainly be reduced.

207. Mr Taconet summarized on the role of the FDS-WG regarding the aforementioned species wahoo, dolphinfish, and dharks. Considering that not all WECAFC members are ICCAT CPCs, that ICCAT doesn't provide stock assessments for some of these species, acknowledging EU's effort to accommodate these in the list of species, further considering the need to harmonize reporting, and to provide support for improved reporting, the FDS-WG could present these views and request to have further review of these species upon coming collaboration with ICCAT.

208. As a conclusion of the above exchanges, FDS-WG Convener proposed to create group 3.

209. European Union recalled that DCRF has to state clearly that there is no binding obligation to report. In addition, it is recalled that any country catching tuna and tuna like species is required under UNCLOS (UN,1978) to report to ICCAT. In order not to block further discussion, European Union agreed on the new proposed Group 3.

210. FDS-WG Convener noted the additional textual edits to be included in next revision of species list and new group 3 to be indicated (containing tunas/tuna like species/billfishes/pelagic sharks)

COUNTRY SELECTIONS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

211. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) recalled the outcomes of the FDS-WG2 October 2020 session, related to the continued need for capacity support in the WECAFC Region, as was presented in Agenda item 9, 10 (October 2020 and in Interim report, item 68), having been developed from a summary of participants presentations on country needs as:

- limited human and financial resources;
- need for modern supporting tools;
- inadequate legal framework;
- highly manual work;
- lack of basic data to feed stoc assessment; and
- need for capacity building, a recurring issue.

212. She noted countries continued indications towards needs for considerations for support, which included limited resources from the WECAFC-FIRMS phase III project, and the need for establishing a foundation for objective selections. The proposed criteria included for evaluating merits of capacity needs included: motivation, technical level, political and institutional priorities, etc.

213. She recalled that the FDS-WG2 October 2020 session further endorsed a number of baseline criteria, including: whether this support was identified at national level as a top priority, whether fisheries statistics are a priority in the FAO Country Programming Framework, whether countries are receiving support on data collection and statistics from FAO or other technical agencies, whether the countries have the capacity to receive support in terms of human resources and infrastructure to ensure the long-term sustainability of the data collection activities, the balance of countries between subregional fishery bodies (CRFM / OSPESCA) and other

stakeholder groups (CLME+, WWF, TNC, ICCAT, etc.), and matching WECAFC priorities in terms of contributions towards Fishery management plans.

214. Ms Cummings presented the post FDS-WG2 October session capacity support work, which was intended to add more transparency as related to the selection leading to developing a preliminary Capacity Initiatives Scoring Matrix. This matrix has 5 main criteria, with each criteria and scoring principles presented. The result of scoring was shared with countries for consideration by participants.

215. Ms Cummings finally presented the proposed strategy in 3 phases:

1. phase 3 WECAFC-FIRMS project period extension through May 2022;
2. balance sought among sub-regions towards three countries pre-identified, one for each sub-region CRFM, OSPESCA, other WECAFC countries; and
3. project coordinator to work with selected countries and WECAFC Secretariat to develop a plan of work including overall scope, project deliverables and time table for work. Anticipated start time: Q4 2021.

216. Ms Cummings requested to the participants of the extended session of the FDS-WG2 the following:

- endorse general approach for country selections incorporating numeric scorings against relevant criteria;
- endorse schedule for proposed country capacity implementation support; and
- discuss interest in adopting this scoring system.

217. FAO (Mr Taconet) added two clarifications:

1. The FAO CPF (Country Programming Framework) is a plan/document at a political level between FAO and member countries identifying strategic priorities. If statistics in general or more specifically fisheries statistics are in CPF, a high priority is given by FAO to national supported projects including through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme fund (TCP).
2. The scoring system is objective and is still being developed however even in the early stages provides a transparent and quantitative approach to ranking project initiatives. A low ranking score does not mean bad performance in data collection, but can mean that the country is already receiving support, or identifies the countries with the highest needs. A high score does not guarantee the country is a final selectee.

He further encouraged participants to contribute to this discussion at a national level.

218. European Union requested clarification on whether a document was published prior to this meeting related to these activities, presenting activities eligible in this framework; and whether any technical, training, and financial support was available? He also asked for a recall of the phase 1 and 2 undertakings to better grasp the work done so far (including beneficiaries and their experiences) and country selection criteria (if any).

219. FDS-WG Convener responded that there is no official document, but this work builds on the FDS-WG2 meeting held in October 2020 with presentation delivered by FAO, for which there is an official meeting report. It was clarified that areas of support are related to development of capacity related to fisheries data and statistics. A table will be prepared with capacity building projects already implemented or on-going.

220. FAO added that WECAFC- phase 1 and 2 didn't include budget for support to capacity building to WECAFC Members. Phase 2 coordinated activities between different projects, using the task force supported by the project to identify synergies and coordinate activities relating to fisheries statistics. Under the request from the donor under phase 3, this framework was developed. It was clarified under European Union request that this initiative is broader than an European Union initiative, i.e. through the WECAFC/FIRMS Secretariat and/or other

donors also. It brings transparency in the process of projects selection to support WECAFC Members. FDS-WG convener called for further suggestions and improvements.

221. Ms Tania Norori (OSPESCA) asked if new projects could be included in the matrix, as follow-up support activities to integrate the subarea division work: FDS-Convener responded positively, complemented by FAO recalling that the matrix will be enriched with any needs expressed by Members as well as status of data submission to FIRMS and DCRF.

222. Brazil queried why Brazil obtained a score of zero in the matrix: FDS-WG Convener recalled that Brazil has just joined FDS-WG and could not be scored in the matrix. It was highlighted that scoring will be revisited and will evolve based on participation (of this meeting) and contribution to FIRMS. Brazil received very positively this answer and expressed its willingness to have more proactive participations to WECAFC working groups, with a direct impact on matrix scoring change for the country.

DATA PREPARATORY WORKSHOP AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEVERAGING DATA COLLECTIONS

223. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) presented the work plan for the online data preparatory workshop. The proposal consists of 4 sessions of 3 hours to be held during Q3 2021, between September and November, to review the data submissions for Tasks II, III and IV of the DCRF and for the FIRMS stocks and fisheries inventory template. Expected outcomes of the data preparatory workshop is the operationalization of the Regional Database with published data and enrichment of FIRMS inventories.

224. France requested clarification on the data preparatory workshop objectives regarding sharing of experience on data entry. It was confirmed that the data prep workshop will be an informal opportunity to present the tools and to get feedback including challenges, shared experiences, and any other matter.

UPDATE, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRMS, SSF MATRIX, AND VESSEL MAPPINGS.

- **FIRMS**

225. Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) presented the status of inventories in the region and recalled the recommendations made during the October 2020 session.

For the WECAFC region, 78 reports were published as marine resource fact sheets, of which 27 were published in 2019, with thirteen countries producing 31 published fisheries fact sheets (for a total of 36 observations) between 2016 and early 2021. It was emphasized that the main sources of information for the marine resource fact sheets include reports from the WECAFC SAG, OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC working groups, the Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR), and CRFM Continental Shelf Fisheries Working Group. For the fisheries fact sheets, contributions were collated from the Department of Fisheries, National Ministries, Fishery Research Institutes (e.g. IFREMER) and other fishery reports (e.g. FAO, fisheries country profiles, CRFM Fishery Reports).

226. He recalled the recommendations made during the October 2020 session, which include:

- progression on the WECAFC-FIRMS stocks and fisheries by encouraging the WECAFC Members to provide new fisheries submissions and/or updates. Member countries working with the FIRMS Secretariat, and the regional and subregional FIRMS focal points will collaboratively progress on this goal;
- encourage the facilitation of the update of the inventories, including designation of regional data calls, and liaising with regional / sub-regional focal points;
- (European Union): recommends the provision on guidance from the Commission on the need and process for updating these inventories;
- (United States): recommends designating a formal data call for inventory updates with the acceptable date to be identified at FDS-WG2 extension workshop;

- encourage Members to disseminate fishery and stock status fact sheets in national/regional websites, social media, and other information sharing mechanisms;
- encourage FIRMS to develop additional data services under the guidance of this WG according to the results of the FIRMS Survey, communicated for the FDS-WG2, and also to conduct further validation of country needs by the extended session (e.g. WECAFC maps viewer, extract of lists of WECAFC stocks in Excel with their status); and
- future work: the inclusion in the DCRF Appendices:
 - list of WECAFC Fisheries ; and
 - list of WECAFC Stocks.

- **SSF Matrix**

227. Mr James Geehan (FAO) recalled the outcome of FDS-WG2 Oct 2020 session outcome regarding the SSF. Eight countries in the region applied the matrix to their fisheries as a case studies. Feedback were collected and presented to the group with proposal for improvement / upgrade: the WG recognized the interest of the Matrix. It is to be noted that this matrix is coming from a global initiative and adding new categories will have to be carefully reviewed by the FAO headquarter team in charge of the SSF Matrix.

228. Recommendation to FDS-WG is to onboard additional WECAFC Members to test the matrix to increase the number of case studies that can be used as the basis of feedback to FAO, as well as broaden the knowledge in WECAFC in terms of the categorization of small-and large-scale fisheries in the region.

- **Vessel Mappings Update**

229. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) recalled the outcome of the FDS-WG October meeting related to the vessel mapping session, i.e. mapping of national fleet segment to proposed WECAFC regional fleet segment classification:

- The proposed extensive definition has been endorsed for fleet segment with incorporation of notion of “Predominant gear” for multigear vessels that allows to reflect diversity of artisanal vessel types from the region as well as a varying composition annually
- The notion of predominance is to be defined: the proposal during October 2020 session was to consider that predominant gear is used more than 50percent of its fishing time during the year (based on fishing days?). If not, the vessel shall be allocated to the multi-gear fleet segments. The FDS-WG requested that predominance definition be included in the DCRF, which has been done.

230. He recalled that comments from European Union were taken into consideration in the vessel mapping classification update.

231. He concluded, requesting participants to consider the Recommendation to SAG to endorse the proposed fleet segment regional classification, recognizing that it describes fully the actual WECAFC fleet topology in all its diversity as it extends the fleet definition to incorporate the notion of “Predominant gear” in the case of multigear vessels.

232. After a question from France representative, FAO confirmed that in absence of any further comment, the proposed addition by France for a length class 6-10 / 10-12 was endorsed, and will be added in the fleet segment classification.

LOGBOOK GUIDELINES PROJECT IN THE WECAFC REGION IN CONTEXT OF OPERATIONALIZING DCRF

233. This item was not considered mature enough to be presented in a full session. It was addressed in item 13.

FINAL PLENARY DELIVERY SUMMARY FROM DISCUSSIONS OF ITEMS 3 – 10. DATA VIEWER, SUBAREAS PROPOSALS, LIST OF SPECIES, DCRF STRUCTURE, APPENDICES STRUCTURE AND CONTENT, COUNTRY SELECTIONS, DATA PREPARATORY WORKSHOP

234. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) presented the group a summary of the discussions held for each substantive item:

- **For the RDB and Maps viewer, and FIRMS inventories**, various proposals were provided for the name of the RDB and a survey will be organized to gain understanding of the best supported proposal for a final decision on the name. Next steps will be the data preparatory workshop, and publishing of the viewer together with the finalization of the WECAFC website.
- **For the Subareas**, the general principles were recalled, and it was noted that the United States will provide some legal terms. The disclaimer regarding the legal status of the proposed subarea and divisional statistical limits was reiterated. Upon request from the United States, further consultation will take place intersessionally regarding the delimitations of statistical subareas. Members agreed on the short-term solution for the Amazonian Basin, and for Honduras the detailed proposal including coordinates for an oblique straight line between Honduras and Guatemala will be tabled to the concerned Members. Regarding the long-term options, a recommendation will be formulated by the Secretariat and reviewed during the intersessional period also by the concerned members. When adopted, any recommendations concerning changes to the FAO Major Fishing Areas will be forwarded to CWP. Regarding the proposal brought by the Secretariat for changes to subarea division 31.6.1 regarding the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the proposal will be reviewed during the intersession with the concerned Members, however in absence of endorsement by Members of an alternative solution, the delineation for 31.6.1 as originally tabled to this extended session will be maintained. Notwithstanding these cases that concern the geographic delimitations of sub-areas or divisions, it was agreed that the general numbering of the sub-areas has been agreed and a recommendation to start working with their general identities will be proposed for adoption. Also, the Secretariat will work on precise coordinates of the delimitations in order to finalize Appendix 2.
- **For the Capacity building initiative**, there is general agreement in principle with the approach as it is transparent and useful for prioritization, and a final scoring - as at the extended session - will be produced and will constitute the basis for the Secretariat to identify priority countries and contact them to assess their willingness to proceed with a project for implementation by mid-2022. As for next steps, an accompanying document detailing the approach will be produced for review towards further enhancements including e.g. other criteria and scoring methodology.
- **For the List of Species**, the proposal to add a third group was well received, and the appendix 3 will be finalized by incorporating the editorial changes from European Union received at this meeting and a few additional structural changes.
- **For the DCRF**, the high-level structure of the DCRF was endorsed, and more editorial work was requested to simplify articulation between National / Regional. Some amendments were requested, including quarterly time resolution optional and for national level, 12 m limit for insertion in vessel registry, a better way to identify ETP species. Defining Target species will require more discussions and could be recommended as a work item for next steps. Additional comments on iDCRF can be provided up to the 15th June, and a new version v0.7 will be produced by the Secretariat with the goal that FDS-WG will recommend it for SAG and WECAC-18 endorsements.
- **For the DCRF Appendix**, the reorganization of appendices is supported by the group with the removal and transfer of appendices 3.2 (list of fisheries) and 3.3 (lists of stocks) in another DCRF associated document. Next steps will include editorial changes, update appendix 2 on subareas, a further elaboration of appendix 6 “biological parameters”, applying the same timeline as DCRF.

235. Following this presentation, some feedback was received by Members:

- Brazil recalled to consider the need to adjust Statistical areas limits to the Sao Paulo case.
- Barbados referred to the term “default” used for the subareas and stressed that the proper language should be to add the word “customary” before the word “default”; and in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela case suggested to not use the term “traditional” as this term has important implications. Barbados also requested to include the nuances between “preliminary data reporting” to the RDB, and “final data reporting”, as it is important to allow revisions of submitted data including for historical figures.

FDS-WG INTERSESSION ACTIVITIES 2021 -2022 –UPDATE ON INTERSESSIONAL WORK SINCE FDS-WG2; FURTHER DISCUSSION ON FDS-WG ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND ADJUSTMENTS INDICATED

236. Mrs Nancie Cummings (NOAA) presented FDS-WG work plan for intersession activities.

237. The workplan was reviewed, completed intersessional activities since October 2020 FDS-WG2 sessions were flagged.

238. The final intersessional workplan is available in [Annex J](#).

239. WECAFC Secretary recalled FDS-WG that SAG new TORs requests that submission of any recommendation is done three months in advance to the Commission. WECAFC 18 should be held in June 2022. Hence any recommendation from FDS-WG should be transmitted for review by March 2022

REVIEW WECAFC STANDARDIZED WG TORs

240. Mrs Yvette Diei Ouadi (FAO) presented the new standardized template for the WECAFC working groups Terms of Reference (ToR).

241. She explained that the current eleven WECAFC Working Groups TORs are very diverse in format and content, and therefore lack cohesion. The SAG TORs were recently reviewed, a process was developed to review and propose a standard approach to updating the WG TORs. Existing TORs were reviewed and compared, best practices from other RFBs and RFMOs scientific committees or technical working groups were consulted. A standard template was developed, reviewed and endorsed. She concluded with the last step in having the WECAFC WGs review and update their TORs according to this new template. She further stressed that the template format can't be altered and only what is in yellow requires the WGs input.

242. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) presented the new template and its application to the existing WG TORs and encouraged the group to contribute and provide feedback on it.

243. Barbados remarked that instead of referring to “living species”, “existant species” would be preferred.

244. European Union thanked those involved in the preparation of this document (new template of the WG TORs) and noted that given the time remaining, the European Union suggests that the WECAFC Secretariat circulate the proposed TORs for extended review to which the WECAFC Secretariat agreed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FDS-WG MEMBERSHIP, ETC.,)

245. No other business was raised by the FDS-WG2.

FDS-WG DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SAG (SPRING 2022) \ COMMISSION (2022) – REVIEW AND ADOPTION

246. The FDS-WG convener presented the draft recommendations shaped in the new standard recommendations template. Proposed recommendation was shared through an online document². Final reviewed version is available in [Annex K](#).

247. European Union and United States requested additional time after the session to review thoroughly the proposed recommendations. Both highlighted the priority to finalize DCRF prior to review the recommendations.

248. Upon request from the US, the institutional process to submit recommendations was clarified: first report is reviewed including recommendations. Then report and recommendations go to SAG, then recommendations are presented to WECAFC-18 after integration of all comments.

249. FAO in agreement with Convener and Secretariat proposed to hold a Conclusion session to propose, review and stamp a final recommendation for SAG. This proposal was endorsed and dates will be refined (Oct/Nov 2021) according to intersession activities.

ELECTION OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

250. Mr Taconet (FAO) indicated that given the current COVID situation, and depending on the resources that can be mobilized, the next meeting FDS-WG3 could be held, face-to-face in 2 years, i.e. in 2023, or alternatively online. He stressed the importance of having such a meeting every 2 years, based on the available resources. This was seconded by Ms Cummings, who proposed the spring/summer of 2023, and no oppositions were further made by the participants.

251. Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi (FAO) continued with the election of the new convener and co-conveners. She opened it up to all members to volunteer, as well as to Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) if she would be willing to continue.

252. Ms Cummings (NOAA) indicated her willingness to continue, but in the interest of building strength and capacity in the WG, she encouraged participation amongst the group in the form of a co-convener role that would fall under her mentorship.

253. Mr Taconet (FAO) thanked Ms Nancie Cummings for her incredible work, leadership, energy and guidance and was pleased that she was willing to continue in the role of convener. He continued that there is opportunity for 2 co-conveners, and any suggestions for candidates have not been received with the hopes to have some suggestions by the next WECAFC. He presented the roles and activities of conveners and co-conveners and highlighted that co-convener role will be requested to be added in TOR addendum. He reminded countries that it is part of their engagement and commitment to be involved, and that younger people can take on a more active role within the task force.

254. Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi (FAO) encouraged the participants to volunteer, and added that once members had had an opportunity to thoroughly go through the TORs, they may be more willing to volunteer.

255. Ms Carolyn Gruber (United States) supported adding a co-convener role and the addition in the TOR addendum.

256. The WECAFC FDS-WG2 participants warmly thanked Ms Nancie Cummings in her role as convener, as well as her willingness to continue acting as the convener.

² https://docs.google.com/document/d/10AF7sU_1M1TyKemPo8SPbb-n2GPM3AZW1P_sdge7C7I/edit

CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

257. In closing of the meeting, Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi (FAO) highlighted some of the main achievements including the discussions and recommendations on subareas, the priority species list, the new version of the DCRF, and the revised TORs. She gave thanks to all of the participants, the RFBs and the chair of the meeting Ms Nancie Cummings for their continued good work. She concluded that follow-up actions relating to the subareas and the finalization of the DCRF have been identified and will be pursued on during the intersessional period.
258. Mr Taconet shared with the participants the organization of the upcoming July 2021 30th session of the FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean (IICAS). FAO has been asked to provide a half day's intervention on fisheries statistics, in the context of WECAFC. CRFM and OPESCA have been contacted to contribute and FAO will come back to certain members to seek further contributions.
259. The meeting was closed on Friday 28 May 2021 at 1.04pm (Miami time).

PART III - FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP SECOND MEETING CONCLUSION SESSION 10TH MARCH 2022

BACKGROUND TO THE MEETING

260. The Extended session was convened virtually 25–28 May 2021 (WECAFC, 2022) with the objective to review conclusions of the following key topics:

- (i) FIRMS – WECAFC Regional Database data viewer;
- (ii) WECAFC Subarea Proposals;
- (iii) WECAFC List of Reference species;
- (iv) DCRF body and Appendices review; and
- (v) Vessel Mappings/ Small Scale Fisheries Matrix.

261. For reaching consensus on a few outstanding points, this Extended session agreed to reconvene for this Conclusion session.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

262. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) welcomed the participants on behalf of the WECAFC and WECAFC Secretary. He recalled that this session is the conclusion of October 2020 FDS-WG2 meeting and May 2021 Extended session, adapting the activities of the FDS-WG to the particular situation of the COVID.

263. He warmly thanked EU DG MARE as well as NOAA for the continuing financial and in-kind support to this working group, the WECAFC Secretariat, and other WGs, and referred to the importance of the work progressed under the FDS-WG as an essential contribution to the WECAFC reorientation process. He expressed his hope to see this collaboration continuing in the coming years.

264. He thanked the FDS-WG Convener, Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA), for her great continued work, and recalled the call for candidates for the role of Convener and Co-Conveners for this working group.

265. He concluded by thanking all the FAO, CRFM and OSPESCA supporting teams.

ATTENDANCE

266. The virtual meeting was attended by 39 experts from the following 15 WECAFC members: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Federative Republic of Brazil, France, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America, in addition to OSPESCA, one of the regional partner organizations. The complete list of participants is available in Annex A.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEURS

267. In the absence of rules for a virtual meeting and considering the challenge of running such a meeting, the Convener of the FDS-WG Ms Nancie Cummings, NOAA, was appointed chair of the meeting. Mr Yann Laurent (FAO), assisted by Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) and Ms Bracken van Niekerk (FAO), acted as rapporteurs.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

268. The tentative agenda was presented to the group. It was proposed to the group to amend slightly item 8 title and to add in item 9 (AOB) the consideration for possible applicants to the Co-Convener(s) role. The meeting adopted the agenda, with the proposed amendment as shown in [Annex D](#).

CONCLUSION MEETING 2ND FDS-WG INTRODUCTION

269. Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA), FDS-WG 2 meeting Convener, recalled to the participants the main outcomes of this FDS-WG second meeting, including review of revised contents of the interim Data Collection Reference Framework iDCRF) and proposed classifications. She also recalled the intersessional

activities and the FDS-WG 2 extended session (held virtually in May 2021) conclusions on the main topics: subareas, list of species, revision of the iDCRF task descriptions and appendices.

270. Ms Cummings invited participants to introduce themselves and present their expectation to this conclusion meeting.
271. Ms Cummings recalled the three main primary objectives: iDCRF, list of aquatic species and other appendices, and WECAFC subareas proposal for statistical purpose.

PARTICIPANTS INTRODUCTIONS (EXPECTATIONS/AFFILIATIONS)

272. A round table was conducted where the 52 participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves and share with the group their expectations for the meeting. Participants highlighted the importance of this working group and meeting, which will contribute to the finalization of iDCRF. It was also noted that the attendance of junior staff is an excellent opportunity for learning, and for continuation of the work in countries regarding data collection and good quality data that is both reliable and harmonized. This was also an opportunity to learn from the Bahamas that the new Fisheries Act passed recently (Dec. 21 2020) with important provisions for data collection.

DCRF UPDATE

273. Mr Marc Taconet (FAO) updated the participants on the progress made on the update of the DCRF according to recommendations made by WECAFC Members during the past sessions / intersessional work.
274. He presented the major changes brought into the DCRF version 0.7 which was shared with the participants one month prior to this meeting, including better alignment between Table 1 and the objectives at task level, simplified presentation of tasks with a focus on the regional level, and focused priority for provision of data to the Regional Database on group 1 Species.
275. Mr Taconet concluded by requesting Member Representatives to:
- a) provide additional comments;
 - b) recommend “Endorsement of iDCRF v0.7 by SAG and WECAFC 18 ;
 - c) promote (i)DCRF use and contributions throughout the other working groups, through SAG and Members active participation; and
 - d) proceed with a staged approach for implementation of DCRF by WECAFC Members.
276. A discussion followed FAO presentation.
277. The France Representative praised the progress in the latest release of the DCRF (v0.7), a very good version. He commented the difference between Task III.1. and Taks I.1, especially with the risk of double counting. He indicated that both tasks were filled out by France showing significant differences. This exercise will be shared with FDS-WG Convener.
278. FAO answered that these two tasks are targeting two different types of information. Task III.1 which measures the fleet engagement in fisheries will indeed result in double counting vessels as same artisanal multigear vessels can switch from one gear to another targeting different species in different fishing grounds. Getting this information on actual or potential capacity regarding vessel engagement can be a demanding task as it requires to have detailed information on vessels, their licenses or their fishing practice (catches, and gears).
279. Representative of Barbados thanked for the clarification on the difference with fleet capacity (Task I.1) where vessels are accounted uniquely. He indicated that an issue was identified in Barbados with the upper limit in the length class [12m – 19.9m]: most vessels are closer to 12m than the upper limit of 19.9. Data in this class might be understood as a large fleet of large vessels although the vessels are actually smaller. Instead of average, modal grouping would be preferable.

280. FAO indicated that Barbados proposal for modal grouping should be reviewed by the working group, probably for the next version of the DCRF as this version is now being finalized for submission to Commission in July
281. TTO representative recalled to FDS-WG that Statistics Templates for data submission in the Regional Database (RDB) need to be updated according to the fleet segment label as featuring in the DCRF. She also indicated that a difference exists between WECAFC fleet segment and FAO reporting of fleet with a 18m limit in FAO, not currently in WECAFC.
282. A discussion followed this concern expressed by Trinidad and Tobago: WECAFC-FIRMS task member recalled that the rationale behind the building of length classes was to align and harmonize regional and international reporting needs:
- European Union: limit at 10m in regulation;
 - FAO: limit at 18m in reporting; and
 - ICCAT: limit at 20m in reporting needs (individual reporting for vessel above 20m).
283. It appeared that the 18m had been lost in the multiple versions of the DCRF: the group requested to have the 18m limit re-integrated in the DCRF. This restored length class [12m – 17.9m] with a lower upper limit would also contribute to address the above concern expressed by Barbados.

DCRF-APPENDICES UPDATE

284. Nancie Cummings (NOAA) recalled the chronology of changes and revision of DCRF and presented changes brought into v0.7 since May 2021 extended sessions: simplified Appendix 2 on spatial units, and revised appendix 3 on list of species. She also presented Appendix 6 as work in progress and called for contributions in the coming intersessional period.
285. Ms Cummings requested to participants to recommend :
- a) to endorse and support reorganisation and revised content of Appendix 3 as presented in v0.7;
 - b) to adopt a staged approach for the implementation of DCRF by WECAFC Members with a priority on Task III.1, Task II and Task IV for species group 1;
 - c) to inform Appendix 6 in collaboration with relevant Species WG; and
 - d) to further develop Appendix to better handle the list of Endangered, Threatened, and Protected Species (ETP).
286. A discussion followed the Convener's presentation, concluded by the Bahamas Representative, seconded by Saint Lucia and United States representatives, who recommended to adopt this version v0.7 of the DCRF and its appendices, it having already gone through a long working history under the FDS-WG with a lot of details included. There will be further opportunities to adapt this document once it is started to be implemented.

WECAFC SUBAREAS

287. Mr James Geehan (FAO) presented an overview of the status of proposals for the WECAFC subareas and divisions, recapping the previous iterations at the various WECAFC FDS-WG2 meetings in 2020 and 2021, as well as the delimitations that remain subject to further discussion and are still pending. Among changes to Appendix 2, he mentioned that the subareas and divisions have been clearly listed, with a proposed name and numbering.
288. He continued by presenting a recap of the general principles for delineating the subareas and also the WECAFC-FIRMS data viewer. He further discussed the subareas and divisions that remain pending (concerning the Amazonian Basin, the Bahamas/United States, Honduras, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and the progress in finalizing short and long-term options since the last FDS-WG meeting.

289. Mr Geehan emphasized that proposed delimitations are for statistical reporting purposes only and recalled the disclaimer prefacing the subarea that states '*the proposed delimitations, names, and designations do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO or WECAFC or its Member States concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries*'.
290. Mr Geehan indicated the next steps that need to be taken, including agreement on the general numbering of the subareas and divisions, wording of the draft recommendation to SAG XI, agreement on the timeline and actions required to finalise that delimitations that remain outstanding, as well as work on the exact coordinates of the delimitations required for the DCRF Appendix 2.
291. The discussion following Mr Geehan's presentation addressed questions raised by Member Representatives.
292. France requested clarification on the medium to long term options concerning the Amazonian Basin and proposals to modify subarea 31.5/southern boundary of FAO Major Fishing Area 34. FAO indicated that while long term options have been drafted – based on the discussions in previous FDS-WG meetings and also intersessionally – further work is required to finalize the exact wording and ensure there is a consensus among WECAFC members prior to submitting the proposal for the consideration of CWP and other relevant stakeholders. Participants were reminded of the necessity to consult with CWP given the implications of revisions to the boundaries of the FAO Major Fishing Areas.
293. The Venezuelan Representative noted that, despite the agreement on the general principles for defining the subareas by the FDS-WG, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela still had a number of concerns regarding the status and delineation of the proposed subareas and which were detailed in a communication dated 3rd March 2022 addressed to the WECAFC Secretariat and FDS-WG Task Group.
294. FDS-WGFAO acknowledged receipt of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's communication and thanked the delegation for their participation in the meeting and indicated that, as their correspondence was submitted shortly before the FDS-WG Conclusion session, it had not been possible to respond comprehensively to all of the points raised by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela or address their case properly during the meeting. FAO and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela agreed on the need for further intersessional discussions, and recommended that a joint-meeting be held as soon as possible in order to respond to Venezuela's concerns and finalize proposals for the WECAFC subarea delimitations concerning the Venezuelan Basin.
295. The Bahamas representative indicated that they currently do not support the United States' proposal to merge areas 31.1 and 31.3.2, which combine different ecoregions and large marine ecosystems, contrary to the general principles agreed by the FDS-WG that considerations from an ecological perspective should be at the forefront in delineating the subareas. The Bahamas further noted that the rationale for the United States' proposal is currently lacking and requested further information.
296. The United States thanked the Bahamas for considering their proposal and replied indicating that the United States is not necessarily arguing the parameters of LMEs and ecoregions as the rational basis for defining the subareas. The United States indicated that the rationale to merge areas 31.1 and 31.1.2 is primarily a maritime delimitation issue of higher level, rather than directly related to the principles for delimitating the statistical areas, and clarified that the United States is attempting to strike a balance regarding other related considerations and parallel discussions taking place with the Bahamas.
297. In the spirit of positively moving forward discussions, the United States Representative expressed their willingness to assist in refining the wording of the current WECAFC subareas disclaimer to be included in the DCRF Appendix 2 and any materials related to the reproduction or references to the subareas. The United States concluded by indicating that providing exact coordinates to the delineations between subarea 31.1 and division 31.3.2 may be problematic due to ongoing issues regarding the status of territorial boundaries in this subregion.
298. The OSPESCA Representative acknowledged that deciding the statistical delimitations is a long process and confirmed that Honduras has been contacted to provide feedback on subdivisions concerning their EEZ, but that an official answer was still pending. The Representative further indicated that the DCRF is a working

document that will evolve over time, hence the suggestion of a disclaimer will help address any concerns by members when discussing subarea related topics.

SUMMARY FDS-WG INTERSESSION WORK: RDB AND FIRMS DATA PREPARATORY SESSIONS

299. Yann Laurent (FAO) presented the summary of the data preparatory workshop work, conducted over three sessions in late 2021 and early 2022 with three Questions/Answers intermediate meetings with the objective to fill and submit statistics (corresponding to 3 main DCRF tasks) and FIRMS templates to start populating the RDB now called WECAFIS.
300. Regarding the collation of statistical templates filled out, 8 countries submitted data at least for one of the three tasks requested, for 10 years and for the main species. He thanked WECAFC Members for their contribution. He highlighted the equally important feedback received on the exercise to fill the template to improve the overall process. Members indicated that it was either easy or medium difficult with the main challenges being on the difficulty to adapt Members' Data to the requested format. The usefulness of video of recorded Q/A session was highlighted by Guyana and Suriname; the need for more documentation in the statistics template was highlighted. Belize Representative indicated that they couldn't participate to this activity because of staff turnover and requested the working group for support for the completion of the template and the reinforcement of their data collection system. FAO and OSPESCA Representatives will organize a call with Belize to explore options for support.
301. Regarding FIRMS inventories, Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) presented the result of the work done with 12 additional fact sheets prepared by four Members. The exercise was rated medium difficulty in general, with the main challenge being time requirement to collect all the data. Mr Gentile recalled the importance of collecting comprehensive data and information from multiple disciplines in support to fishery management (statistics, biological data, stock assessment etc.).
302. Mr Laurent indicated that this exercise was reported interesting by Member Representatives as an opportunity to review and question available statistics to fit DCRF reporting requirements.

SUMMARIZED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAG XI (Q2 2022)

303. Marc Taconet (FAO) summarised the purpose and recommendations of the previous meetings as laid out in the draft "WECAFC DCRF Recommendations" document (see [Annex L](#)). He noted that the DCRF serves as a capacity building tool, as well as an instrument to support specific mandates and priorities of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA including through their ICM; he further recognised that these are living documents that recommend general principles on the delineation of subareas or boundaries and the main lists of priority species in the region.
304. Marc Taconet read aloud the parts of the draft recommendation relating to what WECAFC Members are requested to eventually adopt.
305. The United States Representative asked for clarification on whether there will be opportunity to further review this version of the recommendation and to provide comments later. FAO confirmed but highlighted the tight deadline for comments submission.
306. The WECAFC Secretary recalled that these documents are very important; the FDS-WG is already behind schedule for submission so it is important to provide comments very soon in order not too block process of submission to SAG.
307. The Barbados Representative validated description of boundaries, but suggested that an appendix be included regarding the rationale used for that specific boundary delimitation.
308. It was agreed that the draft Recommendations will remain open for final review by the members of the FDS-WG until 14 March Closure of Business.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

309. The FDS-WG Convener called for expression of interest in working as Co-Convener of the FSD-WG, including being associated in the work of the WECAFC-FIRMS Task Force, and shadowing the Convener or being more active. None was received from Member representatives.

CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

310. FDS-WG Convener acknowledged that participants are willing to collaborate among themselves, and to dive into data. She recognized that the latest improvement on the DCRF went towards simplification of documents as requested by participants. It is acknowledged that the DCRF represents the achievement of close to a decade of WECAFC work on statistics to harmonize and standardize data in support to provision of evidence based advices and policies, and is a living document.

311. FDS-WG recommends that DCRF (in its slightly modified v0.8 that integrates few requests of this Conclusion meeting) is to be brought to SAG and WECAFC Commission meeting.

