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# GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN



**Report of the fortieth session**

St. Julian's, Malta, 30 May – 3 June 2016

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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the final version of the report adopted in St. Julian's, Malta, at the fortieth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean on 3 June 2016.

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### ABSTRACT

The fortieth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean as well as the tenth session of the Compliance Committee and the seventh session of the Committee on Administration and Finance was attended by delegates of all 24 contracting parties, as well as delegates of the two cooperating non-contracting parties and two riparian non-contracting parties. Representatives from 15 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were also in attendance. It was the first time in the history of the Commission that full attendance was attained and all the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states were present together in a regular session.

During the session, the Commission granted cooperating non-contracting party status to Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of its increasing involvement in GFCM activities and as a preliminary step towards full membership in due course. Moreover, within the framework of ongoing cooperation with partner organizations, a memorandum of understanding was signed with OceanCare. The Commission was encouraged to strengthen cooperation further, including by providing technical assistance to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties. This technical assistance would underpin compliance and contribute to the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

A total of seven binding recommendations on measures for the management of fisheries resources in both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea were adopted and dealt with: a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities; the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the Data Collection Reference Framework; further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea; a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily; a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea; scientific monitoring; management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea and the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red coral. Furthermore, the Commission adopted three resolutions addressing issues such as small-scale fisheries, guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions and a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

In the field of aquaculture, the Commission acknowledged the first outcomes of the Task Force on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and agreed to progress in particular on shellfish farming, environmental monitoring and indicators to measure progress on aquaculture development.

Finally, the Commission adopted its programme of work for the next intersession and approved its budget amounting to US\$2 532 162 for 2017 as well as a number of strategic actions to be funded through extrabudgetary resources. It also unanimously endorsed the renewed Bureaus of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries and of the Working Group on the Black Sea for another two-year term.

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## OPENING AND ARRANGEMENTS OF THE SESSION

1. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its fortieth session as well as the tenth session of its Compliance Committee (CoC) and the seventh session of its Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) in St. Julian's, Malta, from 30 May to 3 June 2016. Attendants included delegates from all 24 GFCM contracting parties, 2 cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and 2 non-contracting parties as well as observers, including representatives from 15 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its regional projects, the Bureaus of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and the GFCM Secretariat. The list of participants is provided under Appendix 2.

2. Dr José A. Herrera, Maltese Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, welcomed participants to St. Julian's and praised efforts made by the GFCM, calling for immediate action to achieve sustainability goals. Dr Herrera emphasized in particular the need to develop an integrated approach to fisheries management and to implement an ecosystem approach given the interactions between fisheries and the marine environment. As echoed by Ms Andreina Fenech Farrugia, Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture, who subsequently addressed the audience, this would contribute to counteracting the alarming state of fisheries at the regional and subregional levels.

3. Mr Árni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General – FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, addressed participants on behalf of the FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva, acknowledging in particular GFCM efforts to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the FAO Strategic Objective 2. He underlined the important role of the GFCM in tailoring the implementation of FAO policies to the Mediterranean and Black Sea region and acknowledged the GFCM for having prompted a process towards the declaration of an international day for the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing ("IUU Day").

4. Mr Stefano Cataudella, GFCM Chairperson, sincerely thanked the Government of Malta for hosting the session. In his address, he recalled the importance of GFCM's modernized institutional framework to promote blue growth as well as its significant lead in confronting the challenges faced by the sector, especially in light of the sustainable development agenda. In this respect, he stressed the importance of levelling the playing field in the region and implementing strategies for both the fisheries and the aquaculture sectors.

5. During the statements by contracting parties, Mr Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, underscored the importance of the current session as a decisive turning point in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries management towards the adoption of concrete and effective measures to revert the declining trend of fisheries stocks. To this end, noting the synergies between ongoing United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU [Member Organization]) efforts to improve fisheries management on a global scale, Mr Vella was in full support of a GFCM mid-term strategy to address challenges at a regional scale.

6. The delegate of Tunisia noted that, for the first time, participation of all Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries had been attained at a regular session of the Commission, expressing the strong hope that this would be instrumental in taking concrete actions with all involved actors and fostering a concerted approach, while bearing in mind existing differences.

7. The full text of opening speeches and statements is provided in their original language in Appendix 4.

8. The Chairperson referred to the statement of competence and voting rights by the EU and its Member States, as provided in document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.3. The agenda was adopted without changes as attached in Appendix 1. Mr Abdellah Srour, GFCM Executive Secretary, introduced



delegations and observers and provided information on the arrangements for the meeting. He then reported on the credentials received, noting that 20 countries had presented their credentials according to the agreed standard format while three others were presented under another format.

9. The documents before the Commission are listed in Appendix 3.

## **PROGRESS ON COOPERATION MATTERS**

10. On the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.6, the GFCM Secretariat reported on the progress made in promoting cooperation with: i) contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties; ii) non-contracting parties; and iii) partner organizations having entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the GFCM.

11. Great satisfaction was expressed by the delegates of Algeria and Tunisia for the ongoing provision of technical assistance by the GFCM. In order to further this work in the region, the importance of federating resources towards capacity building was underlined. A request to receive assistance in support of surveys at sea was made, including on aspects such as the harmonization of survey methods and vessel maintenance, also in light of the previous positive experience in a joint project between Tunisia and Japan.

12. Having recalled the “concerted action for Lebanon” initiative, the representative of Oceana reported that the Deep Sea Lebanon project – resulting from a partnership among several organizations involved in the initiative and spearheaded by Oceana – had received financial support from the MAVA Foundation.

13. The delegate of Georgia referred to the important cooperation with the GFCM since the thirty-ninth session (Italy, May 2015), when his country had been granted the status of cooperating non-contracting party, expressing the need for technical assistance on issues such as the fight against IUU fishing.

14. Following the formal request made by Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Commission decided to grant status of cooperating non-contracting party to the country. The delegate of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed gratitude to the GFCM, which was recognized as a forum of significant importance for the development of national fisheries and aquaculture, hoping that this would represent a preliminary step towards full membership. To this end, she also encouraged the provision of technical assistance by the GFCM.

15. The delegate of the EU offered the support of her organization to the GFCM in relation to the training of national inspectors, as requested by CPCs.

16. The delegate of Monaco referred to the ongoing consultations at the UN headquarters on a new legally binding agreement on marine biodiversity in the high seas and to the fact that the absence of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), including GFCM, had been noted and regretted on these occasions. In recognizing the active role that the GFCM played in the region, he was of the opinion that the Commission should bring its knowledge and expertise to these consultations, which were relevant for fisheries.

17. In this respect and in light of the discussions on interactions between regional seas conventions and RFMOs in relevant international fora, the Commission requested the GFCM Executive Secretary to actively participate in ongoing consultations at the UN and to report on the progress made at the next regular session.

18. The representatives of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and of the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP) drew the attention of the

Commission to the joint strategy for the spatial conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea, which was being elaborated together with the GFCM, the Mediterranean Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Med), the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and in collaboration with the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), underlining the opportunity to exploit commonalities among those organizations.

19. The Commission was in favour of continuing discussions on this joint strategy towards the implementation of a holistic approach for the spatial conservation of the marine environment.

20. The Commission moved on to review progress with regard to the implementation of twelve MoUs, stressing their positive contribution to streamlining the work of the GFCM. On the occasion of the signature of a new MoU between the GFCM and OceanCare, the representative of OceanCare commended the work of the GFCM and looked forward to promoting joint activities.

21. Considering the positive outcomes obtained under the current MoU thus far, the Commission – following a comment made by the delegate of Egypt – stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), including through the adoption of a MoU. CPCs were also urged to bring the issue of cooperation between the GFCM and ICCAT to the attention of ICCAT at its upcoming statutory meetings.

22. The GFCM Secretariat was encouraged to intensify ongoing cooperation with other organizations and report back to the next session of the Commission on the progress made.

## **REPORT ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN 2015–2016**

23. Mr François René, Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), presented the activities of the Committee, based on documents GFCM:40/2016/3 and GFCM:40/2013/Inf.8. These activities included the organization of the CAQ reference framework, meetings within the remit of the Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform (AMShP), the first meeting of the GFCM Task Force on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (Aquaculture Task Force), relevant working groups, as well as efforts to enhance the data collection system of the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM). Of note for this Committee was its increasing focus on sustainable shellfish aquaculture, as evidenced by the dedicated expert meeting held during the intersession.

24. Satisfaction was expressed by delegates for the work carried out during the intersession and for the growing importance of aquaculture within the Commission. In particular, the delegates from Albania and Montenegro congratulated the CAQ for the excellent work done, expressing hopes for further aquaculture development within their countries and highlighting, in this regard, the importance of the assistance provided through the CAQ and the AdriaMed regional project.

25. The delegate of the EU also applauded the work carried out by the CAQ towards the positive achievements and inputs provided by the projects “Indicators for sustainable development of aquaculture and guidelines for their use in the Mediterranean” (InDAM) and “Developing site selection and carrying capacity guidelines for Mediterranean aquaculture within aquaculture appropriate areas” (SHoCMed), recalling that the activities of the committee, including on climate change issues, were fully in line with the EU strategy for sustainable aquaculture development.

26. Mr Othman Jarboui, Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), presented the activities of the SAC and related expert groups, based on documents GFCM:40/2016/2 and GFCM:40/2016/Inf.7. These activities consisted of ten expert meetings – including meetings of the new subregional committees (SRCs) launched within the framework of the subregional approach – which addressed issues including stock status, management measures, the protection of vulnerable

marine ecosystems and the implementation of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), in response to the technical requests made at the thirty-ninth session of the GFCM. The SAC Chairperson recalled that the shift to a subregional approach sought to reduce obstacles to the SAC work plan and facilitate the implementation of subregional management plans.

27. The Commission was informed of the publication and dissemination of *The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries* (SoMFi 2016; document GFCM:40/2016/Dma.2), which provided a comprehensive overview of fisheries in the GFCM area of application and was expected to facilitate the adoption of strategic decisions.

28. Delegations voiced their satisfaction for the significant work carried out by the SAC, especially in light of the implementation of the subregional approach. In particular, the important tasks assigned to the coordinators of the recently established subregional committees, currently in their feasibility phase, were highlighted as they would play a significant role in pooling efforts in the subregions and disseminating this work at the SAC level.

29. The Commission welcomed the numerous proposals for new conservation and management measures that incorporated the advice formulated by subsidiary bodies, highlighting the qualitative change in such advice which now provided the Commission and its CPCs with comprehensive scientific evidence to support decision-making.

30. Mr Simion Nicolaev, Coordinator of the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), presented the activities of the working group and its expert groups on the basis of documents GFCM:40/2016/2 and GFCM:40/2016/Inf.9. These activities included the assessment of the main stocks, a workshop on the management of European anchovy and the training of Black Sea inspectors. The Commission was informed about the proposal to establish a scientific and technical project (BlackSea4Fish) for the Black Sea in order to strengthen regional coordination and technical assistance. It was agreed to launch the BlackSea4Fish project and hold a brainstorming meeting to define the priorities and modalities of implementation.

31. The Commission expressed satisfaction for the quality of the work carried out during the intersession to provide enhanced advice in support of fisheries management in the Black Sea.

### **Activities by the FAO regional projects**

32. Mr Enrico Arneri, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, presented the activities and achievements of the FAO regional projects (AdriaMed, CopeMed II, EastMed, MedSudMed) during the intersession, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.20. The role of the donors that allowed the regional projects to carry out their work was acknowledged by the Commission.

33. Several delegations, including Albania, Algeria, Egypt, the EU, Italy, Montenegro and Tunisia, expressed their strong support for the activities implemented through the regional projects as well as for the technical assistance provided at the national and subregional levels. They underlined that the contribution of the regional projects was an asset to GFCM requirements. In particular, it was pointed out that the technical discussions promoted within the framework of the regional projects had contributed to the formulation of SAC advice. Observers, such as Palestine, also thanked the projects for the support provided.

34. The Commission, recalling the 20 years of cooperation established since their inception, praised the valuable contribution of the regional projects to GFCM activities towards sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean.

## **TENTH SESSION OF THE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Report on intersessional activities of the Compliance Committee**

35. In the absence of Mr Samir Majdalani, CoC Chairperson, who could not attend due to major last minute constraints, the tenth session of the Committee was called to order by its first Vice-Chairperson, Mr Josip Markovic. A report on intersessional activities was provided, based on document GFCM:40/2016/4.

36. The GFCM Executive Secretary recalled that, after the endorsement of the proposal for the IUU Day by the Commission at its thirty-ninth session, the GFCM Secretariat had initiated an internal process within FAO to mainstream this activity in the preparatory work of the Organization for the thirty-second session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). The FAO Director-General was expected to circulate a letter to all COFI Members requesting their support.

37. The Commission thanked the GFCM Secretariat for the excellent work done to bring this initiative to the attention of COFI and called upon CPCs to voice their strong support for its endorsement. Moreover, CPCs were invited to be ready to launch activities that would ensure the active participation of fishers in this initiative, once established by FAO. To this end, the GFCM Secretariat was requested to continue coordinating efforts by CPCs, including within FAO.

### **Status of implementation of decisions adopted at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions of the Commission**

38. The GFCM Secretariat presented the status of implementation of GFCM decisions adopted in 2014 and 2015, as well as the submission of data expected in 2016, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.12.

39. With a view to improving timely data submission, the GFCM Secretariat was invited to enact an informal alert system whereby, prior to the expiration of deadlines under relevant GFCM recommendations, concerned CPCs would receive an automatic message alerting them on the upcoming data submission requirement.

### **Clarification and identification process related to cases of non-compliance**

40. The GFCM Secretariat presented the conclusions of the CoC intersessional meeting, as outlined in document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.11. Reference was made to the CoC recommendation to present a list of CPCs for which identification of non-compliance should be discontinued.

41. The delegate of the EU congratulated CPCs for the progress made in implementing GFCM decisions and submitting data to the GFCM Secretariat, noting that the GFCM was creating a culture of compliance. In this regard, she underlined the importance of technical assistance, remarking that CPCs had to clearly identify their needs in connection with cases of non-compliance. She also mentioned the need to adapt some data submission deadlines (e.g. the case of aquaculture production data) to ensure regular submissions by CPCs. Finally, she encouraged CPCs to share with the CoC any relevant information on national measures taken which were stricter than GFCM decisions.

42. The delegate of Egypt also saluted the progress made by CPCs and called upon the GFCM Secretariat to look into technical assistance requests received thus far. As for the submission of data, he agreed with the EU on the need to adjust relevant deadlines.

43. The delegate of Albania clarified that her country's lack of data submission was not a problem of political will but rather the result of a recent reform within the national administration, which resulted in a disconnect within different bodies. She noted that data collection had to be operationalized further. As for the vessel monitoring system (VMS), she clarified that the system was

operative but some technical support might be needed. For this reason, Albania would detail its needs when requesting technical assistance.

44. The delegate of Tunisia referred to ongoing technical assistance provided by the GFCM and requested the GFCM Secretariat to organize another coordination meeting with a view to defining a roadmap in order to address identified national needs, consistent with the letter of agreement entered into with the GFCM.

45. The delegate of Montenegro was grateful for technical assistance provided by the GFCM and AdriaMed and indicated the willingness of her country to continue this important endeavour.

46. The delegate of Ukraine stressed the importance of technical assistance for his country and indicated that Ukraine stood ready to enter into a letter of agreement with the GFCM to begin receiving this assistance in the near future.

47. The GFCM Executive Secretary, in light of the numerous requests of technical assistance made by CPCs, emphasized that duplications had to be avoided. In recalling the “concerted action for Lebanon” initiative, he referred to the practice of pooling resources and defining consistent national priorities.

48. The delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic noted that information was not available for the implementation of GFCM decisions and submission of data by his country. However, despite the national situation, he recalled that Syria had always submitted data in the past and would strive to do so via email in the near future. The marine fisheries sector had not been greatly affected by recent events, despite a drop in annual landing weight. Accordingly, Syria had continued to update its national legislation on the basis of the work of the GFCM. He hoped that, once peace is restored, his country could receive technical assistance.

49. The Committee decided that identification would be lifted for the following CPCs: Albania, Algeria, Egypt, EU, Israel, Lebanon, Libya and Montenegro. The GFCM Secretariat would notify those CPCs of the decision by the Commission to discontinue their identification.

50. As for non-contracting parties, the Committee acknowledged the updated information on fishing vessels sighted in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Regret was expressed for the lack of a response by Belize to the letter of concern sent by the GFCM Secretariat (see paragraph 59 of this report). Moreover, attention was drawn to the recent sighting of several Mongolian fishing vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. Consistent with a suggestion by the EU, it was decided that a letter of concern would be sent to Mongolia to invite this country to uphold its flag state duties. It was hoped that concerned non-contracting parties would denounce the improper use of their flags.

51. The Committee was informed that two Egyptian fishing vessels had been identified as engaged in IUU fishing activities in Italian national waters. There was an informal arrangement between Egypt and the EU that appropriate actions would be taken and reported to the CoC, including sanctions by Egypt against these vessels which had been operating without an authorization. In order to improve transparency and cooperation within the GFCM, CPCs were encouraged to report similar occurrences in the future as this case was not an isolated one. It would also be important for the GFCM to guide CPCs on the kind of deterrent measures that should be taken against vessels engaged in IUU fishing.

52. The GFCM Executive Secretary recalled the alert system set up by the Commission at its thirty-eighth session (FAO headquarters, May 2014). In his opinion, CPCs should be more active when receiving alerts. In this regard, it was proposed that a mutual assistance system be set up. The GFCM Secretariat would report to CPCs any potential illegal fishing activity so as to prompt reactions and ensure concerted actions at the regional level against IUU fishing.

53. The Committee agreed to carry on the clarification and identification process during the intersession. The mandate of the CoC intersessional meeting, as amended at its eighth and ninth sessions, was renewed. As per the current practice, the GFCM Secretariat would send, during the intersession, requests for clarification to all CPCs regarding the status of implementation of GFCM decisions adopted in 2014 and the submission of data due by the end of 2016. Relevant non-contracting parties would be also contacted.

### **Revision of the GFCM Compendium**

54. The GFCM Secretariat recalled the outcomes of the Working Group on the GFCM Compendium (FAO headquarters, December 2015), as reported in document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.13.

55. The Committee endorsed the revised GFCM Compendium, reproduced in document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.14. As for the nature of this document, it was decided that it should remain a compilation of decisions, therefore, the name should remain “GFCM Compendium”. The Committee also agreed on the adoption of Resolution GFCM/40/2016/1 on guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions, which would represent a reference point for CPCs when submitting proposals for GFCM decisions, as reproduced in Appendix 12.

56. The delegate of Tunisia, stressing the importance of the GFCM Compendium in helping all stakeholders to correctly manage fisheries and aquaculture activities, expressed the hope that this document be made available soon in Arabic.

### **Outcomes of the Working Group on IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application**

57. The GFCM Secretariat indicated that the Working Group on IUU fishing (Spain, April 2016) had reported steady progress on the implementation of the GFCM roadmaps to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean Sea, as described in document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.15.

58. Several delegations strongly agreed on the need for the GFCM to develop and adopt a holistic regional action plan against IUU fishing. This should be drafted during the intersession and presented to the next meeting of the Working Group on IUU fishing for discussion and finalization. The GFCM Secretariat was also requested to prepare a resolution on the application of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, taking into account practical problems in the region such as the use of this number for wooden vessels. To this end, consultations with the IMO would be entertained. Further cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic (ATLAFCO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on matters related to IUU fishing was encouraged.

59. In line with document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.16, the Belizean-flagged vessel Okapi Marta was included in the GFCM IUU vessel list (see paragraph 50 of this report). The vessel Thunder, which had recently sunk, was deleted from the GFCM IUU vessel list. The amended GFCM IUU vessel list was endorsed by the Committee and the GFCM Secretariat was instructed to publish it on its website.

60. The Committee also decided to include the vessel Sajo Melita, flying the flag of the Republic of Korea, in the GFCM authorized vessel list, in light of the information provided by the flag state to the GFCM Secretariat.

### **Progress in the implementation of a vessel monitoring system and related control systems in the GFCM area of application**

61. The GFCM Secretariat outlined salient aspects of the work carried out during the intersession towards a regional pilot study on VMS and control systems, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.17.

62. The delegate of Tunisia, supported by other delegations, called upon the Committee to focus in particular on the national level and provide technical assistance to those CPCs which needed support to operationalize VMS and control systems. A regional system could be scaled up once national needs are addressed.

63. It was recalled that the ongoing work on VMS had been agreed upon by the Commission at its previous sessions and that technical assistance was a main part of that work. It was also clarified that the idea behind a regional system would be that of promoting harmonization across the region in terms of technical standards used by CPCs in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). Various actions could therefore be promoted simultaneously.

64. The representative of The Pew Charitable Trusts praised the work of the GFCM on VMS and related control systems and encouraged CPCs to follow through with the regional pilot study. More generally, The Pew Charitable Trusts fully supported the work done by the CoC.

65. The Committee agreed that the regional pilot study would continue. Furthermore, it called upon CPCs to participate actively in its undertaking. The Working Group on VMS and related control systems would be convened again in 2017.

66. In relation to the use of VMS, the GFCM Chairperson noted that, despite the added value of this tool and its increasing use in the control of fishing activities, it needed to be considered within the context of marine spatial planning too and efforts should be made at a regional scale to consider VMS data as a valuable support to fisheries science.

#### **Proposal for a GFCM recommendation on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application**

67. The draft recommendation on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application was introduced by the GFCM Secretariat, consistent with the mandate it had been entrusted with by the Commission at its thirty-ninth session to align the text of Recommendation GFCM/2008/32/1 on port state measures with the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA).

68. It was unanimously decided to adopt the proposal as Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, as reproduced in Appendix 5.

69. The delegation of Morocco took the floor to underline that no provisions in the adopted recommendation had to be interpreted in a manner that permitted by default a right to entry to national ports to foreign fishing vessels which were not engaged in IUU fishing activities.

### **REVIEW OF SALIENT STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

#### **Task Force on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture**

70. The GFCM Secretariat presented, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.18, the progress made in establishing the Task Force on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (Aquaculture Task Force), as a follow-up to the decision taken by the Commission at its thirty-ninth session. The GFCM Chairperson recalled that the Aquaculture Task Force was institutional in nature and that the participatory process to prepare the strategy was in its initial phase. Consequently, technical details would be developed throughout the work of the Aquaculture Task Force, pending approval from the delegations.

71. The Commission was informed of the outcomes of the first meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force, where the main issues related to sustainable aquaculture in the region were reviewed and discussed. The preliminary key elements, including the main axes for a GFCM aquaculture strategy, had been identified and a tentative roadmap for the elaboration of the strategy and its operationalization had been agreed upon.

72. The delegate of Tunisia lent his country's support for this initiative, stressing the important role of aquaculture in food security in light of declining wild fishery stocks. He insisted on the importance of a participatory approach engaging all stakeholders and on the need for coordination between the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

73. The delegate of Egypt also welcomed the preliminary work of the Aquaculture Task Force and highlighted the need for species diversification, definition of standards and market improvements. He recalled that many production models currently applied showed limits and that production plans were necessary to ensure complementarities rather than create competition among CPCs.

74. The delegate of the EU voiced the need to address sustainability issues, particularly in relation to climate change and blue growth. She underscored the role of innovation and research, and highlighted the importance of spatial planning to coordinate between aquaculture development and other sectors such as tourism and marine transport.

75. In this respect, the CAQ Chairperson stressed that aquaculture development along the coastal area needed to be coordinated at multiple levels, fostering cooperation among different coastal users such as wind energy producers.

76. The delegate of Monaco suggested that elements of the aquaculture strategy also address the issue of microplastics at sea, which were vectors of biological and chemical contaminants and were often ingested by fish, resulting in severe biological and socio-economic consequences.

77. Further praise for the Aquaculture Task Force came from the delegates of Albania, Algeria, Montenegro and Morocco who emphasized that the implementation of aquaculture development in their respective countries could be also supported by this strategy. Specifically, the delegate of Algeria suggested considering small-scale aquaculture within the Aquaculture Task Force.

78. Delegations stressed that good governance in aquaculture was particularly relevant to the strategy and that this component needed to firstly address the availability of space and the integration of aquaculture with other activities in coastal areas.

79. The representative of Eurofish commended the work of the Aquaculture Task Force and the CAQ and expressed her organization's readiness to keep closely collaborating on topics such as marketing and public awareness raising, under the current MoU with the GFCM.

80. The Commission appreciated the progress made by the Aquaculture Task Force and thanked the Italian government for the support given to launch this activity. It endorsed the preliminary elements and proposed roadmap for the finalization of the strategy elaborated by the Aquaculture Task Force, to be presented at the forty-first session.

### **Proposal for a mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries**

81. The GFCM Executive Secretary presented, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/Inf.21, a proposed mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries. This strategy aimed to support the GFCM in better fulfilling its mandate in light of recent developments, including its modernized institutional framework, the implementation of the subregional approach, increased cooperation with partner organizations, newly adopted management



plans as well as the technical assistance programme being put in place. Elaborated in line with international commitments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) and FAO Strategic Objective 2, the strategy reflected the Mediterranean and Black Sea context, where fisheries constituted an important socio-economic activity and small-scale fisheries represented 80 percent of the fleet, and characterized by a strong impact of IUU fishing on the sector.

82. The Commission was informed of the five targets within the strategy, which aimed namely to: i) reverse the declining trend of fish stocks; ii) support livelihoods for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries; iii) curb IUU fishing; iv) minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries, marine ecosystems and the environment; and v) enhance capacity building and cooperation. Actions towards the implementation of these targets were based on proposals emanating from the GFCM subsidiary bodies, thus complementing the regular work of the Commission and creating no new obligations upon CPCs.

83. The SAC Chairperson praised the proposed strategy and its fully-encompassing approach, which would allow the Commission to effectively tackle relevant priorities in the region. He highlighted the central role of scientific advice in most of the targets and noted that the SAC, with the support of its subregional committees and technical bodies, stood ready to embrace the important workload required to implement the strategy.

84. In multiple interventions, delegations welcomed the proposal, highlighting that it comprehensively addressed key challenges. Reflection was needed on the means and resources to avoid that the strategy remain only on paper.

85. The delegate of Monaco underlined the high quality of this document, not only for its efficiency but also for its clarity, which enabled GFCM members to have a comprehensive picture of the proposed strategy.

86. The delegate of the EU welcomed this excellent initiative, noting that it was the first time that a proposal of such a strategy was witnessed in relevant fora. She regarded it as a comprehensive instrument in attaining the sustainability of fisheries and underlined the need to discuss indicators and actions within the strategy.

87. Delegates of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, while strongly supporting this initiative, highlighted the need to integrate and align national strategies with this regional strategy, stressing the importance of cooperation and technical assistance for a common implementation, taking into account national realities and socio-economic implications.

88. In relation to the strategy objectives, the delegate of Tunisia cautioned that resource conservation should be attained in a manner that did not negatively impact the revenues of fishers. The use of selective fishing gear and artificial reefs would also represent important activities complementing the focus on control.

89. The delegate of Egypt, in acknowledging the relevance of the strategy, called upon other CPCs to lend their support and hoped the Commission could move onto its implementation soon. He expressed his appreciation that a general framework had been finally presented to measure achievements by the Commission.

90. The delegate of Libya recalled that his country strongly relied on fisheries and thus welcomed any proposals that fostered cooperation in the preservation of the regional resources. He also favoured linking the strategy to national initiatives with a view to building upon what already existed. Furthermore, he agreed that eradicating IUU fishing was a particularly important target.

91. The delegate of Turkey commended the strategy, referring to actions in the Black Sea as important steps for the region, in addition to the contribution of the WGBS. She explained that the

implementation of the BlackSea4Fish project would represent an additional and constructive support to the WGBS as well as an opportunity to further reinforce cooperation among Black Sea riparian states.

92. The delegate of Algeria requested to include governance-related issues in the strategy and underlined the socio-economic relevance of fisheries, including the small-scale fisheries sector, in southern Mediterranean countries.

93. The representative of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) expressed the readiness of his organization to support the strategy, particularly with regard to small-scale fisheries (SSF). The representative of LIFE looked forward to the implementation of the strategy and stood ready to contribute to the execution of activities in support of SSF. She raised the issue of co-management and hoped that this could be further developed in the strategy.

94. The representative of OceanCare referred to the importance of an ecosystem approach and stated that the strategy offered a timely opportunity to evaluate the work done on the negative impacts of anthropogenic activities, such as noise pollution, on marine ecosystems. She stood ready to lend the support of her organization to the GFCM.

95. The representative of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) praised the proposal and expressed willingness to support its implementation through training activities in fisheries.

96. The representative of Palestine supported the strategy and hoped that it could prompt future technical assistance to facilitate efforts to meet the targets expressed therein.

