



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Meeting of Experts to Review
the Draft Action Plan for
the Caribbean Region

E/CEPAL/PROY.3/L.INF.23

ACTIVITIES OF THE
WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION
(WECAFC)



The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in pursuance of a resolution of the Council of FAO in later 1973 and held its first meeting in 1975. Its task has been to consider a number of important problems for the development and rational utilization of the fishery resources of the area (FAO fishing area 31) as specified in its terms of reference:

- (a) To promote and assist in the collection of national statistics and biological data relating to fisheries in general and the shrimp fisheries in particular, and to provide for the compilation and dissemination of these data on regional basis;
- (b) to facilitate the coordination of national research programmes and to promote, where appropriate, the standardization of research methods;
- (c) to promote the interchange of information relating to the fisheries of the region;
- (d) to promote and coordinate, on a national and regional basis, studies on the effect of the environment and of pollution on fisheries, and studies of appropriate methods of control and improvement;
- (e) to promote and assist in the development of aquaculture and stock improvement;
- (f) to encourage education and training through the establishment or improvement of national and regional institutions and by the organization of training centres and seminars;
- (g) to assist Member Governments in establishing national policies for the development and utilization of the resources constituent with national objectives and the conservation and improvement of the resources, and
- (h) to promote and coordinate international aid to further the achievement of the objectives referred to in the preceding sub-paragraphs.

The following countries are members of the commission: Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, France, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Spain, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, U.S.A., Venezuela and Zaire.

Prior to advice on the exploitation of the living marine resources of the region, subsidiary bodies were established, namely

- Working Party on the Assessment of the Shrimp and Lobster Resources
- Working Party on the Assessment of the Fish Resources
- Working Party on Fishery Statistics.

Among the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, particular note should be taken of the Executive Committee for the implementation of the international Project for the Development of Fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic, the functions of which are determined as to:

- (a) act for the Commission during its intersessional period with respect to matters relating to the Project
- (b) maintain close liaison between the Project and the Committee
- (c) provide guidance and assistance to the Project
- (d) consult, as appropriate, with member countries of the Commission that are not represented on the Executive Committee and with the competent international organizations
- (e) report to the Commission, at each session, on its activities during the preceding intersessional period.

The Project referred to above was basically supposed to be a coordinated effort towards the development of the fisheries in the region.

The Project is open to participation and contribution of all WECAFC member and non-member countries utilizing living resources of the region. FAO is executing agency and WECAFC acts as the governments' designated agency.

The work programme designed for a three-year period (January 77 - December 79), to be extended for further two years, distinguishes long-range and immediate objectives as follows:

1. Long-range Objectives

To assist in ensuring the full rational utilization of the fishery resources in the Western Central Atlantic through the development

of under-exploited stocks, particularly those accessible to small-scale fisheries, the promotion of better use of existing catches and of appropriate management actions for stocks that are heavily exploited.

2. Immediate Objectives

The Project will have the role of a coordinating mechanism to advise on the development of appropriate fishery policies and their harmonization at the national sub-regional and inter-regional levels, and in facilitating international assistance. In particular, the objectives are:

Resource Utilization

(i) Resource exploitation

- (a) To assist in the identification and formulation of national or regional projects for the development of fisheries on under-exploited stocks. Particular attention will be given to the identification of stocks that can support increased catches by small-scale fisheries and measures to develop these fisheries;
- (b) to assist small-scale fishermen by increasing and improving the quality of their catches through the introduction and demonstration of improved or new fishing methods, vessels, gear and operations, insofar as the resources allow increased catches to be achieved, and improved post-harvesting techniques on board and ashore;
- (c) to assist governments and the private sector in identifying opportunities for the improvement and development of all sectors of the industry, and sources of assistance for feasibility studies and investment. Particular items which will receive attention include the development of new or improved fishing vessels and gear, planning better harbour and shore facilities, assistance in processing and marketing;
- (d) to assist in the identification and formulation of coastal aquaculture projects;
- (e) to provide assistance to countries to obtain improved statistics of fish processing, exports, imports, domestic distribution, prices, consumption, as well as costs and earnings data on fishing and aquaculture operations.

• • (ii) Resource management and identification of development opportunities

- (a) To assist countries in formulating plans for the development and management of fisheries that take into account the con-

straints set by the magnitude of the sustainable yields from the resources, with special reference to the coordination of plans concerned with the exploitation of the same resource by more than one country;

- (b) to assist in the development of principles and techniques for the management of shrimp fisheries, which take into account biological, social and economic factors, and which can be implemented under appropriate national and multilateral arrangements.

Resource Monitoring

(i) Statistics and biological data

- (a) To provide assistance to the coastal countries concerned with improving their supply of data, e.g. by training biologists and statisticians, and in introducing appropriate techniques for data collection and compilation;
- (b) to collaborate with the non-coastal countries fishing in the area, and with the intergovernmental bodies, such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), in assembling the data necessary for the evaluation of the state of the stocks;
- (c) to ensure the regional compilation, analysis and publication of the data referred to in (a) and (b).

(ii) Research

To assist in the promotion and coordination of regional research activities, especially regarding:

- (a) survey and appraisal of demersal and pelagic stocks, to identify possibilities for development;
- (b) assessment of shrimps and other heavily fished stocks.

Fisheries Administration and Legislation

- (a) To assist in the strengthening of fishery administration in general and, in particular, national fishery research and development institutions;
- (b) to assist in the formulation of fishery legislation.

Training

To support directly, or through bilateral or other funds, training at all levels in all fishery sectors.