312. The FAO Representative thanked and complimented all the participants to this FDS-WG for this major achievement, sharing the feeling of a strong willingness that the DCRF v0.8 is the correct document to take to the SAG, which represents many years of good work.

313. He highlighted the need to have concrete outcomes on the provision of data and statistics recalling that one third of countries – deemed champions - have provided data making the WECAFIS a reality.

314. He warmly thanked FDS-WG Convener for her hard work and commitment to the success of FDS-WG2. A call for a successor was made however unsuccessfully. Constraints are understood but FAO will still pursue its request for volunteers.

315. He finally thanked interpreters and FAO colleagues and Partners (OSPESCA and CRFM).

316. The meeting was closed on Tuesday 10 March 2021 at 1:00pm (Miami time).

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ANNEX A–LIST OF PARTICIPANTS – ALL SESSIONS

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ANNEX B—OPENING CEREMONY SPEECHES

PART I – OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

Yvette Diei Ouadi

WECAFC secretary, FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC), Barbados

- Bid a warm welcome to the distinguished country delegates and partners to the (virtual) second meeting of the WECAFC Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics working group.
- From the agenda it is foreseen to be very engaging. I would also like to recall that it is being held following some highly extensive online technical sessions (5 in total, which took place since 17 July, the last being convened on 10 September).
- Your dedicated contributions to those sessions and the turnout in this meeting point to the importance of the WECAFC (FDS) working group, established by the Commission at its 16th session (Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016). The significance of the subject matter (meaning the data and statistics) the WG tackles cannot be overstated.
- Definitely the effectiveness of policies and the efficiency of fisheries operations and businesses depend on access to timely and reliable data and information on stock status, species distribution, trends, socio-economic data, etc.
- Since this WG was operational, it has been performing remarkably well through the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership, a dynamic and vibrant collaborative and partnership framework
- This meeting is the Second of the WG, but already some valuable products from the first meeting were brought to the attention of the Commission. The RDB, the i-DCRF (the consolidation of whom is at the core of the present meeting) were indeed overwhelmingly well received by members of WECAFC, at its session held 15–18 July 2019 in Miami.
- The Secretariat of WECAFC sincerely praises these efforts and constant contributions that ultimately aim to effective national policy-making and fishery management in the regional context of shared marine resources, and to lay the foundation for a functional Regional Fisheries Management entity/arrangement. As you may know the Commission is going through a strategic reorientation process.
- I seize the opportunity of this brief statement to stress the important support of a donor for the implementation of the intersessional work programme of WECAFC, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (European Union DG-MARE). It supported the previous phase of the FIRMS partnership, through the project Support to the creation of a regional database and associated transversal WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, IFREMER and CFMC Working Party on fisheries data and statistics (WECAFC), which ran from August 2017 – January 2019.
- The current phase (FIRMS 3) which is connected to this workshop is also through the same funding mechanism (European Union Grant), with project Support to the activities of the transversal WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, IFREMER and CFMC Fisheries Data and statistics WG
- WECAFC Secretariat is also grateful for the smooth collaboration and coordinated efforts with our partners of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture for Central America (OSPESCA)
- My congratulations to the WG convener (Nancie), my FAO colleagues who have been tirelessly investing their time and expertise, for the success of the previous technical sessions and for the preparation of this meeting with professionalism
- I have no doubt that we are going to have a productive and successful meeting.
- Thank you very much for your attention.

Marc Taconet

Statistics and Information Branch Head (NFIS), Fisheries Department, FAO, Rome, Italy

Can only subscribe to the message and thanks delivered by Yvette, and I will try with these few words to complement it with my perspective of Responsible for global fisheries and aquaculture statistics and information at FAO

Cannot underscore the importance of comprehensive and reliable fishery statistics, and for this my Branch continues to develop global fishery standards at CWP, and to support the building of national and regional capacities.

Evidence based decision making indeed is a key principle of the DCRF.

but this requirement is increasingly perceived as essential in this era where the target for a sustainable natural environment in the Climate Change (CC) context is high in the global agenda,

We can see countries commitments to sustainable fisheries, the SDGs, and the indicators SDG14.4.1, SDG14.7.1 and the other SDG14 goals on biodiversity and the environment; the data required for these indicators are the fundamentals to assessment, management and sustained natural marine resources in the long term. They also contribute to

- traceability and certification schemes, increasingly important in the region
- baselines for monitoring changes induced by Climate Change and for supporting disasters risk management.

and many of the countries in the region have acknowledged this importance, with a growing interest for building capacities

With this second working group on fishery data and statistics, we have a unique opportunity to create the regional framework which your countries will be able to refer to for developing national data collection and information systems, in ways better harmonized with your neighbour countries, and consistent with the reporting to FAO and ICCAT. Judging on the great participation at the Prep sessions, we have the momentum and we must succeed and take the important decisions which will thereof allow you to move forward.

Just as an example: think of this opportunity to set-up the WECAFC sub-areas, these have never been formally finalized and established. We can today finalize sub-area boundaries.

Setting standards is not an easy task, and your engagement is essential to make these standards a tool which you can implement in your national context and which will allow you to share the statistics which are needed for the Regional Fishery Management plans and other important policy objectives. With the iDCRF we will have a nice text, but we also need your engagement to pilot test it with the operationalization of the Regional Database.

I would finally like to thank

- all the colleagues of the Task Force who, each at their level , played an essential role for making this meeting possible
- Ms Nancie Cummings for her leadership in this Task Force
- and all the participants who joined this meeting.

And I wish you a good work in this virtual company, along the whole week

Reinaldo Morales Rodríguez

OSPESCA Regional Director

Damas y caballeros

Como se ha mencionado las estadísticas significan una de las primordiales herramientas que se tienen para la adopción de decisiones de ordenación en las pesquerías.

Sin embargo, como se ha indicado en diferentes foros, hay una deficiencia en la información y en varias ocasiones en la credibilidad de los datos presentados.

Este problema, se centra en las debilidades presentadas en la colecta de datos por los entes responsables debido a diferentes causas, como son la falta de recursos financieros, movilidad y personal entre otros.

Ante esta problemática, tanto los países como las organizaciones regionales e internacionales relacionadas con la pesca, viene aunando esfuerzos para fortalecer las capacidades institucionales para mejorar los niveles de la colecta de datos y brindar estadísticas fiables y confiables.

En el caso de OSPESCA, se viene trabajando en la mejora de la colecta de datos, mediante la armonización de formularios para la colecta de información en muestreos biológicos pesqueros en desembarques e inspección de desembarques de recursos hidrobiológicos, en el mejoramiento de las metodologías de muestreos, la integración de los actores en los procesos de colecta de datos y el establecimiento de programas armonizados para la evaluación de los stocks de especies como es el caso de la langosta espinosa del Caribe.

En cuanto al registro de embarcaciones se ha diseñado y puesto en operación la versión 2.0 del Sistema Integrado de Registro Pesquero y Acuícola Centroamericano (SIRPAC), que permite actualizar la presentación del registro de la flota, la producción de pesca y la acuicultura y permite las consultas dinámicas.

Un paso importante a nivel regional, es la conformación de este grupo es un claro ejemplo del trabajo conjunto entre el Mecanismo Regional de Pesquerías del Caribe; la Comisión de Pesca para el Atlántico Centro – Occidental y OSPESCA, con el apoyo del Sistema de Seguimiento de Pesquerías y Recursos (FIRMS) de la FAO. Nuestro agradecimiento al acompañamiento de la Unión Europea mediante la DG-MARE.

La continuación del trabajo que ustedes han venido realizando sobre el análisis de los registros de embarcaciones, las sub-áreas para la colecta de información de las pesquerías, así como de las principales especies; adicional a conocimiento de la situación en cada uno de los países de la región, será fundamental para conocer la situación de la base de datos regional, definir el plan de trabajo a seguir y expresar recomendaciones a las autoridades de pesca en este importante tema.

En tal sentido los exhortamos a brindar su mayor esfuerzo de manera a alcanzar los objetivos propuestos en beneficio del ordenamiento y manejo de las pesquerías regionales lo cual nos permitirá de manera conjunta contar con pesquerías sostenibles para las actuales y futuras generaciones.

Muchas gracias

PART II – MAY 2021 SESSION*** Opening statement****by****WECAFC SECRETARIAT**

Delivered by WECAFC Secretary Yvette Diei Douadi on the occasion of the (virtual) Extended Second meeting of the WECAFC Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group

25–28 May 2021

- Bid a warm welcome to the distinguished country delegates, experts and partners to the extended second meeting of the WECAFC Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group
- This meeting as you know follows the October 12–16, 2020 WG Meeting, which generated a number of follow-up actions, to list just few of them: the regional data viewer, the proposals for the WECAFC sub-areas and divisional boundaries, list of species, the DCRF and its appendices, the scoring matrix for capacity building
- Since then, lots have been achieved, beyond the preparation of the proceedings aiming at documenting the successful deliberations and outcome
- Not only that what used to be the i-DCRF is making its way towards finalization, there are also other important deliverables to be tabled at this meeting.
- Active electronic communications, coupled with some opportunities for virtual meetings of clusters, through the organization and Facilitation of **preparatory sessions** on subareas options for statistical reporting for (i) **Central American sub-region on Thursday March 25** & (ii) the French Guiana/Brazil WECAFC subarea (**European Union/France/Brazil**) on **26 March**
- Important progress were made towards reaching some agreements while further consultations were contemplated (bilateral and for the Central American under the aegis of OSPESCA [(with Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua ! Honduras EEZ currently Split between areas 31.8 and 31.7.4]).

g) Distinguished delegates

- Likewise any WECAFC WG meeting, in this meeting, regular agenda items, such as the draft workplan, recommendations and resolutions, review of the TORs are also expected to be addressed
- I especially wish to draw your attention onto these TORs, prepared through an intersessional Commission-driven process, following the review of the mandate of the SAG. It is the outcome of this open and effective exercise which took place over almost half a year, the standardized TORs (across all WECAFC WGs) that you will have the responsibility to review in order to reflect the specificity of the FDS-WG, tailoring it without altering the substantive elements developed by WECAFC members.
- The agenda is rich, commensurate with the importance of the data and statistics [for national decisions on resources conservation and management, to meet the goal of the Commission; a Commission which, moreover, is in its strategic reorientation process. A robust data and information system underpins the effectiveness of RFME/A.
- There are high expectations, and looking at the level and quality of the turnout, we have no doubt that active, cordial and fruitful discussions will befall over the upcoming 4 days.

Distinguished delegates

- The work of this WG, especially the preparation and organization of this meeting wouldn't be possible without the commendable support of a trust fund project, generously granted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (European Union DG-MARE). I'd like to praise the sustained financial and technical contribution to the work of the Secretariat of WECAFC. This unwavering support spans across many other WGs, and to the evidence building for informed strategic reorientation of this RFB.

h)

- Express our appreciation and the hope that these commitments lead to more voluntary contributions in this crucial year preceding the 18th Plenary of the Commission.

Distinguished delegates

- Acknowledgement is also expressed for the collaboration and coordinated efforts of our partners of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture for Central America (OSPESCA)
- My heartfelt thanks to the WG convener (Nancie), my FAO colleagues for their dedication, the passion for this work and their generosity in sharing their time and expertise
- Wishing frank, open, and constructive deliberations.
- Thank you very much for your kind attention.

ANNEX C–LIST OF WORKING AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

All meeting documents are available here:

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/FI_Meetings/WECAFC/FDSWG/2020/WECAFCFDSWG2.htm

Meeting presentations are available here:

<https://data.d4science.org/workspace-explorer-app/?folderId=cVpkcHg0d0cxVHJTeXJURm0xZ0c4ajhlQ2M4M3RicVZxVHRCQnFrRjlZQ3RqVUpwcHUwbIZRdHNTSU9qWIRSZA>

PART II–MAY 2021 SESSION

All meeting documents are available here:

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/FI_Meetings/WECAFC/FDSWG/2021/default.htm

Meeting presentations are available here:

<https://data.d4science.org/workspace-explorer-app/?folderId=UXU5SmkwRFphOUhGaFA4NHNOL25ZdmZfQys5blo0M0ZHekMyVEtXci9nMIUxSjdCQlRNRFBWNjV0QnJJTHpDSw>

PART III–MARCH 2022 SESSION

All meeting documents are available here:

<https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/meetings/41340>

Meeting presentations are available here:

<https://data.d4science.org/workspace-explorer-app/?folderId=SDZkVHpbJb3FiWGt1K0NWaHpPZDEvV3BxaHhyWXh5aDBBdXJQZWFxVEFxVIFkOfIqVFgzMGxRazFlS1VHeW9YbQ>

ANNEX D–AGENDA
PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

Time is UTC-4, Miami time (Florida, United States)

Monday 12 October 2020	
09.15–09.30	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection Please contact Milos Vojar in case of issue (milos.vojar@fao.org)
Morning Session 09.30–09.45	1. Opening of the Session Welcome - FAO/WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA Quick technical introduction to Zoom functionalities
09.45–10.00	2. FDS-WG introduction a) Introduction of Chairperson and Nomination of rapporteurs b) Objectives and Review, and adoption of meeting agenda
10.00–11.00	3. Participants introduction and recalling outcomes a) Participants roundtable: presentation and countries expectations from the 2nd Meeting of the WECAFC FDS–WG b) Recalling outcomes from 1st Meeting (2018) and prioritization of activities
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–11.30	4. Summary of prep session 1: Vessel Mapping
11.30–12.15	5. Summary of prep session 2: Subarea
12.15–13.00	6. Summary of prep session 3: List of main species
13.00	Adjourn for Day
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Homework Day 1 activity: Participants contribute to their country vessel mapping / Subareas and list of species</i>
Tuesday 13 October 2020	
09.15–09.30	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.30–09.45	Day 1 wrap-up
09.45–10.15	7. Summary of prep session 4: SSF Matrix / FIRMS Inventories (recalling project activities)
10.15–11.00	8. Summary of prep session 5: DCRF update review
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–13.00	9. 10 mns’ country statements on 1. progress status of their national data collection system, what fisheries are being covered, vessel registry information, 2. issues, 3. needs, 4. contributions to FDS-WG2 (5 slides max) (template with guidance provided by FAO)
13.00	Adjourn for Day
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Homework Day 2 activity: Participants contribute to their country vessel mapping / Subareas / list of species / FIRMS inventories, and review DCRF updates</i> <i>All contributions are be sent to Nancie Cummings, Marc Taconet, Yann Laurent, James Geehan and Aureliano Gentile by Tuesday 13th COB for consolidation for day 4 conclusion sessions</i>
Wednesday 14 October 2020	

09.15–09.30	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.30–09.45	Day 2 Summary
09.45–11.00	9 cont.) 10 mns’ Country statements on 1. progress status of their national data collection system, what fisheries are being covered, vessel registry information, 2. issues, 3. needs, 4. contributions to FDS-WG2 (5 slides max) (template with guidance provided by FAO ²)
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–12.30	9 cont.) 10 mns’ country statements on 1. progress status of their national data collection system, what fisheries are being covered, vessel registry information, 2. issues, 3. needs, 4. contributions to FDS-WG2 (5 slides max) (template with guidance provided by FAO ²)
12.30–13.00	10. Wrap-up countries statements, proposal for candidates for support by the project according to proposed criteria for selection of countries for priority support with Capacity building
13.00	Adjourn for Day
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Homework Day 3 activity: Participants contribute to their country vessel mapping / Subareas / list of species / FIRMS inventories, and review DCRF updates All contributions are sent to Nancie Cummings, Marc Taconet, Yann Laurent, James Geehan and Aureliano Gentile by Tuesday 13th COB for consolidation for day 4 conclusion sessions</i>
Thursday 15 October March 2020	
09.15–09.30	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.30–09.45	Day 3 wrap-up
09.45–10.15	11. Conclusion and recommendations for Vessel Mapping
10.15–11.00	12. Conclusion and recommendations for Subareas
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–11.45	13. Conclusion and recommendations for List of Species
11.45–12.15	14. Conclusion and recommendations for SSF Matrix / FIRMS
12.15–12.45	15. Conclusion and recommendations for DCRF
12.45–13.00	16. Conclusions on: Criteria / recommendations for selection of countries for priority support with Capacity building
13.00	Adjourn for day
Friday 16 October 2020	
09.15–09.30	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.30–09.45	Day 4 summary
09.45–10.45	17. Update on status and objectives of the Regional Database
10.45–11.00	18. FDS-WG intersession activities 2020–2022–review and validate FDS-WG annual work plan
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–11.45	19. FDS-WG TOR review and update if new mandates have been identified during meeting

11.45–12.00	20. Any other business (FDS-WG membership)
12.00–12.30	21. FDS-WG Draft Recommendations to the SAG (spring 2021) \ Commission (2022)–review and adoption
12.30–12.45	22. Election of convener and vice-convener, Time and Venue of next meeting
12.45–13.00	23. Conclusions and closure of the meeting
13.00	Meeting End

PART II–MAY 2021 SESSION

Time is UTC-4, Miami time (Florida, United States)