97. The Commission agreed on the principles underlying the strategy as well as its overarching scope and decided to define specific objectives, fine-tune the targets and identify necessary resources. A participatory approach was noted as a key element in the *modus operandi* guiding the implementation of the strategy, facilitating the definition and adoption of common rules at the subregional and regional levels. It was agreed that this would be duly considered during an intersessional meeting of the Commission to be held in 2016, the terms of reference of which are available in Appendix 13/Annex 2.

98. Stressing again the crucial role of the strategy in setting measurable targets for reverting the alarming trends in fisheries, the Commission agreed to adopt Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, the text of which is reproduced in Appendix 13.

## **MANAGEMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

### **Aquaculture management advice**

99. The CAQ Chairperson presented the main conclusions and advice emanating from the subsidiary bodies on the basis of documents GFCM:40/2016/3 and GFCM:40/2016/Inf.19. He informed the Commission that advice formulated by the CAQ was related, in particular, to shellfish farming, improving environmental monitoring and the use of indicators to monitor aquaculture development.

100. The Commission noted that mussel and oyster farming activities, together with small-scale fisheries, were of enormous significance for coastal communities and of great economic, social and environmental relevance to the GFCM area of application.

101. The Commission acknowledged the advice provided by the CAQ related to mussel and oyster farming, aquaculture spatial planning, sustainability of aquaculture and aquaculture data collection.

### **Fisheries management and conservation advice**

102. The SAC Chairperson and the WGBS coordinator presented the advice emanating from the subsidiary bodies, related to marine environment and ecosystems, statistics and information, stocks requiring precautionary or urgent actions and other subregional activities – on the basis of which the Commission took the following decisions:

#### ***Marine environment and ecosystems***

103. The Commission discussed the possible adoption of encounter protocols for vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), designed to ensure the collection of necessary data on the distribution of such ecosystems, with a view to identifying priority areas for the future establishment of spatial protection measures such as fisheries restricted areas (FRAs).

104. The delegate of the EU, supported by several delegations, noted that, notwithstanding the importance of the issue, it was premature to adopt these protocols in the context of the Mediterranean and proposed further discussing the matter in an ad hoc working group, capitalizing on the ongoing initiatives in cooperation with the FAO Fisheries Department to characterize habitats and fishing activities in Mediterranean deep-sea areas.

105. The Commission endorsed this proposal and agreed to establish this working group, according to the terms of reference included in Appendix 15.

106. The representative of Oceana emphasized the importance of developing a proper legal framework for the protection of VMEs, in order to comply with the United Nations General Assembly resolutions (Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72), encouraging the Commission to work towards the adoption of a GFCM recommendation on VMEs by 2018.

#### ***Statistics and information***

107. The proposal for a recommendation on data submission in line with the DCRF, expected to repeal Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on Task 1 Statistical matrix, was thoroughly examined.

108. The delegates of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, while recognizing the extreme importance of such a proposal, noted that potential difficulties might appear during its implementation, such as the timing for data collection following DCRF provisions. They consequently suggested to proceed with a transitional period in order to allow CPCs to better adapt to DCRF requirements.

109. The Commission decided to adopt Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the DCRF, as reproduced in Appendix 6. This recommendation would be reconsidered at the forty-first session of the Commission, on the basis of the elements collected and analysed in a dedicated intersessional workshop. Consequently, this recommendation would remain in force for one year only. As for data submission obligations during the intersession, it was clarified that only CPCs which were ready to submit data to the GFCM Secretariat according to this recommendation would do so. Other CPCs would continue to transmit data under the current Task 1 requirements until the forty-first session.

#### ***Small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea***

110. On the basis of the SAC advice presented and of the proposal tabled by the EU, the Commission adopted Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3 establishing further emergency measures in

2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18), the text of which is included in Appendix 7.

111. The delegate of Montenegro underlined that the small size of the Montenegrin fleet had to be taken into account when further implementing measures related to small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 and that his country contributed less than 1 percent to the total fishing effort and catch. He added that Montenegro would submit shortly to the GFCM Secretariat a development plan of its fishing fleet, including a proportional increase of the catch. Referring to catch limitation, he insisted on the fact that additional time would be needed to ensure the full implementation of the recommendation, in light of the process of harmonization of catch statistics with EU regulations.

112. The delegate of Albania expressed the support of her country to this recommendation, which was in line with the mission of the GFCM towards sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. She added that, according to the new fisheries law in Albania and the recent strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, a management plan was under preparation and included some measures to reduce small pelagic fishing mortality. Considering the size of the Albanian fleet and its capacity, the impact of Albanian fisheries on pelagic resources would be minimal but, on the other hand, the social and economic impacts of the new GFCM measures could be heavy for the sector in the country.

113. The representative of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) informed the Commission that a specific small pelagic fishery in the Adriatic Sea had entered into the organization's certification process. In stressing the need to put in place a science-based long-term management plan for this fishery, he expressed confidence that the certification process could contribute to improving knowledge of this stock as well as its management.

#### ***European hake and deep-water rose shrimp fisheries in the Strait of Sicily***

114. The delegate of the EU introduced a draft proposal for a fishery management plan exploiting European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) in the Strait of Sicily, based on the scientific advice provided by the SAC and building upon Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily.

115. In the ensuing discussions, several comments were raised on the importance of improving gear selectivity and/or establishing spatio-temporal closures as a complement or alternative to fishing capacity reduction measures, in order to minimize, among others, their potential socio-economic impacts.

116. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the proposed management measures progressively integrated scientific advice formulated by the SAC and highlighted that the role of national administrations and research institutes was crucial for the provision of data and expertise to support such advice.

117. Subsequent to amendments arising from discussions, the proposal was adopted as Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 establishing a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16), the text of which is reproduced under Appendix 8.

118. The representative of Oceana congratulated the SAC and its subregional committees for the quality of the scientific advice provided and applauded the Commission's decision, while the representative of the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MedAC) supported the establishment of FRAs and highlighted the importance of the authorized vessel list, covered by Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2, as a measure to ensure the management of the fleet operating in the area.

### ***Blackspot seabream fishery in the Alboran Sea***

119. The delegate of the EU introduced a proposal for a recommendation aimed at improving scientific knowledge on the blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) fishery spanning the Atlantic and Mediterranean façades of the Strait of Gibraltar.

120. The delegate of Morocco underscored the importance of ensuring the sustainable exploitation of this resource in the long-term, noting that improved knowledge on stock dynamics and on socio-economic characteristics of the fishery would be needed to facilitate decision-making based on sound scientific advice.

121. Following the discussions, the proposal was withdrawn assuming that the SAC would carry out, in 2017, an assessment of the status of this stock and provide a definition of management scenarios as well as an analysis of the main features of the fishery. The delegate of Algeria asked the Commission if her country could be included in these studies.

### ***European hake stocks in the Mediterranean Sea***

122. The delegate of the EU introduced a proposal for a recommendation on the management of European hake in the Mediterranean as a first step towards a management plan. She emphasized that, according to the assessment made by the SAC, this emblematic species showed large overexploitation indexes throughout the Mediterranean and that a debate on measures to address this situation was urgent. To this end, a set of technical measures, including minimum landing size, was proposed and the SAC was urged to work towards the management of this species.

123. During the debate, the multi-specific nature of Mediterranean fisheries and the presence of European hake alongside other species in most demersal fisheries was recalled. It was noted that, notwithstanding the level of catches in most fleets, this species was not always the preferred target. This posed difficulties in applying some management measures such as gear selectivity studies. For this and other reasons, a more in-depth reflection would be needed before a comprehensive management plan for this species could be adopted at the regional level.

124. After extensive discussion on the technical contents of the original proposal, Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea was adopted, as reproduced in Appendix 9.

### ***Turbot fisheries in the Black Sea***

125. The proposal concerning a management plan for turbot (*Psetta maxima*) in the Black Sea was tabled by the delegate of the EU, based on the advice formulated by the WGBS. The proposed management plan built upon the principles set forth in Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea.

126. The proposal was adopted as Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/6 on scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29), the text of which is reproduced in Appendix 10.

127. The delegate of Ukraine recalled his concern, as expressed during the last meeting of the WGBS, regarding the two-month closure required by the management plan. He added that Ukraine was strongly committed to complying with common rules adopted by the GFCM in the Black Sea and was requesting a derogation based on sound scientific evidence and taking into consideration the particular weather conditions restricting the fishing period in the coastal waters of Ukraine.

128. The delegate of the Russian Federation welcomed the management plan on turbot, mentioning however that the different technical VMS requirements in his country might hamper its implementation in relation to control-related provisions.

### ***Management of fishing capacity***

129. Following a proposal tabled by the EU on fishing capacity, several delegations recalled the importance of taking into account the existing differences among countries, including the specificities of national fleets, pointing out that additional time would be needed to develop comprehensive national management plans before addressing the management of fleet capacity at the regional level.

130. During the discussions that followed, the Commission decided not to endorse the proposal and agreed to give mandate to the SAC and the CoC to assess fishing capacity at the regional level, in line with Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/2 on the management of fishing capacity, provide advice on additional measures for the fleet management, in line with Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2 on guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application, and assess the impacts of these measures, so that a decision could be taken either in 2017 or 2018, according to the progress achieved.

### ***Recreational fisheries***

131. The delegate of the EU presented a proposal for a recommendation aimed at assessing the relevance of recreational fisheries at a regional scale.

132. According to this proposal, the SAC was invited to establish a list of the main species concerned and assess the impact of these fisheries on the status of resources with a view to providing advice towards the management of this sector.

133. The discussion that followed resulted in a non-consensus on this proposal and therefore the Commission agreed to keep the proposal as pending, so that it would be revisited during the next session. The pending proposal is reproduced in Appendix 16.

### ***Pending proposal on the establishment of a closing season in GSA 14***

134. With reference to the pending proposal from 2015 relating to the establishment of a closing season in GSA 14, the delegate of Tunisia noted that some management measures included in such a proposal had been incorporated in the adopted Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4. Consequently, the proposal was withdrawn.

### ***Sustainable small-scale fisheries***

135. Acting upon a request by the Commission, the GFCM Secretariat presented a proposal for a resolution on sustainable small-scale fisheries. This proposal was based on the conclusions of the regional conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (SSF Regional Conference) held in 2016.

136. Many delegations voiced their strong support for this proposal, given the paramount importance of this sector, in particular for southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. It was noted that working on small-scale fisheries should be among the priorities of the Commission over the next years.

137. Following the integration of some comments by delegations, the proposal was adopted by the Commission as Resolution GFCM/40/2016/3 on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the GFCM area of application, the text of which is reproduced in Appendix 14.

### ***Other decisions on fisheries management***

138. The Commission was invited to examine the request submitted by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to comment on the possible inclusion of a number of elasmobranch species in CITES Annex II and to decide on the next steps towards the management of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea.

139. In this respect, several delegations underlined the fact that such issues should be duly addressed in the context of the GFCM, thus ensuring that responsibility remains within its remit. Consequently, the Commission requested that the GFCM Secretariat coordinate and communicate with CITES, including through reports on GFCM work and progress towards the management of elasmobranchs and red coral.

140. With regard to elasmobranch species, the GFCM Secretariat informed that only three of the species proposed for inclusion in CITES Annex II inhabited the Mediterranean Sea and that these species were already protected by dedicated management measures included in either GFCM or ICCAT recommendations.

141. The representative of The Shark Trust showed her appreciation for the participation of several CPCs in sponsoring the CITES proposal and for the way the Commission had addressed it. She praised the efforts already made by the GFCM to protect sharks and rays, which had culminated in the past adoption of Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, and expressed the availability of her organization to support CPCs in fulfilling their obligations.

142. Regarding further steps on the management of red coral, several delegations emphasized the lack of comprehensive data at a regional scale. It was also reported that only Italy had submitted to the GFCM Secretariat a report on their research plan concerning the use of remotely operated vehicles (ROV), for which the derogation expired at the end of 2015. The Commission extensively discussed the possible extension of such derogations, so as to allow crucial research efforts on red coral.

143. Consequently, the Commission agreed to adopt Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/7 concerning the authorization of the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red coral, the text of which is reproduced in Appendix 11.

### **PROGRAMME OF WORK**

144. The Commission was informed of the work programme proposed by its subsidiary bodies during the intersession and the activities emanating from the mid-term strategy as well as new recommendations adopted during the session. The work programme was endorsed as follows:

#### **CAQ work programme**

##### **Aquaculture Task Force**

- Consolidate an aquaculture strategy and roadmap for its implementation

##### **Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholders Platform (AMShP)**

- Integrate specific indicators on shellfish aquaculture into the GFCM regional indicators and the AMShP strategic areas

#### Working Group on Environment and Aquatic Animal Health (WGEAA)

- Finalize the regional survey on guidelines on harmonized environmental monitoring programmes (EMP), including a calibration assessment of variables to monitor the quality of water column and sediments
- Prepare a review on the effects of climate change and related phenomena on aquaculture

#### Working Group on Governance and Regulatory Aspects (WGGRA)

- Finalize and publish a methodology for implementing allocated zones for aquaculture (AZA)
- Continue the survey on aquaculture governance within marine spatial planning

#### Working Group on Quality and Market of Aquaculture Products (WGQMA)

- Finalize the assessment of aquaculture market and industry for finfish and shellfish in the region
- Identify and report on aquaculture success stories to improve the image and acceptability of aquaculture products

#### Aquaculture data collection and statistics (SIPAM)

- Keep strengthening online submission of aquaculture-related data on the GFCM Extranet
- Finalize work to facilitate the consultation of CAQ production data
- Contribute to the work plan 2016–2019 of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) in collaboration with the CWP Aquaculture Group and Eurostat

### **SAC and WGBS work programme**

#### ***Regional issues***

##### *Marine environment and ecosystems*

- Execute the first phase of the ACCOBAMS-GFCM joint project on mitigating interactions between endangered marine species and fishing activities
- Finalize a list of Mediterranean VME indicator species and produce posters and identification guides to be carried on board of commercial vessels
- Develop a medium-term bycatch strategy allowing to monitor the volume and characteristics of discards and incidental catches of vulnerable species at a regional scale as well as to design adequate mitigation measures
- Develop and launch awareness campaigns to educate fishers on the negative impacts of bycatch on fisheries productivity and on marine ecosystems
- Develop a comprehensive regional management plan for red coral
- Create an adaptive strategy to cope with potential effects of invasive species and climate change on fisheries

##### *Stock assessment*

- Develop a programme for the implementation of scientific surveys at sea at the regional and subregional levels
- Elaborate catalogues of fishing activities, also for small-scale and recreational fisheries, including information on fishing gear and fishing operations, description of fishing areas as well as target and bycatch species



- Implement a dedicated approach for the provision of advice to the Commission for selected priority species in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, including the following:

	Western Mediterranean	Central Mediterranean	Adriatic Sea	Eastern Mediterranean	Black Sea	
Pelagic species	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i>
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	<i>Sarda sarda</i>
Demersal species	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	<i>Psetta maxima</i>
	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Saurida lessepsianus</i>	<i>Rapana venosa</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>
	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>					
Species of conservation concern	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>				<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	
	<i>Corallium rubrum</i>					

#### *Socio-economics*

- Finalize guidelines on a common methodology for socio-economic analysis
- Complete a comprehensive regional survey on the socio-economic impact of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea
- Develop bio-economic models for the incorporation of socio-economic information into the assessment of the state of main commercial fisheries and the provision of advice on the comparative impact of alternative management scenarios

#### *Statistics, information and capacity building*

- Extend and expand the DCRF pilot study to support the consolidation of the DCRF recommendation
- Assess fishing capacity at the regional level and provide advice on additional measures for the management of fleet capacity in line with Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2 on guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application
- Launch the preparation of a regional programme for education and training through mid- and long-term specialization curricula in fisheries

#### *Small-scale and recreational fisheries*

- Implement a regional survey on small-scale and recreational fisheries to provide a snapshot of ecological, social and economic impacts of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and, at the same time, improve the capacity to collect relevant data on small-scale fisheries, as requested through the DCRF
- Establish a regional platform to engage and promote dialogue among small-scale fishing associations
- Identify the list of species for which recreational fisheries have a significant impact on marine living resources and propose appropriate measures for data collection and monitoring of recreational fishing activities

## ***Subregional activities***

### ***Adriatic Sea***

- Assess alternative solutions to ensure that hydroacoustic survey results of the previous year are available not later than 31 January of a given year
- Assess the relative advantages of different management scenarios for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea
- Assess whether the impact of measures adopted under Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3 establishing further emergency measures for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea will enable the achievement of the objective of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for small pelagic fisheries in GSA 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for small pelagic fisheries in GSA 18 (southern Adriatic Sea)
- Extend the assessment of alternative management measures to demersal stocks, especially European hake, including options to increase the minimum conservation reference size and impose spatio-temporal closures or FRAs
- In view of the meetings of the working groups on stock assessment in 2016: i) prepare input data and attempt tentative joint assessments of red mullet, European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in GSAs 17 and 18; ii) compile existing information on nursery and spawning areas of the assessed stocks to investigate the possibility of establishing new spatio-temporal closures and FRAs; and iii) assess the status of additional demersal species which are important for the subregion, such as the Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), common sole (*Solea solea*) and mantis shrimp (*Squilla mantis*)

### ***Central Mediterranean***

- Assess alternative measures to improve the selectivity of demersal trawlers, including through the use of selectivity devices
- Consolidate bio-economic assessments of the potential impact of management measures on deep-water rose shrimp and European hake trawling fisheries, incorporating better socio-economic information and simulating a wide variety of scenarios
- Identify the main nursery areas for European hake and deep-water rose shrimp, in addition to those already identified in GSAs 15 and 16
- Assess the impact of the proposed temporary closure in GSA 14 on offshore trawl fisheries targeting deep-water crustaceans
- Improve knowledge on the abundance, distribution and population dynamics of demersal elasmobranch species that occur in the whole central Mediterranean, also building upon the work done in the Strait of Sicily, and provide advice on suggested minimum/maximum landing size

### ***Western Mediterranean***

- Provide elements for the management of the blackspot seabream fishery in the Strait of Gibraltar, including on stock boundaries, stock status, minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) and other relevant management measures

### ***Eastern Mediterranean***

- Compile and analyse information towards the identification of stock boundaries
- Compile available information on alien species and their interactions with fisheries

### *Black Sea*

- Continue working towards monitoring the good environmental status of exploited populations in the Black Sea, in collaboration with the Black Sea Commission
- Identify priority actions towards the conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea, in collaboration with ACCOBAMS
- Compile and analyse relevant information requested by Recommendations GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea, GFCM/40/2016/6 on the scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29) and GFCM/39/2015/4 on management measures for piked dogfish in the Black Sea
- Evaluate the current fishing effort for turbot fisheries
- Assess the impact of measures already adopted by CPCs and propose different scenarios/options for achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2020 while ensuring the sustainability of turbot fisheries
- Define the adequate dimensions for bottom-set gillnets by establishing their characteristics (maximum length, maximum height and hanging coefficient) and propose the minimum requirements for the marking and identification of bottom-set gillnets operating in turbot fisheries

### **CoC work programme**

- Carry on the identification and clarification process
- Keep the GFCM IUU vessel list under review
- Update the database of national legislations
- Draft a regional plan of action to fight against IUU fishing, including a booklet with guidelines to conduct inspections according to relevant international standards
- Finalize a comparative analysis of national baseline data on IUU fishing on the basis of the information reported by CPCs to the Working group on IUU fishing (WGIUU)
- Develop criteria for the inclusion of cargo vessels and any vessels engaged in transshipment operations in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area, consistent with the practice of other RFMOs
- Collaborate with the SAC in the context of the Expert meeting on the estimation of IUU fishing, including in relation to the inclusion in the DCRF of an additional catch component to collect data on seized IUU fishing products
- Further the work on the IMO number, including the preparation of a resolution on its application, taking into account practical problems in the region
- Cooperate with ATLAFCO and OECD on IUU fishing-related matters
- Continue to support activities relating to the declaration of an international day for the fight against IUU fishing
- Organize training for inspectors and relevant national operators, in cooperation with relevant partners
- Progress in the phased development of a centralized VMS and control system, including feasibility studies at the subregional level
- Set up a protocol for the control of FRAs established by the GFCM

- Establish a regional information system to exchange port state measures-related data, consistent with FAO PSMA provisions

## Meetings

145. The Commission approved the following meetings, some of which would be subject to the availability of funds. Note was taken of the kind offer by some CPCs to host meetings of the subsidiary bodies, subject to confirmation by their competent authorities.

CAQ MEETING	PLACE / DATE	FUNDING <sup>1</sup>
Workshop on environmental carrying capacity for shellfish productivity	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)
Meeting on finfish and shellfish aquaculture market and industry in the region	Rome, Italy 7–9 November 2016	(2)
Second meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force	Rome, Italy 7–9 November 2016	(2)
Tenth session of CAQ, including the special session of SIPAM	Izmir, Turkey 27–29 March 2017	(1)

SAC MEETING	PLACE / DATE	FUNDING*
FAO Workshop on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the Mediterranean (in collaboration with GFCM)	FAO headquarters 18–20 July 2016	(2)
EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eel (WGEEL)	Cordoba, Spain 15–22 Sept. 2016	(2)
Working group on stock assessment of demersal species (WGSAD)	GFCM headquarters 7–12 November 2016	(1)
Working group on stock assessment of small pelagic species (WGSASP)	GFCM headquarters 7–12 November 2016	(1)
SRC-WM training on stock assessment	Tangier, Morocco 16–20 January 2017	(2)
SRC-WM workshop on blackspot seabream	Tangier, Morocco 16–20 January 2017	(3)
Meetings of four SAC subregional committees	GFCM headquarters 20–25 February 2017	(1)
SRCs joint meeting on the use of simulation and forecast bio-economic models for the assessment of management measures/working group on alternative management measures for small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea	GFCM headquarters 20–25 February 2017	(3)

<sup>1</sup> (1) covered by the autonomous budget  
(2) minimum extrabudgetary funds already secured  
(3) subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds

<b>SAC MEETING</b>	<b>PLACE / DATE</b>	<b>FUNDING*</b>
SRC-WM/SRC-CM workshop on red coral	Tunis, Tunisia 7–10 March 2017	(3)
Nineteenth session of the SAC	Slovenia 16–19 May 2017	(1)
Workshop towards the implementation of a management plan for European eel	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)
Workshop on vulnerable marine ecosystems	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)

<b>WGBS MEETING</b>	<b>PLACE / DATE</b>	<b>FUNDING*</b>
Regional conference on fisheries governance in the Black Sea	Bucharest, Romania 24–25 October 2016	(2)
Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea (SGSABS)	Burgas, Bulgaria 14–19 November 2016	(1)
Workshop on the harmonization of scientific surveys at sea: combining survey information on abundance and distribution for main commercial stocks in the Black Sea	Burgas, Bulgaria 14–19 November 2016	(3)
Brainstorming meeting on the GFCM BlackSea4Fish project	Burgas, Bulgaria 14–19 November 2016	(3)
Sixth meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS)	Constanta, Romania 13–16 June 2017	(1)
Meeting for the establishment of a demonstrative centre to promote sustainable aquaculture in the Black Sea	possibly back-to-back with WGBS	(1)

<b>COC MEETING</b>	<b>PLACE / DATE</b>	<b>FUNDING*</b>
Intersessional meeting of CoC	FAO headquarters 26–27 January 2017	(3)
Working group on IUU fishing (WGIUU)	Greece 24–28 April 2017	(3)
Working group on VMS and related control systems / Working Group on integrated MCS measures for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily	Back-to-back with WGIUU	(3)
Working Group on the Compendium of the GFCM decisions/national legislations	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)
Eleventh session of the CoC	FAO headquarters 29–30 June 2017	(1)

<b>GFCM MEETINGS (transversal meetings)</b>	<b>PLACE / DATE</b>	<b>FUNDING*</b>
Intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy	FAO headquarters 22–23 September 2016	(3)
Workshop on data submission in line with the GFCM DCRF	FAO headquarters 3–4 November 2016	(2)

<b>GFCM MEETINGS (transversal meetings)</b>	<b>PLACE / DATE</b>	<b>FUNDING*</b>
Working group on small-scale and recreational fisheries (WGSSF)	TBD 19–20 September 2017	(3)
Forty-first session of the Commission	Montenegro 16–20 October 2017	(1)
Expert group on the assessment of IUU fishing	Bulgaria end 2017/2018	(3)
GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)
High-level meeting on small-scale fisheries	TBD end 2017/2018	(3)

146. The Commission prompted the GFCM Secretariat to keep providing CPCs with the technical assistance needed on issues related to compliance, VMS, collection and submission of data in line with DCRF requirements, and other topics of relevance.

147. Considering the increasing importance of the work carried out by the CoC on a number of fronts requiring specific expertise, the Commission decided to discontinue the practice of holding the annual CoC meeting during the regular session of the Commission. The agenda of the Commission would be adapted accordingly, and major topics (i.e. aquaculture and fisheries issues) would be addressed separately in order to better streamline discussions and optimize the overall organization of the session. For the same reason, the work programme of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies would be presented following a new format.

148. Regarding the possibility of activating the Review Panel as foreseen in the GFCM Rules of Procedure (Rule XIV) and holding a meeting in 2017, the delegates of Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia indicated that the Review Panel would significantly facilitate the transposition of scientific advice provided by subsidiary bodies into potential management measures by preparing draft decisions to be submitted to the Commission for consideration and potential adoption.

149. The delegates of the EU, France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey recalled that Rule XIV referred to the ad hoc basis of the Review Panel, which should be activated only as necessary. While agreeing in principle on the need to strengthen decision-making, and not ruling out the possibility of activating the Review Panel in the future, they stressed that complex aspects such as composition and work methods of such a mechanism needed to be thoroughly considered beforehand.

150. The Commission was reminded of the extensive discussions held within the framework of the GFCM Task Force on how to strengthen the decision-making process and on the rationale behind the inclusion of the Review Panel in the Rules of Procedure. However, since no agreement was reached on the principle of its activation for the year to come, it was decided to include this issue in the agenda of the intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy and/or of the forty-first session of the Commission.

## **SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

### **Report on administrative and financial issues**

151. The seventh session of the CAF was called to order by its Chairperson, Mr Hachemi Missaoui. After reviewing the agenda, he delivered a presentation on administrative and financial issues, on the basis of document GFCM:40/2016/5. The presentation focused on the implementation

of recommendations adopted under Articles 5, 8 and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the status of ratification of the GFCM Agreement, the coordination of activities and meetings agreed by the Commission – including the implementation of the subregional approach as well as institutional and technical cooperation. The Chairperson also informed the Committee on aspects related to the functioning of the GFCM Secretariat (e.g. staffing, FAO policies on information technologies, human resources and communications).

152. The Chairperson summarized the financial situation, indicating that the annual contributions received in 2015 from CPCs amounted to 82 percent of the adopted budget, in addition to arrears received from Lebanon, Malta and Slovenia. He informed that the cash accrual totalled US\$278 571 and that accumulated pending contributions for the fiscal years 2005–2015 amounted to US\$928 573.59. CPCs were reminded of their obligation to ensure payment of any arrear as a matter of priority. After illustrating expenditures by chapter of the autonomous budget and extrabudgetary funds, he showed that the balance was positive in both cases.

153. With reference to the implementation of the subregional approach, which was in its feasibility phase, the GFCM Executive Secretary informed delegates that offers to host GFCM subregional offices had been received from Bulgaria, Lebanon, Malta and Spain and that no offer had yet been received for the Adriatic Sea. He invited the Commission to examine these proposals and express its opinion on the principle of establishing such offices.

154. In the ensuing discussions, the delegate of Lebanon, in confirming the offer of his country, underlined the considerable opportunity that this would represent to promote effective coordination and collaboration among the countries of the subregion. He added that it could also be open to the EastMed regional project, allowing for greater synergies towards reaching common objectives. The delegates of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic intervened to highlight the importance of carrying out technical work for the benefit of countries in geographical proximity. The initiative was also strongly supported by other delegations.

155. The Committee was grateful to those CPCs that had already manifested their intention to host subregional offices. The feasibility and modalities of establishing such offices would be discussed internally within FAO, and it was recalled that this undertaking carried no budgetary implications for the GFCM.

156. In response to an inquiry by the EU on the budgetary implications of the various MoUs adopted by the GFCM, the GFCM Executive Secretary clarified that, thanks to these MoUs, it had been possible to promote synergies with partner organizations. This also included co-funded activities, where the costs of given actions had been shared, as well as the organization of co-sponsored events, such as the SSF Regional Conference which saw the involvement of multiple partners who contributed, *inter alia*, to covering the fees of specialized consultants.