Tuesday 25 May 2021	
09.00–09.15	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection Please contact Milos Vojar in case of issues (milos.vojar@fao.org) Brief technical introduction to Zoom functionalities
Morning Session 09.15–09.30	1. Opening of the Session Welcome - FAO/WECAFC
09.30–10.15	2. Extended Meeting 2nd FDS-WG introduction 2.01 Introduction of Chairperson and Nomination of rapporteur a) Recalling outcomes FDS-WG2 (October 2020 virtual session) and prioritization of activities b) Participants introductions (expectations/affiliations) c) Meeting objectives & Review/Adoption of agenda
10.15–10.45	3. FIRMS–WECAFC RDB data viewer
10.45–11.00	Break
11.00–12.00	4. WECAFC subareas 4.01 Updated proposal for WECAFC reporting Subareas; 4.02 indication of additional options needing discussion long term, reaching consensus
12.00–13.00	5. WECAFC List of Reference species–discussion on proposals and reaching consensus
13.00	Adjourn for Day
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Homework Day 1 activity: further inputs from countries on RDB data viewer, subarea options, and list of species</i>
Wednesday 26 May 2021	
09.00–09.15	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.15–09.30	Day 1 wrap-up
09.30–11.15	6. DCRF update
11.15–11.30	Break
11.30–13.00	7. DCRF Appendices Update
13.00	Adjourn for day
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Homework Day 2 activity: Further inputs on DCRF and Appendices</i>
Thursday 27 May 2021	
09.00–09.15	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.15–09.30	Day 2 Summary
09.30–10.30	8) Country selections for capacity building support
10.30–11.00	9) Data preparatory workshop and other opportunities for leveraging data collections

11.00–11.15	10) Update, conclusions, and recommendations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel Mappings Update • SSF Matrix • FIRMS
11.15–11.30	Break
11.30–12.00	11) Logbook guidelines project in the WECAFC region in context of operationalizing DCRF
12.00–13.00	12) Final Plenary delivery summary from discussions of items 3-10 Data viewer, Subareas proposals, List of species, DCRF structure, Appendices structure and content, Country selections, data preparatory workshop
Friday 28 May 2021	
09.00–09.15	Call to order–Zoom session open for connection
09.15–09.30	Day 3 summary
09.30–10.00	13) FDS–WG intersession activities 2021–2022 - update on intersessional work since FDS-WG2a; further discussion on FDS-WG annual work plan and adjustments indicated
10.00–10.15	14) Review WECAFC Standardized WG TOR
10.15–11.00	15) Any other business (FDS-WG membership, etc.,)
11.00–11.15	Break
11.15–12.30	16) FDS-WG Draft Recommendations to the SAG (spring 2022) \ Commission (2022)–review and adoption
12.30–12.45	17) Election of convener and co–convener(s), Time and Venue of next meeting
12.45–13.00	18) Conclusions and closure of the meeting
13.00	Meeting End

PART III–10 MARCH 2022 SESSION

Conclusion meeting 2nd Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group

(10 March 2022) Thursday 10 March 2022

08:00–13.00 (Miami time, EST)

08:00–08:15	<p>Call to order–Zoom session open Please contact Milos Vojar in case of issues (milos.vojar@fao.org) Brief introduction to Zoom functionalities Registration: https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEqduytrzgvtEoeld9FGgTKZqbf0FWwAM_</p>
Morning Session 08:15–08:30	1) Opening of the Session
08:30–09.15	<p>Welcome - FAO/WECAFC 2) Conclusion Meeting 2nd FDS-WG introduction a) Introduction of Chairperson and Nomination of rapporteur</p>
09.15–10.00	<p>b) Recalling outcomes FDS-WG2 (May 2021) and prioritization of activities c) Participants introductions from (one) lead country participant (expectations and affiliations) d) Meeting objectives & Review/Adoption of agenda 3) DCRF update</p>
10.00–10.30	<p>4) DCRF-Appendices update a) WECAFC Reference List of aquatic species–proposals discussion and reaching consensus b) Other Appendices update and work during the intersession</p>
10.30–10.45	5) <i>Break</i>
10.45-11.30	<p>6) WECAFC subareas - a) Updated proposal for WECAFC statistical reporting -subareas b) Indication of additional options needing intersessional discussion long term, national vs regional, reaching consensus</p>
11.30-11.45	7) Summary FDS-WG Intersession Work: RDB and FIRMS data preparatory sessions
11.45–12.15	8) Summarized Recommendations for SAG (Q2 2022)
12.15–12.30	9) Any other business
12.30–13.00	10) Conclusions and closure of the meeting
13.00	Meeting Adjourns

ANNEX E–COUNTRY STATEMENTS SUMMARY
PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
BERMUDA	Y	<p>Fisheries Act 1972 Commercial fishing definition, reporting and fishing effort Started in paper forms, lag in data reporting until around 1986 Enhanced fisheries management since mid-1980s, Since 2017 possible for fishers to upload their own catch reports. No vessel monitoring at this stage (VMS/AIS?) Landings are dispersed, no processing centre. All fishers sell direct to stores / restaurants / public. No socio-economic data collected.</p>	<p>SQL server database used to store licensing data, CE data. Currently do not license recreational fisheries. Most of the analysis done in Excel. Calculate CPUE for lobster fisheries. Data sharing with other governments departs. Summary statistics and reports to ICCAT and FAO.</p>	<p>Commercial fishing defined as fishing for money and includes charter boats Registration of vessels, recreational boats registered separately. Most vessels 5.5 - 20 m long, all motorized 1 longline vessel. Length of vessel the most important in vessel capacity and how far the vessel can go fishing.</p>	<p>Resources are limited - funds and personnel. Benefits need to be obvious to justify spending. Lot of legacy issues for the database. Multispecies fisheries complicate CPUE calculations. Dispersed landing sites and direct sales make it hard to validate self-reported catches. Fisheries reluctant to adopt new technologies - but uploading their catch reports.</p>		<p>Sub-areas review: Bermuda EEZ north of 35 N included in area 31.4.4. Vessel mapping - all vessels multispecies hook & line, complicates the categorisation of distinct subfleets. Data provision: can providing finfish landings, but biological data more difficult to provide.</p>
Costa Rica	Y	<p>Data collection per type of fisheries in the Caribbean small scale fisheries: snapper lobster and other: biological data Medium scale fisheries: large pelagics etc: inspection form at landing for 100percent of the fleet + biological data 20 vessel in the caribbean area : added in infopesca vessel registry Collection of data is made on paper.for SSF and medium scale fisheries Stopped because of the pandemic</p>	<p>Data are archived in Excel / Access Manual data processing of data Landing is only available (no effort data)</p>	<p>166 small vessel 6 yo 11.9m - net Medium 2 vessels, shark and dolphinfish and marlin up to 20m / LL surface and mid water Sport fishers 20 vessels All recorded in the registry</p>	<p>Lack of human and financial resources No infrastructure for vessel landing</p>	<p>Need to design and implement on-board program</p>	<p>Interest in the list of species in the Caribbean side of CR The vessel mapping First participation to meeting: any that can be gathered for this meeting is important for us.</p>

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
BAHAMAS	N	Landing site interviews, catch certificates. Expanded data collection throughout the 30 islands of the bahamas. Last frame survey in 1995. Data collection paper based by data collectors and fishermen. New fisheries act - compels fishers to report the data. Important to understand regional requirements.	Data collected on 30 species. Live exports. Various species of groupers. How are information collected: Data archived using FISMIS and MS Access. Data processed manually or automated in Access, Excel, and FisMIS. Statistics disseminated annually, also reported to FAO/CRFM, catches weight and value and export quantities/values. Data fed into stock assessments. Landings data also feeds into non-detriment findings. Will discontinue conchs exports in the next two years.	Vessels registered with Port Department annually. Only >15ft vessels will be registered (currently >20fy vessels)	Limited technical capacity and training required in data collection and management. Financial resources Data collection challenges in addition to enforcement and compliance - limited resources. Project on Open FisMis approved.	Need for training on standards, for capacity building tools	FDS-WG should facilitate regional management of transboundary species including conch and lobster. FDS-WG importance to guide standards for data collection and reporting.
BELIZE	N	Focus on lobster and conch. Some shark data collection For finfish, aggregated data Collect biological / catch and effort / landing / export For conch annual dive visual survey to count conch. Vessel registration is done annually (jan to dec) Work conducted in lobster fisheries in 2019: census on vessel and gear for this fisheries. Still on-going Data is collected manually based on paper	Data is stored in computers, which are backed-up by CITO. Data is stored in excel. Would like to move towards a central database but no resources for that. Dissemination: data are shared with regional and international organizations. Reports also to national organizations. Annual stats report is produced. Most of the data is used for the AMF for lobster and conch for the quota	Artisanal fishing fleet: data collected by Belize Fisher Industry: registered by high seas fishing unit	Limited human and financial resources	Needs for computers and software to save time of officers Need for more technical capacity in data collection and data management Need guidance to develop more strategic monitoring system (coral for instance)	Expect to get guidance on fisheries data collection system for efficient management Expect to receive training to develop capacity

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
		Additional info from one fishing cooperative traceability system. It was supposed to be extended to all the fishing cooperatives. Catch log system has been developed. Fishers are supposed to report on a monthly basis. They are obliged by law but few comply to this obligation					
DOMINICA	N	<p>Progress: Continued to encourage fishers to participate in field data sampling programme. Capturing data on a daily basis.</p> <p>Pilot programme for fisher logbook - using KoBo toolbox.</p> <p>Resistance to participate by fishers...try to encourage them, understand the value of these programs</p> <p>Incorporating R into data reports - automating a number of reports.</p> <p>Vessel frame survey conducted in 2019 and 2020 (in progress) - using KoBo toolbox.</p> <p>Firms inventories completed for large pelagis, flyingfish and lobster.</p> <p>Dominica has a small scale fisheries sector - 3 types of vessels mostly coastal pelagic fisheries, wooden boats, larger piroque boats fiberglass boats (also multi-species) Hook and line vessels</p>			<p>Staff requires further training/education for assessing critical fisheries/resources. Also for data analysis for reporting.</p> <p>Need to update and modernise the database for multi-user and reporting needs.</p> <p>Lack of monitoring at non-sampling sites.</p> <p>Lack of consistent biological sampling programme.</p>		

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
St Kitts & Nevis	N	5 types of fisheries. 206 vessels licensed in 2019: open pirogue mainly 777 fishers registers at last year, but registry not updated (retired or deceased are not removed) Data collection in landing sites: opportunistic as data collectors works 8 to 5 5/7. Biological data collected for conch (for raising factor) but not resumed yet due to covid	No formal system From tablets to google sheet then to excel. Store in Nikkita cloud storage Total landings are raised manually This info is sent quarterly to Fisheries, annually to Department of Statistics Data submitted to ICCAT / FAO Also shared with CRFM Data has not been used to inform regulatory actions. No Stock Assessment conducted.	Licensed every year - renewed every year. Registry constantly updated	Issue of harmonization between Saint Kitts and Nevis. Vessel mapping: less info in Nevis than St Kitts. So not easy to build. Challenges: no training - need for capacity for data and information JICA project: a component on data and SA? Not sure	Need to other software other than Excel	Not present during the previous FDS-WG meeting Expect the WG to engage countries individually to gather needs
Saint Lucia	N	No update from the previous presentation to the FDS-WG. Working on getting species composition in landing data	No change, still the old software Support is planed for Saint Lucia	No change, still the old software	Limited funds to provide training. Lack of technical skills among fisheries personnel. Use of minimum data to perform assessments: Historical data available Models for SA - data not available in order to run the model.	Legacy database used for CE and vessel registration - need to update the database to accommodate the data collection and reporting needs for today. Using a data collection system that is possibly outdated - needs to be validated to ensure the methodology is statistically sound. Need for increased research capacity, reporting capabilities.	Provided feedback on the documents and key workstreams submitted by the FDS-WG Convener. Efforts needed to provide assistance in order to match SA models to the data available (data limited SA models). Saint Lucia is available (and willing) to participate in any training provided by WECAFC.
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	N	Catch and effort is mainly form of data collection according to a stratified sampling methodology.	Shell fish, demersal inshore pelagics offshore pelagics	In CARIFIS database No reporting tool	No biological data since the 90 Challenge of querying and analyzing data (limitation due to CARIFIS)	Need for modern database Need to enhance data collection tools because of growing	Not much time to contribute to the documents, but SVG expects to contribute to the DCRF, to FIRMS,

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
		<p>24 out of 36 landing sites were collected.</p> <p>Fishers are interviewed on catch + some exploitation cost.</p> <p>Effort is now collected from the Kingstown Market market.</p> <p>Data are compiled monthly, quarterly and yearly</p> <p>Export data Conch YFT, seamoss are increasing</p> <p>Increase of live baits (Jacks)</p> <p>Increase of investments on local fisheries by returning nationals: increase in number of registered vessels.</p> <p>4 vessel registered in high seas</p>	<p>Data collection is recorded on data collection sheets and reviewed.</p> <p>Data are punched in Excel format. And manually processed from data extracted in Excel</p>		<p>Difficulties in completing and fulfilling data requirements because of increased demands in various formats.</p>	<p>demand for data (tablets / electronic scale)</p>	<p>to develop fisheries management plans for species of key , to contribute vessel mapping and SSF matrix.</p>
Suriname	N	<p>Recruited 9 new collectors and 2 observers and 3 office staff in 2020.</p> <p>Sampling of artisanal categories</p> <p>Retired data collectors</p> <p>Turnover of staff - young recruits</p> <p>Planning for a sample system e for collecting continuous length and biological samples - for main species (snappers...5 species)</p>		<p>Current in an ACCESS database. Yearly license. Will be moved in a centralized database.</p>	<p>Thanks for Rebyc II Project - provided materials and gears for collection foe length and biological data.</p> <p>Digitizing the length/biological data before submission to the office.</p>	<p>Level of motivation, capacity, and a rigid system of operation. Improve ments in the processing of data required - move away from Excel based system to open source software (jamovi - https://www.jamovi.org/), as opposed to R (steep learning curve).</p>	<p>Contributed to vessel classification, and harmonized data collection model and protocols for processing the data. Direction moving to data science - markov and monte carlo simulations, manipulation of the data is easier with the principles guiding us.</p>
Trinidad and Tobago	N	<p>Catch and effort - artisanal including all trawling fleet (non-artisanal): continued gaps in data collection to loss of staff recruited based on</p>	<p>Recreational fisheries: only limited to fishing tournaments targeting pelagics.</p>	<p>Fisheries information system: new system for vessel registry and catch / effort.</p>	<p>Lack of data collectors is still one of the major issues</p> <p>Artisanal data collection: not disaggregated by species (but by species group : snappers/</p>	<p>Historical record preservation: need to scan paper from 1959–1990. After 1990, the first</p>	<p>Submitted contribution to vessel mapping, subareas, main species</p> <p>Are expecting input from Tobago</p>

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
		<p>contract. Support from CC4FISH, review of the statistical system in July 2018, and expecting to receive continuous support from FAO to finalize implementation.</p> <p>C/E (non artisanal): trip reporting system for pelagic LL fleet - operating very well because of ICCAT obligation. No observer programs nor VMS (cabinet approval but no fund yet) Multi gear pot / line fleet: no reporting (no legal obligation)</p> <p>Biological: for shrimp length frequency mainly - under REBYC project implementation trawler observer Programme</p>	<p>Tobago - currently conducted a study on shark</p> <p>Socio economics data: ongoing collection of prices by species / species group for artisanal, trawl and LL. On-going study socio-eco study on trawl fisheries.</p>	<p>Challenge to clean the data.</p>	<p>shrimp)/ Need for training of data collectors Landing group by landing areas. To accommodate WECAFC subareas, need to adapt the data collection system. Challenge for Tobago: no system in place to raise total landings. Inadequate legislation: lack of provision for mandatory submission (especially for A Fisheries Management Bill 2020 has been introduced to parliament Lack of human / financial resources, especially for MCS Fisheries Management is usually a low priority. Due to COVID agriculture including fisheries has been identified as top priority.</p> <p>Limited collaboration between Trinidad and Tobago</p>	<p>FISMIS was implemented. Effort Days at sea are collected. Need to adapt data collection system. Need for communication with Tobago</p>	<p>Expecting capacity building in appropriate stock assessment, especially data limited model.</p> <p>Capacity to participate to DCRF-RDB would be very challenging due to limited resources.</p>
European Union–Data collection Framework	Y	<p>European Union obligations CFP: overarching regulation EMFF: co-funding programme including data collection programme DCF: data collection framework Control Regulation: more oriented toward vessel registry</p>	<p>European Union DCF It implements routine and systematic data collection for scientific analysis.</p> <p>One focal point in each Member states liaises with European Union for DCF. This focal point is then liaising with all national institutions Each Member states provides a DCF work plan and annual reports for the implementation of the work plan (publicly available). These reports are not data but account for the</p>	<p>The European Union fleet registry is publicly available</p>	<p>Challenges to update several overlapping regulations (fisheries, statistics etc..) Issues with data quality, variability</p>		<p>Contribution to avoid duplications</p>

Country	New?	National data collection system	Fisheries coverage / Use of information	Vessel registry information	Issues	Needs	Contributions to FDS-WG2
			<p>organization of data collection. Data are collected through data calls from different working groups.</p> <p>European Union adopts Multi Annual Plan. Current one is 2020–2021. It has two acts, the list of mandatory surveys and threshold and the list of variables to be collected.</p>				
France	Y	<p>European Union French fishing fleet register - census of all french fishing vessels. European Union Fleet register, flying a European Union country flag. No information on effort</p>	<p>Statys of national data collection Biological data - discards, length, age collected</p> <p>Socio-economic data also collected</p> <p>Data stored in IFREMER database (Harmonie) Data processed through Java application and R-script Capacity, fishing activity, socio-economic and biological data disseminated nationally A number of data calls: ICCAT, FAO, EuroStat</p>	<p>European Union French fishing register Vessels ≥ 12m Annual census fishing activity - coming from logbooks, crosschecked with VMS data Cross validation tool developed by IFREMER Vessels ≤ 12 m using CAS data</p>	<p>Implementation of socio-economic surveys on a regular basis, CAS - difficulty to assess precise spatial fishing effort of vessels. Data generally highly aggregated spatially</p>	<p>Improvement needs in coverage of biological data sampling - benefits of regional database.</p> <p>Need to develop methodologies for data limited fisheries</p>	<p>Supporting objectives of the WECAC DCRF - provide inputs for the vessel mapping, predominant gears. Ensuring the compatibility of WECAFC DCRF with other data collection frameworks (in particular European Union DCMAP). Avoid duplication of efforts, over-data collection.</p>

ANNEX F–FDS-WG 2018–2019 INTERSESSIONAL WORK

PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

STATUS UPDATE ON: 2018–2019 WORK PLAN OF THE WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA

WORKING GROUP ON FISHERY DATA AND STATISTICS
(WECAFC FDS-WG)

The FDS-WG will carry out the following activities in 2018–2019 intersessional period:

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE	Status
1. Consultation among their members to finalize their respective list of Priority and Other Reference species (Action item DCRF-1).	June 2018–November 2018	CRFM (June Master), OSPESCA (Ms Jeanette Mateo), and WECAFC (Ms Yvette DieiOuadi for the complementary countries)	Fully Achieved
2. Finalize DCRF priority species list (from DCRF-1) and provide feedback (Action item DCRF-2), i. <u>Coordinate with species working groups to ensure final species listings are finalized.</u> ii. Identify timing of working groups such to timely incorporate all input into the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) document (e.g. CLME+ Shrimp and Groundfish next meeting planned for May 2019, iii. <u>Coordinate with WECAFC Secretariat to organize virtual meeting of the SAG (March 2019) to seek final input and comment of review of DCRF to further finalize DCRF, logbook guidelines and data access and sharing guidelines for dissemination to WECAFC 18th Commission.</u>	June 2018–January 2019	FDS-WG convener (Nancie Cummings), WECAFC Secretariat, FIRMS Secretariat	Partially achieved- Species working group to be liaised with further during WG 2 intersession Initial consultations in February 2019.
3. <u>Consolidate the species list</u> , and share it with the various stakeholders and importantly with National authorities before final submission to WECAFC-SAG (Action item DCRF-3)	June 2018–November 2018	FDS-WG convener	Fully achieved
4. Follow-up with their respective Legal offices on the <u>feasibility of delineation of areas</u> , according to options presented in the Report of the 1st Meeting of the FDS-WG or other identified area delineations as identified relevant (Action item DCRF-4)	June 2018–May 2019	FAO, and CRFM and OSPESCA Secretariat	Fully achieved
5. <u>Consult with its members regarding delineations of FAO sub-areas in the Central American–Caribbean sub-region</u> (Action item DCRF-5)	January 2019 onwards	OSPESCA	Fully achieved
6. Consult the species WGs regarding <u>delineations of FAO sub-areas</u> (Action item DCRF-6)	June 2018–January 2019	FDS-WG convener	Initiated and Rescheduled
7. Provide the mappings of their national vessel categories to the agreed regional Fleet segment categories of the DCRF (Action item DCRF-7)	June 2018–January 2019	FDS-WG members	Fully achieved

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE	Status
8. Contribute to the CWP <u>survey on the “International Standards Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV)”</u> and provide general comments through WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA (Action item DCRF-8). Survey references documents http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt983e.pdf / ISSCFV by GRT categories: http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt982e.pdf	June 2018– May 2019	FDS-WG members	Fully achieved
9. Finalize through the Task Force and WECAFC regional / CRFM / OSPESCA sub regional focal points (Action item DCRF-9)	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC-FIRMS Task Force	Partially achieved
10. Explore <u>best practice section for implementation of the logbook guidelines</u> : This could be in the form of Case studies or Pilot projects (Action item LOG-1)	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC-FIRMS regional focal point (Ms Nancie Cummings) and FDS-WG Jamaica representative (Ms Anginette Murray)	Partially achieved
11. Preparation <u>template to collect feedback on logbook implementation experience</u> and to organize the distribution, filling-out and analyzing of this template from all the WECAFC Members. (October 2018) (Action item LOG-2)	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC-FIRMS regional focal point (Ms Nancie Cummings) and FDS-WG Jamaica representative (Ms Anginette Murray)	Partially achieved
12. Conduct <u>testing of the “Matrix on small scale fisheries”</u> matrix with its members, and to consolidate the feedback (Action item MSSF-1). Reference documents: WECAFC/FDSWG/I/2018/6 and WECAFC/FDSWG/I/2018/Ref.19	June 2018– May 2019	FDS-WG CRFM representative, June Masters	Fully achieved
13. Liaise with the 3 CLME+ sub-projects to identify opportunities of funding regarding the regional training workshop for data upload in the RDB (Action item RDB-1)	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC Secretariat through its Task Force	Fully achieved (contact established but regional data workshop postponed..)
14. Liaise with the United States and France to explore possibilities of automatic reporting to the RDB (Action item RDB-2)	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC Secretariat through its Task Force	Partially achieved
15. Work on the mobilization of funding resources with the goal to strengthen a few national data systems among WECAFC members (Action item RDB-3). i. Conduct second R training, and system training in Trinidad, March 2019 ii. Conduct data collection design workshop (Trinidad, May 2019) iii. Initiate data collection design pilot (Trinidad, July 2019 - 6 months scale) iv. New data collection design (Suriname, Guyana- February 2019, CLME+)	June 2018– July 2019	FAO, CRFM and OSPESCA	Partially achieved (R training conducted, Suriname statistics review in progress, other activities postponed due to COVID)

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE	Status
<p>16. FIRMS Inventories and RDB training and Decision Support System (DSS) Implementation (Action item FIRMS-1) Develop supplemental training on FIRMS inventories for the region ii. Coordinate with FIRMS sub regional focal points to obtain updates on already published inventories (January–March 2019)</p> <p>17. Identify synergies with the regional training on RDB (with possible support from regional projects as already highlighted) (January–March 2019)</p>	June 2018– May 2019	FIRMS Secretariat , FIRMS regional and sub regional Focal point (N. Cummings, J. Masters, J. Mateo)	
<p>18. Coordinate with WECAFC-SAG chairperson and FIRMS Secretariat for the upload of stock status information in FIRMS (Action item FIRMS-2)</p>	June 2018– May 2019	WECAFC chairperson (also FDS member)	Fully achieved

ANNEX G—FDS-WG 2020–2022 INTERSESSIONAL WORK

PART I—OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

FDS-WG2 Intersessional Work plan template (October 2020–May 2022)

- I. It is proposed to convene a follow-up virtual meeting of FDS-WG2 to address the following topics sometime between Q1 and Q2 2021.
1. Vessel mappings
 - a. Liaise with FDS-WG focal points for additional submissions;
 - b. Review submission from WECAFC Members and highlight where revisions are needed;
 - c. Implementations in the Regional Database with corresponding metadata; and
 - d. Discussion of adding vessel type information into FIRMS tables, including vessels images when available.
 2. WECAFC Subarea Boundaries
 - a. Finalize the proposal in the Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala sub-region under the OSPESCA umbrella;
 - b. Review feedback from countries on sub-areas related to area 31 and 41, and if the case appears feasible, prepare for presentation at CWP; and
 - c. Discuss a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward.
 3. FIRMS Inventories
 - a. Summarize inputs by countries, highlight latest submissions, share results of the FIRMS online survey, and discuss/elaborate specific FIRMS services for the region (delivered through WECAFC map viewer); and
 - b. Discuss/identify/implement a path for updating inventories in OSPESCA region- e.g. consultant to further inventory development on a country by country basis possibly.

Also noting that FIRMS Secretariat may develop a pilot demonstrating how a possible future addition of FIRMS fishery Ids (optional) in certain Tasks of the DCRF can be exploited, for presentation at FDS-WG3

4. Small Scale Fisheries Matrix
 - a. Summarize list of countries which submitted highlighting latest submissions and new pilot testing;
 - b. Present a synthesis of the level of adaption of the SSF matrix to the WECAFC region and what would need to be changed in the SSF matrix for it to be of practical application for the region; and
 - c. Discuss a recommendation for submitting to FAO for consideration WECAFC iDCRF.
5. WECAFC List of main Species, annotation of important Subareas by species and DCRF tasks
 - a. Review submissions by countries and WGs for additional species, and sub-areas for species, and proceed with countries endorsements for the proposals. The use of the FIRMS map viewer will help to obtain additional input on annotation of area by species;
 - b. Review inputs from relevant working groups, for the list of species and their sub-areas and identification of specific DCRF tasks;
 - c. Annotation of relevant standard conversion metrics by species/subarea for inclusion in DCRF catalogue (Tables) of conversions; and
 - d. Annotation of relevant biological parameters for select set of species in main list of species by important subareas (e.g. reproductive ogives, growth parameter estimates) for inclusion in DCRF catalogue (Tables) of biological parameters.

6. iDCRF

- a. A revised DCRF document will be made available early December (2020) for review by Members, WGs and ICCAT by end January 2021, for consolidation in February and final review in March for adoption at the extended session of FDS-WG2 (end March/early April) of a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward ;
- b. Further proofing DCRF (post extended session of FDS-WG2) with:
 - i. pilot testing starting with DataPrep workshop and initial country submissions that will follow; and
 - ii. two proposed e-TWGs:
 - for elaboration on measures of fishing effort per Fleet segment or Geartype; and
 - for refinement of Biological tasks—countries with experience invited to be part of this WG.

II. Operationalization of the DCRF (DCRF) and Contributions to RDB (RDB-1)

1. Finalize the Maps viewer (through e-TWG?) for public release as soon as possible;
2. Identifying countries willing to commit in the intersession, to populate the RDB using local statistics in 2020 and 2021. Local statistics uploaded to RDB. Identification of local country data manager;
3. Liaising with/identifying Regional species WGs to combine their expectations for data with the countries contribution (Flying fish, Lobster, Shrimp and Groundfish, Lobster*, ...), and organize joint activities;
4. Identifying issues/challenges with countries committing data to RDB during pilot tests; and
5. Developing road map including pilot data sets for implementing data uploads to RDB by end of 2021.

(*) [Engage in communication of OSPESCA Director of 12 June 2020 on topic of collaborating on pilot data sets to test for RDB that currently are already capturing statistics]

- III. Discussion of how the RDB information can contribute to informing SDG 14.4.1 through the work of the FDS-WG via the DCRF? Has any progress been made yet, what is needed to begin to make progress (individual countries operationalizing the DCRF through committing to contribute to the RDB) . Develop some time tables and a path (roadmap);
 - Is a subcommittee needed- perhaps focus on one of the pilots (e.g. OSPESCA lobster); and
 - Fostering Growth of FDS-WG throughout region.

- IV. How can this WG interact or begin to interact with other regional/international WGs (species, topical, RFMAS) to further improve the regional statistics and information on fisheries;
 - Under MoU with ICCAT- contribute to the planned joint ICCAT-WECAFC working group where respective species list might be examined; and
 - Should this WG contact ICCAT re' participating in ICCAT statistics WG as observer to learn how ICCAT develops/prioritizes and carries out it's tasks/intersessional work on the topic of statistics (a question to ask to the participants? would anyone volunteer).

V. Review Logbooks guidelines and revisit FDS-WG 2 (LOG-1)

Review work done during FDS-WG 1 intersession- discuss LOG-1 (two pilot surveys) and LOG-2 (historical experiences) survey instruments in context of best practices in logbook implementation in region and identify needed revisions for survey instruments LOG-1, LOG-2.

VI. Capacity building- other needs

1. Finalize the list of criteria and propose a short list of WECAFC Members meeting these criteria for final selection;
2. For the selected WECAFC member(s), define the workplan and related budget for support; and
3. Seek for co-funding from other regional projects and agree on the shared investments.

ANNEX H–FDS-WG REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCES

PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs) OF THE WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA

Fishery Data and Statistics Working Group

(WECAFC FDS-WG)

Preamble:

CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC, in January 2016, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate, support and strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries. WECAFC in its 16th session held in Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016 agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership and in support of the development of a regional database in collaboration with the Members and partners in the region.

The aim of the envisioned FDS Working Group was to strengthen collaboration on fisheries data and statistics matters among the three regional fisheries bodies. The European Commission General Directorate for Fisheries (DG-MARE) agreed to support financially the organization of the first meeting of the FDS-WG in the context of the WECAFC-FIRMS project phase II.

The FDS-WG will report to the WECAFC Commission

- Formulate recommendations and guidelines for data collection and statistics;
- Develop standardized data collection formats and templates to be collectively considered for coordinated national and regional implementation;
- Conduct work under direction from the WECAFC Commission, and in close interaction with the WECAFC Secretariat; and
- Develop annual work plans prioritizing activities and identify actions to be taken, and annually provide a report of activities, outputs, and prioritized future work plans (1–2 years) to the Secretariat.

The FDS-WG will interact/liaise with:

- All working groups under the WECAFC and regional fishery bodies (CRFM), OSPESCA, CFMC and their working groups with the aim to strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries; and
- Intergovernmental institutions, including those that constitute the Interim Coordination Mechanism of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems.

The Membership of the FDS-WG:

- National Officers responsible of Fishery Statistics and Data in WECAFC Member Countries (e.g. statisticians, data managers, directors of fisheries statistics, or fisheries offices, etc.) with activities related to the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analysing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g. RFMA reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.);

- Regional Officers from the three Regional Fisheries Bodies (CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC) involved in the same domains related to fisheries data and statistics as listed above; and
- The WECAFC Secretariat.

Sessions of the FDS-WG:

- The FDS-WG shall meet ideally annually face-to-face or virtually, and at least once every two years.
- The FDS-WG elects a convener (and vice convener) among its members for a period of two years.
- The vice-convener will assist the convener in his/her roles and shall fulfil the duty of the convener if the convener is not able to carry-out the duty of the position;
- Meeting of the FDS-WG will be notified by the FDS-WG convener.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize the FDS-WG meetings.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will inform the FDS Members at least 3 months in advance and share the agenda and meeting documents at least 2 months before the meeting.
- The FDS-WG may include experts appointed as resource persons by the WECAFC Secretariat, on the basis of their knowledge in FDS matters and their expertise in FDS regional issues.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize with the support of CRFM and OSPESCA resource persons the drafting, translation, review, validation and distribution of the FDS-WG meeting report and its recommendations when relevant.
- Meetings of the FDS-WG will be chaired by the host country in case of a face to face meeting, or by Barbados [WECAFC host country] in case of an virtual meeting.

Intersessions of the FDS-WG:

- The WECAFC Secretariat supervises in close consultation with the FDS convener the intersession activities recommended by the FDS-WG, with the support of resource persons.
- The WECAFC Secretariat ensures coordination among regional projects related to fisheries data and statistics with the support of the WECAFC-FIRMS task force.

The FDS-WG will assist with:

Data collection at national level - Provide recommendations and guidelines to address national data collection and sharing challenges in the WECAFC region:

- Identify issues (gaps, deficiencies), challenges and best practices in data collection at national level in the region, and provide recommendations on how to address issues and challenges, and implementing best practices;
- Identify and recommend best practices for the region including how to involve private interests in data collection (of fisheries operational and socio-economic data from industry's stakeholders, intergovernmental groups, etc.);
- Review and make recommendations on standard data collection formats for use at national level and related minimum guidelines for collection; and
- Review and make recommendations on coordination opportunities for new data and statistics projects coming into the region.

Data sharing and harmonization at regional level - Provide recommendations to address open data sharing challenges at international level for the benefit of fisheries, research and management communities and to improve the ability to manage fisheries resources:

- Identify and recommend a list of data to be shared among WECAFC countries in a regional data base (RDB), defining regional standards, classifications and data policies;
- Define formats, metadata, policies (including confidentiality matters) and best practices to exchange data; and
- Provide recommendations on data harmonization to allow data collation at regional level including the mapping between national and regional classifications.

Countries data reporting to international bodies and global monitoring systems (i.e. CRFM, FAO, ICCAT, OSPESCA, FIRMS) - Provide recommendations to streamline reporting from national to regional and international levels, including through collaborative arrangements promoting harmonization:

- Address issues of multiple reporting standards and formats among the various international organizations, including through review of documents, sharing experiences and lessons learned and formulate recommendations and guidelines in support to enhanced reporting on shared fisheries resources in the WECAFC area;
- Formulate mechanisms to coordinate / streamline exchanges among regional fishery bodies and other intergovernmental institutions operating at regional and global level, including methods, tools and procedures for the harmonization of national/sub-regional/regional data collection, storage formats and reporting approaches; and
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme and in the regular reporting of the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE), making recommendations to ensure that data sets, information and assessment approaches follow statistically sound and regionally harmonized methods.

IT management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase (RDB) - Provide recommendations for cost efficient and sustainable management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase

- Provide high level recommendations on technology and policy issues related to development, hosting and maintenance for the RDB;

- Provide RDB specifications, priorities, governance, policy mechanisms; and
- Formulate project development phases and participation mechanisms.

Administration of the FDS-WG

- The FDS-WG will be supported through the financial resources of the Commission.