157. The delegate of Tunisia requested clarification about the unspent amounts shown in various subheadings of the autonomous budget. The GFCM Executive Secretary explained that this was the result of a conservative approach on expenditure dictated by the fact that, up to 2015, the budget was approved at the regular session of the Commission and related contributions were not received until later in the year, hence creating a deficit in cash flow. Such financial shortcomings were covered by FAO in the meantime, which generated a negative impact on the smooth running of the GFCM Secretariat, namely with obstacles for the renewal of staff contracts. The adoption of the triennial budget from 2016 resulted in a more solid financial situation for the Commission.

158. The Commission recognized that, in recent years, there had been a steady increase in the work of the GFCM Secretariat and in the complexity of its tasks. In light of this, it was decided that the issue would be addressed internally at the FAO level with a view to discussing all administrative aspects entailed in the review of job profiles for GFCM staff.

159. In addition, in light of the increasing amount of activities entailed by the proposed strategy for the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the Commission took note of the need to enhance human resources within the GFCM Secretariat in order to support its implementation.

### **GFCM budget and contributions by contracting parties for 2016–2018**

160. The GFCM Executive Secretary, in recalling that the 2016 autonomous budget had been adopted at the thirty-ninth session in line with the new approach to budget approval, submitted a firm budget proposal for 2017 and a tentative budget for 2018 to the consideration of the Committee. The proposed amounts included a number of flagship activities to effectively operationalize the strategic priorities of the Commission.

161. With reference to the adopted budget for 2016, the Committee acknowledged the importance attached by the Commission to holding its intersessional meeting on the mid-term strategy in 2016 and decided to cover related expenses, including interpretation, through the 2016 autonomous budget. The GFCM Executive Secretary would inform of the exact budgetary implications of this meeting at the next session of the Commission.

162. The 2017 budget amounting to US\$2 532 162 was adopted as shown in Appendix 17(1). Expected contributions due by GFCM members are presented in Appendix 17(2). Concerning the budget proposal for 2018, the delegate of the EU, followed by other delegations, pointed out that the 5.1 percent increase would be difficult to cover by its member countries. It was therefore agreed that the budget for 2018 would be further examined by the Commission during its forty-first session. However, the delegate of the EU informed that the EU was exploring the possibility of providing additional funding to contribute to covering priority activities planned for the intersessional period.

163. The GFCM Secretariat informed that it would liaise with relevant FAO departments so that the FAO annual contribution of US\$62 500 could be used to purchase equipment and materials, services needed to enhance GFCM infrastructure, maintenance work and any other expenditure related to the functioning of GFCM headquarters.

164. Finally, the Committee agreed to fill, as soon as possible, the post of GFCM Information Management Officer vacated in September 2015 at P-3/P-4 level, as well as that of GFCM Office Assistant (also unfilled since November 2014) at G-4/G-5 level.

### **ENDORSEMENT OF THE BUREAUS OF THE SAC AND WGBS**

165. The Commission paid tribute to the efficient work carried out by the outgoing Bureaus of the SAC and the WGBS, as well as to the considerable progress made on several fronts.

166. The GFCM Executive Secretary referred to Rule VII of the GFCM Rules of Procedure, applying to the election of the Bureaus of GFCM subsidiary bodies, whereby members could serve for a two-year term, renewable once, and should be elected among delegates or alternates attending the session at which the election took place.

167. The Commission unanimously endorsed the renewed SAC Bureau, composed of Mr Othman Jarboui (Tunisia) as Chairperson, Mr Ali Cemal Gücü (Turkey) as first Vice-Chairperson and Ms Claire Saraux (France) as second Vice-Chairperson, replacing Ms Capucine Mellon. The Commission also endorsed the renewed mandate of the WGBS Bureau composed of Mr Simion Nicolaev (Romania) as Coordinator, Mr Violin Raykov (Bulgaria) as Vice-Coordinator and Mr İlhan Aydin (Turkey) as second Vice-Coordinator.



## **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

168. Side-events were held in parallel to the session by: i) UNEP/MAP–RAC/SPA, ACCOBAMS, GFCM and IUCN-Med, with the collaboration of MedPAN, on the progress related to their joint strategy for the spatial conservation and sustainable use of the Mediterranean marine environment; ii) Oceana on the organization's work towards the recovery of Mediterranean stocks, also through the designation of FRAs and the protection of Mediterranean VMEs; and iii) the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on the implementation of the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines). Such initiatives were strongly valued by all participants.

169. The Commission thanked the Government of Malta for the warm hospitality as well as for the outstanding organization of the fortieth session and the excellent support provided to ensure its smooth conduct.

170. Gratitude was expressed to the GFCM Secretariat for the tireless work undertaken in the preparation of and during the session.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION**

171. The Commission took note of the kind invitation made by the delegation of Montenegro to host the forty-first session in 2017.

## **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

172. The report, including its appendixes, as well as the reports of the CoC and the CAF, was adopted on 3 June 2016.

## **List of annexes**

- 1) Agenda
- 2) List of participants
- 3) List of documents
- 4) Statements pronounced at the fortieth session of the Commission
- 5) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application
- 6) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)
- 7) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3 establishing further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18)
- 8) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16)
- 9) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5 establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea
- 10) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/6 on scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29)
- 11) Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/7 concerning the authorization of the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red coral
- 12) Resolution GFCM/40/2016/1 on guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions
- 13) Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries
- 14) Resolution GFCM/40/2016/3 on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the GFCM area of application
- 15) Terms of reference for selected activities
  - 1) Workshop on data submission in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)
  - 2) Working Group on sustainable small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries (WGSSF)
  - 3) Ad-hoc scientific Working Group on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)
  - 4) Moderators of the SAC subregional committees
- 16) Pending proposal for a GFCM recommendation on measures concerning recreational fishing activities in the Mediterranean Sea
- 17) GFCM autonomous budget for 2017
  - 1) GFCM autonomous budget for 2017
  - 2) Contributions of the CPCs to the autonomous budget for 2017

**Agenda**

1. Opening and arrangements of the session
2. Cooperation with non-contracting parties and party organizations
3. Report on fisheries and aquaculture intersessional activities in 2015–2016
4. Tenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC)
5. Review of salient strategic initiatives
6. Management of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture
7. Programme of work for the intersessional period 2016–2018
8. Seventh session of the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF)
8. Endorsement of the Bureaus of the SAC and WGBS
9. Any other matters
10. Date and place of the forty-first session
11. Review and adoption of the report

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**List of documents**

GFCM:40/2016/1	Provisional agenda and timetable
GFCM:40/2016/2	Report on fisheries intersessional activities in 2015–2016, recommendations and work plan for 2016–2018
GFCM:40/2016/3	Report on aquaculture intersessional activities in 2015–2016, recommendations and work plan for 2016–2017
GFCM:40/2016/4 (CoC 10)	Executive report on selected issues and activities before the Compliance Committee
GFCM:40/2016/5 (CAF 7)	Report of the Secretariat on administrative and financial issues
GFCM:40/2016/6 (CAF 7)	GFCM budget and contracting parties contributions for 2016–2018
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.1	Provisional list of documents
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.2	Provisional list of participants
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.3	Statement of competence and voting rights by the European Union and its member States
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.4	Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.5	Report of the thirty-ninth session of the GFCM (Italy, 25–29 May 2015) (Available in English and French)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.6	GFCM framework for cooperation and arrangements with non-contracting parties and party organizations (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.7	Report of the eighteenth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) (Cyprus, 21–23 March 2016) (bilingual)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.8	Report of the ninth session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) (Morocco, 24–26 February 2015) (bilingual)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.9	Report of the fifth meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) (Ukraine, 5–7 April 2016) (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.10	Conclusions of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (Algeria, 7–9 March 2016) (Available in Arabic, English and French)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.11 (CoC 10)	Report of the intersessional meeting of the Compliance Committee (FAO headquarters, 19–20 January 2016) (Available in English only)
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GFCM:40/2016/Inf.15 (CoC 10)	Report of the Working Group on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (WGIUU) (Spain, 19–21 April 2016) (Available in English only)

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GFCM:40/2016/Inf.18	Report of the first meeting of the GFCM Task Force on a “Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea Aquaculture” (Italy, 4–6 May 2016) (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.19	Report of the Expert meeting on sustainable shellfish aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Italy, 23–25 November 2015) (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.20	Report on major activities of the FAO regional projects (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Inf.21	Proposal for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Dma.1	GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) (Available in English and French)
GFCM:40/2016/Dma.2	<i>The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries</i> (SoMFi 2016) (Available in English only)
GFCM:40/2016/Dma.3	Basic texts of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish)
GFCM:40/2016/Dma.4	<i>Guidelines for the use of artificial reefs in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea</i> . GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 96. 2015 (Available in English only)

**Statements pronounced at the fortieth session of the Commission  
(in their original language)**

**His Excellency José Herrera,  
Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change**

Honourable delegates, participants,

I welcome you to Malta for the fortieth session of the GFCM. As minister responsible for sustainable development, I cannot but underline the importance of the work being done by this Regional Fisheries Management Organization for the sustainable use of fishery resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Indeed, for the objective of the UN Agreement on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks of 1995, the states party to that agreement were determined to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of these fish stocks.

Great efforts have been made in order to build what is now a veritable compendium of recommendations under the international framework provided by the GFCM. Nevertheless, the situation is far from being a sustainable one with most stocks which have been assessed as overexploited. We need to re-kindle that determination which resulted in the adoption of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement now more than ever in order to achieve sustainability and every one of us needs to strive for that goal. If we act now, we may be in time to reverse the current trends and avoid drastic measures which would harm that part of our social fabric which has the potential of becoming a guardian for our seas.

To reach our goals of sustainability, we need an integrated approach to managing fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries which seeks to manage the use of natural resources, taking into account fishing and other human activities, while preserving both the biological wealth and the biological processes necessary to safeguard the composition, structure and functioning of the habitats of the ecosystem affected and considering the knowledge and uncertainties regarding biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems.

An ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management needs to be implemented and environmental impacts of fishing activities should be minimized.

This becomes even more important when one considers that fisheries in this region are of great socio-economic importance at the small-scale level and to coastal populations. The sector employs hundreds of thousands of people directly, and through the secondary processing sector. In fact there is great potential for the development of what is being termed as “Blue Growth”. However, in order to do so, there must be sound foundations based on a healthy ecosystem to sustain such economic growth.

It is clear that fisheries in the Mediterranean make a vital contribution towards food security particularly for the region’s most vulnerable populations. It offers a way to supplement income or food supply in times of need, contributing to regional stability.

However, we have a precarious situation for fisheries in the Mediterranean which risks undermining all we have worked for. Most of the assessed Mediterranean fish stocks have been shown to be heavily overfished; at times even up to six times the mortality limit. Nearly 50% of marine biodiversity has been strongly and negatively affected since 1970. To reverse this, we need to have a good international ocean governance framework with everyone on board. Collaboration with a common goal is key to such an achievement.

I wish you success in your endeavours during the coming days and I am positive that the GFCM Secretariat will be able to successfully reach the goals set in the Agenda for a stronger and sustainable future.

**Andreina Fenech-Farrugia, Director General, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture**

Honourable delegates and participants,

I also take the opportunity to welcome you to Malta where not so long ago, we held the first conference on small-scale fisheries. Taking a cue from my Minister on the need to address the management of the Mediterranean resources through an ecosystem approach, I cannot but underline what you already know, that is, the importance of having sound scientific data on which to base our discussions and management decisions. Each party should be able to collect biological, environmental, technical, and socio-economic data necessary for fisheries management, manage those data and make them available for analysis. In this regard, I applaud the efforts made by the GFCM Secretariat and the success they have achieved in coordinating the collection of data from the respective parties. This data will serve a higher purpose by enabling the assessment of:

- the state of exploited marine biological resources;
- the level of fishing and the impact that fishing activities have on the marine biological resources and on the marine ecosystems; and
- the socio-economic performance of the fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors within the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The new data collection framework endorsed within the GFCM framework will go a long way into achieving this and creating the right conditions for meaningful management measures.

Malta has been active in this field and firmly believes in the need to have available scientific data. We have also recently hosted the latest meetings of MedSudMed and CopeMed, which brought together once again scientists from different countries to work together. Worthy of mention is the first meeting ever on the coryphaena, which promises to yield a better picture on this stock and to understand how best to manage it.

The European Union is also currently in the process of updating its own data collection framework and will ensure that the vast amount of data being collected will continue and will become of even better quality.

Nevertheless, the GFCM has much more on its plate than data collection. Here I would like to personally thank Abdellah for his relentless commitment to the Organization and the great efforts made by his staff. In particular, I would like to thank him and his team for the cooperation and support they provide continuously even at the individual level.

I look forward to participating in this year's work together to continue on the path of sustainability and for the well-being of our seas.

**Árni Mathiesen, Assistant Director General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO**

On behalf of the FAO Director General, Mr. José Graziano Da Silva, please allow me to welcome you to the opening of the fortieth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean of FAO (GFCM), including the tenth session of the Compliance Committee (CoC) and the seventh session of the Committee of Administration and Finance (CAF). To begin, I wish to extend my enormous gratitude to the government of Malta for their generosity in agreeing to host this session – it is truly a pleasure to be here with you all in this wonderful country. Indeed, I am so pleased to see so many of you here today. The high number of participants at this meeting is a testament to the important work ahead of us this week and the seriousness with which you take the common issues that we face in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I am pleased to remark on the great progress being made by the GFCM in implementing its mandate at the Mediterranean and Black Sea level. We are all aware of this progress, with particular regard to the efforts by the GFCM to revert the alarming status of the stocks in the region. Presently, we know that – according to the findings of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries – some ninety percent of scientifically assessed stocks are considered to be fished outside of safe biological limits. Halting this trend is the most pressing challenge ahead of us and I am calling upon this session to make clear and strong proposals to this end, consistent with most recent developments at the global level.

I am referring in particular to the decision by the United Nations last year concerning the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change. Of particular relevance to the GFCM is UN Sustainable Development Goal 14, which provides a comprehensive and phased strategy to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.” Targets to achieve this goal have been set therein and include, among others, sustainably managing marine ecosystems, ending IUU fishing, increasing available scientific knowledge, and enhancing small-scale fisheries. Complementing the SDGs, FAO has also sharpened its focus around five strategic objectives, one of which is to make fisheries more productive and sustainable. This is part of our organizational effort to boost blue growth through fisheries and aquaculture, including at the regional level through those RFMOs established by FAO. As I have already stated in the past, the GFCM is the flagship FAO RFMO as it continues to play an important role in coordinating efforts towards the goals of the Organization consistent with most recent developments agreed in the umbrella of the United Nations. In this regard, I very much look forward to the presentation of the GFCM mid-term strategy, which I am confident will present a wide-ranging course of action to attain sustainable development at the regional level with a view to meet the targets set by UN SDG 14 in a phased manner.

I would also like to stress the sound cooperation between FAO and the GFCM. The GFCM has long proven itself to be adept at tailoring global FAO policies within the context of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The last instance relating to this pattern is the strong coordination between FAO and the GFCM on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Last March, on occasion of the “Regional Conference on Building a Future for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries”, which was graciously hosted by Algeria and which I had the pleasure of attending, we bore witness to the added value that the practical application of these Guidelines can have in this region. The conference provided the necessary forum to discuss the region’s main challenges and opportunities, as linked to SSF, and the GFCM is now moving to the next level and spearheading the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Furthermore, the GFCM has been a leader in the implementation of regional port state measures. With the coming entry into force of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement on June 5th of this year – that is, next week – the proposal to align the GFCM’s regional port state measures with the FAO PSMA is of critical importance and I strongly encourage you to endorse it. This is directly linked to the initiative that was promoted by the GFCM last year, on occasion of its 39th session at EXPO-MILAN, to launch internal discussions within FAO to have the Committee of Fisheries

declaring an international day for the fight against IUU fishing. In my view, not only was that initiative ground-breaking, as FAO has never before proclaimed an international day in matters relating to fisheries, but it also proved to be exceedingly timely, given the imminent entry into force of the FAO PSMA. I am exceedingly pleased to report that the declaration of an international day for the fight against IUU fishing has been duly considered at internal FAO levels and it will be presented for endorsement at the 32nd session of COFI this July. With a view to supporting this initiative, the FAO DG has signed a circular letter which is expected to be dispatched to all COFI Members, yourselves included, by the end of this week.

I do believe that one of the assets of the GFCM is its ability to come up with concrete and workable proposals. I have already mentioned a few of them but I would be remiss if I don't underline the important initiatives planned for the Black Sea. I welcome in particular the hosting of a high-level regional conference on Black Sea fisheries governance, which we know will be kindly hosted by Romania this Fall, as well as the possibility to launch a cooperative scientific and technical project for the Black Sea. I am positive that this latter initiative will undergo further debate here in Malta, as well as in Romania on occasion of said conference. I would like, however, to lend my support as we urgently need to increase cooperation in the Black Sea with a view to underpinning the serious work by the GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea. Cooperation is key for our endeavours to be successful and this applies to the Mediterranean Sea as well. I hope that this session will, as it happened last year, grant cooperating status to new riparian countries and I am referring in particular to Bosnia and Herzegovina that made a specific request for this purpose. Moreover, any discussion of cooperation in the Mediterranean Sea must necessarily acknowledge the good work of the FAO regional projects: AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed. Particularly in light of the new subregional approach of the GFCM, the work of the regional projects is crucial to support the successful management of the Mediterranean through the provision of scientific expertise.

To conclude, I wish to commend the exemplary work that is taking place within the remit of the GFCM. The GFCM continues to make great strides every year, not only to better manage the region's fisheries, but also to holistically address sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. Despite enormous progress, the region's fisheries continue to be at risk. If we are truly to achieve the objective of sustainable development – if we are to promote the development of the region's fishing sector in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – then we are obliged to do more. The challenges faced in the Mediterranean and Black Sea are extensive and complex, and on occasion, highly political, yet the GFCM is endowed with the proper tools to address these challenges and therefore it is time to tackle them head on. This session carries with it many expectations and I trust that you, the national delegates in particular, will live up to these expectations by adopting, based on the principles of best available knowledge and the precautionary approach, concrete and systematic measures for the management and conservation of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.



## **Stefano Cataudella, GFCM Chairperson**

I am honoured to be here in Malta today and I would like, at the outset, to add my voice in welcoming all of you here. Allow me to also add my own words of gratitude to the hosting country, Malta, which is geographically located at the very heart of the Mediterranean Sea. Malta, thanks to the enormous efforts of its national administration, is becoming one of the main hubs for the development of regional and international fisheries policies as proven by their invitation to host this important session of the GFCM. The high number of participants in this session most certainly bodes well for our work. I am concerned because of the complexity of the task ahead but still, I am positive we will constructively discuss the very important issues that are at stake as we are now seeing the results of the decision we took to open the door of the Commission to the various stakeholders in the region thus underpinning a participatory approach.

Over the last 5 years, the sessions of the Commission have revolved around the modernization of the GFCM. This started with the performance review of the GFCM in 2011 and the consequent establishment of an ad hoc Task Force by the Commission. The Task Force has operated relentlessly up until last year, when the last piece of the modernization of the GFCM, namely the revision of the Rules of Procedure and the Financial Rules, came into the renewed institutional framework of the Commission. I would like to highlight in particular one outcome of the reform: for the first time in the history of the Commission we have received for the current year almost 70% of the total annual contributions by GFCM Members. As you are aware, this was not the case in the past as we came to the annual meeting to adopt a budget which covered a financial year for which expenditures had been already made, thus compelling FAO to advance funds to the GFCM.

We must now make use of the new institutional framework of the GFCM fully. As recalled by the FI-ADG in his speech, 2015 marked the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is by far the most fully-encompassing instrument ever envisaged by the international community to address major issues such as hunger, poverty and climate change. Albeit the GFCM is directly concerned by only one of the targets therein, target number 14, we must live up to those engagements that were already agreed upon at the United Nations. To the best of my recollection and knowledge, the GFCM is the first – and for the time being only – regional organization that has tailored the targets in the SDGs to its own priorities and needs. This is exceedingly important because, against a broader background, we are now going to work to obtain tangible results for the Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries. To this end, the proposed mid-term strategy represents a serious contribution to sustainable development in the interest of both present and future generations.

In the context of the modernization process of the Commission, we also reviewed our policies relating to aquaculture, another central component of GFCM activities. In this regard, I would like to recall that since the establishment of the CAQ more than 20 years ago, aquaculture has been directly contributing to the livelihood of coastal communities in our region. Regardless, with a view to improve this the GFCM Task Force for Sustainable Development of Mediterranean and Black Sea Aquaculture has inaugurated its work early this month in Naples. As a result of the active participation of Contracting Parties in the Task Force we aim primarily at endowing this sector with a regional character. It seems to me that we are on the right track as the outcomes of the meeting in Naples are practical and could support national administrations in creating an appropriate environment for job growth, trade and market opportunities at the regional and subregional levels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Colleagues,

I have always maintained that the specificities of the GFCM area of application are not only defined by its different regions, but also by its varying fishing and aquaculture activities, and the interactions between these activities and other human activities. In this regard, I would like to recall that the GFCM, together with several other partners including the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the FAO regional projects, WWF, MedPAN and CIHEAM, have hosted last March in

Algeria a Regional Conference on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, with the strong cooperation and support of the Algerian Government. The conclusions of this regional conference, which recognize the primary role that small-scale fisheries have in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, are now part of the proposed mid-term elements for a regional strategy since specific targets are set therein for small-scale fisheries. Thanks to the strong input of the Commission we have ultimately come to better understand a social sector, that of small-scale fisheries, which is linked to a large number of human dynamics commonly known by the general public in recent years. Let us consider, for example, that human migrations in this region rely on the inappropriate use of artisanal fisheries boats. Furthermore, many human lives have already been saved by fishermen at sea. For this, we must continue to disseminate materials to raise awareness on the social relevance of small-scale fisheries. In this regard, I am exceedingly pleased with the work done by the GFCM Secretariat in developing media outlets and making information technology available to everyone, as we have witnessed in occasion of the Regional Conference on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.

Allow me also to underline the contribution that the FAO Regional Projects provide to the work of the GFCM. Again this year AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed have ensured technical and scientific support to the parties concerned. Their role remains crucial and increased coordination would maximize results in the future. I would therefore like to thank the donors of the FAO regional projects, namely the EU – that had made a special effort to support –, as well as Croatia, Italy and Spain, in addition to the donors to the GFCM Framework Programme which include, in addition to those I have just mentioned, France and Monaco. Finally, I would like to express special gratitude to the GFCM Secretariat which has demonstrated adaptability and resilience during the various intersessional periods by ensuring the successful outcomes of established Task Forces in addition to the average commitment towards the regular work-plan, in accordance with the mandate of the Commission.

Ahead of the challenges we face at the GFCM, it is time for everyone to contribute to an effort which is necessarily common. The alarming status of the stocks in the region cannot be reverted only by the Contracting Parties. There is a role that other actors too must play because, as I said in the past, if we do not succeed in our endeavour this would represent an institutional failure. This is because no actor by himself can pull off such a complex task. Consequently, I hope that recent reforms launched by FAO to streamline the operations of Article XIV bodies can be effectively applied in the context of the GFCM. Similarly, I hope that the strong focus of FAO on communication will result in making the outcomes of the work of the GFCM discernible to ordinary people, who also happen to be customers regularly buying fishery products. Without keeping you any longer, I thank you very much for your attention and I look forward to our discussions.

**Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries,  
European Commission**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here with you again today. As you know, this is a special session, an anniversary of sorts.

For four decades, the GFCM has worked for sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Last year, we gave the GFCM's institutional framework an overhaul. We now have the means to act quickly, decisively and effectively. Now we must do so. There is no excuse. I said it earlier this year in Sicily, and I said it again at the Ministerial Conference I convened in Brussels last month: we need to act, we need to act now, and we need to act together.

So today, I want us to make history. I want this fortieth session to be a game-changer. When people look back, another 40 years down the road, I want them to see this session as the beginning of a new era. An era where we take concrete action to protect key species and stop the collapse of stocks. An era where we adopt a coherent strategy that lets our fish stocks recover and our fishermen sleep soundly at night.

We all know how much fisheries mean for our economies. In the Mediterranean and Black Sea, over 200 000 people depend on fisheries for their jobs. Without those jobs, they and their families would struggle to survive. Can we afford to stand by and watch those jobs disappear? Can we risk the resulting poverty and desperation?

Because that is the future we are looking at. And thanks to GFCM's work, we are all well aware of the problems. We know that the vast majority – about 90% – of the stocks assessed by GFCM are overfished. We know that, as a result, productivity and prices are declining, putting jobs at risk. We know that many fish stocks are shared between countries, making reliable data harder to get and corrective action harder to take. And we know that there are still gaps in our scientific advice.

So yes: our fishermen are looking at an uncertain future. And the more they worry about tomorrow, the more they overfish today, making their future even bleaker. It is high time that we break out of this vicious circle!

That is why, in February, the EU sounded the alarm at the high-level conference we organized in Sicily. And that is why I called a Ministerial Conference for all Mediterranean countries last month.

I was pleased to see on both occasions that the EU's concerns are widely shared. The critical state of our fisheries is beyond doubt. And I sensed a real will to act, to restore our fisheries – and our fishing economy – to good health.

I want to build on this will. Next year in March, I want us to adopt a Ministerial Declaration for a sustainable fishing sector in the Mediterranean. This should be a joint Declaration, backed by all Mediterranean states. And so the EU will invite all GFCM members to participate in this process.

In the meantime, until March:

We will push within ICCAT for a better management of Mediterranean swordfish.

We will provide additional funding for FAO to support long-term scientific surveys.

We will enhance our cooperation with non-EU countries to improve control, fight illegal fishing, and diversify the fishing industry.

And we will continue to advise non-EU countries on how they can use the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the European Neighbourhood Instrument to fund such measures.

And just to be clear: the EU is pushing for stronger cooperation not only in the Mediterranean, but in the Black Sea as well. And I will pass on exactly this message when I attend the Black Sea conference on the blue economy in two weeks.

But, dear colleagues, we also need you. You all – and our joint work together within the GFCM – will be critical to our success.

And that is why, as I said, I want this session to be a game-changer. An event where we take the next step in our cooperation and move from words to action.

How? I believe that the GFCM's work in the coming year should focus on five main areas: scientific and economic advice, control and IUU, small-scale fisheries, recreational fisheries and multilateral cooperation.

Let me go through them very briefly.

First, on scientific issues, we need to further improve data collection and scientific advice, including the cooperation among scientists. But it is becoming equally important that our scientific data is translated into relative economic impact that can allow decision makers to understand the full consequences of what is at stake. This will help us take management measures that better protect the marine environment. So far, the GFCM has adopted 16 management and conservation measures. I am convinced that, faced with the alarming prospect of severe reductions in employment and profitability, we need more. So we are using this session to propose several new measures, based on the excellent work by the GFCM Scientific Advice Committee.

Second, we need to ensure that everybody plays by the same rules when it comes to control and the fight against IUU fishing. If needed, the EU is ready to help others put in place the necessary tools to ensure control and compliance.

Third, we need to take targeted action to support small-scale fisheries. Because let's not forget: most of the 100 000 fishing boats in the Mediterranean and Black Sea are small-scale. We can help these fishermen promote their products, diversify their sources of income, and breathe new life into coastal communities.

Fourth, if we really want our fish stocks to recover, we need to regulate recreational fisheries – not least to avoid conflicts with small-scale commercial fisheries.

Finally, we need to enhance North-South and East-West cooperation. Countries need to work together on capacity building and common long-term plans, to nurture our fish stocks back to health.

I know this is ambitious. We are asking a lot – but we know that we have a lot to lose. So we are looking into increasing the EU's financial support to make sure that the GFCM can tackle these issues effectively.

And let's be clear: simply throwing money at these issues is not the solution. Above all, we need one overarching strategy. We need a coherent multiannual plan. A plan that is fully in line with the UN's newly adopted sustainable development goal to protect and preserve our oceans. A plan that ties in with the EU's ongoing efforts to improve ocean governance around the world.

So I think that the GFCM's work to establish a midterm strategy for 2017 to 2020 is an excellent initiative. And we would like to see it implemented within the next three years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know that we all want to keep our fish stocks healthy, protect our food security, and ensure a viable future for our fishermen and coastal communities. I also know we all agree on the need to build trust, strengthen cooperation and improve fisheries management in the region.

But agreeing on principles is one thing. We now need to move forward, together. It is time to act. It is time to build a new partnership between all Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, EU Member States and non-EU countries, GFCM and FAO.

Forty years after its first general meeting, for GFCM this is truly a game-changing moment.

So let's do it. Today, let's make history!

Thank you.