Performance review of the RDB

- Conduct periodic review against a set of metrics of the data collection reference framework (DCRF) and best practices data collection guidelines; and
- Recommend changes and adjustments to the RDB after review.

See published TORs at:

http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/WECAFC/WECAFC2019/17/TOR-WG_WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA_FisheriesDataStatistics.pdf

ANNEX I–FDS-WG DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
As adopted during PART I–OCTOBER 2020 SESSION

WECAFC FDS-WG

Recommendations FDS-WG2

16 October 2020

AGENDA ITEM 21

FDS-WG interim Recommendations towards the extended session; and Draft Recommendations to the SAG (spring 2021) \ Commission (2022)–review and adoption.

The Convener presented a draft set of recommendations for the primary topics reviewed during the FDS-WG2 virtual session. These were reviewed and discussed by participants on Day 5 and important feedback obtained and collated as ‘Columns 2 and 3’ in following table. Following the end of session on Day 5, participants reviewed the collated recommendations again and a few members submitted additional inputs. The final agreed recommendations are presented as ‘Column 1’ in Annex I.

On Vessel mapping

Based on vessel mappings submitted by 13 countries at FDS_WG2, the FDS-WG herein referred to as the ‘working group’ considers that the current fleet segment regional classification is mostly in alignment with the actual WECAFC fleet topology in all its diversity.

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>1. The FDS-WG recommends the proposed extensive definition for fleet segment incorporating the notion of “Predominant gear” for multigear vessels that allows to reflect diversity of artisanal vessel types from the region as well as a varying composition annually.</p> <p>The FDS-WG recommends that the Notion of predominance is specified, e.g. use the gear used more than 50percent of its fishing time during the year (based on fishing days?*) If not, the vessel shall be allocated to the multi-gear fleet segments. The FDS-WG requested that predominance definition be included in the DCRF.</p>	<p>Yes-with additional text</p>	<p>European Union: Proposal to specify: 1) Fleet segment has to be calculated on a year basis (e.g. predominant fishing gear during the year) i.e. one vessel belong to only one fleet segment for a given year, 2) Notion of predominance should be helpfully specified, e.g. use the gear more than 50percent of its fishing time during the year (based on fishing days?) If not, the vessel shall be allocated to the multi-gear fleet segments.</p> <p>We suggest that the “predominant fishing gear” is</p>

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>*: European Union indicated that in addition to the vessel mapping definition, fleet capacity per proposed fleet segment be calculated on a year basis (e.g. predominant fishing gear during the year) i.e. one vessel belong to only one fleet segment for a given year</p>		<p>introduced as a choice at the same level as the “multigear” rather than as an option as it is currently the case.</p> <p>Trinidad: Clarify, predominant gear listed in case of multi-gear vessels? So eg can have multigear non-trawl gillnet, and multigear non-trawl fishpot. Will need to define what predominant means eg gear used for more than 6mths or majority of year, for multiple gears based on seasonality.</p>
<p>2.(European Union proposal) Regarding the regional fleet segment classification, the WG also recommends splitting the size category 6-12 m into two categories (6-10 and 10-12m) to allow for a finer level analysis of this segment that encompasses the majority of fishing vessels in the Region.</p>	<p>Yes-with additional text</p>	<p>Costa Rica:In Our country the current classification of artisanal fleets is up to 15 meters in length and industrial fleets more than 15. 1 metersis</p>
<p>3. The FDS-WG recommends SAG endorse the proposed fleet segment regional classification recognizing that it describes fully the actual WECAFC fleet topology in all its diversity as it extends the fleet definition to incorporate the notion of “Predominant gear” in the case of multigear vessels.</p>	<p>Yes-with additional text</p>	

On Stocks & Fisheries Inventory

The FDS-WG acknowledged progress undertaken under the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership on the FIRMS stocks and fisheries inventories, with the understanding that inventoried fisheries and their status, originated and owned by WECAFC Members, are published in FIRMS following protocols endorsed under FAO/WECAFC-FIRMS partnership agreement (annex 2), endorsed at Commission 16.

The FDS-WG raised the question of which process prevails for the publishing of the WECAFC-FIRMS Stocks status reports in the WECAFC region, and called for SAG to consider the rules which FIRMS should follow to publish stock status reports.

The FDS-WG noted the logical linkages between certain Tasks of the DCRF and the FIRMS fisheries, and recognized that once further developed and mature, the two parallel initiatives have a potential to enrich each other.

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>4. Strive towards progressing the work on WECAFC-FIRMS stocks and fisheries by encouraging the WECAFC Members to provide new fisheries submissions or updates. Member countries working with the FIRMS Secretariat, and the regional and subregional FIRMS focal points will collaboratively progress on this goal.</p>	Yes	<p>European Union: this recommendation needs clarifications and context. It would help to clarify what does this work entail. Who is supposed to do what?</p>
<p>5. Encourage facilitation of the update of the inventories including designation of regional data calls, and liaising with regional / sub-regional focal points .</p> <p>(European Union): Recommends the provision on guidance from the Commission on the need and process for updating these inventories.</p> <p>(US): The US recommends designating a formal data call for inventory updates with the acceptable date to be identified at FDS-WG 2 extension workshop.</p>	Yes	<p>The US suggests designating formal data call for inventory updates; acceptable date to be identified at FDS-WG 2 extension workshop</p> <p>European Union: Under DCRF, should not be the first priority to have an annual data call to feed the WECAFC RDB while continuing to encourage WECAFC members to complete/update FIRMS fisheries and stocks inventories.</p>
<p>6. The FDS-WG agrees on the inclusion in the DCRF Annex of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● List of WECAFC Fisheries ● List of WECAFC Stocks 	<p>No for now</p> <p>The US recommends Yes for bullets 1 during the DCRF implementation phase and more long term for bullet 2, and No for now for bullet 3</p> <p>European Union: this could be further discussed intersessionally. We do not consider this as a priority at this stage</p>	<p>European Union: First priority for DCRF should be the incorporation of gear information in relevant tasks.</p> <p>FIRMS is an independent initiative that is very useful, however, in our view its interaction with the DCRF should be considered once the framework is further developed and benchmarked.</p>
<p>7. FDS-WG encourage Members to disseminate fishery and stock status fact sheets in national / regional websites, social media, and other information sharing mechanisms.</p>	Yes	
<p>8. FDS-WG encourages FIRMS to develop additional data services under the guidance of this WG according to the results of the FIRMS Survey, communicated for the FDS-</p>	Yes	<p>Need to clarify/specify the Survey being referred to.</p>

WG2 , and also to conduct further validation of country needs by the extended session (e.g. WECAFC maps viewer, extract of lists of WECAFC stocks in Excel with their status, generate dashboard of indicators, generate maps in PDF/jpg, etc.. of selected stocks or fisheries).		
9. FDS-WG acknowledges the proposal by the FIRMS Secretariat to explore the incorporation of Fishery FIRMS IDs according to relevant tasks of the DCRF, for piloting purpose and presentation of preliminary results at the next FDS-WG.		

On SSF matrix

Based on the 8 WECAFC countries that have tested the SSF matrix so far, the FDS-WG agreed on the utility of this SSF matrix to facilitate the characterization of small- and large-scale fisheries in WECAFC, noting a number of potential improvements in order to adapt the matrix to the regional context.

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>9. The FDS-WG requested the following points, regarding the design and categorization of the SSF-Matrix, be considered by FAO in order to better tailor the matrix to the local and regional context in WECAFC, and certain specific characteristics of small-scale vessels in the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>motorisation</u>: review current categories, e.g. notably the power of outboard engine; - <u>fishing grounds/distance from shore</u>: consider additional categories for vessels fishing >20km from shore (e.g. as suggested in the case of Bermuda); - <u>size classes of fishing vessel</u>: consider additional length classes to distinguish vessels <12m (e.g. as suggested in the case of Suriname); - enable user the ability to check more than one category; - other additional considerations based on the findings from the vessel mappings developed during the intersessional of FDS-WG1 intersessional period. 	Yes-with additional text	European Union: More of a statement than a recommendation—if seeking Commission’s approval to proceed with further changes then need to reword and be clearer
10. The WG recommended that additional WECAFC Member countries test the matrix to increase the number of case-studies that can be used as the basis of feedback to FAO, as well as broaden the knowledge in WECAFC in terms of the categorization of small- and large-scale fisheries in the region.	Yes	No comment

This activity is to be conducted during the intersessional period of FDS-WG2, and prior to the extended session, taking into account any changes in the fleet segmentation conducted over the same period.		
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On WECAFC boundaries

The proposals for the WECAFC sub-areas and sub-area divisions aim, as far as possible, to maintain consistency with the major ecosystems in the region as the starting point for defining the boundaries. The proposals also accommodate, to the extent practical, existing national jurisdiction boundaries; in particular treaty lines and other default limits (e.g. 200 nautical miles), using the maritime boundaries database as a reference. Of the two options presented for defining boundary lines, the FDS-WG favored, where possible, existing EEZ boundary lines over straight longitudinal/latitudinal lines, in accordance with the Option 1³, while also adhering to the general principles outlined below.

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>11. The FDS-WG endorses and recommends to SAG and the Commission the following general principles for the delineation of WECAFC sub-area and divisional sub-area boundaries:</p> <p>As the overarching principle, maintain consistency with the major ecosystems in the region as the starting point for defining the boundaries;</p> <p>For the definition of boundary lines, utilize EEZ boundary lines (where they are formalized through treaties and are not disputed) and other default limits (e.g. 200 nautical miles) as the prevailing principle, in combination with, where required or preferred, simple longitudinal, latitudinal or oblique straight lines in the cases where:</p> <p>(a.) there is no clear demarcation of the maritime boundaries, to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces;</p> <p>(b.) there are locally recognized and important ecosystem boundaries, together with other considerations such as countries' data collection capacity;</p> <p>The WG further recommends that the above general principles constitute decisive criteria and should be followed for further proposals on the final boundaries, subject to agreement of the WECAFC Members directly involved.</p>	Yes-with additional text for amendments	No comment
<p>12. The WG recommends the use of Option 1 of the proposed boundaries sub-areas presented at the FDS-WG2 meeting⁴, with the understanding that consultations need to continue under the OSPESCA umbrella with Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua in order to finalize the proposal to be presented at the extended session of the FDS-WG2.</p>	Yes	Trinidad: Option 1 relates to EEZ boundaries, but Trinidad and Tobago still considers that it would be best to use Option 2 as not all countries have delineated their EEZs, and it would be a

³ For more details refer to WECAFC/FDSWG/II/2020/Ref8 (http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/FI_Meetings/WECAFC/FDSWG/2020/Ref8e.pdf).

⁴ For a summary of the Options and main discussion points during the FDS-WG2 and the sub-area 2nd Preparatory Meeting, refer to the following link [here](#).

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
		more standardized approach for all countries and more aligned with areas used by ICCAT.
<p>13. The WG recommends proposals for short and long-term solutions in the case of specific boundaries that remain unresolved. Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Short term:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Catches for Bermuda are assigned to the predominant areas 31.4.4 in order to simplify data reporting. b. Catches for French Guiana are assigned to the predominant areas 31.5 in order to simplify data reporting. c. Statistics for the reporting of catches and assessment of stocks in the Brazil-Guyana ecosystem are provided for sub-area 31.5 and division 41.1.1. 2. <u>Long term:</u> <p>Explore the feasibility of changing the northern and southern boundaries of FAO Major fishing area 31, to accommodate the need to simplify the reporting of requesting Members (Bermuda, European Union - for French Guiana) and also to improve alignment with the ecoregion boundaries in the Amazonian Basin sub-region, bringing the matter to relevant stakeholders, including CWP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enclosing the Bermuda EEZ entirely within area 31; for example by reassigning the portion of Bermuda's EEZ currently in area 21 (sub-area 21.6) to area 31.4.4. b. Sub-area 31.5 to be modified to incorporate Amazon (Division 41.1.1). c. Consider the current 31.5 division to become division 31.5.1 and consider modifying the westward boundary to fit with French Guiana EEZ treaty lines. d. Current division 41.1.1 to become division 31.5.2, delineated offshore by the 200 nautical miles boundary. e. Consider where to allocate the high seas portion of 41.1.1. <p>(European Union:) The WG also recommends that to the extent possible reporting is done at the finest possible division level to allow for finer scale data availability which is very useful in particular for scientific purposes.</p> 	<p>13 Part 1: Yes</p> <p>13 Part 2: Yes with additional text</p>	No comment

On WECAFC list of Main species

The FDS-WG acknowledges that Commission 17 adopted the DCRF as an interim document as a sign of recognition of its value.

Mindful that national data collection systems potentially encompass all marine aquatic species, and that certain species are already under international mandatory reporting requirements, the FDS-WG recognizes that WECAFC Members will benefit from a WECAFC DCRF well harmonized with other regional data collection and reporting frameworks.

Further the FDS-WG recommends that two main groups of species be adopted in the List of Main species, defined as: Group 1 (all species of interest to WECAFC members) and Group 2 (other species already with international mandatory reporting requirements (i.e. tunas and tuna like species) as defined below: For Group 2 species, the FDS-WG acknowledges and recommends that data collection for Group 2 species follow the protocols and guidelines provisioned by these organizations.

Statement / Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
14. With this preamble in mind, the FDS-WG adopts the revised structure of the Species list recognizing two Groups of species.	No-work in progress (European Union) Yes, the US supports the revised list	The list is developed from sound principles and incorporates the relevant species and/or species groups in its formation European Union: In our view this requires additional work and consultations intersessionally
A] - Group 1: The FDS-WG recognizes 4 bases for its Group 1* Reference Species lists, as follows: (*) this Group 1 excludes the tuna and tuna like species with existing international mandatory reporting requirements	Yes	
<u>basis 1</u> . listing species of key importance to WECAFC, under existing FMPs (e.g. conch, lobster, flying fish) or FMPs being developed ..	Yes	European Union: In our view species managed by other RFMOs should be excluded from this list and bases.
<i>[new]</i> <u>basis 2</u> (former v0.6 basis 4), listing species of interest to historical WGs of regional bodies (WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, including through their ICM). These species would include those such as: small pelagic, reef and shelf resources, recreational, commercially targeted and threatened sharks, rays.	Yes	Costa Rica: La lista no deberia incluir a las especies que ya son tratadas por otras comisiones como la ICCAT European Union: In our view species managed by other RFMOs should be excluded from this list and bases. The US does not agree /support the recommendation to exclude the species of historical significance to the region

Statement / Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
		The US does not support the exclusion of ICCAT species
<i>basis 3</i> (former v. 6 basis 3) species in high seas (areas beyond national jurisdictions) / straddling / shared / migratory / demersal / deep seas stocks	Yes	Solo especies que esten en aguas jurisdiccionales The US does not agree with the above statement European Union: In our view species managed by other RFMOs should be excluded from this list and bases.
[new] <i>basis 4</i> (former v0.6 basis 5), listing other reference species for WECAFC region originating from 1978 working party on fishery statistics and/or of interest for other reasons (e.g. of local interest including high commercial value, for biodiversity reasons, for importance of impacts from due to climate changes),	Costa Rica: Yes US: Yes	European Union: In our view species managed by other RFMOs should be excluded from this list and bases. Trinidad: would any other threatened and endangered species would fit in this basis?
B] Group 2 Species (former v0.6 basis 2): Further, the FDS-WG recognizes and adopts that data collection protocols and standards for species for which international mandatory reporting requirements are in place (e.g. Tuna/tuna like, and High Seas) and recommends that members follow the adopted data collection protocols and standards of the relevant management body (e.g. ICCAT).	Si	Sin comentarios European Union: this new basis seems confusing and would require additional intersessional consultation and clarification from the proponents Trinidad: need to need to clarify "Tuna and High Seas" US: The US is not in agreement with to delete this basis for the above reasons. US: It is not a new basis- but rather basis 2 from the endorsed list now moved to basis 5 and is in Group 2 category.

The FDS-WG Recommends for the intersession	Yes/No	Comment
<p>15. Continue to work intersessionally on remaining items of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Elevation of species b. Annotation of subareas by species c. Assignment of DCRF tasks by species and subareas d. Liaise with WECAFC working groups on above tasks as relevant, and in particular for validation of added species, or annotations of species by sub-area submitted by countries e. Liaise with neighboring RFMO (ICCAT, NAFO) on key data and statistics matters as relevant to the region (e.g. joint working group on dolphinfish) 	<p>Yes-with additional text</p> <p>US: Yes to each sub bullet</p>	<p>Sin comentarios</p> <p>Trinidad: need to better explain what elevation of species means</p> <p>US: Yes taking into account information on elevation of species by subarea/species group already provided during the online preparatory meetings as well as during FDS-WG 2 meeting (e.g. inputs from Trinidad and Tobago, Bermuda, Bahamas, Costa Rica)</p>
<p>16. Promote the essential role of the FDS-WG in bringing the matters of FDS-WG to the relevant WGs which their respective organization leads</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

On DCRF

The FDS-WG2 recognizes that the DCRF represents a data and statistics standards framework, harmonized with other reporting frameworks (e.g. FAO, ICCAT, WECAFC Members frameworks) while encompassing supplementary flexible provisions for the region, (European Union:) and strives aiming at for collecting robust, harmonized and comparable fisheries data addressing end-users needs.

The WG also recognises that the DCRF should ensure compatibility with existing data collection frameworks already implemented by WECAFC members and should be aligned with the mandate of WECAFC to avoid any duplication in data collection processes in the region and foster optimization of resources allocated to data collection mechanisms (e.g. avoid duplication of data collection tasks/work/resources covered by other organisations such as ICCAT).