**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/1**  
**on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*RECALLING* the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

*RECALLING* further the 2005 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing endorsed by the twenty-sixth session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (FAO headquarters, March 2005);

*RECALLING* further the resolutions on sustainable fisheries adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, in 2005, 2006 and 2007, calling for the development of a legally binding instrument on port state measures;

*RECALLING* further part three of the 2005 General Guidelines for a GFCM control and enforcement scheme and Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/8 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application repealing Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/4;

*REAFFIRMING* its roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea endorsed at the thirty-seventh session of the GFCM (Croatia, May 2013);

*REAFFIRMING* its roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean endorsed at the thirty-eighth session of the GFCM (FAO headquarters, May 2014);

*ACKNOWLEDGING* the decision of the twenty-seventh session of the COFI (FAO headquarters, March 2007) to develop a legally binding instrument on port state measures;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, signed in Rome on 22 November 2009;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, adopted by the COFI at its thirty-first session (FAO headquarters, June 2014);

*NOTING* port state measures that have been adopted by various regional fisheries management organizations;

*NOTING ALSO* that port state measures provide a powerful and cost-effective means of preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing;

*CONCERNED* by the continuation of IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area of application, and that these activities diminish the effectiveness of the GFCM conservation and management measures;

*RECOGNIZING* the potential effectiveness of strengthened and harmonized port state measures in combating IUU fishing activities, and the need to develop and to implement such measures in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

*RECOGNIZING* the need for assistance to developing countries to adopt and implement port state measures;

*RECOGNIZING* also the need to raise awareness on the negative impacts of IUU fishing activities;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the following recommendation:

## **Objective**

1. The objective of this recommendation is to contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application through strengthened, harmonized and transparent port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

## **Definitions**

2. For the purposes of this recommendation:

- “fish” means all species of marine living resources, whether processed or not;
- “fishing” means:
  - i) the actual or attempted searching for, catching, taking or harvesting of fish in the GFCM area of application; and
  - ii) engaging in any activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the locating, catching, taking or harvesting of fish in the GFCM area of application;
- “fishing-related activities” means any operation in the GFCM area of application in support of, or in preparation for fishing, including the processing, transshipment or transport of fish that have not been previously landed and offloaded at a port, as well as the provision of personnel, fuel, gear and other supplies at sea;
- “port” includes offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, processing, refuelling or resupplying;
- “illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing” has the same meaning as set out in the paragraph 3 of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) and applies to all marine fisheries;
- “regional economic integration organization” means a regional economic integration organization to which its member states have transferred competence over matters covered by this recommendation, including the authority to make decisions binding on its member states in respect of those matters;
- “regional fisheries management organization” (RFMO) means an intergovernmental fisheries organization or arrangement, as appropriate, that has the competence to establish conservation and management measures;
- “vessel” means any vessel, ship of another type, boat and other craft used for, equipped to be used for, or intended to be used for, fishing or fishing related activities in the GFCM area of application.

## **Application**

3. This recommendation only applies to vessels which are within the GFCM area of application.

4. Each contracting party and cooperating non contracting party (CPC) shall, in its capacity as a port state, apply this recommendation in respect of vessels that are not flying its flag and that are seeking access to its port(s) or are in one of its ports, except for:

- a) vessels of a neighbouring state that are engaged in artisanal fishing for subsistence, provided that the port state and the flag state cooperate to ensure that such vessels do not engage in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing; and
- b) container vessels that are not carrying fish or, if carrying fish, carry only fish that have been previously landed, provided that there are no clear grounds for suspecting that such vessels have engaged in fishing-related activities in support of IUU fishing.

5. A CPC may, in its capacity as a port state, decide not to apply this recommendation to vessels chartered by its nationals exclusively for fishing in areas under its national jurisdiction and operating under its authority therein. Such vessels shall be subject to measures by the CPC which are as effective as measures applied in relation to vessels entitled to fly its flag.

6. Each CPC shall take additional measures, as it deems necessary, to reinforce effective jurisdiction and control over the fishing and fishing-related activities of vessels flying its flag. To the greatest extent possible, such measures shall include *mutatis mutandis* the port state measures set forth in this recommendation in respect of such vessels.

7. This recommendation shall be applied in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with international law.

### **Integration and coordination at the national level**

8. To the greatest extent possible, CPCs shall:

- c) integrate or coordinate port state measures into a broader system of port state controls;
- d) integrate port state measures with other measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and fishing-related activities in support of such fishing; and
- e) take measures to exchange and share information among relevant national agencies and to coordinate the activities of such agencies in the implementation of this recommendation.

### **Cooperation and exchange of information**

9. In the implementation of this recommendation and with due regard to appropriate confidentiality requirements, CPCs shall cooperate and exchange information with the GFCM Secretariat, relevant coastal states, flag states, international organizations, RFMOs and other entities, including, as appropriate, by:

- a) requesting information from, and providing information to, relevant databases; and
- b) requesting and providing cooperation to promote the effective implementation of this recommendation.

10. The CPCs shall, to the extent possible, ensure that national fisheries-related information systems allow for the direct electronic exchange of information on port state inspections between them and with the GFCM Secretariat, with due regard to appropriate confidentiality requirements, in order to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation.

11. The CPCs shall establish a list of contact points in the relevant administrations in order to take due note of any reply or any actions proposed or taken by the flag state of the inspected vessel. The list shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat and to the other CPCs not later than 30 days after the entry into force of this recommendation. Any subsequent changes shall be notified to the GFCM Secretariat at least 15 days before the change takes effect.

12. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a register of contact points based on the lists submitted by the CPCs. The register shall be posted on the GFCM website.

### **Designation of ports**

13. The CPCs shall designate and publicize national ports to which foreign vessels may be permitted access and, to the greatest extent possible, shall ensure that every port designated and publicized has sufficient capacity to conduct inspections and take other port state measures in accordance with this recommendation.

14. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat of the ports designated under paragraph 13 not later than 30 days after the entry into force of this recommendation. Any subsequent change to this list shall be notified to the GFCM Secretariat at least 15 days before the change takes effect.

### **GFCM register of ports**

15. The GFCM Secretariat shall establish and maintain a register of designated and publicized national ports based on the lists submitted by CPCs. The register shall be made available through the online channels established by the GFCM Secretariat.

### **Prior notice of entry into port**

16. The CPCs shall, before granting access to their designated ports, require the masters of vessels to notify the competent authorities of the port they wish to use at least 72 hours before the estimated time of arrival. However, a CPC may make provision for another notification period, taking into account, *inter alia*, the distance between the fishing grounds and its ports. In such a case, the CPC shall inform the GFCM Secretariat, which will integrate this information in the register of ports. The notification shall include, as a minimum standard, the information set out in Annex 1.

### **Port entry authorization**

17. After receiving the relevant information required pursuant to paragraph 16, as well as such other information as it may require to determine whether the vessel requesting entry into its port has engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, each CPC shall decide whether to authorize or deny the entry of the vessel into its port and shall communicate this decision to the vessel or to its representative.

18. Each CPC, through its competent authorities, shall communicate in a written form the authorization, or denial, for access to the port for landing, transshipping or processing to the master of the vessel seeking access to its ports. The master of the vessel shall present the authorization for access to the port to the competent authorities of the CPC upon arrival at port before commencing authorized activities.

### **Denial of use of port**

19. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish if the vessel:

- a) at the relevant time was engaged in fishing in the GFCM area of application and was not flying the flag of a CPC; or
- b) has been sighted as being engaged in, or supporting, IUU fishing in the GFCM area of application, unless the vessel can establish that the catch was taken in a manner consistent with relevant GFCM conservation and management measures.

20. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish if the vessel is included in a list of vessels having engaged in, or supported, IUU fishing adopted by the GFCM.

21. A CPC shall not allow a vessel to use its ports for landing, transshipping or processing of fish where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the vessel does not have a valid and applicable authorization to engage in fishing and fishing-related activities in the GFCM area of application.

22. A CPC shall, in appropriate situations, deny a vessel referred to in paragraphs 19, 20 and 21 access to port services, including, *inter alia*, refuelling and resupplying services but not including services essential to the safety, health and welfare of the crew.



23. Where a CPC has denied the use of its ports in accordance with this recommendation, it shall promptly notify the master of the vessel, the flag state and, as appropriate, the relevant coastal state(s), the GFCM Secretariat and other relevant organizations of such action.

#### **Withdrawal of denial of use of port**

24. A CPC may withdraw its denial of the use of its ports in respect of a vessel only if the CPC is satisfied that there is sufficient proof to show that the grounds on which the use was denied were inadequate or erroneous or that such grounds no longer apply.

25. Where a CPC has withdrawn its denial pursuant to paragraph 24, it shall promptly notify those to whom a notification was issued pursuant to this recommendation.

#### **Non-authorized entry**

26. Each CPC shall ensure that any vessel or vessel engaged in fishing-related activities that enters into its port without prior authorization shall be automatically subject to inspection.

#### **Levels and priorities for inspection**

27. Each CPC shall inspect at least 15 percent of the total number of port entries of vessels in the previous year in accordance with this recommendation.

28. In determining which vessels to inspect, a CPC shall give priority to:

- a) vessels that have previously been denied the use of a port in accordance with this recommendation; or
- b) requests from other relevant states or RFMOs that particular vessels be inspected; and
- c) other vessels for which there are clear grounds for suspecting that they have engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing.

#### **Conduct of inspections**

29. Each CPC shall ensure that inspections of vessels in its ports are carried out in accordance with the inspection procedures set out in Annex 2.

30. Each CPC shall, in carrying out inspections in its ports:

- a) ensure that inspections are carried out by properly qualified inspectors authorized for that purpose;
- b) ensure that, prior to an inspection, inspectors are required to present to the master of the vessel an appropriate document identifying the inspectors as such;
- c) ensure that inspectors examine all relevant areas of the vessel, the fish on board, the nets and any other gear, equipment, and any document or record on board that is relevant to verifying compliance with relevant conservation and management measures;
- d) require the master of the vessel to give inspectors all necessary assistance and information, and to present relevant material and documents as may be required, or certified copies thereof;
- e) in case of appropriate arrangements with the flag state of the vessel, invite that state to participate in the inspection;
- f) make all possible efforts to avoid unduly delaying the vessel to minimize interference and inconvenience, including any unnecessary presence of inspectors on board, and to avoid action that would adversely affect the quality of the fish on board;

- g) make all possible efforts to facilitate communication with the master or senior crew members of the vessel, including where possible and where needed that the inspector is accompanied by an interpreter;
- h) ensure that inspections are conducted in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner and would not constitute harassment of any vessel; and
- i) not interfere with the master's ability, in conformity with international law, to communicate with the authorities of the flag state.

31. Each CPC shall, as a minimum standard, require the information set out in Annex 3 to be included in the report of the results of each inspection.

32. Each CPC shall ensure that the results of port inspections are always presented to the master of the vessel for review and signature and that the report is completed and signed by the inspector. The master of the inspected vessel shall be given the opportunity to add any comment to the report and, as appropriate, to contact the relevant authorities of the flag state, in particular when there are serious difficulties in understanding the contents of the report.

33. Each CPC shall ensure that a copy of the report of inspection shall be provided to the master of the inspected vessel for retention on board the vessel.

#### **Standardized information on port inspections**

34. Each CPC shall handle information on port inspections in a standardized form, consistent with Annex 4.

#### **Training of inspectors**

35. Each CPC shall ensure that its inspectors are properly trained, taking into account the guidelines for the training of inspectors in Annex 5. CPCs shall seek to cooperate in this regard.

#### **Port state actions following inspection**

36. Where there is reasonable evidence for believing that a vessel has engaged in or supported IUU fishing activities or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, the relevant port state shall:

- a) transmit the results of the inspection without delay to the flag state of the inspected vessels, to the GFCM Secretariat and to other CPCs; and
- b) deny use of their ports to the vessel for landing, transshipping or processing of fish and for other port services, including, *inter alia*, refuelling and resupplying, maintenance and dry-docking, if these actions have not already been taken in respect of the vessel, in a manner consistent with this recommendation.

37. Notwithstanding paragraph 36, a CPC shall not deny a vessel referred to in that paragraph the use of port services essential for the safety or health of the crew or the safety of the vessel.

38. CPCs may take measures other than those in paragraph 36, if they are provided for in their national laws and regulations and consistent with international law.

#### **Information on recourse in the port state**

39. Each CPC shall maintain the relevant information available to the public and provide such information, upon written request, to the owner, operator, master or representative of a vessel with regard to any recourse established in accordance with its national laws and regulations concerning port state measures taken by that CPC, including information pertaining to the public services or judicial institutions available for this purpose, as well as information on whether there is any right to

seek compensation in accordance with its national laws and regulations in the event of any loss or damage suffered as a consequence of any alleged unlawful action by the CPC.

40. The CPC shall inform the flag state, the owner, operator, master or representative of the vessel, as appropriate, of the outcome of any such recourse.

### **Regional information system**

41. A regional information system which includes port state information shall be developed by the GFCM to better monitor and control the GFCM area of application.

### **Force majeure or distress**

42. Nothing in this recommendation affects the access of vessels to port in accordance with international law for reasons of force majeure or distress, or prevents a CPC from permitting entry into port to a vessel exclusively for the purpose of rendering assistance to persons, ships or aircraft in danger or distress.

### **Role of the flag state**

43. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a flag state, cooperate with other CPCs in inspections or exchange of information carried out pursuant to this recommendation.

44. When a CPC has reasonable grounds to believe that a vessel flying its flag has engaged in or supported IUU fishing and is seeking access to or is in the port of another CPC, it shall, as appropriate, request that CPC to inspect the vessel or take other measures consistent with this recommendation and to advise it of the results.

45. Each CPC shall ensure that vessels entitled to fly its flag land, transship and process fish, and use other port services, in ports of other CPCs that are acting in accordance with, or in a manner consistent with this recommendation.

46. The flag state shall ensure that the master of a fishing vessel entitled to fly its flag shall, when being inspected:

- a) cooperate with and assist in the inspection of the fishing vessel conducted pursuant to these procedures, and not obstruct, intimidate or interfere with the inspectors in the performance of their duties;
- b) provide access to any areas, decks and rooms of the fishing vessel, catch (whether processed or not), nets or other gear, equipment, and any information or document which the inspector deems necessary in undertaking an inspection; and
- c) provide access to registration documents, fishing authorizations or any other documentation as required by the inspector.

47. If the master of a fishing vessel refuses to allow an authorized inspector to carry out an inspection in accordance with these procedures, the master shall offer an explanation of the reason for such refusal. The port inspection authorities shall immediately notify the authorities of the fishing vessel, as well as the GFCM, of the master's refusal and any explanation.

48. If the master does not comply with an inspection request, the flag state shall be requested to suspend the vessel's authorization to fish and order the vessel to remain in port or take other measures that it deems appropriate. The flag state shall immediately notify the port inspection authorities and the GFCM of the action it has taken in these circumstances.

49. Where, following port state inspection, a flag state receives an inspection report indicating that there are clear grounds to believe that a vessel entitled to fly its flag has engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing, it shall immediately and fully investigate the

matter and shall, upon sufficient evidence, take enforcement action without delay in accordance with its laws and regulations.

50. Each CPC shall, in its capacity as a flag state, report to other CPCs and, as appropriate, relevant coastal states and the GFCM Secretariat on actions it has taken in respect of vessels entitled to fly its flag that, as a result of port state measures taken pursuant to this recommendation, have been determined to have engaged in IUU fishing or fishing-related activities in support of such fishing.

### **Requirements of developing states**

51. CPCs shall give full recognition to the special requirements of CPC developing states in relation to the implementation of this recommendation. To this end, CPCs shall, either directly or through the GFCM Secretariat, provide assistance to CPC developing states in order to, *inter alia*:

- a) enhance their ability, in particular the least developed among them, to develop a legal basis and capacity for the implementation of effective port state measures;
- b) facilitate their participation in GFCM meetings that promote the effective development and implementation of port state measures; and
- c) facilitate technical assistance to strengthen the development and implementation of port state measures by them, in coordination with other international organizations, where appropriate.

52. CPCs shall give due regard to the special requirements of developing CPC port states, in particular the least developed among them, to ensure that a disproportionate burden resulting from the implementation of this recommendation is not transferred directly or indirectly to them. In cases where the transfer of a disproportionate burden has been demonstrated, CPCs shall cooperate to facilitate the implementation by the relevant CPC developing states of specific obligations under this recommendation.

53. CPCs shall assess the special requirements of CPC developing states concerning the implementation of this recommendation.

### **Entry into force of this recommendation**

54. Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area of application is replaced by this recommendation.

## Information to be provided in advance by vessels

1. Vessel identification						
Name of the vessel						
Previous name(s) and flag state(s), if any						
External Identification Number						
International Radio Call Sign						
Lloyd's IMO number (where appropriate)						
RFMO ID, if available						
Flag state						
Type of vessel						
Vessel owner (name, address, contact, unique identity for company and registered owner)						
Vessel operator if different from owner (name, address and contact)						
Beneficial owner if different from owner (name, address and contact)						
Vessel master (name and nationality)						
Vessel agent (name, address and contact)						
VMS	No	Yes: National	Yes: RFMO(s)	Type:	Details of the unit to enable communication	
2. Access to port						
Intended port of call						
Port state						
Estimated time of arrival						
Purpose(s)						
Port and date of last port call						
<b>Fishing authorization (licenses/permits)</b>						
Identifier	Issued by (state)	Validity	Fishing area(s)	Species	Bycatch authorized	Details of allocation authorized (quota, effort or other)
Transshipment authorization						
Identifier		Issued by		Validity		
Identifier		Issued by		Validity		
Transshipment at sea (Yes/No):		Date:	Species:		Quantity:	
<b>Fishing trip information</b>						
Area visited						
Date:	GSA:		High sea:		Other:	
Total catch on board					Catch to be offloaded	
Species	Product form	Catch area	Quantity		Quantity	Intended destination of landed fish
			Estimated processed weight	Estimated equivalent live weight		
Other						

## **Port state inspection procedures for vessels**

### **1. Vessel identification**

The port inspector(s) shall:

- a) verify that the official documentation on board is valid, if necessary, through appropriate contacts with the flag state or international records of vessels;
- b) where necessary, arrange for an official translation of the documentation;
- c) be assured that the vessel's name, flag, any external identification number and markings (and IMO ship identification number when available), main dimensions and the international radio call sign are correct;
- d) to the extent possible, examine whether the vessel has changed name and/or flag and, if so, note the previous name(s) and flag(s);
- e) note the port of registration, name and address of the owner (and operator and beneficial owner if different from the owner), agent and master of the vessel, including the unique ID for company and registered owner if available; and
- f) note name(s) and address(es) of previous owner(s), if any, during the past five years.

### **2. Authorization(s)**

The port inspector(s) shall verify that the authorization(s) for fishing activities and fishing-related activities are compatible with the information obtained under paragraph 1 and examine the duration of the authorization(s) and their application to areas, species and fishing gear.

### **3. Other documentation**

The port inspector(s) shall review all relevant documentation, including documents in electronic format. Relevant documentation may include logbooks, in particular the fishing logbook, as well as the crew list, stowage plans and drawings or descriptions of fish holds if available. Such holds or areas may be inspected in order to verify whether their size and composition correspond to these drawings or descriptions and whether the stowage is in accordance with the stowage plans. Where appropriate, this documentation shall also include catch documents or trade documents issued by any RFMO.

### **4. Fishing gear**

- a) The port inspector(s) shall verify that the fishing gear on board is in conformity with the conditions of the authorization(s). The gear may also be checked to ensure that features such as, *inter alia*, the mesh size(s) (and possible devices), length of nets, hook sizes conform with applicable regulations and that identification marks of the gear correspond to those authorized for the vessel.
- b) The port inspector(s) may also search the vessel for any fishing gear stowed out of sight and for fishing gear that is otherwise illegal.

### **5. Fish and fishery products**

- a) The port inspector(s) shall, to the greatest extent possible, examine whether the fish and fishery products on board were harvested in accordance with the conditions set out in the applicable authorization(s). In doing so, the port inspector(s) shall examine the fishing logbook and reports submitted, including those transmitted by a vessel monitoring system (VMS), as appropriate.
- b) In order to determine the quantities and species on board, the port inspector(s) may examine the fish in the hold or during the landing. In doing so, the port inspector(s) may open cartons where the fish has been pre-packed and move the fish or cartons to ascertain the integrity of fish holds.

- c) If the vessel is unloading, the port inspector(s) may verify the species and quantities landed. Such verification may include product type, live weight (quantities determined from the logbook) and the conversion factor used for calculating processed weight to live weight. The port inspector(s) may also examine any possible quantities retained on board.
- d) The port inspector(s) may review the quantity and composition of all catch on board, including by sampling.

#### **6. Verification of IUU fishing**

If the port inspector(s) has reasonable grounds to believe that a vessel has engaged in, or supported IUU fishing, the competent authority of the port state shall as soon as possible contact the flag state authorities to verify whether the fish and fishery products have been harvested or collected in the areas as recorded in the relevant documents. As appropriate, the competent authority may also contact a coastal state where the fish was allegedly taken.

#### **7. Report**

A written report shall be prepared and signed by the inspector on completion of the inspection and a copy provided to the master of the vessel in accordance with paragraph 30 of the recommendation. The inspector shall, where necessary and possible, arrange for translation of relevant documentation.

## Results of port state inspections

1. Inspection report No		2. Port state	
3. Inspecting authority			
4. Name of principal inspector		ID	
5. Port of inspection			
6. Commencement of inspection	YYYY	MM	DD HH
7. Completion of inspection	YYYY	MM	DD HH
8. Advance notification received		Yes	No
9. Purpose(s)	LAN	TRX	PRO OTH (specify)
10. Port and state and date of last port call			YYYY MM DD
11. Vessel name			
12. Flag state			
13. Type of vessel			
14. International Radio Call Sign			
15. Certificate of registry ID			
16. IMO ship ID, if available			
17. External ID, if available			
18. Port of registry			
19. Vessel owner(s)			
20. Vessel beneficial owner(s), if known and different from vessel owner			
21. Vessel operator(s), if different from vessel owner			
22. Vessel master name and nationality			
23. Fishing master name and nationality			
24. Vessel agent			
VMS	No	Yes: national	Yes: RFMOs Type:
25. Status in RFMO areas where fishing or fishing related activities have been undertaken, including any IUU vessel listing			
Vessel identifier	RFMO	Flag state status	Vessel on authorized vessel list
26. Relevant fishing authorization(s)			
Identifier	Issued by	Validity	Fishing area(s) Species Gear
27. Relevant transshipment authorization(s)			
Identifier	Issued by	Validity	
Identifier	Issued by	Validity	
28. Transshipment information concerning donor vessels			
Name	Flag state	ID no	Species Product form Catch area(s) Quantity



29. Evaluation of offloaded catch (quantity)					
<i>Species</i>	<i>Product form</i>	<i>Catch area(s)</i>	<i>Quantity declared</i>	<i>Quantity offloaded</i>	<i>Difference between quantity declared and quantity determined, if any</i>
30. Catch retained onboard (quantity)					
<i>Species</i>	<i>Product form</i>	<i>Catch area(s)</i>	<i>Quantity declared</i>	<i>Quantity retained</i>	<i>Difference between quantity declared and quantity determined, if any</i>
31. Examination of logbook(s) and other documentation			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
32. Compliance with applicable catch document			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
33. Compliance with applicable trade information scheme(s)			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
34. Type of gear used					
35. Gear examined in accordance with paragraph e) of Annex 2			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
36. Findings by inspector(s)					
37. Apparent infringement(s) noted including reference to relevant legal instrument(s)					
38. Comments by the master					
39. Action taken					
40. Master's signature					
41. Inspector's signature					

**Information system on port state inspections**

**1. Communication between CPCs and the Secretariat, and the relevant flag states as well as between CPCs and relevant RFMOs would require the following:**

- data characters;
- structure for data transmission;
- protocols for the transmission; and
- formats for transmission including data element with a corresponding field code and a more detailed definition and explanation of the various codes.

**2. International agreed codes shall be used for the identification of the following items:**

- states: 3-ISO Country Code;
- fish species: FAO 3-alpha code;
- vessels: FAO alpha code;
- gear types: FAO alpha code;
- devices/attachments: FAO 3-alpha code; and
- ports: UN LO-code, or codes as provided by the port state.

**3. Data elements shall at least include the following:**

- inspection references;
- vessel identification;
- fishing authorization(s) (licenses/permits);
- trip information;
- result of the inspection on discharge;
- quantities inspected;
- result of gear inspection;
- irregularities detected;
- actions taken; and
- information from the flag state.

**Guidelines for the training of port state inspectors**

Elements for a training programme of port state inspectors should include at least the following areas:

1. Training in inspection procedures;
2. Relevant laws and regulations, areas of competence, conservation and management measures of relevant RFMOs, and applicable rules of international law;
3. Information sources, such as logbooks and other electronic information that may be useful for the validation of information given by the master of the vessel;
4. Identification of fish species and measurement calculation;
5. Monitoring catch landing, including determining conversion factors for the various species and products;
6. Identification of vessels and gear and gear measurements and inspections;
7. Vessel boarding/inspection, hold inspections and calculation of vessel hold volumes;
8. VMS equipment, other electronic tracking systems and operation;
9. Collection, evaluation and preservation of evidence;
10. Range of measures available to be taken following the inspection;
11. Health and safety issues in the performance of inspections;
12. Conduct during inspections; and
13. Relevant languages, particularly English.

**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2**  
**on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the GFCM Data Collection**  
**Reference Framework (DCRF)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that rational management for sustainable fisheries is dependent on the scientific utilization of relevant data on fishing fleet capacity, on the fishing activities carried out, on the status of exploited biological resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries;

*RECALLING* the subregional approach to fisheries management as enshrined in the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement), with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

*NOTING* the importance of multidisciplinary data and information to monitor and assess fisheries and fisheries resources and to ensure their sustainable exploitation;

*RECOGNIZING* the need to develop a GFCM database, on the basis of the information received from contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) according to a standardized format;

*FURTHER RECOGNIZING* the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as an instrument supporting the identification of fisheries-related data necessary to formulate sound scientific advice;

*CONSIDERING* that a timely submission of complete data and the analysis of the status of fisheries and exploited resources are of paramount importance for the effectiveness and credibility of GFCM management measures;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the importance of the classification by groups of priority species as identified by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), of the use of the GFCM fleet segmentation for the collection of economic and biological data, as well as of the use of standard nominal fishing effort measurement;

*NOTING* that relevant data on fishing fleet, red coral and common dolphinfish as identified by the SAC in the DCRF are already requested under existing GFCM Recommendations GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices (FADs), GFCM/33/2009/5 on the establishment of the GFCM regional fleet register, GFCM/33/2009/6 concerning the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area of application amending Recommendation GFCM/29/2005/2 and GFCM/36/2012/1 on further measures for the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat national data on catch, incidental catch of vulnerable species, fishing effort, socio-economic and biological information (as specified in Annex 1) for the first time in 2017, and subsequently each calendar year. Such submission shall be made in accordance with appropriate data submission standards, procedures and protocols to be made available online by the GFCM Secretariat. Data shall be compiled following the specifications on the GFCM fleet segmentation (Annex 2) and on fishing effort measurement (Annex 3).
2. In addition to the data mentioned above, CPCs shall submit to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time in 2017, and subsequently each calendar year, the information needed to assess the status of those stocks considered as priority stocks by the Commission. Such submission shall be made using the stock assessment form (SAF) made available online by the GFCM Secretariat and following the data structure specified in Annex 5.

3. CPCs shall submit the data referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 according to submission specifications (reporting schedule, reference year and frequency) as defined in Annex 4. With a view to ensuring the consistency of time series in the GFCM database, populated with data submitted in line with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix and repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1 up to the 2014 reference year, the first data submission in 2017 shall also cover the preceding two-year time frame, i.e. 2015 and 2016.
  4. The quality of data submitted pursuant to this recommendation shall be regularly assessed with a view to ensuring the formulation of scientific advice for the Commission.
  5. Relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies may draw the attention of the Commission to the possible need for any revision of Annexes 1–5 to this recommendation in order to ensure the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis.
-

**Data fields (DCRF tasks)**

The data variables listed below are those that should be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat following the guidance provided by the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies through the DCRF manual, which indicates namely the field definitions, list of species (groups 1, 2 and 3 by GFCM subregion), fishing gear, vulnerable species and shared stocks. In line with the GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures, the “data confidentiality status” identifies the access level criteria for the sake of data dissemination: public (P), semi-private (S) or private (R).

<b>DATA FIELDS</b> (DCRF tasks and subtasks)		<b>MANDATORY</b> (X)	<b>DATA</b> <b>CONFIDENTIALITY</b> <b>STATUS</b>
<b>Global figures of national fisheries</b>	Number of vessels	X	P
	Total landings	X	P
	Total capacity (GT)	X	P
	Total engine power (kW)	X	P
<b>Catch</b>	<b>Total landing</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	P
		Total landings	P
	<b>Catch per species</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Species	P
		Total landings per species	P
		Total discards per species (if any)	S
		Total catch per species	P
<b>Incidental catch of vulnerable species</b> (by GSA and fleet segment) <sup>1</sup>	Date	X	P
	Source of data	X	S
	Fishing gear (if available)	X	P
	Group of vulnerable species <sup>1</sup>	X	P
	Family (if available)	X	P
	Species (if available)	X	P
	Total number of individuals caught	X	P
	Total weight of individuals caught (if available)	X	P
	Number of individuals released alive (if available)	X	S
	Number of dead individuals (if available)	X	S
	Number of individuals released in unknown status (if available)	X	S
<b>Effort</b>	<b>Fleet segment</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Fishing days	S
		Capacity	P
		Nominal effort	S
		Number of vessels	P
	<b>Fishing gear</b> (by GSA)	Fishing gear	S
		Fishing days (by fishing gear)	S
	<b>CPUE</b> (by GSA) <sup>2</sup>	Fishing gear	P
		Species <sup>2</sup>	P
		Nominal effort	S
		CPUE	S

<sup>1</sup> Mandatory for the GFCM vulnerable species.

<sup>2</sup> Mandatory for the species of group 1 and group 2.

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)			MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
<b>Socio- economics</b>	<b>Economic and social data</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Capacity (gross tonnage)	X	P
		Capacity (engine power)	X	P
		Number of vessels	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Total days at sea	X	S
	<b>Operating costs</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Number of vessels	X	P
		Personnel costs	X	R
		Fuel consumption (if available)	X	R
		Fuel price (if available)	X	R
		Total fuel cost (if available)	X	R
		Repair and maintenance costs	X	R
		Commercial costs	X	R
		Other variable costs	X	R
		Capital costs	X	R
		Value of physical capital	X	R
		Fixed costs	X	R
		Employment	X	R
		Currency	X	S
	<b>Species value</b> (by GSA and fleet segment) <sup>3</sup>	Number of vessels	X	P
		Species <sup>3</sup>	X	P
		Total landing volume	X	P
		Total landing value	X	S
		Prices by commercial species	X	S
		Currency	X	S
	<b>Other economic aspects</b> (by GSA and fleet segment)	Operating subsidies		R
		Investments in physical capital		R
		Other income		R
		Full-time equivalent (FTE)		S
		Number of persons in the crew < 25 year-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew 25– 40 year-old		S
		Number of persons in the crew > 40 year-old		S
		Currency		S
<b>Biological information</b>	<b>Length data</b> (by GSA) <sup>4</sup>	Source of data	X	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	X	S
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery- dependent data)	X	S
		Species <sup>4</sup>	X	S
		Length	X	S
		Number of individuals sampled (per length classes)	X	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per	X	S

<sup>3</sup> Mandatory for the species of groups 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> Mandatory for the species of groups 1, 2 and 3.

DATA FIELDS (DCRF tasks and subtasks)		MANDATORY (X)	DATA CONFIDENTIALITY STATUS
		length classes)	
		Number of individuals expanded (per length classes)	S
	Size at first maturity (by GSA) <sup>5</sup>	Species <sup>5</sup>	P
		Sex	S
		L <sub>50</sub>	S
		Reference (if any)	S
	Maturity data (by GSA) <sup>5</sup>	Source of data	S
		Name of the scientific survey (if any)	P
		Fleet segment (only if from fishery-dependent data)	P
		Species <sup>5</sup>	P
		Length	S
		Sex	S
		Maturity <sup>6</sup>	S
		Number of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	S
		Weight of individuals sampled (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	S
		Number of individuals expanded (per length class, sex and maturity stage)	S
	European eel	Habitat	P
		Site	P
		Gear types	P
		Mesh size (if any)	S
		Number of fishermen	S
		Fishing days	S
		Average number of “gear units” per day per fisherman (if any)	S
		Total catch of silver eel (if any)	P
		Total catch of yellow eel (if any)	P
		Total catch of glass eel (if any)	P

<sup>5</sup> Mandatory for the species of group 1.

<sup>6</sup> Following the scale of maturity stages (DCRF manual).



**GFCM fleet segmentation**  
(Combination of vessel groups and length classes)

VESSEL GROUPS			LENGTH CLASSES (LOA)			
			< 6 m	6–12 m	12–24 m	> 24 m
Polyvalent	P	Small-scale vessels without engine using passive gear	P-01	P-02	P-03	P-04
			P-13			
		Small-scale vessels with engine using passive gear	P-05	P-06	P-07	P-08
		Polyvalent vessels	P-09	P-10	P-11	P-12
					P-14	
Seiners	S	Purse seiners	S-01	S-02	S-03	S-04
					S-09	
		Tuna seiners	S-05	S-06	S-07	S-08
					S-10	
Dredgers	D	Dredgers	D-01	D-02	D-03	D-04
				D-05		
Trawlers	T	Beam trawlers	T-01	T-02	T-03	T-04
		Pelagic trawlers	T-05	T-06	T-07	T-08
				T-13		
		Trawlers	T-09	T-10	T-11	T-12
Longliners	L	Longliners	L-01	L-02	L-03	L-04
				L-05		

Note

- A vessel is assigned to a group on the basis of the dominant gear used in terms of percentage of time: more than 50 percent of the time at sea using the same fishing gear during the year.
- “Polyvalent vessels” are defined as all the vessels using more than one gear, with a combination of passive and active gear, none of which exceeding more than 50 percent of the time at sea during the year.
- A vessel is considered “active” when it executes at least one fishing operation during the reference year in the GFCM area of application.
- The yellow cells contain the codes of reported fleet segments which should be included in the GFCM data submission. If necessary, fleet segments as identified in the orange cells can be used: P-13 (P-01 + P-02), P-14 (P-11 + P-12), S-09 (S-03 + S-04), S-10 (S-07 + S-08), D-05 (D-02 + D-03), T-13 (T-06 + T-07 + T-08) and L-05 (L-02 + L-03 + L-04). Any proposal for a different aggregation of fleet segments should be brought to the attention of the relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, mentioning the rationale and corresponding references (e.g. existing scientific studies), which in turn should confirm the similarity/homogeneity of the combined cells.

Table on fishing effort measurement

*Effort measurement by fleet segment*

FLEET SEGMENTS			EFFORT MEASUREMENTS		
Vessel groups		Length classes (LOA)	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
P	Small-scale vessels without engine using passive gear	All	Net length <sup>1</sup>	Fishing days	Net length* Fishing days
	Small-scale vessels with engine using passive gear		Number of traps/pots <sup>7</sup>	Fishing days	Number of traps/pots* Fishing days
	Polyvalent vessels		Number of lines <sup>7</sup>	Fishing days	Number of lines* Fishing days
S	Purse seiners Tuna seiners	All	GT	Number of fishing sets <sup>2</sup>	GT* Number of fishing sets
D	Dredgers	All	GT	Fishing days	GT* Fishing days
T	Beam trawlers Pelagic trawlers Trawlers	All	GT	Fishing days	GT* Fishing days
L	Longliners	All	Number of hooks	Fishing days	Number of hooks* Fishing days

<sup>1</sup> Should this information not be available, “GT” may be used as capacity unit, upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

<sup>2</sup> Should this information not be available, “fishing days” may be used as activity unit, upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

*Effort measurement by fishing gear*

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
Surrounding nets	With purse lines (purse seines)	PS	GT	Number of fishing sets <sup>1</sup>	GT* Number of fishing sets
	One boat operated purse seines	PS1			
	Two boats operated purse seines	PS2			
	Without purse lines (lampara)	LA			
Seine nets	Beach seines	SB	Net length <sup>2</sup>	Fishing days	Net length* Fishing days
	Boat or vessel seines	SV			
	Danish seines	SDN			
	Scottish seines	SSC			
	Pair seines	SPR			
	Seine nets (not specified)	SX			
Trawls	Bottom trawls	TB	GT	Fishing days	GT* Fishing days
	Bottom beam trawls	TBB			
	Bottom otter trawls	OTB			
	Bottom pair trawls	PTB			
	Bottom nephrops trawls	TBN			
	Bottom shrimp trawls	TBS			
	Midwater trawls	TM			
	Midwater otter trawls	OTM			
	Midwater pair trawls	PTM			
	Midwater shrimp trawls	TMS			
	Otter twin trawls	OTT			
	Otter trawls (not specified)	OT			
	Pair trawls (not specified)	PT			
	Other trawls (not specified)	TX			

<sup>1</sup> Should this information not be available, “fishing days” may be used as activity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

<sup>2</sup> Should this information not be available, “GT” may be used as capacity unit upon approval by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis.

Fishing gear		Gear code	Unit of capacity	Unit of activity	Nominal effort
Dredges	Boat dredges	DRB	GT	Fishing days	GT * Fishing days
	Mechanised dredges	HMD			
	Hand dredges	DRH			
Gillnets and Entangling nets	Set gillnets (anchored)	GNS	Net length <sup>10</sup>	Fishing days	Net length * Fishing days
	Driftnets	GND			
	Encircling gillnets	GNC			
	Fixed gillnets (on stakes)	GNF			
	Trammel nets	GTR			
	Combined gillnets-trammel nets	GTN			
	Gillnets and entangling nets (not specified)	GEN			
	Gillnets (not specified)	GN			
Traps	Stationary uncovered pound nets	FPN	Number of traps/pots <sup>10</sup>	Fishing days	Number of traps/pots * Fishing days
	Pots	FPO			
	Fyke nets	FYK			
	Stow nets	FSN			
	Barrier, fences, weirs, etc.	FWR			
	Aerial traps	FAR			
	Traps (not specified)	FIX			
Hooks and lines	Handlines and pole-lines (hand operated)	LHP	Number of lines <sup>10</sup>	Fishing days	Number of lines * Fishing days
	Handlines and pole-lines (mechanised)	LHM			
	Trolling lines	LTL			
	Set longlines	LLS	Number of hooks	Fishing days	Number of hooks * Fishing days
	Drifting longlines	LLD			
	Longlines (not specified)	LL			
	Hooks and lines (not specified)	LX			

### Data submission calendar

Each calendar year (n), the requested data, as specified in Annex 2 and pertaining to the year before submission (n-1), shall be submitted to the GFCM Secretariat on the basis of the following schedule:

- May
  - Global figures of national fisheries
  - Socio-economics – Species value<sup>1</sup>
  - Socio-economics – Other economic aspects<sup>1</sup>
  - Socio-economics – Operating costs<sup>1</sup>
- June
  - Catch – Landing data
  - Catch – Catch data per species
  - Effort – Fleet segment
  - Effort – Fishing gear
  - Effort – CPUE
- July
  - Incidental catch of vulnerable species
  - Biological information – Length data
  - Biological information – Size at first maturity
  - Biological information – Maturity data
- September
  - Biological information – Stock assessment form<sup>2</sup>
  - Biological information – European eel
- November
  - Socio-economics – Economic and social data

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<sup>1</sup> Data should cover the reference year n-2 and their submission should take place on a biennial basis only for those countries that do not have annual economic surveys in place. Countries collecting these data on a yearly basis are requested to submit data each year (keeping reference year n-2).

<sup>2</sup> The date of data submission is linked to the scheduling of the GFCM stock assessment working groups and therefore may differ from one year to another.

**Stock assessment forms**

The stock assessment forms (SAFs) to be used to submit the information required to assess the status of those stocks considered as priority stocks by the Commission shall be provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies according to the following structure:

- Basic identification data;
- Stock identification and biological information (stock unit, growth and maturity);
- Fisheries information (description of the fleet, historical trends, management measures, reference points);
- Fisheries independent information (name, brief description of the chosen method and assumptions used, spatial distribution of the resources, historical trends);
- Ecological information (protected species potentially affected by the fisheries, environmental indexes);
- Stock assessment (name of the model, model assumptions, scripts, input data and parameters, tuning data, results, robustness analysis, retrospective analysis, comparison between model runs, sensitivity analysis, assessment quality);
- Stock predictions (short, medium, and long-term); and
- Draft scientific advice.

The SAFs shall be revised by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies on a regular basis and their most up-to-date version shall be disseminated online by the GFCM Secretariat.

**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/3**  
**establishing further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks**  
**in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

*CONSIDERING* that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

*CONSIDERING* that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that “States should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures”;

*NOTING* that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has considered that the stocks of European anchovy and sardine are distributed in GFCM geographical subareas (GSAs) 17 and 18 and has carried out the first joint assessments at its eighteenth session (Cyprus, March 2016);

*NOTING* that the revision of input data and the benchmark assessment for sardine and European anchovy in GSA 17 and GSA 18 were undertaken in 2015 and that final stock assessment models based on the revised data were provided by the GFCM Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP) in November 2015;

*CONSIDERING* that, at its eighteenth session, the SAC concluded that both European anchovy and sardine stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18 are overexploited and in overexploitation and that it advised once again to decrease fishing mortality;

*CONSIDERING* that fishing mortality is an overall measurement system, which can be adjusted by applying reductions in terms of fishing capacity and/or fishing effort;

*NOTING* that the acoustic survey data for both small pelagic species, sardine and European anchovy, indicate a declining trend in total biomass;

*NOTING* that there has been a declining trend in the mean length of sardine in catches for the last eight years and of European anchovy in catches for the last ten years in the western Adriatic Sea;

*NOTING* that the latest stock assessment of European anchovy has also indicated a declining trend in spawning stock biomass (SSB) since 2005;

*NOTING* that, since temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed period during the spawning season of European anchovy and sardine in the Adriatic Sea shall be applied;

*NOTING* that hydroacoustic surveys have the potential of providing latest biomass estimates and that their results can support management decisions;

*CONSIDERING* that, due to stock dynamics, it may take several years to observe the effects of the management measures adopted and applied to date on the stock status of small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea but that this delay should not be taken as a justification to postpone action to improve the status of these stocks;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM may consider adopting additional measures including catch limitations;

*CONSIDERING* the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting sardine and European anchovy in the Adriatic Sea and the need to ensure their sustainability;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, paragraph 2 therein;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and, notably, paragraphs 2 and 3 therein;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

*NOTING* that, under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, a reduction of fishing effort as well as spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2015 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18);

*NOTING* that, under Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1, a reduction of fishing effort was applied for fishing vessels targeting European anchovy in GSA 17 for 2016 and spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2016 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18;

*CONSIDERING* the findings of the GFCM Workshop on bioeconomic assessments of management measures (WKMSE) (GFCM headquarters, February 2016), which concluded that the effort limitations and spatio-temporal closures proposed under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 and Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1 are not sufficient to bring the stocks back above safe biological limits;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

## **PART I**

### **General objective, geographical scope and definitions**

1. The general objective of the present recommendation is to ensure that the exploitation levels of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea are at the maximum sustainable yield by 2020.
2. The present recommendation shall apply in GSA 17 and GSA 18 (Adriatic Sea).



3. For the purpose of this recommendation,
- a) “European anchovy” means fish pertaining to the *Engraulis encrasicolus* species;
  - b) “sardine” means fish pertaining to the *Sardina pilchardus* species;
  - c) “small pelagics” means stocks of European anchovy and sardine;
  - d) “pelagic trawler” means a fishing vessel operating single or in pair with a pelagic trawl net; and
  - e) “purse seiner” means a fishing vessel operating with a purse seine net for small pelagic species

## **PART II**

### **Emergency management measures**

#### ***Catches***

4. In 2017 and 2018, contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall not exceed the level of catches for small pelagics exerted in 2014 as reported in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 on the implementation of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix repealing Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1.
5. If this catch limit in 2017 or 2018 is exceeded in any given year, the GFCM shall recommend appropriate management measures.

#### ***Fishing effort***

6. Notwithstanding the fishing effort established under paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, the CPCs shall reduce their fishing effort for the years 2017 and 2018. Fishing vessels targeting small pelagics shall not exceed 180 fishing days per year, with a maximum of 144 fishing days targeting sardine and a maximum of 144 fishing days targeting European anchovy.

#### ***Closures***

7. In 2017 and 2018, the CPCs shall apply spatio-temporal closures in view of protecting nursery and spawning areas. Such closures shall cover the entire distribution of small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea, for periods of not less than 15 continuous days and up to 30 continuous days. These closures shall take place during the following period:
- for sardine, from 1 October – 31 March, and
  - for European anchovy, from 1 April – 30 September
8. In 2017 and 2018, the CPCs shall apply additional closures for vessels over 12 m length overall for not less than 6 months. Such closures shall cover at least 30 percent of the area which has been identified as a nursery area or as an important area for the protection of early age classes of fish (in territorial and inner sea).
9. The CPCs shall notify the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2016, of the set of closure dates and areas of application.

#### ***Fleet capacity and fleet register***

10. The CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2016, the list of all pelagic trawlers (single or pair trawlers) and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in 2014.
11. The CPCs shall ensure that the overall fleet capacity of trawlers and purse seiners actively fishing for small pelagic stocks in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT), engine power (kW) and number of vessels, as recorded both in national and GFCM registers, does not exceed, in 2017 and 2018, the fleet capacity for small pelagics in 2014.

12. The provision under paragraph 11 shall not apply to the CPCs with a fleet of less than ten purse seiners and/or pelagic trawlers. Such CPCs may increase their fleet capacity for not more than 50 percent in number of vessels and in terms of gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT) and engine power (kW).

### **PART III**

#### **Scientific monitoring**

13. The SAC shall suggest alternative solutions to ensure the availability of the hydroacoustic survey results of the previous year not later than 31 January of a given year.

14. A working group on alternative management measures for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea shall be established in accordance with this recommendation, following to the terms of reference defined in Annex 1. The working group shall report back to the SAC before its annual session in 2017.

15. The SAC shall assess, in 2017, the relative merits of different management regimes for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea. This task shall include an assessment of the biological, economic, social and market impacts.

16. The SAC shall assess in 2017 whether the impact of the measures adopted under this recommendation will enable achievement of the objective of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1.

17. The SAC shall report back to the GFCM on paragraphs 15 and 16 before the annual session of the GFCM in 2017.

18. If the SAC concludes, in 2017, that European anchovy and sardine are still overexploited, the Commission may adopt more stringent measures for 2018, based on the scientific advice of the SAC. These measures shall aim at achieving the objective set out in paragraph 1.

### **PART IV**

#### **Control measures**

19. Notwithstanding the national control programmes established under paragraph 29 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1, the CPCs shall ensure that all vessels above 15 m length overall actively fishing for small pelagic stocks are equipped with an electronic logbook and vessel monitoring system by the end of 2017.

20. In order to facilitate the monitoring of catches, all catches shall be landed, with the exception of those catches which may be discarded in accordance with national legislation.

**Terms of reference for the Working Group on alternative management measures for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea**

The working group referred to in paragraph 14 shall:

- 1) be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
- 2) establish a time schedule for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting during 2016, before the next SAC meeting;
- 3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, FAO, and other regional fishery organizations to participate in its meetings;
- 4) report its conclusions and opinions to the SAC.

The mandate of the working group will cover an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages as well as an analysis of biological, social, economic and market impacts of different management regimes for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea, including:

- a) capacity limitations
- b) fishing effort regime
- c) spatio-temporal closures
- d) technical measures relating to fishing gear
- e) catch limitations

These measures should be considered individually as well as in combination.

**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/4**  
**establishing a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and**  
**deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield;

*CONSIDERING* that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

*CONSIDERING* that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that “States should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures”;

*RECALLING* the Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption by the GFCM of multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area of application, as agreed during the thirty-seventh session of the GFCM;

*CONSIDERING* Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/2 on the minimum mesh size in the codend of demersal trawl nets;

*CONSIDERING* Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in the GFCM area of application;

*CONSIDERING* Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application and, in particular, the prohibition of any fishing activity with trawl nets within three nautical miles off the coast or within the 50 metres isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast;

*CONSIDERING* Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily, pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan;

*NOTING* that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has recurrently considered that the stocks of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp are in overexploitation in the geographical subareas (GSAs) 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16;

*CONSIDERING* that the status of stocks as assessed by the SAC requires the development and adoption of management measures aimed at ensuring the conservation of demersal stocks in the above GSAs as soon as possible;

*CONSIDERING* that fishing mortality is an overall measurement system, which can be adjusted by applying reductions in terms of fishing capacity and/or fishing effort;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the SAC Technical Workshop on bioeconomic assessment of management measures that took place in February 2016;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the meeting of the SAC Subregional Committee for the Central Mediterranean that took place in February 2016;

*CONSIDERING* the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting demersal stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the eighteenth session of the SAC (Cyprus, March 2016), and in particular those regarding the management of selected fisheries in the Strait of Sicily;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

## **PART I**

### **Subject matter, scope and definitions**

#### ***Subject matter and scope***

1. The present recommendation establishes a multiannual management plan (the plan) for the fisheries targeting European hake or deep-water rose shrimp in the marine waters of GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 (Strait of Sicily), as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.

2. This recommendation shall apply to bottom trawls above 10 m length overall fishing for European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily, when the total catches of those species represents at least 25 percent of the catch in live weight or value.

#### ***Definitions***

3. For the purpose of this recommendation:

- a) “European hake” means fish pertaining to the species *Merluccius merluccius*;
- b) “Deep-water rose shrimp” means crustaceans pertaining to the species *Parapenaeus longirostris*; and
- c) “Designated landing ports” means ports, or places close to the shore, designated in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 on a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application, including offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refuelling or resupplying of fishing vessels, where landings, transshipments, packaging and/or processing operations of fishery products are permitted.

## **PART II**

### **Specific objectives and targets**

#### ***Specific objectives***

4. The plan shall aim at contributing to the objectives mentioned in Article 2 and the principles listed in Article 5 of the GFCM Agreement.

5. The plan shall, in particular:
- a) Apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management;
  - b) Ensure that exploitation levels of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp are at the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2020 at the latest;
  - c) Protect nursery areas and essential fish habitats that are important for the stocks of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily;
  - d) Gradually eliminate discards by avoiding and reducing, as far as possible, unwanted catches, and by gradually ensuring that catches are landed;
  - e) Provide for measures to adjust the fishing capacity of the fleets to levels of fishing mortality consistent with the MSY, with a view to allowing for economically viable fleets and without overexploiting marine biological resources.

### ***Targets***

6. The target fishing mortality ranges for the stocks of hake and deep-water rose shrimp, as provided in Annex 1 to this recommendation, shall be reached by 2020 and maintained onwards.

## **PART III**

### **Technical measures**

#### ***Fisheries restricted areas***

7. Fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) shall be established for the conservation and management of demersal stocks, European hake and deep-water rose shrimp, in the three areas of the Strait of Sicily as defined in Annex 2.
8. Any fishing activity with bottom trawlers shall not be allowed in the FRAs defined in paragraph 7.
9. In order to avoid accidental access to the FRAs established in paragraph 7, buffer areas shall be set up around each FRA. Those buffer areas are extended over one nautical mile outside the established FRAs and defined in Annex 2.
10. Any fishing activity with bottom trawlers in the buffer areas established in paragraph 9 shall ensure the frequency of transmission of vessel monitoring system (VMS) signals. Those vessels not equipped with VMS transponders and aiming to fish in the buffer areas shall be equipped with any other system of geolocalisation allowing control authorities to track their activities.
11. The SAC shall identify additional nursery areas of European hake in the entire Strait of Sicily, with special attention to GSAs 12, 13, and 14.

#### ***Temporal closure***

12. Any fishing activity with bottom trawlers shall not be allowed between the coast and the 200 m depth isobath in GSA 14 (Gulf of Gabès). This closure shall apply from 1 July to 31 September.

## **PART IV**

### **Management of the fishing effort**

13. In accordance with paragraph 8 of Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat the list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been delivered for the forthcoming year(s), no later than 30 November each year.
14. The CPCs shall take necessary measures to reduce the fishing mortality of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily.

15. Fishing vessels targeting European hake or deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily shall be equipped with a VMS in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7.

16. The CPCs shall decide and communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, by not later than 30 November 2016, the necessary measures identified to carry out the reduction mentioned in paragraph 14. Measures should be considered in terms of number of fishing days, fishing vessels and catch limits.

## **PART V**

### **Specific measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities**

17. The CPCs shall establish a mechanism to ensure that vessels authorized to fish for European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily record catches of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp.

18. Each CPC shall designate landing ports in which landings of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp from the Strait of Sicily may take place.

19. The CPCs shall specify, for each designated landing port, the permitted landing and transshipping times and places. The CPCs shall also ensure inspection coverage during all landing and transshipping times and at all landing and transshipping places.

20. It shall be prohibited to land or tranship from fishing vessels any quantity of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp fished in the Strait of Sicily at any place other than landing ports designated in accordance with paragraph 18.

21. The CPCs shall transmit to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 November 2016, a list of the designated landing ports in which landings of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp from the Strait of Sicily may take place. Any subsequent change that may occur to this list shall be promptly notified to the GFCM Secretariat.

22. The CPCs shall engage to cooperate on the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, in particular by sharing information and intelligence to fight IUU fishing activities and organized crime.

## **PART VI**

### **National programmes for control, monitoring and surveillance**

23. The CPCs, through the GFCM, shall establish, before 2018, an observation and inspection programme to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation. The programme may comprise, *inter alia*, the following elements:

- a) High seas inspection;
- b) Procedures for effective investigation of an alleged violation of the conservation and management measures contained in this recommendation and for reporting to the GFCM on the actions taken, including procedures for exchanging information;
- c) Provisions for appropriate action to be taken when inspections reveal serious violations as well as for the expedient and transparent follow-up of such actions in order to uphold the responsibility of the flag state within the intended programme;
- d) Port inspections;
- e) Monitoring of landings and catches, including statistical follow-up for management purposes;
- f) Specific monitoring programmes, including boarding and inspection; and
- g) Observer programmes.

24. A working group shall be established to develop integrated control, monitoring and surveillance measures, in accordance with this recommendation and its tasks defined in Annex 3.

**PART VII**  
**Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision of the plan**

25. The CPCs shall ensure an adequate annual scientific monitoring of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily.
26. The SAC shall provide advice on the status of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily. Such advice shall include reference points in terms of fishing mortality at levels which can produce the MSY at the latest by 2020 and safeguard points.
27. The SAC shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the MSY.
28. The SAC shall advise on the most appropriate minimum and/or maximum landing size for elasmobranch species affected by the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily.
29. The SAC shall advise on the most appropriate technical measures to improve the selectivity of bottom trawlers targeting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp stocks.
30. The SAC shall identify, where appropriate, nursery areas beyond a 200 m depth in GSA 14 (Gulf of Gabès).
31. Whenever the GFCM, on the basis of the SAC advice, finds that the target fishing mortality rates specified in paragraph 6 are no longer appropriate to achieve the objectives detailed in paragraph 5, it shall revise those parameters accordingly.
32. Where the scientific advice indicates that the general or specific objectives of the plan are not being met, the GFCM shall decide on additional and/or alternative management measures to ensure that those objectives are achieved.
33. If, for whatever reason (e.g. lack of appropriate data), the SAC is not in a position to provide an accurate advice on the status of European hake and deep-water rose shrimp and on their exploitation level, the GFCM shall decide on the most appropriate management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fishery. Such measures shall be based on the advice of the SAC, taking into consideration socio-economic elements.
34. For the purpose of providing advice for the development of the plan, the SAC shall organize adequate workshops. In this respect, the SAC shall promote scientific cooperation and a harmonized approach among all countries around the Strait of Sicily.

**PART VIII**  
**Final provision**

*Duration*

35. The current plan shall remain in force for three years starting from the date of its adoption.
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**Estimated target fishing mortality for European hake and deep-water rose shrimp  
in the Strait of Sicily**

<b>Stock</b>	<b>Target fishing mortality range</b>
European hake in the Strait of Sicily	0.12 – 0.18
Deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily	0.84 – 0.93

**Geographical coordinates of the fisheries restricted areas (FRA)****FRA 1: East of Adventure Bank**

Fisheries restricted area		Buffer area	
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
37° 23,850' N	12° 30,072' E	37° 24,849' N	12° 28,814' E
37° 23,884' N	12° 48,282' E	37° 24,888' N	12° 49,536' E
37° 11,567' N	12° 48,305' E	37° 10,567' N	12° 49,559' E
37° 11,532' N	12° 30,095' E	37° 10,528' N	12° 28,845' E

**FRA 2: West of Gela Basin**

Fisheries restricted area		Buffer area	
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
37° 12,040' N	13° 17,925' E	37° 13,041' N	13° 16,672' E
37° 12,047' N	13° 36,170' E	37° 13,049' N	13° 37,422' E
36° 59,725' N	13° 36,175' E	36° 58,723' N	13° 37,424' E
36° 59,717' N	13° 17,930' E	36° 58,715' N	13° 16,682' E

**FRA 3: East of Malta Bank**

Fisheries restricted area		Buffer area	
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
36° 12,621' N	15° 13,338' E	36° 13,624' N	15° 12,102' E
36° 12,621' N	15° 26,062' E	36° 13,624' N	15° 27,298' E
35° 59,344' N	15° 26,062' E	35° 58,342' N	15° 27,294' E
35° 59,344' N	15° 13,338' E	35° 58,342' N	15° 12,106' E

**Terms of reference for the  
Working Group on integrated MCS measures for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily**

The Working Group referred to in paragraph 24, shall:

- 1) be supported by the GFCM Secretariat;
- 2) establish a time schedule for the development of its work and hold at least one meeting in 2016, before the next meeting of the GFCM Compliance Committee (CoC);
- 3) invite observers attending GFCM meetings, FAO and other regional fisheries organizations to participate in its meetings; and
- 4) report its conclusions and opinions to the CoC.