The FDS-WG acknowledges that the DCRF v0.6 serves a minimum of two purposes currently::

A] Capacity building tool, which can be used by countries as a reference standard framework to set-up national data collection and information systems for all aquatic marine species.

B] An instrument to support science based conservation and management of marine biological resources under the mandate of WECAFC, the mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM, by implementing:

- A modular task oriented structure articulated currently around four supporting bases for reference list of species
- Through an incremental approach to implementation for some countries

The WG recommends

Recommendations	Yes/No	Comment
18. FDS-WG recommends To Adopt the rationale for the proposed modified structure including: Objectives, Scope, Data access and sharing rules- [include background on rationale of DCRF in document]	Yes	European Union: our preference would be to see the consolidated version first.
19. Confirms the consolidation of iDCRF with these concepts and structure, mindful of the further need to review carefully its content towards adoption by the extended session	Yes	
20. Confirms the revised structure for the Appendices, as follows:	European Union: No for now US: yes	<p>European Union: In the Appendix 5 could be added the list of “target assemblage group of species” (e.g. small pelagic species, crustaceans ...) which we think it is different from the main list of species as this information could be complementary to the gear type information asked in Tasks Effort and Catch.</p> <p>US: The above statement is too restrictive and excludes many of the primary species of interest to regional fishery groups such as CRFM/OSPESCA</p>

<p>DCRF–Proposed revised Appendix2 structure</p> <p>Appendix 1 : WECAFC Members</p> <p>Appendix 2: Spatial units for fishing areas zones</p> <p>Appendix 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WECAFC Reference list of aquatic species ● WECAFC list of stocks <p>Appendix 4: Fleet segment - vessel type / length class</p> <p>Appendix 5: Fishing Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fishing Gear ● Fishing Mode ● Effort measurement by fleet segment ● WECAFC list of fisheries <p>Appendix 6: Biological references (conversion factors, scales maturity stages, conventions for LFs, ...)</p> <p>Appendix 7: Socio-economics (Age groups, Currency, ...)</p> <p>Appendix 8: Questionnaires and data submission schedule</p> <p>Appendix 9: Glossary</p>	<p>US supports Yes to Appendix 1 and 3– Appendix 6.</p> <p>US recommends to begin work during intersessional period to advance appendix 2</p>	
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Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>21. Mindful of the constraints imposed by limited resources, the WG recommends the need for an incremental/staged approach to full implementation of the DCRF by WECAFC Members.</p>	Yes	
<p>a. In this staged approach, the WG recommends Tasks II (Catch & Effort), III (Fleet statistics), and IV (Biological data) be adopted as short-term (1–3 years) priority tasks for implementation during stage 1</p>	Yes-with additional text	
<p>b. In this staged approach, the WG recommends Tasks I (Regional statistics, V (Incidental catches), and VI (Socioeconomics) as secondary priority tasks for implementation during stage 1, to be done on a best effort approach, and further recommends that during stage 1 the FDS-WG develop pragmatic roadmap for implementation of stage 2 goals (Tasks, I, IV, V)</p>	Yes-with additional text	

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>22. Mindful of the need to explore options for the use of DCRF framework in a modular and incremental way, the FDS-WG recommends that the Members provide their feedback towards a final recommendation by the extended session on pending issues (e.g., annotation of DCRF tasks by species and subarea are to be considered for a first stage implementation of the DCRF).</p>	Yes	

Recommendation	Yes/No	Comment
<p>23. Confirm schedule for DCRF intersessional work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. By end November 2020 - V0.6 consolidated post FDS-WG2 b. By end January 2021 - V0.6 reviewed by WG members c. By end February 2021–V0.6 consolidated upon review by WECAFC Members, Fisheries Directors, WGs , CRFM, OSPESCA, and ICCAT d. By end March 2021– V0.6 adopted by extended session of FDS-WG2 e. Acknowledge that further progress can be conducted to fine tune DCRF, through national implementation and/or through pilot testing of submission to RDB, e.g. on occasion of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data contribution to species working groups, • dataPrep workshop (3rd quarter 2021) 	Yes	

**ANNEX J–FDS-WG2 INTERSESSIONAL WORK PLAN
PART II–May 2021 SESSION**

Updated FDS-WG2 Intersessional Work plan template (October 2020–May 2022)

Extended Session FDS-WG2 (May 2021)

Noting performance since October FDS-WG2 session

Code sheet

Yellow Highlighting indicates new column since FDS-WG2 October 2020 session

Red font indicates- progress update

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
I. It is proposed to convene a follow-up virtual meeting of FDS-WG2 to address the following topics during Q2 2021.	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway	
Extended Meeting Components			
1. Vessel mappings	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway	
a. Liaise with FDS-WG focal points for additional submissions			
b. Review submission from WECAFC Members and highlight where revisions are needed			
c. Implementations in the Regional Database with corresponding metadata			

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
d. Discussion of adding vessel type information into FIRMS tables, including vessels images when available			
2. WECAFC Subarea Boundaries	Q2 2021	Extended session, underway	
a. Finalize the proposal in the Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala sub-region under the OSPESCA umbrella		Intersessional meetings held	
b. Review feedback from countries on sub-areas related to area 31 and 41, and if the case appears feasible, prepare for presentation at CWP		Intersessional meetings held	
c. Discuss a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward			
3. FIRMS Inventories	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway	
a. Summarize inputs by countries, highlight latest submissions, discuss/elaborate specific FIRMS services for the region (delivered through WECAFC map viewer)		Additional fisheries inventories completed	
b. Discuss/identify/implement a path for updating inventories in OSPESCA region- e.g. consultant to further inventory development on a country by country basis possibly, considerations of focus groups working with fleet segments (across multiple countries) to enrich inventories			
c. Also noting that FIRMS Secretariat may develop a pilot demonstrating how a possible future addition of FIRMS fishery Ids (optional) in certain Tasks of the DCRF can be exploited, for presentation at next FDS-WG			

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
4. Small Scale Fisheries Matrix	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway	
a. Summarize list of countries which submitted highlighting latest submissions and new pilot testing			
b. Present a synthesis of the level of adaption of the SSF matrix to the WECAFC region and what would need to be changed in the SSF matrix for it to be of practical application for the region			
c. Discuss a recommendation for submitting to FAO for consideration WECAFC iDCRF			
5. WECAFC List of main Species , annotation of important Subareas by species and DCRF tasks	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway Revisions incorporated into v.6, new ordered list of species	
a. Review submissions by countries and WGs for additional species, and sub-areas for species, and proceed with countries endorsements for the proposals. The use of the FIRMS map viewer will help to obtain additional input on annotation of area by species.		All inputs reviewed to date and incorporated into updated list of species in DCRF v.6	Input on elevation of species by subarea and DCRF task is considered to be ongoing process
b. Review inputs from relevant working groups, for the list of species and their sub-areas and identification of specific DCRF tasks		No additional WG inputs received since October 2020 session	Noting, omission of 4 shark species in Appendix 3.b, to be corrected in v.6 to be delivered to SAG, WECAFC 18
c. Annotation of relevant standard conversion metrics by species/subarea for inclusion in DCRF catalogue (Tables) of conversions		Initiated for Extended session as new content in Appendix 6 in DCRF v.6	considered to be ongoing process

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
d. Annotation of relevant biological parameters for select set of species in main list of species by important subareas (e.g. reproductive ogives, growth parameter estimates) for inclusion in DCRF catalogue (Tables) of biological parameters		Extended session, initiated February 2021 in DCRF v.6, new content	considered to be ongoing process
6. iDCRF	Q2 2021	Extended session, Underway	
a. A revised DCRF document will be made available early December for review by Members, WGs and ICCAT by end January 2021, for consolidation in February and final review in March for adoption at the extended session of FDS-WG2 (end March/early April) of a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward		Completed including revised Appendices, section 4 v.6 DCRF	
b. Further proofing DCRF (post extended session of FDS-WG2) with:		Completed	
i. pilot testing starting with Data preparatory workshop and initial country submissions that will follow			Anticipate work to be done Q3 2021
ii. two proposed e-TWGs:			
a. for elaboration on measures of fishing effort per Fleet segment or Gear type		Work began March 2021 under CWP-TWG Effort, TORS developed	
b. for refinement of Biological tasks–countries with experience invited to be part of this WG		Work began February 2021 under FDS-WG	Noting this work item also included under above item 5 Species (d)
II. Operationalization of the DCRF (DCRF) and Contributions to RDB (RDB-1)- post Q2 2021, initiate June 2021	To be Initiated Q3 2021		
a. Finalize the Maps viewer (through e-TWG?) for public release as soon as possible		Work begun Q1 2021, to be presented at extended session	

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
b. Identifying countries willing to commit in the intersession, to populate the RDB using local statistics in 2020 and 2021. Local statistics uploaded to RDB. Identification of local country data manager.		Extended session agenda item	Need to liaise with Secretariat, Q3 2021+ Also noting parallel and related request by WECAFC Secretariat to members to provide available data in context of the WECAFC Transformation process
c. Liaising with and identifying Regional species WGs to combine their expectations for data with the countries contribution (Shrimp and Groundfish, Lobster, ...), and organize joint activities			Need to liaise with Secretariat to identify opportunities to work with WGs
d. Identifying issues/challenges with countries committing data to RDB during pilot tests			
e. Developing road map including pilot data sets for implementing data uploads to RDB by end of 2021			Identify date for data submission- liaise with Secretariat
(*) [Consider communication of OSPESCA Director of 12 June 2020 on topic of collaborating on pilot data sets to test for RDB that currently are already capturing statistics]			
III. Discussion of how the RDB information can contribute to informing SDG 14.4.1 (initiate Q1 2021 through the work of the FDS-WG via the DCRF? Has any progress been made yet, what is needed to begin to make progress (individual countries operationalizing the DCRF through committing to contribute to the RDB). Develop some time tables and a path (roadmap)-			Noting FAO plan for a regional workshop during second half of 2021 to raise awareness on the SDG14.4.1 indicator and train stakeholders in reporting methodology for this indicator
1. is a sub-committee needed- perhaps focus on one of the pilots (e.g. OSPESCA lobster)			
IV. Fostering Growth of FDS-WG throughout region -this work is ongoing			

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
a. Co-convener shadow training to develop leadership in WG	Q3 2021		Possible considerations of co-convener for training
V. How can this WG interact or begin to interact with other regional/international WGs (species, topical, RFMOs) to further improve the regional statistics and information on fisheries		Work begun Q2 2021 at extended session	
1. Under MoU with ICCAT- contribute to the planned joint ICCAT-WECAFC working group where respective species list might be examined		MoU discussions ongoing between WECAFC/ICCAT	
2. Should this WG contact ICCAT re' participating in ICCAT statistics WG as observer to learn how ICCAT develops/prioritizes and carries out its tasks/intersessional work on the topic of statistics (a question to ask to the participants? would anyone volunteer)		Work begun Q2 2021 at extended session	iDCRFv.6 has been shared with ICCAT data manager for any feedback Noting ICCAT has been invited to Extended session
VI. Review Logbooks guidelines and revisit FDS-WG2 (LOG-1) Begin Q3 2021		Item on Extended session Agenda, Q2 2021	
1. Review work done during FDS-WG 1 intersession- discuss LOG-1 (two pilot surveys) and LOG-2 (historical experiences) survey instruments in context of best practices in logbook implementation in region and identify needed revisions for survey instruments LOG-1, LOG-2.			
VII. Capacity building- other needs-this work is ongoing			

Activity	Timeframe	Status	Note/Comments
1. Finalize the list of criteria and propose a short list of WECAFC Members meeting these criteria for final selection		Q2 2021, Work began and results will be presented at extended session	
2. For the selected WECAFC member(s), define the work plan and related budget for support	Q3 2021		
3. Seek for co-funding from other regional projects and agree on the shared investments	?		

ANNEX K–(DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/ XVIII /2021/XXXX ON “WECAFC FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS”

Extended session May 2021

Fisheries for states of the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries region, in particular for African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) from the Caribbean are important for food security and nutrition, as source of livelihoods, income earnings, and also source of foreign exchange for national governments.

For many years, the Caribbean region data deficiencies and limited statistical information have been hampering national policy-making and fishery management in a regional context of shared marine resources.

The “Review of current fisheries management performance and conservation in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) area” in 2015 identified a number of challenges in data and statistics in support to fisheries management, including: inadequate legislation; challenges for cooperation with stakeholders with regard to acquisition of data and information on a routine basis; rather weak data and information base for supporting fisheries management. The need to strengthen and maintain a quality statistical monitoring system was considered key to the success of immediate fisheries management needs.[1]

Despite some regional European Union and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) programmes aiming at improving statistics supply chain in the Caribbean region, a lack of capacity to collect and exchange data and information, analyze state and trends of fishery resources and regional data policies remains. In the meantime, slow-onset changes as well as extreme weather events showed that climate change and variability is impacting the sector in the region severely.

During WECAFC 14 (dates/location) and 15 (dates/location), the European Union expressed the need for increased attention to improved fisheries data and information collection as the basis of better fisheries management in the region. The identified data gaps continue to undermine any significant effort to improve fishery management. This need was considered so urgent that one of the four technical Focus Areas in the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2014–2020 was dedicated to this subject and the current Programme of Work includes activity 2.4 “Improved fishery and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination at regional and national level” in support of this subject.

WECAFC 16 (Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016) agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS 1 (Fisheries and Resource Monitoring System) Partnership and supported the development of a regional database (RDB) in collaboration with the Members and partners in the region.

The most recent Commission session (17th) (Miami, July 2019) adopted eleven regional fisheries management recommendations, including among others for the conservation and management of sharks and rays, the management of Caribbean spiny lobster, the management of shrimp and groundfish resources of the North Brazil-Guianas Shelf, improved compliance with trade measures for Queen conch, the sustainability of fisheries using moored fish aggregating devices, the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species. In order to support these conservation and management measures, the Commission also adopted the WECAFC interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF), and an interim List of Main Species for data collection in the WECAFC area.

[1]:Singh-Renton, SUnited Statesn & McIvor, Ian. (2015). Review of Current Fisheries Management Performance and Conservation Measures in the WECAFC Area.

The Commission is asked to:

NOTE that reliable and timely fisheries data, statistics and information are instrumental to supporting national evidence-based policy-making, development and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans ;

RECALL that WECAFC 17 urged them to provide national data and statistics to the Regional Database in line with the interim DCRF and to support and promote the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership as a collaborative platform for collating and sharing scientific information throughout the region and leveraging of ongoing regional projects.

1. Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

MINDFUL that qualitative and quantitative improvement of regional data and statistics requires harmonization and standardization at national and regional level with the definition of minimum data requirements in support of evidence-based decision-making.

MINDFUL of the global Reference Harmonization standard being developed by the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics under which WECAFC, ICCAT, FAO and other RFBs collaborate for harmonizing and streamlining data collection and reporting frameworks including consideration of multiple reporting burdens.

REAFFIRMING the commitment of CARICOM States to improving evidence-based decision-making through regional cooperation as expressed in multiple regional policy documents including the “Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem”, the CARICOM Strategic Plan, 2015–2019, the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the CRFM Strategic Plan, 2013–2021;

RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the WECAFC members to increase their capacities to collect, analyze and report fisheries data and statistics;

RECALLING the endorsement of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership by WECAFC 15 in 2014;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK”

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/5+6+7 “ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS AND RAYS IN THE WECAFC AREA” related to reporting data and information on sharks and rays including for non-contracting parties to ICCAT

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/9 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 4 related to Catch Documentation Schemes

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

Recognize that the DCRF serves a minimum of two purposes, including i) a capacity building tool, which can be used by Members as a reference standard to set-up national data collection and information systems for all aquatic marine species, and ii) an instrument to support the scientific mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM

Recognize that the DCRF, its appendices, and associated documents “Data sharing and access policies” and “Lists of fisheries and stocks within the WECAFC competence area” are living documents based on a modular task-oriented structure articulated around clear supporting bases for reference list of species, with parts more mature than others, and as such conducive to a staged and incremental approach to implementation of the DCRF for some Members

Endorse version 0.8 of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and its appendices, including in particular Appendix 2 WECAFC subareas and Appendix 3 WECAFC Reference list of main species

Promote the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection of the newly established WECAFC geographic subareas and divisions as per DCRF Appendix 2, developed in accordance with the prevailing principles of maintaining consistency with the major ecoregions in the region, and the utilization of EEZ boundary lines and other default limits, in combination with, where required or preferred, simple longitudinal or latitudinal or oblique straight lines where:

- there is no clear demarcation of the maritime boundaries, to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces;
- there are locally recognized and important ecosystem boundaries, together with other considerations such as countries’ data collection capacity.

Promote the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection on the evolving categorization of WECAFC Reference list of main species developed by the FDS-WG as DCRF Appendix 3, which consists of three groups and several subgroups with defined bases for selection:

- Group 1 - Priority species for DCRF reporting: Species with fisheries management plans endorsed
- Group 2 - Species of interest for WECAFC that could be elevated to the Group 1, with three Subgroups:
 - Subgroup basis 2: Species of interest to historical WGs of regional bodies (WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, including through their ICM).
 - Subgroup basis 3: Species in high seas (areas beyond national...) other than tuna and associated species reported in group 3
 - Subgroup basis 4: Species for WECAFC region of general interest to WECAFC Members
- Group 3 - Other species of interest for WECAFC Members

- Subgroup basis 5 - Species under the mandate of other RFMOs, including for mandatory reporting (e.g. ICCAT), such as tuna and tuna-like species and pelagic sharks.