The mandate of the working group will cover the aspects described in part VI of this recommendation.

**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/5**  
**establishing a minimum conservation reference size for European hake**  
**in the Mediterranean Sea**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

*NOTING* that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) has concluded, at its eighteenth session (Cyprus, March 2016), that the stocks of European hake are heavily overexploited and, in some cases, well below safe biological limits;

*NOTING* that many fisheries exploiting European hake in the Mediterranean exert a pressure over juveniles;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

### PART I

#### General objective, geographical scope and definitions

1. The general objective of the present recommendation is to protect juvenile European hake in the Mediterranean Sea.
2. For the purpose of this recommendation, “European hake” means fish pertaining to the species *Merluccius merluccius*.

### PART II

#### Minimum conservation reference size

3. The minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the whole area covered by this recommendation is fixed at 20 cm total length.
4. Specimens of European hake shall be measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin.
5. Specimens of European hake smaller than the minimum conservation reference size in total length, as defined in paragraph 3, and measured to the lowest centimetre, shall not be caught, retained on board, transhipped, transferred, landed, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale.
6. Notwithstanding paragraph 5, when, due to unavoidable circumstances, undersized specimens of European hake have been effectively caught, the master of the catching vessel shall record those catches (estimated weight) of undersized specimens.
7. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall establish an adequate mechanism for recording catches of undersized specimens of European hake.
8. Without prejudice to provisions foreseen in paragraph 5 and when a system to avoid discards and an obligation to land all catches have been established by a CPC, except in justified cases where

there is a derogation for landing obligations, the master of the fishing vessel shall not be allowed to discard those catches and shall therefore land all the fish caught, independently of the size of the fish. All quantities of undersized fish landed shall be recorded and shall not be displayed, offered for sale or used for direct human consumption.

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**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/6**  
**on the scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea**  
**(GSA 29)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries in order to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

*CONSIDERING* that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

*CONSIDERING* that fisheries targeting turbot are multispecies in nature and management decisions should therefore take into account possible impacts on mixed fisheries;

*CONSIDERING* the socio-economic importance of fisheries exploiting turbot and associated stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

*RECALLING* that, at its seventeenth session (FAO headquarters, March 2015) the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) concluded that the turbot stock in the GFCM geographical subarea (GSA) 29 (Black Sea) is overexploited and in a state of overexploitation and advised to implement a recovery plan;

*NOTING* that, in 2016, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) urged the GFCM to take corrective measures to mitigate the current situation of the turbot stock;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea;

*RECALLING* the GFCM roadmap to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Black Sea endorsed at the thirty-seventh session of the GFCM (Croatia, May 2013);

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

## **PART I**

### **General objective and scope**

1. The purpose of the present recommendation is to counteract turbot overfishing and to restore, to the extent possible, the size of the Black Sea turbot stock, with a view to providing high long-term yields consistent with the maximum sustainable yield, while ensuring the sustainability of the fisheries.
2. The present recommendation shall apply in GSA 29 (Black Sea).
3. For the purpose of this recommendation,
  - a) “Turbot” means fish pertaining to the species *Psetta maxima*; and
  - b) “Bottom-set gillnet” means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintaining the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.

## **PART II**

### **Management of turbot fisheries**

4. As of 2018, the contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall not exceed the average level of the fishing opportunities (quotas) allocated in 2013–2015 or, for the countries that do not apply the quota system, the average level of the catches or the average level of fishing effort deployed in 2013–2015.
5. Each CPC shall establish, each year, a closure period for at least two months during the spawning season of turbot (i.e. from April to June).

## **PART III**

### **Scientific monitoring**

6. For the purpose of ensuring a proper scientific monitoring of the turbot fisheries, the SAC shall, during the intersessional period 2016–2017:
  - a) Regularly assess the status of the turbot stock and, particularly, establish the level of current fishing mortality ( $F_{curr}$ ) and provide the GFCM with the necessary elements for setting target reference points;
  - b) Evaluate the fishing effort for turbot fisheries, on an annual basis (the first analytical evaluation shall take place in 2017);
  - c) For all countries that would freeze the average level of their fishing effort, estimate a fishing effort baseline which shall take into account the characteristics of the fishing gear;
  - d) Propose different scenarios/options for achieving MSY by 2020, while ensuring the sustainability of the fisheries;
  - e) Define the adequate dimensions of bottom-set gillnets by determining the following characteristics: maximum length, maximum height and hanging coefficient;
  - f) Propose the minimum requirements for the marking and identification of bottom-set gillnets operating in the turbot fisheries; and
  - g) Assess the impact of measures already adopted by CPCs.
7. The CPCs shall communicate to the SAC, not later than 30 November of each year, any additional information in support of the scientific monitoring of turbot fisheries.

**PART IV**  
**Control measures**

8. All vessels above 12 m length overall authorized to fish for turbot shall be equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) or any other system of geolocalisation allowing control authorities to track their activities.
  9. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 concerning the establishment of a GFCM Logbook, amending Recommendation GFCM/34/2010/1, all turbot catches shall be indicated in the logbook, irrespectively of the live weight of the catch.
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**Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/7**  
**concerning the authorization of the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of**  
**national scientific research programmes on red coral**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/2 on the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application, and particularly paragraph 2, as well as the work of the GFCM aiming to ensure the protection of this species;

*CONSIDERING* the need, for certain contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs), to pursue research programmes on red coral with the aim of reaching the adoption of a management plan for red coral in the shortest possible time;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

1. The use of remotely operated vehicles (ROV) shall be strictly limited to observation for scientific purposes and shall only be authorized by the CPCs in the context of research programmes led by national scientific institutions until 31 December 2017. Such authorization shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted or maintained by the CPCs.
2. The commercialization of red coral harvested within research programmes led by national scientific institutions shall be strictly forbidden.
3. Each CPC intending to use ROV pursuant to paragraph 1 shall submit the following information to the GFCM Secretariat, at least 20 days before the start of the campaign based on the use of ROV. The GFCM Secretariat shall, in turn, communicate such information without delay to all CPCs:
  - list of research vessels authorized to use ROV;
  - duration of the research campaign mission implicating the use of ROV; and
  - identification of the areas where ROV will be used for research purposes.
4. The scientific outcomes of these research studies shall be presented to the twentieth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) for review and advice.
5. The GFCM, based on the advice provided by the SAC, shall pronounce itself, where necessary, regarding the possible extension of the use of ROV for scientific purposes.
6. A working group on red coral shall be organized in December 2016 with the aim to examine all data collected by the CPCs within the framework of their national research programmes, including in relation to the use of ROV for scientific purposes. The CPCs shall ensure the submission to the GFCM Secretariat of an interim report on their research activities before 30 November 2016.

**Resolution GFCM/40/2016/1**  
**on guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*RECALLING* that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* Resolution GFCM/35/2011/3 concerning the procedure to submit new proposals of decisions to the annual sessions of the GFCM;

*AWARE* of the necessity to provide guidance to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in the elaboration of conservation and management measures submitted to the Commission as draft decisions for consideration and possible adoption;

*TAKING* into account the need to streamline the decision-making process within the Commission with a view to ensuring formal consistency throughout the Compendium of GFCM decisions;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. Contracting parties shall ensure, to the extent possible, to use the guidelines on drafting GFCM decisions reproduced in Annex 1 when presenting to the GFCM Secretariat any proposal for new decisions to be submitted to the Commission.
  2. The GFCM Secretariat might adapt the formal text of relevant decisions reproduced in the Compendium of GFCM decisions on the basis of the guidelines on drafting GFCM decisions and bring any formal changes proposed to the attention of the Commission for endorsement.
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**Guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions**

- a) All GFCM decisions should have an external structure based on a number, a title, a preamble and an operative part, followed, if appropriate, by annexes.
- b) If appropriate, GFCM decisions should include “final provisions” where the relationship with other GFCM decisions is indicated, in particular whether previous decisions or some of their provisions are terminated.
- c) Definitions in GFCM decisions should be given only where a word or an expression is used in a technical meaning or in a meaning that is different from the ordinary one.
- d) Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, terms that are already defined in the GFCM Agreement should be defined in the same way in GFCM decisions by making a reference to the relevant definition in the GFCM Agreement.
- e) Consistency between the definitions of the same terms given in different GFCM decisions should be checked.
- f) Acronyms should be put in brackets immediately after the expression that is abbreviated, where in the text it is used for the first time.
- g) The provisions in GFCM decisions should be called “paragraphs”; if appropriate, they should be grouped in parts and sections.
- h) Each sentence in a provision should enunciate a limited number of rights or obligations – preferably one – pertaining to the subjects to which the decision is addressed; exceptions should be clearly distinguished from rules.
- i) The correspondence between the linguistic versions of the GFCM decisions in the official languages of the Commission should be carefully checked.
- j) At the time of adoption of a decision, the GFCM should consider indicating which version among the official languages of the Commission is authoritative in case of differences in meanings.
- k) Proposals for new GFCM decisions should be drafted at least in two of the official languages of the Commission.
- l) The mandatory character of a provision should be expressed in English by “shall” followed by the verb, in French by the present of the indicative mode of the verb, and in Arabic and Spanish by the appropriate terminology.
- m) The voluntary character of a provision should be expressed in English by “should” or “may” followed by the verb, in French by the conditional mode, and in Arabic and Spanish by the appropriate terminology.
- n) The GFCM, at the time of the adoption of a recommendation that has a mandatory effect under the GFCM Agreement, should use the following formula: “The GFCM (...) adopts, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation”.
- o) The GFCM, at the time of the adoption of a recommendation that has a voluntary effect under the GFCM Agreement, should use the following formula: “The GFCM (...) adopts, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution [or decision]:”.
- p) GFCM decisions that have a mandatory character should be deemed to become effective at the expiration of the 120-day deadline for casting objections provided for in Article 13, paragraph 3, of the GFCM Agreement, unless they indicate another deadline.

**Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2  
for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of  
Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*RECALLING* that the objective of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995, the Agreement to promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas of 24 November 1993, as well as other relevant international instruments concerning the conservation and management of marine living resources;

*RECALLING* the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration);

*RECALLING* that, according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), states should widely apply the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, and highlighting besides that the lack of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

*RECALLING* the Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption by the GFCM of multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area of application, as agreed during its thirty-seventh session (Croatia, May 2013);

*RECALLING* that the FAO Council adopted on 23 June 2001 an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;

*RECALLING* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (UN headquarters, New York, September 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, signed in Rome on 22 November 2009;

*RECALLING* the subregional approach to fisheries management as enshrined in the GFCM Agreement, with a view to better addressing the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region;

*CONSIDERING* that rational management for sustainable fisheries is dependent on the scientific utilization of relevant data on fishing fleet capacity, on the fishing activities carried out, on the status of exploited biological resources and on the social and economic situation of fisheries;

*CONSIDERING* that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) considers that several stocks are overexploited, some with a high risk of collapse, and that sustainable management requires that measures aimed at limiting the capture of juveniles are implemented;

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<sup>1</sup> As amended and endorsed by the intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (FAO headquarters, September 2016).

*NOTING* the importance of multidisciplinary data and information to monitor and assess fisheries and fisheries resources and to ensure their sustainable exploitation;

*FURTHER RECOGNIZING* the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as an instrument supporting the identification of fisheries-related data necessary to formulate sound scientific advice;

*TAKING* into account the importance of the classification by groups of priority species as identified by the SAC, of the use of the GFCM fleet segmentation for the collection of economic and biological data, as well as of the use of standard nominal fishing effort measurement;

*RECONIZING* to have a mutual interest in the development and the proper utilization of the marine living resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

*RECOGNIZING* the need for assistance to developing countries to adopt and implement port state measures;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM shall establish a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries (the strategy) aimed at supporting the GFCM in better fulfilling its mandate, as presented in Annex 1.
  2. The implementation of the strategy is expected to ensure that, by 2020, the alarming trend in the status of commercially exploited stocks is reversed.
  3. The strategy is divided into the following five targets, with selected outputs and proposed activities:
    - a) Reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management;
    - b) Support livelihoods for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries;
    - c) Curb illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, through a regional plan of action;
    - d) Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment; and
    - e) Enhance capacity-building and cooperation.
  4. The GFCM shall review the contents of the mid-term strategy in due course.
  5. The Commission agreed on the importance to convene an intersessional meeting to be held in 2016. The terms of reference of this meeting, as reproduced in Annex 2 of this resolution, will include in particular issues relating to governance and integration of national strategies into the mid-term strategy.
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**Mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of  
Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries  
(Mid-term strategy)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **The need for a strategy**

1. Fishing has a tremendous cultural, social and economic importance in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, providing an important source of food and livelihood for riparian countries and sustaining the traditions and the way of life of many coastal communities. However, Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries are currently facing serious challenges, with roughly 90 percent of the scientifically assessed stocks considered to be fished outside safe biological limits, decreasing catches and shrinking fleets at the regional scale.

2. As some of these challenges are also experienced globally and in other regions of the world, a pledge to act to avoid the serious risk of irreversible environmental and socio-economic damage was renewed at the level of the United Nations (UN) and at the regional scale. Against the backdrop of international commitments towards the sustainability of fisheries as a means to support the livelihood of coastal communities in a Blue Growth perspective, existing challenges in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea bring about the need to develop tailor-made actions, taking into account the specificities of the region and the capacities of all actors involved.

3. The mid-term strategy is in line with the mandate of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) as a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) having competence over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is indeed fully consistent with the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) as amended in 2014. The mid-term strategy is based on key activities identified by the GFCM subsidiary bodies and intends to capitalize on accomplishments in the region over recent years in the field of stock assessment and fisheries management, marine environment and control, as well as to consolidate efforts pursued within the context of the GFCM Framework Programme (FWP), born in 2013 as a platform to promote sustainable development and cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea through multiannual and multidonor arrangements.

4. In addition, the mid-term strategy has been discussed with relevant organizations having interest in different aspects of fisheries and marine ecosystems, including observers to the GFCM and organizations that have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the GFCM (currently adding up to 14 international organizations). Therefore, the implementation of the mid-term strategy is based on a unique interdisciplinary partnership that provides for a perfect opportunity to enhance cooperation in the region and maximize the probability of success.

### **Historical background**

5. The issue of sustainable fisheries has evolved over the years at the regional and subregional levels, before and after the 2003 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries in the Mediterranean (2003 Venice Declaration)<sup>1</sup>. Created in 1949 as a Council under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, by means of an international agreement, the GFCM was entrusted with the primary responsibility of supporting Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in elaborating common rules on exploited fisheries. The GFCM Agreement had been amended three times prior to the 2003 Venice Declaration, including in 1997 when new obligations were agreed upon by Contracting Parties, consequently morphing the Council into a

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<sup>1</sup> In 2003, the Ministers of Mediterranean riparian countries met in Venice (Italy) with a view to renewing their commitment to work together towards developing sustainable and responsible fisheries. This commitment was embodied in the 2003 Venice Declaration which focused, in particular, on the future work of the GFCM and its role in this endeavour.

Commission endowed with administrative and financial autonomy.

6. With the entry into force of the third amendment to its constitutive Agreement, in 2004, the GFCM was provided with the operational means to step up its work in its area of application. Progress should in fact be measured from 2004 onward, following the 2003 Venice Declaration, when the role of its Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) was reinforced and new subsidiary bodies – such as the Compliance Committee (CoC) and, later, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS), developed as an ad hoc mechanism for scientific work and decision-making for Black Sea riparian states – were created. This allowed to better address the challenges identified. Such challenges include the need to provide timely data and information, to encourage the active participation of scientists in technical work, to revert the overexploitation of main fish stocks, to improve the evaluation and management of fishery resources, to protect marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems from harmful bycatch and discarding practices and to reduce the incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Since 2004, some 50 decisions have been taken including binding recommendations underpinning a regional management system consisting of data collection and reporting schemes, assessments and evaluations of commercially exploited stocks, elaboration of management measures, area-based management tools, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) instruments and periodical discussions on the implementation of decisions in place.

7. Consistent with the calls by the UN General Assembly and the Committee on Fisheries of FAO, a performance review was carried out in 2009–2011 to assess the effectiveness of the GFCM, under the stewardship of an ad hoc Task Force that eventually recommended a set of amendments to the GFCM Agreement with the objective of further modernizing the Commission. From an institutional point of view, the legacy of the 2003 Venice Declaration is enshrined in the GFCM Agreement, as amended in 2014. The renewed institutional framework of the GFCM is a response to a new generation of challenges currently affecting sustainable fisheries in the region. Its premise is a subregional approach to fisheries management, reinforced by a strong network of partner organizations that collaborate based on several MoU and with the support of the GFCM FWP to carry out the increasing technical activities.

8. The positive impacts of the resolute actions stemming from the GFCM reform will likely play out in the near future. Although the challenges ahead are important, the GFCM nowadays is a modern RFMO with the capability and expertise to take appropriate decisions based on the best available scientific advice and ensure their implementation. In parallel, a number of organizations have made substantial progress in working on several aspects connected to fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, placing them among their priorities and thus paving the way for enhanced collaboration and synergies

### **International context**

9. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 (New York, 25–27 September), world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDG 14 – entitled “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” – builds upon the provisions of numerous legal instruments that have been adopted to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources – e.g. the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement – and advocates for healthy and resilient marine ecosystems based on multiple elements. Similar relevance in the context of sustainable fisheries can be attributed to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT), in particular Target 6 which concerns fisheries. The SDG 14 and ABT 6 can therefore be regarded as embodying comprehensive strategies calling for phased action at all levels of governance, including at the regional level. The SDG 14 in particular offers substantial guidance as to how challenges to the sustainability of fisheries should be tackled, including the following, which are particularly relevant to the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries:

10.

SDG 14	
<b>Target 14.2</b>	<b>by 2020</b> , sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
<b>Target 14.4</b>	<b>by 2020</b> , 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
<b>Target 14.5</b>	<b>by 2020</b> , conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
<b>Target 14.7</b>	<b>by 2030</b> , 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
<b>Target 14.7.a</b>	increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing states and least developed countries
<b>Target 14.7.b</b>	provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
<b>Target 14.7.c</b>	enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources

11. As a UN specialized agency, FAO already contributes to the global implementation of the SDGs through a strategic framework, of which Strategic Objective 2 specifically aims to increase and improve the provision of goods and services from fisheries in a sustainable manner, addressing in particular multi-sectoral approaches for ecosystem management, capacity building, governance frameworks and the like.

12. In order to support the achievement of UN targets, as well as the international obligations stemming therefrom, including the FAO Strategic Objectives, the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries has been elaborated.

13. The mid-term strategy will have an external dimension in that progress in implementing SDG 14 and ABT 6 through the regional targets, outputs and activities foreseen therein will be reported to international fora where the achievement of globally agreed goals is being monitored. As a regional body having a competence relevant to the implementation of SDG 14 and ABT 6, the GFCM is expected to provide information on the Mediterranean and Black Sea through, *inter alia*, the submission of reports and participation in meetings.

### Regional context

14. The geopolitical situation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is currently complex. As of late, the Mediterranean has been experiencing significant instability due to ongoing conflicts and political turmoil in the region which, in turn, has exacerbated the problem of migration across the sea. At the same time, the existing gap in the level of development between the different subregions of the Mediterranean remains a top priority on the regional agenda. Similar considerations apply to the case of the Black Sea although different issues are at stake, including weaker fisheries governance resulting *inter alia* from the fact that not all six riparian countries are members of a same institutional arrangement such as the GFCM. In light of the special characteristics of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, it is all the more imperative to ensure a sound strategy is in place to promote the region's sustainable development. The fisheries sector, in particular, has an important role to play in such a strategy, as it is crucial to livelihood protection, food security and sustainable long-term development in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

15. The GFCM recently released assessment *The State of Mediterranean and the Black Sea Fisheries* (SoMFi 2016) highlights the impact of fisheries, and in particular the small-scale fisheries sector, within the region. Indeed, 80 percent of the region's fisheries are small-scale fisheries,



underlining the role of fisheries in sustaining the region's coastal communities. Although the value generated from the first sale of fish products from Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries may seem relatively small compared with other sectors (representing less than 1 percent of regional GDP), the sector's ability to target some of the region's most economically vulnerable coastal communities makes it a key player in any sustainable development strategy. In fact, the value at first sale as a percentage of GDP is six times greater in the developing countries of the southern Mediterranean than in the wealthier northern Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, exports of fish products from this region represent over 10 percent of total global exports, indicating significant secondary impacts of this sector on the wider economy.

16. Likewise, around a quarter of a million people are directly employed onboard fishing vessels in this region; yet the number of people dependent on the fishing sector for their livelihoods increases exponentially when considering the families supported by the region's fishers and those employed in related sectors, such as fish processing, vessel maintenance and tourism. Furthermore, around 60 percent of fishing employment is found in the developing countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, meaning that the majority of the jobs provided by this sector are located precisely where jobs are needed.

17. Taken together, these factors endorse the potential of the fishing sector to play an instrumental role in the sustainable development of the Mediterranean and Black Sea region and, in particular, its most vulnerable coastal communities. To this end, reliable data on the status and trends on stocks and fisheries is needed, so that management plans embracing the ecological, economic and social aspects are adopted to ensure the sustainability of fisheries. Building on the success of the SDGs in drawing the attention of the international community to the role of fisheries in sustainable development, a regional strategy which adapts such principles to the Mediterranean and Black Sea context is of paramount importance to address current challenges in this area.

## **2. NATURE AND SCOPE**

18. The proposed mid-term strategy is linked to SDG 14 and the FAO Strategic Objective 2. As this strategy stems from existing international and regional legal instruments, it does not create any new obligations on contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs). On the other hand, it purports to define a course of instrumental action to further progress in the development of sustainable fisheries at the regional level. It is programmatic and multiannual in nature and provides guidance for the strategic priorities in the 2017–2020 period, identifying key activities that complement, when needed, the regular work carried out by the different organizations in relation to fisheries. The mid-term strategy addresses three main pillars of the work of the GFCM, as the RFMO in the area,: i) the scientific and technical work of the SAC and its subregional committees in the Mediterranean Sea and of the WGBS in the Black Sea, each of them carrying out core functions towards the provision of scientific advice for the Commission in light of relevant biological, social and economic parameters; ii) the decisions taken by the Commission in relation to capture fisheries, including all industrial, small-scale and recreational fisheries, and iii) the thorough assessment of the implementation of adopted management measures by CPCs, including efforts to fight against IUU fishing through the enhancement of MCS, as overseen by the CoC.

19. The mid-term strategy does not apply to aquaculture as this increasingly important sector has distinctive requirements that need to be addressed specifically. A dedicated Task Force within the framework of the GFCM is currently developing a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

20. The implementation of the proposed mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries will be guided by the following select principles which are in place at the FAO level:

Best available knowledge: The provision of advice, including on the status and trends of stocks and fisheries, should be based on the best available knowledge, including scientific advice and relevant information emanating from a variety of sources and stakeholders. Efforts to collect all information available shall be ensured, and standards for assuring the quality of information should be applied wherever and whenever practicable and appropriate within SAC and WGBS;

Objectivity and transparency: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment should contribute to the transparent provision of the best scientific evidence available, while respecting any confidentiality requirements. Uncertainty associated with information on status and trends should be expressed, without detracting from the application of the precautionary approach, when data and information are incomplete. Information on activities towards the fight against IUU fishing should be made available, respecting confidentiality requirements;

Timeliness: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should be provided in as timely a manner as possible;

Participation and cooperation: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should account for all relevant participants in the preparation, analysis and presentation of scientific advice and conclusions. Relevant participants may include, *inter alia*, representatives of CPCs and other riparian states, relevant international, non-governmental and civil society organizations. The existing cooperative network established through the adoption of MoU would be relied upon, having regard to the cross-sectoral nature of the strategy;

Adaptability: The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of fisheries, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as information on IUU fishing, should be adaptive enough to permit adjustments, as necessary, to ensure their effective support of fisheries management based on the most recent scientific advice available.

### 4. OBJECTIVE AND TARGETS

21. The overall objective of the mid-term strategy is to improve, by 2020, the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, by achieving five targets and related outputs and activities.

#### **TARGET 1: REVERSE THE DECLINING TREND OF FISH STOCKS THROUGH STRENGTHENED SCIENTIFIC ADVICE IN SUPPORT OF MANAGEMENT**

It is recognized that, with only 40 percent of the landings in the GFCM area of application coming from stocks for which scientific advice is provided to the Commission, and with an even smaller percentage of the landings coming from fisheries that are subject to comprehensive management plans, there is a need to improve the coverage of advice on the status of stocks and to increase the percentage of landings coming from fisheries regulated by specific multiannual management plans.

It is also recognized that, whenever possible, the advice provided to the GFCM as the international body in charge of adopting binding recommendations for the region should address all relevant aspects needed for decision making, including past and current socio-economic characteristics of the fisheries, as well as the potential socio-economic impacts of alternative management measures. Furthermore, when this information is lacking or scarce, precautionary measures should be advised so that, based on the precautionary approach, the Commission can still efficiently take decisions to regulate fisheries.

It is agreed that, consistently with SDG Targets 14.2, 14.4 and 14.7, commitment is needed to implement, by 2020, actions to increase the existing scientific and socio-economic knowledge in support of fisheries management, and to adopt necessary decisions to reverse the current overexploitation rates, reducing the percentage of stocks outside biologically safe limits, through the achievement of the following:

### **Output 1.1: Enhanced knowledge and expertise on Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries**

Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states have systems in place for the collection of fisheries data and information and its subsequent submission in line with specific binding recommendations. The GFCM in particular receives such information through dedicated data calls, national reports to its technical subsidiary bodies and through ad hoc questionnaires. The GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) organizes the different data calls and provides indications and tools on how to collect and submit data to the GFCM, with a view to creating a more rational and efficient database in support of decision making. Furthermore, regional workshops and working groups on a variety of topics, including stock assessment, and dedicated conferences such as the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (SSF Conference) have provided experts with fora in which information could be exchanged and incorporated into the advice from the subsidiary bodies to the Commission. However, this information is still fragmented and unbalanced between different subregions and aspects such as socio-economic characteristics of fisheries are still not well understood and incorporated in the advice.

This output will require the compilation of data and information on different fisheries-related issues, including through the implementation of the DCRF, as well as the execution of a number of activities as listed below:

- a. The creation of a **GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science (GFCM FishForum)**, expected to act as a hub for collecting in a more comprehensive manner experiences and scientific information/data on aspects related to fisheries, from stock assessment to socio-economic issues and anthropogenic effects on fisheries and ecosystems. Among other results, the GFCM FishForum should support stock assessment-related work, the compilation of existing knowledge on the status of stocks and discussion on harmonized ways to provide advice on stocks and fisheries, the creation of a database with comprehensive and reliable fisheries data and the establishment of a network of experts and research institutions covering different domains of fisheries science. The Forum will be organized around the following thematic clusters: stock assessment, socio-economic aspects, small-scale and recreational fisheries, bycatch and discards, IUU fishing, fishing technology, interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems, stakeholders and regional/subregional platforms.
- b. The realization of **regional surveys at sea**, including acoustic surveys for pelagic species as well as trawl surveys for demersal fisheries. These joint surveys, carried out in the context of FAO, are expected to provide information on a large number of species over large areas and to serve as tuning indices for assessment purposes, as well as provide validation on the advice on the status of the main commercial stocks.
- c. The compilation of **catalogues of fishing activities** by geographical subarea, also for small-scale and recreational fisheries, and including information on fishing gear and fishing operations, description of fishing areas as well as target and bycatch species. This catalogue is expected to provide a comprehensive summary of fishing activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, as well as updated estimates of fishing capacity by fleet segment and subregion.

All information gathered through this output is expected to feed into the process of the provision of advice (see Outputs 1.2 and 1.3) and will also be summarized among others in the next issues of the report on *The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries* (SoMFi), expected to be delivered biennially under the framework of this strategy (in 2018 and 2020).

## **Output 1.2: Socio-economic information and analysis incorporated into scientific and management advice**

In recent years, GFCM subsidiary bodies have made efforts to integrate available socio-economic analysis into the advice provided to the Commission through dedicated workshops on bio-economic assessment of management measures. Despite data limitations, attempts have been made to review existing methodologies to perform management strategy evaluation (MSE) simulations and to assess the economic, social and biological implications of alternative management scenarios for certain stocks. However, the quality and quantity of available socio-economic data are still limited and work is needed to harmonize methodologies for socio-economic analysis, including on the definition of adequate indicators that could be used across the region, so as to further integrate socio-economic data into management advice. Furthermore, information on socio-economic characteristics should facilitate an analysis of profitability and therefore the integration of dedicated measures for the valorization of fish products into management measures (see Output 1.3). In order to achieve this output, the following activities should be executed within the mid-term strategy:

- a. The definition of socio-economic indicators and the completion of **a comprehensive regional survey on the socio-economic characteristics of fisheries** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This survey is expected to help overcome a main barrier to the integration of socio-economic data in management advice by providing accurate, timely and complete socio-economic baseline data on the region's fisheries.
- b. The **incorporation of socio-economic information** into the assessment of the state of main commercial fisheries and the provision of advice on the comparative impacts of alternative management scenarios.

## **Output 1.3: Enhanced science-based GFCM regulations on fisheries management**

In recent years, relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies have improved their advice, both in terms of scope (e.g. covering aspects ranging from red coral to artificial reefs to the status of stocks and fisheries) and coverage (e.g. improving subregional coverage and increasing the percentage of the landings for which advice on stock status is given) and cooperation has been enhanced with relevant partner organizations towards an increased scientific base. At the same time, and following the adoption of the GFCM Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption of GFCM multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area<sup>1</sup>, the GFCM has advanced towards the regulation of fisheries in its area of application, with the adoption of a comprehensive management plan for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea and demersal trawlers in the Strait of Sicily, and with an incipient management plan for turbot gillnet fisheries in the Black Sea.

However, advice in support of management measures still focuses on a limited number of topics and still addresses a small percentage of exploited stocks, marine populations, ecosystems and areas. In some cases, existing advice at the national level (e.g. assessment of national stocks) is not presented to the GFCM subsidiary bodies and therefore is not taken into account in the provision of advice. In other cases, information is scarce or lacking, and no scientific advice is provided. Furthermore, scientific advice is not always immediately incorporated into recommendations and, as a result, only a very small percentage of the landings come from fisheries regulated by comprehensive management plans.

Technical work for the improvement of the advice on cases with limited information (data-limited stock assessment methods) as well as technical work in support of the establishment of new management plans (e.g. for small pelagic fisheries in the western Mediterranean, deep-water shrimp in the central-eastern Mediterranean, anchovy in the Black Sea or European eel in the Mediterranean Sea) is already underway within the GFCM. Output 1.2, coupled with the work towards the estimation of IUU activity (see Output 3.3), will also support better decision making through the incorporation of

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<sup>1</sup> OTH-GFCM/37/2013/1

socio-economic information, including aspects of valorization of fish products, as well as information on the impact of IUU.

In order to achieve this output, the following activities should be carried out within the mid-term strategy:

- a. The implementation of a dedicated **approach for the provision of advice to the GFCM by its subsidiary bodies**. Such an approach envisions action for stocks/fisheries where information on stocks/fisheries is either fragmented or not made available, and stocks/fisheries for which a validated scientific advice exists. In the former situation, immediate actions to collect the required information and make it available should be launched, while at the same time precautionary advice should be issued. On the other hand, when a validated scientific advice exists, the advice should include indications on the effect of alternative management measures on both the stocks and the fisheries, including on socio-economic aspects. Within this approach, and without prejudice to addressing additional species, the GFCM agreed on a list of priority commercial species by subregion for which an advice should be produced:

	Western Mediterranean	Central Mediterranean	Adriatic Sea	Eastern Mediterranean	Black Sea	
Pelagic species	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i>
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	<i>Sarda sarda</i>
Demersal species	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	<i>Psetta maxima</i>
	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Saurida lessepsianus</i>		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>
	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>					
Species of conservation concern	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>				<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	
	<i>Corallium rubrum</i>					
Invasive species	<i>Pterois miles</i>				<i>Rapana venosa</i>	
	<i>Lagocephalus sceleratus</i>					

- b. [The **operationalization of the Review Panel**, as established by GFCM (Rule XVI of the GFCM Rules of Procedure) to review the scientific advice formulated by its subsidiary bodies and provide conclusions to support the decision-making process.]
- c. The **revision of existing management plans / development of new management plans**, based on the technical advice provided by the subsidiary bodies, with the objective of addressing the main commercial fisheries as well as those fisheries that rely on or show a strong interaction with resources in need of urgent action.

## TARGET 2: SUPPORT LIVELIHOODS FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

It is recognized that small-scale fisheries play an important role in providing income and ensuring food security, particularly within economically vulnerable coastal communities. Therefore concerted action should be taken to support this sector.

It is recognized that the data available to measure the extent and impact of small-scale fishing activity are limited and can vary widely from country to country. Due to these data limitations, small-scale fisheries tend to be undervalued, potentially leading to their marginalisation in the decision-making process.

It is also recognized that states should be responsible for collecting complete, timely and accurate socio-economic data on the impact of small-scale fishing and for developing coherent policies to ensure resource and market access for small-scale fishers. Support will be provided within the mid-term strategy to enhance the coordination of efforts and to harmonize existing measures to support the small-scale fishing sector.

It is agreed that commitment is needed, by 2020, to support livelihoods within sustainable small-scale fisheries, consistent with SDG Target 14.b and 14.7, through the realisation of the following:

**Output 2.1: Robust and timely information on the impacts of small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries on marine living resources and on their interactions with other human activities in coastal communities**

In recent years, work has been carried out to better understand the importance of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Preliminary analyses have shown that these fisheries are the predominant sector in the region (accounting for 80 percent of the region's fishing fleet, 60 percent of all on-vessel fishing labour and approximately 25 percent of the total landing value from the region's capture fisheries), highlighting the crucial role that these fisheries must play in any strategy to sustainably manage the region's marine living resources. As discussed in depth at the First Regional Symposium on sustainable small-scale fisheries (27–30 November 2013, Malta) and the subsequent SSF Conference (7–9 March 2016, Algeria), due to the delicate socio-economic role these fisheries play in providing livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of people in the region's coastal communities, concerted efforts are needed to support this sector. The importance of producing an accurate, timely and comprehensive socio-economic description of small-scale fisheries, and their interactions with other sectors such as recreational fisheries, have been identified as a crucial first step towards mitigating detrimental socio-economic impacts of efforts to manage the region's marine resources. However, despite similarities between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries, the latter deserve a specific action. Socio-economic indicators are needed to inform policy interventions that will help to maximize economic and social benefit, while minimizing environmental and ecological impacts. This output will require the execution of a number of activities as listed below:

- a. The implementation of a **regional survey on small-scale fisheries**. This survey is expected to provide a snapshot of the ecological, social and economic impacts of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and at the same time improve the capacity to collect relevant data on small-scale fisheries as requested through the DCRF. Information on the different gear used in SSF will be collected as part of the catalogue of fishing activities (Target 1) with a view to better linking SSF to the different fishing activities in coastal areas.
- b. The establishment of a **permanent Working Group on Small-Scale and Recreational Fisheries**. This working group is expected to foster knowledge-sharing platforms among the region's small-scale and recreational fishers for the dissemination of best practices and the sharing of information, to oversee the completion of the regional survey on small-scale fisheries and to coordinate efforts among CPCs and relevant organizations.
- c. The assessment of the impacts of **recreational fisheries** and the consideration of best management measures to regulate these activities.

The information gathered through these activities should result in an **estimate of the economic impact of small-scale fisheries** on coastal communities and their interactions with related sectors, as well as inform the development of **indicators to monitor the socio-economic status of small-scale fisheries** and the management of recreational fisheries.

**Output 2.2: FAO Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines tailored to the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea**

The FAO *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) constitute an important tool for supporting actions to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries and support livelihoods in coastal communities. These guidelines take a holistic approach, among others, promoting the importance of tenure rights,

livelihood diversification, market access, decent working conditions and the engagement of women and marginalized groups, as crucial elements towards improving socio-economic conditions and strengthening small-scale coastal fishing communities. This output will require a holistic approach to supporting the region's small-scale fisheries, including by carrying out the following activities:

- a. The development of **national plans of action for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines** is expected to provide roadmaps for bolstering valorization, commercialization and livelihoods in small-scale fisheries and coastal communities in a way that adapts to the specific needs at the regional, subregional and national levels.
- b. The establishment of **a regional platform to engage and promote dialogue among small-scale fishing associations** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This platform is expected to build on and reinforce existing subregional and national platforms in order to provide a participatory mechanism for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and the dissemination of best practices.
- c. The **endorsement of the principle of decent work**, as defined by the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), so as to promote, without compromising environmental sustainability, the improvement of socio-economic conditions within small-scale fisheries and the promotion of livelihood diversification.
- d. The organization of **a high-level meeting** in collaboration with strategic partners, including the Mediterranean Initiative of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to generate political will in small-scale fisheries within a Blue Growth context.

### **TARGET 3: CURB ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING, THROUGH A REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION**

It is recognized that better management of fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is undermined by IUU fishing activities and the disregard of common rules. Although the impacts of IUU fishing are currently not assessed and therefore under-represented in the current status of fisheries and trends information, they must be adequately considered in the development of scientific advice for management.

It is stressed that CPCs, in their capacity as flag states, coastal states, port states and market states, have the primary responsibility to ensure respect of common rules by fishing vessels. Support will be provided within the mid-term strategy to enhance coordination of efforts and harmonize existing measures aimed at improving monitoring, control and surveillance.

It is acknowledged that, while the implementation of the two roadmaps to fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea adopted by the GFCM has been positive thus far, there is an important need to set political and operational objectives to counter illegal activities, building upon the elements of these roadmaps and reflecting relevant elements in the FAO International Plan of Action against IUU, which is already voluntarily applied in the region. It is also acknowledged that support will be provided for **the organization and celebration of an international day for the fight against IUU fishing**, to be imminently declared by FAO upon the request of the GFCM.

It is agreed that there is a need to commit to **effectively reducing IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea** by 2020, consistent with SDG Target 14.4, by developing a holistic **regional plan of action to fight IUU fishing**, to eventually be transposed at the national level and that would among others achieve the following:

#### **Output 3.1: Regular quantification of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and harmonization of existing measures to fight against IUU fishing**

IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries, undermining national and regional management efforts. In 2003, it was calculated that the lower and upper estimates of the total value of IUU fishing worldwide were between US\$10 billion and US\$23 billion annually, representing between 11.06 and 25.91 million tonnes of fish, and there is today a general recognition that the incidence of IUU fishing has not decreased since. Another topical

issue relating to IUU fishing is the need to harmonize at the regional level existing measures used to counter illegal activities. In this regard, guidance is not only sought from the Regional Plan of Action to fight IUU fishing but also from an evaluation of relevant national legislations in place which are collected in the GFCM database of national legislations. In order to meet the target of considerably reducing IUU fishing, it will be instrumental to carry out the following activities:

- a. The realization of an **assessment of the quantity, magnitude and characteristics of IUU fishing** in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Whereas work is ongoing within FAO to bring about a common methodology to assess IUU fishing, a tailored approach for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is needed with a view to supporting the scientific work of the SAC and WGBS.
- b. The evaluation of the adequateness of national legislations relating to IUU fishing adopted by CPCs as contained in the GFCM database of national legislations. As appropriate, this evaluation should lead to the revision of national legislations in view of the harmonization of measures to fight IUU fishing which will be facilitated by the Regional Plan of Action to fight IUU fishing.

### **Output 3.2: Reinforced inspection procedures in the framework of port state control**

The regional system of port state measures in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea should be aligned with the provisions in the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). Most importantly, the 5 June 2016 entry into force of the FAO PSMA brings about actions and initiatives to promote port controls worldwide. The GFCM should be involved in the correct implementation of the FAO PSMA, through the adoption of robust port state measures. Efforts will be needed, on the one hand, to support the ratification of the FAO PSMA by states and, on the other hand, to make sure that appropriate conditions are in place to strengthen port state measures (both political, legal and technical). This will entail carrying out several activities within the remit of the GFCM:

- a. The promotion of **training of national inspectors** and, as appropriate, relevant officers, including jointly with other partners and by developing specific online instruments, with a view to launch national actions to better take stock of the needs of each recipient country relating to efficient port controls.
- b. The establishment of a **mutual assistance system** will facilitate exchange of information between flag states and port states via the GFCM Secretariat and that of a **regional information system to exchange port state measures related data** will operationalize port state measures in the GFCM area of application, consistent with the provisions of the FAO PSMA, complementing the ongoing establishment of a regional monitoring and control system.

### **Output 3.3: Enhanced modular monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) at the regional level**

Since the adoption of the GFCM recommendation on the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS), the Commission has been advancing on the phased development of a regional control system, with a view to enhancing monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This system is needed in order to have the same control standards in place across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and therefore ensure all CPCs are on par, regardless of whether or not they have a fishing monitoring centre. In this regard, priority will be given to the development of national VMS to verify whether these are consistent with minima requirements in place at the GFCM level. Furthermore, because of the high number of small-scale vessels operating in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the system will underpin a modular approach which is responsive to the needs of those CPCs which rely primarily on small-scale vessels. This output will complement control related activities already agreed upon by the GFCM, such as the working group on integrated MCS measures for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily, and will be achieved by carrying out the following action:

- a. The continuation of the operationalization of a **regional VMS and control system**, in order to help monitor adherence to fisheries restricted areas and to underpin GFCM data collection systems by progressively incorporating electronic tools, such as the e-logbook, which could be developed at the regional level. Effort and catches information deriving from this system



would support the enhanced assessment of fisheries stocks, identification of fishing grounds and fishing activities, contributing to the achievement of Target 1.

#### **TARGET 4: MINIMIZE AND MITIGATE UNWANTED INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FISHERIES AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENT**

It is underlined that healthy and productive marine ecosystems are an important means to supporting maximum sustainable yield and facilitating blue growth.

It is recognized that fisheries, as well as other anthropogenic-driven phenomena, such as climate change or the introduction of non-indigenous species, can have potentially negative effects on the marine environment and marine ecosystems.

It is agreed that, by 2020, consistent with SDG Targets 14.1, 14.2 and 14.5, necessary measures will be taken to minimize and mitigate negative impacts of fisheries on marine biodiversity and ecosystems, especially in relation to vulnerable species and ecosystems, as well as to mitigate negative anthropogenic effects on fisheries, in close coordination with partner organizations. These measures should be implemented by achieving the following outputs:

##### **Output 4.1: Reduced bycatch rates in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries**

Bycatch is considered as one of the most important threats to the profitability and sustainability of fisheries and, as such, it is considered to be one of the major concerns for most RFMOs and other fisheries management bodies. In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, based on the analysis presented in SoMFi 2016, discard rates vary between areas and fishing gear, but can reach up to 20 percent of the total catch. In order to address this threat and to take into account previous concerns raised, this output will require the execution of the activities as listed below:

- a. The implementation of a **bycatch monitoring programme**, including through the use of observers onboard commercial fishing vessels. This programme is expected to obtain representative data on the discard component of total bycatch in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, as well as information on the incidental catch of vulnerable species that could occur during sampled fishing operations, with a view to facilitating the adoption of required management measures towards the reduction of bycatch rates.
- b. The development and launch of a fully encompassing **communication mechanism** to educate fishers on the negative impacts of bycatch on fisheries productivity and on marine ecosystems. This activity entails, among others, the publication of infographics, cards and posters. Ecolabelling and certificates for fishers who ensure their commitment in fishing according to sustainable practices in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea should also be envisaged.
- c. The implementation of **effective management measures to improve the selectivity of fisheries**, including the possibility to use artificial reefs to protect fish essential habitats (e.g. nursery areas) as well as the implementation of more selective fishing gear.
- d. The proposition of measures to reduce catches of vulnerable species when appropriate, by entrusting the SAC with this task.
- e. The identification and implementation of **mitigation measures to address the interaction between cetaceans and fishing gear**.

##### **Output 4.2: Healthier marine ecosystems and more productive fisheries**

The GFCM was a pioneer in adopting, in 2005, a binding recommendation on the protection of seabeds below 1 000 metres depth from trawling, as a measure to minimize the impact of these fisheries on deep-sea ecosystems. Moreover, in 2006, the GFCM adopted a specific area-based management tool, the fisheries restricted areas (FRAs), to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the region. Furthermore, the Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity has been elaborated among the Secretariats of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous

Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the GFCM, the Mediterranean Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Med), the UNEP/MAP through its Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and in collaboration with the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) , which will focus on the identification of priority spatial areas at regional scale for the implementation of protection measures, in order to maximize the potential benefits of such measures.

Specific actions towards the protection of Mediterranean populations of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) have also been developed, and, within the context of the MoU between the GFCM and the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP), a number of indicators for good environmental status (GES) of exploited marine populations have been established. In addition, within the same MoU, work towards the implementation of the Mediterranean Regional Plan on Marine Litter has been initiated. Finally, SAC subsidiary bodies have highlighted the potential combined effects of climate change and other direct and indirect anthropogenic impacts such as the introduction of non-indigenous species (often referred to as “alien species”) in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, stressing the need to launch dedicated actions to better understand such phenomena so as to better mitigate their effects.

To achieve Output 4.2, coordination will be guaranteed between relevant regional organizations so to ensure:

- a. The promotion of the **identification and establishment of new FRAs** to protect priority areas within ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), VMEs, etc. from harmful fishing activities, and the implementation of monitoring and control systems to ensure the efficiency of these spatial measures, also in relation to Target 3. This action should aim to achieve at least the protection of 10% of the coastal and marine areas, as expressed in Aichi Target 11. The CPCs should be closely involved in the definition of new FRAs.
- b. The adoption of a comprehensive **regional management plan for red coral**, based on previous technical work carried out in the context of the GFCM subsidiary bodies, including relevant GFCM guidelines, and updated advice as provided within Output 1.3.
- c. The creation of an **adaptation strategy to cope with potential effects of invasive species and climate change on fisheries**. Such a strategy should be based on the results of an evaluation of the potential ecological and socio-economic effects of climate change and of the introduction of non-indigenous species on Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.
- d. The creation of an **adaptation strategy to cope with potential effect of marine litter on fisheries**, as well as the implementation of fisheries management measures aimed to minimize the production of litter from fishing activities (e.g. abandoned fish gear), in line with existing Mediterranean regional management plan on marine litter.

## **TARGET 5: ENHANCE CAPACITY BUILDING AND COOPERATION**

It is urged that CPCs, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and concerned stakeholders enhance cooperation to promote sustainable development and blue growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

It is acknowledged that fulfilling the objective of the mid-term strategy through the proposed activities both requires and promotes increased scientific and technical cooperation throughout the region. Particular efforts will be needed for the Black Sea, given that not all riparian countries are currently contracting parties to the GFCM.

It is agreed that commitment is needed, by 2020, in line with SDG 14.7, to help level the playing field for developing countries and to ensure the accrual of socio-economic benefits from the sustainable management of fisheries, by achieving the following:

### Output 5.1: Improved national capacity for the management of fisheries resources

In recent years, the CoC has acknowledged that there is strong political willingness to support the work of the GFCM and to routinely carry out the assessment of adopted GFCM decisions. Some CPCs are, however, experiencing some difficulties in meeting their obligations stemming from GFCM decisions and, therefore, capacity-building efforts must be enhanced. In this regard, the GFCM Agreement recognizes, in particular, the needs of developing CPCs. This output will be achieved through the completion of the following activities:

- a. The provision of **capacity building for CPCs**, as obliged by the Commission, when necessary, to assist CPCs in meeting their obligations stemming from relevant GFCM decisions. The provision of technical assistance by the GFCM has been sparse up to now as no clear mechanism existed to govern the provision of technical assistance, including from the identification of needs to the actual support on the ground.
- b. The implementation of a **technical assistance mechanism** to support CPCs in bridging existing gaps. Such a mechanism should be based on recent work carried out by the CoC to thoroughly address the link between national gaps/shortcomings and the implementation of GFCM recommendations. Based on requests for technical assistance received by the GFCM thus far, the main following areas would be, among others, covered by the technical assistance mechanism: i) stock assessment and management plans; ii) data collection, analysis and transmission; iii) elaboration and amendment of national legislations; iv) assessment and development of national VMS and control systems in accordance with GFCM standards; v) the strengthening of port controls and vi) the elaboration and development of case studies on small-scale fisheries.
- c. The launch of a **regional programme for education and training** to lay down the foundation for a new generation of fisheries experts through mid- and long-term specialization curricula, in collaboration with regional and national research/training institutions, which would essentially cover domains such as population dynamics, including stock assessment, fishing technology, socio-economic analysis and fisheries legislation.

### Output 5.2: Strengthened fisheries governance in the Black Sea

On the occasion of the 2014 amendment to the GFCM Agreement, the specificities of the Black Sea were recognized when it was decided to establish a specific mechanism to promote cooperation among riparian countries. Over the past decades, many efforts have been made to bring about a concerted approach to the issues and challenges that are faced in the Black Sea. The trend has shifted towards a regional decision-making process which has been promoted through the WGBS since 2011 (the year it was established). The contribution of the WGBS to fisheries governance has been decisive, to the extent that three binding recommendations have been adopted by the GFCM in the years that followed the establishment of the WGBS. Furthermore, a non-binding roadmap to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea was also adopted. The most crucial element for fisheries governance in the Black Sea remains cooperation among the riparian countries. Enhanced cooperation has been staunchly pursued by the GFCM, leading to the granting of cooperating non-contracting party status to Georgia and Ukraine in 2015. There is momentum, at present, to build upon ongoing cooperation and further strengthen fisheries governance in the Black Sea. To this end, this output will be achieved through the completion of the following activities:

- a. The organization of a **high-level conference on fisheries governance** in order to examine existing institutional hurdles and provide a forum for riparian countries to provide inputs to the ongoing process of cooperation in the Black Sea. Discussions are needed in particular to ensure full membership of the six riparian countries to the GFCM, in due course.
- b. The launch of the start-up phase of a **regional, scientific and technical cooperation project for the Black Sea**, the BlackSea4Fish project, carried out in the remit of the WGBS. It is expected that this project would operate under the umbrella of the GFCM, with the aim to support the activities of the WGBS, and would contribute to further bridging gaps at the

regional level, endowing the WGBS with the necessary support to make sure that its work programme is efficiently implemented.

### **Output 5.3: Increased cooperation with relevant actors**

As part of the same organization, tight collaboration with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on issues such as the development and implementation of the SSF Guidelines, the management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), the implementation of the FAO PSMA or the Global Record, has been instrumental to align regional actions with global practices and to showcase regional initiatives in reply to international guidelines. The establishment of the FAO regional projects for the Mediterranean, starting with the launch of Copemed in 1996 and followed by MedSudMed, AdriaMed and EastMed, has substantially supported the SAC in the provision of scientific advice, thanks to the technical support and capacity-building activities directly provided to countries over the years.

In addition to the ongoing collaboration of the GFCM with relevant FAO departments and projects, at the time of writing, the GFCM has concluded 14 MoU. These instruments have been central to fostering synergies and avoiding duplications. Moreover, several initiatives are being undertaken in the framework of these instruments which are extremely important due to the transversal nature of the areas of cooperation addressed therein. In addition to the governmental cooperation promoted by the GFCM, intra-governmental cooperation with other institutions is also important. This output will be achieved through the following activities:

- a. The **operationalization of existing MoU**, including the launching of joint activities, with a view to avoiding duplications. Where new possibilities arise for new MoU, these should be submitted to the Commission for its consideration and adoption.
- b. In line with the FAO Strategic Objective 2, the **strengthened coordination with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and FAO regional projects**, taking into account current challenges and recent changes within the GFCM, including the focus on a subregional approach and the launch of this strategy.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS**

22. Consistent with Article 17 of the GFCM Agreement, the capacity of developing CPCs will be duly taken into account in implementing the strategy in order to level the playing field and bridge existing gaps. Technical assistance will be provided where there is a need to build national capacities so that existing commitments can be fulfilled equally. In this respect, the promotion of the “concerted actions” initiative or the signature of bilateral letters of agreement, as already implemented by the GFCM in the past with selected CPCs, should be encouraged.

23. The effective implementation of existing and future fisheries management-related decisions by CPCs is instrumental in reaching the objectives of the mid-term strategy.

24. The GFCM, through its relevant subsidiary bodies, should regularly assess the attainment of the targets during the period of implementation of the strategy, by reviewing the outcomes of specific activities, revising and updating, as appropriate, the expected outputs and providing guidance to reach more effectively agreed objectives.

*This strategy is dedicated to the late Mohamed HadjAli Salem, an important member of the GFCM family having twice served as GFCM Chairperson and also as the long-standing coordinator of the SIPAM network. His experience and commitment intelligently led the Commission through delicate times of change.*

**Terms of reference for the intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries**

The intersessional meeting of the Commission on the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries will:

- Be open to CPCs and all relevant partner organizations, including FAO and FAO regional projects;
- Set specific agreed targets, based on national strategies, under the five objectives of the mid-term strategy, as endorsed by the Commission at its fortieth session;
- Match agreed objectives in GFCM recommendation against the targets in the mid-term strategy with a view to further promoting complementarities;
- Integrate relevant outcomes of previous work by the GFCM (e.g. SSF, IUU) in the strategy;
- Consider the possibility to clarify the scope of activities foreseen in the mid-term strategy, as appropriate;
- Review the progress of the two-year feasibility study on the implementation of the sub-regional approach and make recommendations on the course of action to be followed;
- Discuss the *modus operandi* and practical arrangements for the implementation of the mid-term strategy;
- Identify the necessary resources, including means to pool resources in the context of concerted actions; and
- Define the composition and methods of work of the Review Panel.

**Resolution GFCM/40/2016/3**  
**on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the GFCM area of application**

*RECALLING* the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which calls upon states to cooperate in the conservation and management of marine living resources, including through subregional or regional fisheries organizations;

*TAKING NOTE* of the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which recognizes the important contributions of small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security;

*ACKNOWLEDGING* the 2014 FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) which aim at enhancing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition and at supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) whereby the Commission shall pay particular attention to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities in adopting conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities;

*CONSIDERING* the role of the GFCM as the FAO regional fishery body competent over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to contribute to the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and to improve the socio-economic situation of fishers and fish workers within the context of sustainable fisheries management;

*WELCOMING* the conclusions of the 2013 First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea organized by the GFCM in partnership with FAO, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari), the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and in collaboration with the Government of Malta;

*FURTHER WELCOMING* the conclusions of the 2016 Regional Conference on Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea organized by the GFCM in partnership with FAO, CIHEAM-Bari, MedPAN, WWF and in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

1. The GFCM should provide support to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) to accelerate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines by adapting them to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea context.
2. The CPCs acknowledge the importance of the work made at the Regional Conference on Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and underline the significance of the conclusions adopted by this conference (which are attached in Annex 1 to this resolution) in the context of the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries at the regional level.
3. The GFCM should facilitate the elaboration of national strategies for the sustainable development of the small-scale fisheries sector, in line with the SSF Guidelines and with the conclusions of the Regional Conference.
4. CPCs should continue to build political will to invest in participative management approaches – such as co-management schemes – in order to sustainably develop fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Particular attention should be accorded to improving livelihoods and

socio-economic opportunities – including access to markets – for small-scale fishers, in line with Target 14 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). To this effect, marine spatial planning, including, *inter alia*, preserved fisheries areas and the installation of artificial reefs, provides an effective tool for engaging stakeholders in the sustainable management of fisheries.

5. Specific actions should be foreseen to elaborate coordinated policies in support of the small-scale fishing sector, including a common regional strategy, in coordination with the existing regional small-scale fisher networks and platforms throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and a high-level event on sustainable small-scale fisheries.

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## **Conclusions of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”**

**(Algiers, Algeria, 7–9 March 2016)**

### **PREAMBLE**

The Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (Algeria, March 2016) enjoyed the robust attendance of over 200 participants, which included policy-makers, scientists, practitioners, fishers representatives, fish workers, civil society organizations, NGOs, research institutions, international organizations and more. The conference was organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), including its Mediterranean regional projects, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries and in partnership with the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM-Bari), the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

In 2013, on the occasion of the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Malta, November 2013), the main challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishery sector in this region were brought to the forefront. Since then, such issues have continued to gain prominence in discussions on small-scale fishery management in the context of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

This regional conference was conceived as a practical response to the outcomes of the symposium in Malta, seeking to capitalize on the momentum already generated in order to offer a tangible strategy for the future sustainable development of this sector. Concrete case studies were carried out, which further explored key themes identified through the symposium, and their results were presented in a format which deliberately sought to promote discussions, express opinions and share experiences in order to better grasp priorities and opportunities for this sector.