Therefore strongly encourage WECAFC Members to proceed with the use of DCRF for monitoring and reporting, with prioritization for provision of data for Tasks III (Fleet), II (Catch by species and Effort), and IV (Biological data), with focus on Group1 species.

Promote continued participation in the FDS-WG and specifically to support the intersessional work plan as relates interactions with thematic working groups relating to national vessel mappings to regional fleet segment classifications, promotion of species and associated subareas for priority reporting.

Promote interactions between FDS-WG and thematic working groups to further tailor the DCRF and associated data sharing policies in consideration of the use of relevant data sets by those working groups.

2. WECAFC Regional Database

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16th session of WECAFC held in Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016, agreed to establish the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)

FURTHER NOTING that FDS-WG acts as a steering committee for the Regional Database as per its TORs;

MINDFUL that sharing of information in support to management and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans requires an instrument for data dissemination and sharing;

NOTING that data access and sharing in the region is to “facilitate regional fisheries data and information exchange to support evidence-based fisheries policy-making at national and regional levels, while ensuring non-disclosure of sensitive fisheries data and information”.

RECOGNIZING the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to support and to validate national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as part of the global monitoring framework requested under SDG14.4.1

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK” section 4 related to the Regional Database

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 1 related to the Regional Database

RECALLING Resolution WECAFC/XVII/2019/8 “ON THE WECAFC-FIRMS PARTNERSHIP”

ACKNOWLEDGING that WECAFC Regional Database is a fully functional information system;

REITERATES the promotion to WECAFC MEMBERS of provisioning of national data and statistics to the WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Regional DataBase (RDB) according to Interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF),

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

The [new name of the RDB] has the mandate to disseminate data and statistics covered by DCRF as well as FIRMS information on status and trends of fisheries and stocks under the WECAFC competence area

The [new name of the RDB] be published in the Data section of the new coming WECAFC website

Encourage Members to publish DRCF data in the RDB for Task II.1 and Task II.2, Task III.1 and Task IV.1, especially for Groups 1 species to reinforce management of shared stocks, and promote proceeding with related tasks including:

- carrying out mappings of national vessel types to regional fleet segment classifications

Recognize the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to support and to validate national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as part of the global monitoring framework requested under SDG14.4.1, and therefore:

- WECAFC Members are encouraged to update or further develop their inventories and status reports on national fisheries and publish in FIRMS
- List of Stocks and stock status reports be updated and published in FIRMS after endorsement through the SAG process

3. WECAFC Capacity Building for collection and production of data, statistics, and information

RECALLING that The WECAFC shall cover all living marine resources, without prejudice to the management responsibilities and authority of other competent fisheries bodies and other living marine resources management organizations or arrangements in the area

CONCERNED of the challenges that WECAFC members still face to collect data and produce statistics on all living marine resources

ACKNOWLEDGING continuing technical support from FAO and financial support from donors including the European Union to develop WECAFC MEMBERS' Capacity for collection and production of data, statistics and information;

RECALLING the important steps taken by the WECAFC, OSPESCA, and CRFM members in the recent years in terms of increasing their capacities to collect, analyze and report reliable and timely fisheries data and statistics

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 "ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA section 2 related to capacity building on stock assessment and bioeconomic analysis of priority fisheries

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK” section 7 related to strengthening of national capacity

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

Reiterate recognition that the WECAFC-FIRMS project provides a collaborative platform for collation and sharing of scientific information, leveraging ongoing regional projects, and prioritizing national data needs.

Acknowledge the development by the FDS-WG of criteria and related scoring to support the identification and prioritisation of capacity-building investments and projects that support the WECAFC agenda to improve science-based decision-making and support its further development as a dashboard for monitoring needs and mobilize resources with final benefits to WECAFC and its Members.

Further investments should be made to build national capacities of WECAFC Members for data collection, analysis, and reporting with priorities on implementing DCRF and feeding the [name of regional database]

[1] From Draft Recommendation WECAF/17/2018/1 „on the marking and identification of fishing vessels in the WECAFC area“–as these only available estimates are based on the Agnew et al. 2009 estimates, these estimates could be outdated.

[2] FAO (2018). Report of the first meeting of the regional working group on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Bridgetown, Barbados. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 1190.

ANNEX L–FDS-WG FINAL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO WECAFC 18

Conclusion session 10 March 2022

(draft) Recommendation WECAFC/ XVIII /2022/xxx on WECAFC Fisheries Data, Statistics, and Information”

Cover note

Fisheries for States of the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries region, in particular for African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) from the Caribbean are important for food security and nutrition, as source of livelihoods, income earnings, and also source of foreign exchange for national governments.

For many years, the Caribbean regional data deficiencies and limited statistical information have been impeding national policy-making and fishery management in a regional context of shared marine resources.

The “Review of fisheries management performance and conservation in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) area” in 2015 identified a number of challenges in data and statistics in support to fisheries management, including: inadequate legislation; challenges for cooperation with stakeholders with regard to acquisition of data and information on a routine basis; a weak data and information base for supporting fisheries management. The need to strengthen and maintain a quality statistical monitoring system was considered key to the success of immediate fisheries management needs⁵.^[1]

Despite some regional European Union and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) programmes aiming at improving statistics in the Caribbean region, a lack of capacity to collect and exchange data and information, and to analyze the status and trends of fishery resources and regional data policies remains. In the meantime, environmental trends as well as extreme weather events suggest that climate change and variability are already impacting the region’s fisheries, in some cases severely.

During WECAFC 14 (6–9 February 2012, Panama) and 15 (26–28 March 2014, Trinidad and Tobago), the European Union expressed the need for increased attention to improved fisheries data and information collection as the basis of better fisheries management in the region. The identified data gaps continue to undermine any significant effort to improve fishery management. This need was considered so pressing that one of the four technical Focus Areas in the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2014–2020 was dedicated to this topic and the current Programme of Work includes activity 2.4, “Improved fishery and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination at regional and national level,” in support of this subject.

WECAFC 16 (Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016) agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS (Fisheries and Resource Monitoring System) Partnership and supported by the development of a regional database (RDB) in collaboration with the WECAFC Members and partners in the region.

The most recent Commission session (17th) (Miami, July 2019) adopted 11 regional fisheries management recommendations, including among others for the conservation and management of sharks and rays,

⁵ Singh-Renton, Susan & McIvor, Ian. (2015). Review of Current Fisheries Management Performance and Conservation Measures in the WECAFC Area.

the management of Caribbean spiny lobster, the management of shrimp and groundfish resources of the North Brazil-Guianas Shelf, improved compliance with trade measures for Queen conch, the sustainability of fisheries using moored fish aggregating devices, the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species. In order to support these conservation and management measures, the Commission also adopted the WECAFC interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF), and an interim List of Main Species for data collection in the WECAFC area. The proposed actions if supported will contribute towards continued improvement in the quality of statistics and data available for monitoring and management in the region, building on the initiatives undertaken through the WECAFC-FIRMS and FDS-WG activities.

Following this 17th WECAFC Commission, the second session of the FDS-WG2 met virtually three times between October 2020 and March 2022 to address the requested improvements of the iDCRF, the operationalization of the regional database, and the steps for increasing Members capacities. In its Concluding meeting (10 March 2022), the FDS-WG2 adopted draft recommendations as laid out in this document.

The Commission is asked to:

NOTE that reliable and timely fisheries data, statistics and information are instrumental to supporting national science-based policy-making and management, and development and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans;

RECALL that WECAFC 17 urged WECAFC Members to provide national data and statistics to the Regional Database in line with the interim DCRF and to support and promote the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership as a collaborative platform for collating and sharing scientific information throughout the region and leveraging of ongoing regional projects.

1. Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

MINDFUL that qualitative and quantitative improvement of regional data and statistics requires harmonization and standardization at national and regional level with the definition of minimum data requirements in support of evidence-based decision-making;

MINDFUL of the global Reference Harmonization standard being developed by the FAO's Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics under which WECAFC, ICCAT, FAO and other RFBs collaborate for harmonizing and streamlining data collection and reporting frameworks including consideration of multiple reporting burdens;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of CARICOM States to improving evidence-based decision-making through regional cooperation as expressed in multiple regional policy documents including the "Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem", the CARICOM Strategic Plan, 2015–2019, the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the CRFM Strategic Plan, 2013–2021;

RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the WECAFC members to increase their capacities to collect, analyze and report fisheries data and statistics;

RECALLING the endorsement of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership by WECAFC 15 in 2014;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK;”

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/5+6+7 “ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS AND RAYS IN THE WECAFC AREA” related to reporting data and information on sharks and rays including for non-contracting parties to ICCAT;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/9 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 4 related to Catch Documentation Schemes;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

1(a) Recognize the DCRF serves a minimum of two purposes, including i) a capacity building tool, which can be used by Members as a reference standard to set-up national data collection and information systems for all aquatic marine species, and ii) an instrument to support the scientific mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM.

1(b) Recognize the DCRF, its appendices, and associated documents titled, “Data sharing and access policies” and “Lists of fisheries and stocks within the WECAFC competence area,” are living documents based on a modular task-oriented structure articulated around clear supporting bases for reference list of species, with parts more mature than others, and as such conducive to a staged and incremental approach to implementation of the DCRF for some Members.

1(c) Endorse version v.8 of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and its appendices, including in particular Appendix 2, "WECAFC subareas" and Appendix 3, “WECAFC Reference list of main species.”

1(d) Recommend the following general principles for the delineation of WECAFC sub-areas and divisions:

- That the WECAFC subareas and divisions are identified, as far as possible, consistently with the major ecosystems in the region as the starting point for defining their delineations, and as the overarching principle.

- That in defining the subareas and divisions, established maritime boundaries and 200 nautical mile EEZ limits are utilized (where they are established and are not disputed) and other default limits as the prevailing principle, in combination with, where required or preferred, simple longitudinal, latitudinal or oblique straight lines in the cases where:

(a.) there are no established maritime boundaries, to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces; and

(b.) there are locally recognized and important ecosystem boundaries, together with other considerations, such as WECAFC Member countries’ data collection capacities, that would limit adequate reporting.

- That some of these subareas and divisions remain to be finalized and are subject to further discussion and modification. This document and any proposal for, or final delineation of, any subarea or division is without prejudice to the WECAFC Member States’ maritime claims and boundaries.

- That these delimitations do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO or WECAFC or its Member States concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

1(e) Further recommend regarding statistical delineations:

- That the above general principles should be followed for further proposals on the final statistical limits, subject to approval by the WECAFC Members directly involved.

- The adoption of a provisional list of subareas and divisions, that include correspondence to the Large Marine Ecosystems, or marine ecoregions, as identified in DCRF Appendix 2, and promotes the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection of the newly established WECAFC geographic subareas and divisions as per DCRF Appendix 2.

- That, to the extent possible, reporting is done at the finest possible division level to ensure the availability of spatial granular data required for scientific purposes.

1(f) Recommend the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection on the evolved categorization of WECAFC Reference list of aquatic species developed by the FDS-WG as DCRF Appendix 3, which consists of three groups and several subgroups with defined bases for selection:

- Group 1, “Main Reference Species,” are key species to the region, other than those included in Group 3, and of specific interest to the WECAFC mandate for which States are strongly encouraged to statistical reporting:
 - Subgroup basis 1: Species with fisheries management plans endorsed.
- Group 2, “Other Reference Species,” other than those included in Group 3, are Species of interest for WECAFC that could be elevated to the Group 1, with three Subgroups:
 - Subgroup basis 2: Species of interest to historical WGs of regional bodies (WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, including through their Interim Coordination Mechanisms)
 - Subgroup basis 3: Species in high seas (areas beyond national jurisdiction)/straddling / shared and not under mandate of another RFMO
 - Subgroup basis 4: Species for WECAFC region originating from 1978 working party on fishery statistics and/or of interest for other reasons (e.g. of local interest including high commercial value, for biodiversity reasons, or for importance of impacts from/due to climate changes)
- Group 3, “Other species of interest for WECAFC Members,” are...
 - Subgroup basis 5 - Species under the mandate of other RFMOs, including for mandatory reporting (e.g. ICCAT), such as tuna and tuna-like species and pelagic sharks.

1 (g) Strongly encourage WECAFC Members to proceed with the use of DCRF for monitoring and reporting, with prioritization for provision of data for Tasks III (Fleet), II (Catch by species and Effort), and IV (Biological data), with high priority on Group1 species.

1 (h) Recommend continued participation in the FDS-WG and specifically to support the intersessional work plan as related to interactions with thematic working groups relating to:

- national vessel mappings to regional fleet segment classifications, promotion of species and associated subareas for priority reporting, species biological parameters.
- further tailor the DCRF and associated data sharing policies in consideration of the use of relevant data sets by those working groups.

2. WECAFC Regional Database

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16th session of WECAFC held in Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016, agreed to establish the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG);

FURTHER NOTING that FDS-WG acts as a steering committee for the Regional Database as per its Terms of Reference;

MINDFUL that sharing of information in support to management and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans requires an instrument for data dissemination and sharing;

NOTING that data access and sharing in the region is to “facilitate regional fisheries data and information exchange to support evidence-based fisheries policy-making at national and regional levels, while ensuring non-disclosure and/or careful handling of sensitive fisheries data and information;”

RECOGNIZING the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to validate regional inventories and to support and facilitate consistency and harmonization with national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as a contribution to the global monitoring framework requested under SDG14.4.1;

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK” section 4 related to the Regional Database;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 1 related to the Regional Database;

RECALLING Resolution WECAFC/XVII/2019/8 “ON THE WECAFC-FIRMS PARTNERSHIP;”

ACKNOWLEDGING that WECAFC Regional Database is a fully functional information system;

REITERATES the promotion to WECAFC MEMBERS of provisioning of national data and statistics to the WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Regional DataBase (RDB) according to Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

2(a) The Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Information System (“WECAFIS”) has the mandate to disseminate data and statistics covered by DCRF with due consideration of DCRF data access and sharing rules, as well as FIRMS information on status and trends of fisheries and stocks under the WECAFC competence area.

2(b) The WECAFIS be published in the Data section of the new WECAFC website.

2(c) Members publish DCRF data in WECAFIS for Task I, and for Task II.1 and Task II.2, Task III.1 and Task IV.1 with high priority for Groups 1 species to reinforce management of shared stocks, and promote proceeding with related tasks including:

- carrying out mappings of national vessel types to regional fleet segment classifications

2(d) Members recognize the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to validate regional inventories and to support and facilitate consistency and harmonization with national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as contribution to the global monitoring framework requested under/ SDG14.4.1.

2(e) WECAFC Members are therefore encouraged to:

- Update or further develop their inventories of fisheries and develop status reports on national fisheries and publish in FIRMS
- Update or further develop new List of Stocks and stock status reports be updated and published in FIRMS
- Engage in training opportunities towards completion of WECAFIS-DCRF data templates towards progressing operationalization of the DCRF and WECAFC-FIRMS data templates to enrich FIRMS content

2(f) SAG is encouraged to review and provide recommendations in light of other processes as regards the information/content on list of stocks and stock status

3. WECAFC Capacity Building for collection and production of data, statistics, and information

RECALLING that WECAFC's mandate covers all living marine resources, without prejudice to the management responsibilities and authority of other competent fisheries bodies and other living marine resources management organizations or arrangements in the area

CONCERNED about the challenges that WECAFC members still face to collect data and produce statistics on all living marine resources

ACKNOWLEDGING continuing technical support from FAO and financial support from donors, including the European Union and the United States, to develop WECAFC Members' capacities for production and collection of data, statistics, and information;

RECALLING the important steps taken by the WECAFC, OSPESCA, and CRFM members in the recent years in terms of increasing their capacities to collect, analyze and report reliable and timely fisheries data and statistics

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 "ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA" section 2 related to capacity building on stock assessment and bioeconomic analysis of priority fisheries

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 "ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK" section 7 related to strengthening of national capacity

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

3(a) Members reiterate recognition that the WECAFC-FIRMS project provides a collaborative platform for collation and sharing of scientific information, leveraging ongoing regional projects, and prioritizing national data needs.

3(b) Membes are encouraged to acknowledge the development by the FDS-WG of criteria and related scoring to support the identification and prioritization of capacity-building investments and projects that improve science-based decision-making and support the further development of these criteria as a dashboard for monitoring needs and mobilizing resources for the benefit of WECAFC and its Members.

3(c) Members recognize that further investments should be made to build national capacities of WECAFC Members for data collection, analysis, and reporting with priorities on implementing DCRF and feeding the WECAFIS through the SAG process.

The second meeting of the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG) was convened on-line in three (3) sessions with the main session on 12–16 October 2020, extended session on 25–28 May 2021 and conclusion session on 10 March 2022. The Regional FDS-WG is a joint working group of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), and Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Central America (OSPESCA). Along these three sessions, a total of 44 participating experts representing 21 WECAFC members were presented with documents meant to provide the WECAFC Region as solid, harmonized and standardized framework for data collection in support to fisheries management and stock assessment, the interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF), with its regional fleet segments classification and mapping, a proposal for WECAFC Subareas and list of main species. These documents were reviewed, amended and validated by the FDS-WG for presentation to the coming Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) meeting for review prior to submission to WECAFC 18th meeting.

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