There is no doubt that small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea play a significant social and economic role. These fisheries constitute over 80 percent of the fishing fleet, employ at least 60 percent of total on-vessel fishing labour and account for approximately 25 percent of the total landing value from capture fisheries in the region. At their best, small-scale fisheries exemplify sustainable resource use: exploiting marine living resources in a way that minimizes environmental degradation while maximizing economic and social benefits. Yet concerted effort is needed to ensure that best practices become standard practices.

In recognition of this need for a concerted action for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishery sector, the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries graciously offered to host the regional conference with a view to mobilizing such an effort. This event is perfectly aligned with the “Aquapêche 2020” strategy, recently launched by Algeria as a result of a nation-wide consultation process with all stakeholders and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO. Consistent with Blue Growth principles, this strategy is also expected to provide a decisive contribution towards the promotion of sustainable small-scale fisheries, both at the national and regional levels.

The following conclusions have been developed based on the outcomes of the regional conference. The conclusions are put forth to urge actions in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and they are grouped, first, under a cluster of general and transversal proposals and, next, under five clusters relating to the specific thematic sessions of the conference.



## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which, among other issues, stress the importance of providing access for small-scale artisanal fisheries to marine resources and markets, the importance of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” was acknowledged. Widespread support was expressed by conference participants for the conference objectives to raise awareness, share knowledge, and devise future strategy to promote this crucial fishing sector.

In particular, the following general proposals were made:

- Tailor implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) to the Mediterranean and Black Sea context and provide support to GFCM contracting parties in the implementation of these guidelines.
- Launch a comprehensive and region-wide survey to develop accurate, timely and complete baseline data on the value and economic impact of small-scale fisheries, with a view to ultimately informing policy interventions.
- Launch wide-ranging consultations, including a mechanism for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishing sector and specific actions to develop coordinated policy to support this sector. To this end, implement a joint regional strategy which builds on existing regional networks and platforms and promotes a level playing field throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- Develop a regional programme aiming to provide support and technical assistance, in particular to developing countries, in order to build capacity in the field of small-scale fisheries. Carry out at the national level, where necessary, an analysis of legislation and institutional mechanisms which ensure the full participation of small-scale fishers in all activities regarding the sustainable development of the sector (development of alternative activities, co-management, financial support, labelling, traceability, right to decent work, social protection, etc.).
- Build the political will to invest in small-scale fisheries as a crucial tool to transform fisheries management, particularly within the context of the Blue Growth initiative and the implementation of the reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy. It was suggested that the GFCM member countries, the European Commission and FAO provide joint leadership in this regard (i.e. through the organization of a high-level event).
- Disseminate the conclusions of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” to relevant international meetings, such as GFCM regular sessions, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and relevant European Union (EU) meetings.

## **SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO THE PANELS**

### **PANEL I – Supporting the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective**

Blue Growth is a recent concept that seeks to create sustainable economic, environmental and social development in the aquatic environment. As Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries are dominated by small-scale fishing activities, if the exploitation of fish resources in these seas is to contribute to Blue Growth, then small-scale fishing will necessarily play an integral role in Blue Growth strategies.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Develop indicators to measure the economic and social impact of small-scale fishing, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, efforts should be made to estimate not only the value of the output produced by such fishing and its economic impact on coastal communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, but efforts should also be made to measure small-scale fishing's impact on related sectors such as fish processing and tourism. Furthermore, an analysis of the interaction of small-scale fishing with other sectors, particularly those also engaged in Blue Growth strategies (i.e. marine transportation, oil and gas, tourism, etc.), is needed for a better understanding of the wider economic and social impacts of small-scale fishing as well as the risks these other sectors may pose to small-scale fishing communities.
- Examine the economic impact of small-scale fishing under different exploitation arrangements, with a view to identifying circumstances under which this activity might generate an investable surplus and undertake studies to estimate the potential size of this surplus. Similarly, efforts should be made to identify points of entry for technological, management, marketing and policy interventions that would facilitate the above-mentioned favourable circumstances.
- Identify relevant parameters – having acknowledged the need to develop a common definition of small-scale fisheries – for the classification of “small-scale fishing” in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, based on relevant regional characteristics (e.g. dimension of the vessel, gear used, activities of non-vessel based fisheries) and in relation to the harvested resources.
- Disseminate information on the effectiveness of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and promote its use as a data collection tool for small-scale fishing. Provide technical assistance in the practical application of the DCRF in the collection of standardized data on small-scale fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- Produce a desk study on the social protection systems and national legislations in place and available to small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian states, with a view to identifying and promoting the most successful options.
- Identify policy interventions which facilitate income and livelihood diversification for small-scale fishers. In particular, efforts should be made to identify opportunities for cross-over between the small-scale fishing and small-scale aquaculture sectors.
- Develop, in collaboration with GFCM Members, a pilot programme that would test ways to both better integrate small-scale fisheries into a Blue Growth approach, as well as better integrate small-scale fisheries in the decision-making processes of other sectors whose Blue Growth activity may have an impact on small-scale fisheries.

## **PANEL II – Strengthening the role of stakeholders in the context of management and co-management schemes**

Acknowledging concrete evidence on how co-management can be an effective approach for both resolving conflicts and developing innovative solutions for the management of small-scale fisheries, key actions were identified that would create enabling conditions for the institutionalization of stakeholder engagement through co-management schemes. Such key actions include the need for stronger investment in capacity building, both for institutions and for fisher organizations, and the need for a better understanding of legal and institutional frameworks that allow for the participation of fishers in fisheries management. The panel stressed that while Blue Growth presents important opportunities for small-scale fisheries, the effects of Blue Growth in other sectors may also present a risk to these fisheries. Stronger organization and co-management initiatives are needed in order to guard against such risks.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, the following actions are proposed:

- Conduct an analysis to assess national and international legal frameworks with a view to identifying institutional contexts that allow for the establishment of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes and with a view to defining general rules for the engagement and compliance of small-scale fishers with these schemes.
- Prepare best practice guidelines for the enforcement of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Such guidelines should be linked directly to the SSF Guidelines and, in addition to providing advice on the institutional and legislative context, should provide direction for the elaboration and implementation of participatory processes, co-management settings and tools, approaches for monitoring, control and surveillance schemes and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of management measures.
- Provide support to ongoing co-management processes in the Mediterranean and build commitment for their multiplication across the region. A regional programme, based on a solid institutional framework and building on existing experiences and partnerships, should be established to offer a longer-term vision on how co-management can benefit small-scale fisheries at the regional scale.
- Map fishing activities in order to provide relevant information to be integrated into marine spatial planning processes. Such processes are crucial to securing tenure rights and access to the resources for small-scale fishers, and thus ensuring livelihoods and the sustainable development of communities reliant on small-scale fisheries. The GFCM, on behalf of its member countries, should advocate for this issue at a high-level with the European Commission, prior to the commencement of the marine spatial planning processes.
- Establish a capacity building programme devoted to supporting stakeholder roles in small-scale fisheries co-management and tailored to different targets (institutional, marine protected areas administration, local administrations, natural and social scientists, civil society, small-scale fishers and other resource users).

### **PANEL III – Improving the efficiency of marine protected areas (MPAs) as fisheries management tools and benefits from involving the small-scale fisheries sector**

Recognizing the priority socio-economic and environmental challenges for the management of marine ecosystems, marine protected areas (MPAs) offer a potential solution to concurrently address a multitude of issues. Indeed, an important strategy for reconciling conservation and sustainability objectives is the integration of the small-scale fisheries sector into management decisions in and around MPAs. Action must be taken at the local and national levels in view of reaching international and regional agreements. Such action can be effected by decision makers, MPA managers, fishers, scientists and the private sector.

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Adapt and draw lessons from the experience of MPAs with no take zones and regulated buffer zones that have been successful in involving fishers in management decisions and in processes that both safeguard wild resources, while also preserving the livelihoods upon which small-scale fishers depend. Given the socio-economic benefits obtained by small-scale fishers in these exemplary MPAs, learning from such cases would provide guidance on how to sustain economic, social and cultural aspects of the profession. To support replication of these successful MPAs, adequate legal frameworks, political will and financial and human capital would be required.
- Replicate examples of collaboration at the inter- and intra-ministerial levels that demonstrate the successful management of small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs when working “hand in hand”. Such integrative models could encourage top-down and bottom-up processes in many riparian countries for securing the future sustainability of the profession, while also providing international technical guidance.
- Improve the management of MPAs, including multiple use MPAs, by relying on the scientific and traditional knowledge of fishers, by involving concerned users/stakeholders and by using adaptive approaches. To this end:
  - Tailor management in light of the outcomes of long-term comparative monitoring of biological features, ecological effects of small-scale fisheries and socio-economic benefits in and outside MPAs;
  - Develop adaptive participatory approaches for management plans for small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs, based on biological and socio-economic data, which could be jointly formulated, implemented and revised by MPA practitioners and fishers;
  - Adopt regulations to overcome conflicting uses of MPAs which could have a negative impact on the livelihood of small-scale fisheries, having regard to relevant conservation objectives;
  - Consider participative management, in cases of use conflicts, specifically those between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries, to create a balance between the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and, where applicable, the sustainable development of responsible tourism, so as to achieve conservation objectives.
- Consider conservation efforts, and MPAs in particular, as an investment in natural capital rather than as a public expenditure. As such, efforts should be made to protect this investment from risks, such as conflicting marine-based activities and land-based pollution.
- Safeguard the small-scale fisheries sector in and around MPAs, including by setting up cooperatives, through strategies that are integrated in development plans devised by local authorities and that provide a market edge in favour of responsible and sustainable fisheries practices.

#### **PANEL IV – Enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains**

The value chain of small-scale fisheries is enhanced by a favourable environment where fishers are strongly connected with other local actors, including public and private institutions and even consumers. This permits the creation of competitive economic clusters, which can foster the development of coastal communities. Clustering must be encouraged, eliminating all possible bottlenecks. In the case of SSF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, four relevant areas of intervention have been identified: sustainability aspects (including governance and MPAs), marketing strategies (quality aspects), inter-sectoral integration and provision of infrastructures and services (in particular, access to markets and credit).

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Identify best practices for value creation, especially in the fields of labelling, direct sale, processing, diversification, inter-sectoral integration and vertical coordination. Additional case studies should be carried out to further examine such best practice interventions and to promote their replication in various Mediterranean and Black Sea contexts.
- Model successful value chains, particularly in cases where clustering of various coastal economic activities occurs, to identify entry points for innovation and to better understand the scope for fisher cooperation in resource management and in product marketing.
- Establish a capacity building programme to support stakeholder roles in the creation of cooperatives, formulation of agreements with public and private institutions, development of partnerships and projects for coastal development.
- Better study and analyse issues related both to credit and financial institution support. Public institutions should provide basic infrastructures and services to foster value chains and to prevent market failure. Access to formal finance is a crucial concern. This includes access to both formal credit for capital expenses and financing for fishing operations. Facilities and financial products can be developed in partnership with banks for medium to long-term investment. Formal financing schemes (production contracts, storage receipts) can be applied with the participation of fishers, traders and public authorities.

## **PANEL V – Putting the principles of the SSF Guidelines into practice: the case of the Mediterranean and Black Sea**

The SSF Guidelines constitute an important tool for supporting actions to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. These guidelines take a holistic perspective on the needs of small-scale fisheries and recognize that the implementation of these guidelines will necessarily be cross-sectoral. With a view to adapting these guidelines to the regional context, key elements to operationalize the principles of the SSF guidelines were explored: i) policy and legal frameworks; ii) main stakeholders; iii) institutional structures; iv) key entry points; and v) collaboration with other initiatives. The panel noted the importance of action at the local level and the need for effective participation of fishing communities. There are already positive developments taking place in the region in support of the SSF Guidelines implementation, for instance the existence of regional organizations and platforms such as the Maghreb Platform for sustainable small-scale fisheries, the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishers (MedArtNet), Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) and the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MedAC), and the development of national policies and initiatives (e.g. Aquapêche 2020 in Algeria, SSF national action plan proposals in EU countries).

In light of the discussions held during the panel, it is proposed to:

- Establish a GFCM working group on small-scale fisheries to facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the GFCM region by developing national action plans and taking into account recommendations from relevant events and existing experience within the region and beyond.
- Strengthen the GFCM engagement with small-scale fishing communities by establishing a mechanism for supporting organizational development and agreeing on a *modus operandi* for meaningful collaboration. In particular, FAO's work on small-scale fisheries should be taken into account and special efforts should be made to collaborate with existing small-scale fisheries organizations and platforms, as well as to include women and marginalized groups in such collaboration.
- Promote, without compromising environmental sustainability, the improvement of socio-economic conditions within small-scale fisheries, particularly through the promotion of livelihood diversification as appropriate, and the endorsement of the principle of decent work, as defined by the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Furthermore, ratification of this convention by GFCM member countries should be encouraged.
- Promote and facilitate the development of a forum for small-scale fisheries associations of northern and southern Mediterranean riparian countries, particularly through specific projects financed by member countries or by other international, governmental or non-governmental entities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Satisfaction and gratitude were expressed by all participants in the regional conference to the Government of Algeria for kindly hosting the event and to the co-organizers for the thorough preparation of the event. The Principality of Monaco is also gratefully acknowledged for its financial support towards the publication of the conference conclusions.

**Terms of reference for selected activities****Workshop on data submission in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)**

The workshop shall provide advice in support of the phasing in of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 and perform, in particular, the following tasks:

- Streamline the data submission calendar, without prejudice to the guidance already provided by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies;
  - Analyse the general user experience in participating in the DCRF pilot study (from October 2015 to June 2016), including the assessment of data collection difficulties faced by the CPCs;
  - Discuss potential challenges and solutions for the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 by CPCs, including the identification of technical assistance needs;
  - Provide advice on the incorporation into the DCRF of new data requirements as emanating from recommendations adopted at the fortieth session of the GFCM; and
  - Advance on the definition of quality indicators on the basis of the proposal presented at the intersessional session of the Compliance Committee (January 2016) with a view to facilitating the regular quality assessment of data by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies for the formulation of scientific advice for the Commission.
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### **Working Group on sustainable small-scale and recreational fisheries (WGSSF)**

The main objective of the working group is to coordinate activities, both technical and institutional, relating to small-scale and recreational fisheries, in order to fill the main data gaps relating to these sectors and to support the sustainable development of these fisheries within a Blue Growth perspective.

This permanent working group shall consist of relevant GFCM national experts, as well as relevant partner organizations and stakeholders. All technical aspects shall be reported through the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) for validation, while institutional aspects shall be reported to the Commission.

#### **General terms of reference**

Carry out activities towards the implementation of the conclusions of the Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (SSF Conference), including in particular:

Institutional aspects:

- Oversee the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) in the GFCM area of application;
- Manage the provision of technical assistance, particularly to developing countries, to build capacity in the field of small-scale fisheries;
- Carry out activities to identify, analyse and promote policy interventions which facilitate improved socio-economic conditions, livelihood development and decent work for small-scale fishing communities;
- Strengthen GFCM engagement with small-scale fishing communities and establish mechanisms to support organizational development and to promote the exchange of knowledge between the small-scale fisheries associations of the region.

Technical aspects:

- Promote the use of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) as a data collection tool for small-scale fisheries and provide technical assistance in the practical application of the DCRF in the collection of standardized data on small-scale fishing activity;
- Develop indicators to measure the economic and social impacts of small-scale fishing activity on coastal communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and mechanisms to assess the access of small-scale fishers to resources and markets, in light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.b. Efforts should be made to examine the interaction of small-scale fishing with related sectors, particularly fish processing, marine recreational fisheries and tourism;
- Identify relevant parameters and regional characteristics (e.g. dimension of the vessel, gear used, activities of non-vessel based fisheries) of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea with a view to developing a common regional or subregional definition of “small-scale fishing” which connects the fishing activity to the resource harvested;
- Consider interactions between recreational and commercial small-scale fishing activity with a view to identifying sources of conflicts, in particular:
  - Competition for resources, especially where unlicensed “recreational” or “hobby” fishermen compete with commercial fisheries both for the resource (e.g. using nets or pots) and/or by supplying low priced fish to markets; and
  - Competition for space/gear interactions (e.g. fixed nets set close inshore);



- Develop indicators to measure the ecological and economic impacts of marine recreational fishing activity on coastal communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Efforts should be made to examine the interaction of recreational fishing with related sectors, particularly small-scale fisheries and tourism;
- Identify relevant parameters and regional characteristics of Mediterranean and Black Sea marine recreational fishing activities (e.g. hobby fishing, subsistence fishing, leisure fishing, sports fishing, angling and recreational angling), with a view to developing a common regional or subregional definition of “marine recreational fishing” which distinguishes this activity from commercial fishing;
- Evaluate the potential effects of marine recreational fisheries on fish stocks.

#### **Specific terms of reference (2016–2018)**

Institutional aspects:

- Facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the GFCM area of application through the development of national action plans.

Technical aspects:

- Define the elements to be included within a comprehensive region-wide survey on the economic impact of small-scale fisheries and oversee the launch of said survey. This activity aims to develop accurate, timely and complete baseline data on the value and economic impact of small-scale fisheries, with a view to ultimately informing policy interventions.

### **Ad hoc scientific Working Group on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)**

As agreed by the fortieth session of the GFCM, the scientific Working Group on VMEs (WGVME) shall discuss to develop appropriate measures related to the protection of VMEs according to the FAO mandate (UNGA Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72) in the GFCM area of application. The WGVME will also advise the SAC on the subject. To that end, the following actions should be developed:

- ACTION 1: Create the list of Mediterranean VME indicator species, habitats and related features (e.g. seamounts, submarine canyons), by compiling the available scientific information. Data provided by contracting parties and observers and gathered by the GFCM Secretariat should also be considered.
- ACTION 2: Assess the efficiency of existing management measures for the protection of VMEs adopted by other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and states, in order to outline which of these might be applicable to Mediterranean Sea.
- ACTION 3: Suggest targets, actions and milestones to be taken to improve the implementation of VME protection, in accordance with FAO advice.
- ACTION 4: Identify and propose means by which data collection on VMEs can be strengthened, and knowledge about VMEs and fishing impacts improved (e.g. to channel relevant data gathered through the DCRF to the FAO database on VMEs).
- ACTION 5: Identify and define measures to be included in a GFCM recommendation on VME protection to be submitted to the forty-second session of GFCM, including: definition of a VME encounter protocol and scientifically-based move-on rule; impact assessments to determine whether fishing activities do or would have significant adverse impacts on VMEs; the identification of areas where VMEs occur or are likely to occur and closure of these areas to bottom fisheries.

The WGVME will take advantage of the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries (DSF) and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in the Mediterranean Sea (FAO-GFCM Workshop) which will be held in collaboration with the GFCM in Rome (July 2016). Subsequent WGVME meetings will be organized within the annual GFCM work programme and/or the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, according to the needs to advance in achieving the above actions.

General considerations for the FAO-GFCM workshop:

- Since the FAO-GFCM workshop is aiming to provide contributions to assist GFCM in the management of VMEs, the GFCM will request FAO to include as many of the aforementioned actions as possible with a view to submitting the results at the nineteenth session of the SAC.
- In the event that Action 1 cannot be completed by the FAO-GFCM workshop, a dedicated meeting of the WGVME should take place before the nineteenth session of the SAC, since it is crucial to move forward in the implementation of the UNGA Resolutions.
- Considering that the FAO-GFCM workshop will be organized as a multi-stakeholder platform, in order to be as effective as possible, it is suggested that discussions related to Action 1 take place under a specific forum composed of scientists from national and international institutions and experts working on deep-sea habitats.

Lastly, in order to maintain appropriate coordination between UN organizations and to ensure harmonisation of activities, the WGVME may also be supported by information provided by UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA in relation to the implementation of the Dark Habitats Action Plan and to the current process to update the Reference List of Mediterranean habitats.

### **Moderators of the SAC subregional committees**

The moderator shall assist the GFCM Secretariat within the framework of the ongoing process of reorganization of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), which envisages in particular testing the feasibility of the subregional approach to the development of fisheries multiannual management plans in the GFCM area of application.

Under the general supervision of the GFCM Executive Secretary and the technical supervision of the GFCM Secretariat's Officer in charge of fisheries-related matters, and in direct coordination with the SAC Bureau, the moderator is expected to:

- Develop a network of national focal points, having regard to the different tasks of the SAC, and a network of experts from scientific research bodies in the subregion (e.g. national institutes, universities, research centres) having expertise in fields such as fisheries management, stock assessment, fisheries technology, socio-economic aspects of fisheries, etc.;
- Participate in the elaboration and implementation of the SAC work programme in relation to activities associated to fisheries management at the subregional level;
- Support the efforts of the GFCM aimed at strengthening the active participation of scientists from the subregion in the activities of the SAC;
- Contribute to the identification of training and technical assistance needs in the different domains of fisheries;
- Assist the GFCM Secretariat in the establishment of subregional databases to underpin the scientific works of the SAC (e.g. biological parameters, selectivity related issues, discards, socio-economic sciences, etc.);
- Participate in the organization of meetings at the subregional level and, as appropriate, at the regional level;
- Ensure coordination and cooperation with the moderators of other subregional committees in place as well as with relevant SAC focal points;
- Contribute, within his/her field of expertise, to the technical work in support of the work programme of the subregional committees;
- Liaise with the FAO regional projects and with partner organizations in relation to issues of common interest;
- Back the SAC and the GFCM Secretariat in their efforts towards the establishment of multiannual subregional management plans, including stock assessment and other pertinent activities;
- Participate in meetings and relevant activities of the SAC, including in order to present, as appropriate, the outcomes of the work in the subregion. In particular, lodge with the GFCM Secretariat a bimonthly report on the activities carried out and the related achievements.

The work carried out by the consultant in his/her capacity as moderator, including the data and information collected as well as the reports prepared, are the property of GFCM/FAO and should be used with the prior authorization of the GFCM Executive Secretary and in accordance with the confidentiality rules of the organization.

**Pending proposal for a GFCM recommendation on measures concerning recreational fishing activities in the Mediterranean Sea**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*CONSIDERING* that the objective of the Agreement for the Establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve the marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

*RECALLING* that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield;

*CONSIDERING* that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

*CONSIDERING* that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

*CONSIDERING* the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries providing that “States should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures”;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the need to regulate recreational fishing activities to ensure that these activities do not undermine sustainable exploitation of the stocks in the Mediterranean Sea;

*ADOPTS*, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, that:

**PART I**  
**Definitions**

1. The present recommendation shall apply to the area covered by the GFCM Agreement with the exclusion of the Black Sea. This recommendation shall apply without prejudice of stricter measures already adopted by law at the national level.
2. For the purpose of this recommendation, “recreational fisheries” means a non-commercial fishing activity exploiting marine living resources for recreation, tourism or sport.

**PART II**  
**Scientific monitoring and evaluation**

3. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) shall identify in 2017, and present to the Commission for adoption, the list of species for which recreational fisheries or activities have a significant impact on the marine living resources. The SAC will also propose to the Commission appropriate measures for data collection and monitoring of recreational fishery activities.

4. Where recreational fisheries are found to have a significant impact, the GFCM may adopt further measures aimed at strengthening specific management measures for recreational fisheries, such as fishing authorizations, catch declarations, limitation on the use of fishing gear and prohibiting the marketing of fish from recreational fisheries.

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## GFCM autonomous budget for 2017

		US\$	Share of total %
STAFF	Professional staff (9)	1 428 000	56.39 %
	Administrative staff (5)	396 000	15.64 %
	<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>1 824 000</b>	<b>74.73 %</b>
FUNCTIONING	Temporary human resources (security guards, admin. support, overtime)	65 000	2.57 %
	Consultants (including translators of scientific publications)	25 000	0.99 %
	Travel (Staff, Bureau, coordinators, interpreters, experts' DSA and tickets)	105 000	4.15 %
	Training	12 000	0.47 %
	Expendable procurement (including printing of publications)	12 000	0.47 %
	Non-expendable procurement	5 000	0.20 %
	General operating expenses	15 000	0.59 %
	Internal/External services backcharge	165 000	6.52 %
	Task force	90 000	3.55 %
	<b>TOTAL FUNCTIONING</b>	<b>494 000</b>	<b>19.51 %</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL 1 (staff + functioning)</b>		<b>2 318 000</b>	
ANCILLARY	Hospitality and miscellaneous	23 180	
	Participation fund 2.5 %	-	
	<b>SUBTOTAL 2</b>	<b>2 341 180</b>	
	FAO support costs (4.5% of subtotal 2)	105,353	
	<b>SUBTOTAL 3</b>	<b>2 446 533</b>	
	GFCM working capital fund (3.5% of subtotal 3)	85 629	
	<b>AUTONOMOUS BUDGET (US\$)</b>	<b>2 532 162</b>	

**Contributions to the GFCM budget for 2017**  
**(based on 2012–2014 averages)**

Contracting Party	US\$	%	US\$	Index	US\$	Weighted Total	US\$
Albania	23 498	0.93	11 009	1	5 948	19 754	6 541
Algeria	83 492	3.30	11 009	1	5 948	200 943	66 535
Bulgaria	16 957	0.67	11 009	1	5 948		
Croatia	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Cyprus	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Egypt	87 755	3.47	11 009	1	5 948	213 817	70 797
France	129 970	5.13	11 009	20	118 961		
Greece	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Israel							
Italy	129 970	5.13	11 009	20	118 961		
Japan	129 970	5.13	11 009	20	118 961		
Lebanon	20 256	0.80	11 009	1	5 948	9 961	3 298
Libya	104 126	4.11	11 009	10	59 480	101 586	33 636
Malta	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Monaco	11 009	0.43	11 009				
Montenegro	12 239	0.48	11 009			3 713	1 230
Morocco	38 874	1.54	11 009	1	5 948	66 191	21 917
Romania	16 957	0.67	11 009	1	5 948		
Slovenia	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Spain	70 490	2.78	11 009	10	59 480		
Syrian Arab Republic	18 982	0.75	11 009	1	5 948	6 113	2 024
Tunisia	126 071	4.98	11 009	1	5 948	329 536	109 114
Turkey	384 059	15.17	11 009	10	59 480	947 018	313 569
European Union	775 037	30.61	11 009			2 307 460	764 028
		100		149		4 206 094	
	<b>2 532 162</b>		253 216		886 257		1 392 689

Total budget	2 532 162	US\$
Basic fee	10% of total budget	
	253 216	US\$
Number of contracting parties*	23	
Total budget less basic fee	2 278 946	US\$
GDP component	35% of total budget	
	886 257	US\$
Catch component	55% of total budget	
	1 392 689	US\$

\* Contracting parties paying their contributions to the autonomous budget

The fortieth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean as well as the tenth session of the Compliance Committee and the seventh session of the Committee on Administration and Finance was attended by delegates of all 24 contracting parties, as well as delegates of the two cooperating non-contracting parties and two riparian non-contracting parties. Representatives from 15 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were also in attendance. It was the first time in the history of the Commission that full attendance was attained and all the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian States were present together in a regular session. During the session, the Commission granted cooperating non-contracting party status to Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of its increasing involvement in GFCM activities and as a preliminary step towards full membership in due course. Moreover, within the framework of ongoing cooperation with partner organizations, a memorandum of understanding was signed with OceanCare. The Commission was encouraged to strengthen cooperation further, including by providing technical assistance to contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties. This technical assistance would underpin compliance and contribute to the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. A total of seven binding recommendations on measures for the management of fisheries resources in both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea were adopted and dealt with: a regional scheme on port state measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities; the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the Data Collection Reference Framework; further emergency measures in 2017 and 2018 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea; a multiannual management plan for the fisheries exploiting European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily; a minimum conservation reference size for European hake in the Mediterranean Sea; scientific monitoring; management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea and the use of remotely operated vehicles within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red coral. Furthermore, the Commission adopted three resolutions addressing issues such as small-scale fisheries, guidelines for drafting GFCM decisions and a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries. In the field of aquaculture, the Commission acknowledged the first outcomes of the Task Force on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and agreed to progress in particular on shellfish farming, environmental monitoring and indicators to measure progress on aquaculture development. Finally, the Commission adopted its programme of work for the next intersession and approved its budget amounting to US\$2 532 162 for 2017 as well as a number of strategic actions to be funded through extrabudgetary resources. It also unanimously endorsed the renewed Bureaus of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries and of the Working Group on the Black Sea for another two-year term.

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