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**NINTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY  
SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

**Rome, 2, 3 and 9 September 2022**



Report of the  
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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report of the Ninth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-9), held in hybrid format, in person and by videoconference, on 2, 3 and 9 September 2022. The report was prepared by the RSN Secretariat. The material in the appendices is reproduced as submitted.

### ABSTRACT

Forty-four Secretariats of regional fishery bodies (RFBs) participated at the Ninth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-9). The meeting brought together Secretariats of RFBs with diverse mandates from all geographic regions, including FAO and non-FAO regional fishery bodies, marine and inland fishery advisory and management bodies and agreements, the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other invited organizations. RSN-9 took place immediately before and after the Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI-35), which was held from 5 to 9 September 2022. As was the case with COFI, RSN-9 met in hybrid format, in person and virtually, via videoconference, to facilitate the participation of those who could not assist personally. For the first time, the meeting was convened over three days. The meeting allowed participants to exchange views and discuss global processes of particular relevance to RFBs. In addition, RSN-9 provided the opportunity to discuss the development and strengthening of RSN, which included the adoption of the RSN terms of reference and the subsequent amendment of the RSN rules of procedure, as well as a space for reflection on the outcomes of COFI-35 and their implications for regional fishery bodies. The meeting had a high level of participation, which underlined the role of the Network as a unique forum to foster cooperation, facilitate discussion and share experiences.



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABMTs	area-based management tools
ACAP	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
BBNJ	marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
BOBP-IGO	Bay of Bengal Programme-Intergovernmental Organization
CACFish	Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CTMFM	Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front
CWP	Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics
EAF	ecosystem approach to fisheries
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EIFAAC	European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
FIRMS	Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ILBI	international legally binding instrument
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated
IWC	International Whaling Commission
MCS	monitoring, control, and surveillance
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NACA	Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NPAFC	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
OECMs	other effective area-based conservation measures
OSPESCA	Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus
PSC	Pacific Salmon Commission
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RECOFI	Regional Commission for Fisheries
RFAB	Regional Fisheries Advisory Body
RFB	regional fishery body
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization



RoP	Rules of Procedure
RSN	Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network
RSO	regional seas organization
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SSF	small-scale fisheries
TOR	terms of reference
UN	United Nations
DOALOS	Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFSA	United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
WECAFC	Western and Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
VMS	vessel monitoring system



## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The Chairperson Mr Guillermo Compeán, former Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), opened the Ninth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-9) from Rome at 09.00 hours on Friday 2 September 2022.
2. The Chairperson welcomed participants and the secretaries of Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).<sup>1</sup> He also thanked the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the RSN Secretariat for the support they had provided for intersessional activities. He thanked the participants present and those registered participants who could not attend the meeting in-person but followed the meeting online. He informed RSN-9 was his last RSN meeting as Chair and encouraged participants to hold informal consultations to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair.
3. The Chair gave the floor to Manuel Barange, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division at FAO. Mr Barange also welcomed the participants and recalled that FAO has been supporting the regular meetings of RFBs in the margins of sessions of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) since the first meeting of FAO and Non-FAO Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) or Arrangements in February 1999, and reinforced the said support when it officially became the "Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network" (RSN) in 2005. He mentioned that FAO has maintained its direct functional connection with RSN by providing the venue and secretariat services to the Network meetings and intersessional work that has facilitated the expansion of RSN, which has been growing in terms of membership (currently 54 member organizations and partners) and international recognition.

## **MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

4. Forty-four regional fishery bodies (RFBs) attended RSN-9, as well as the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other invited organizations. FAO officers were also in attendance. The list of participants is available in Appendix 5.
5. Mr Piero Mannini, Secretary of RSN and Senior Liaison Officer, FAO, explained the meeting arrangements, particularly in light of the hybrid aspects of the meeting and the COVID restrictions in place at FAO headquarters that required holding the sessions in two different meeting rooms.
6. The Chairperson provided an overview of the agenda, which was extended by one day compared to previous RSN meetings to allow pending issues of interest for RSN members and partners to be addressed. Participants agreed on the meeting arrangements and commended the RSN Secretariat for the organization of the meeting. The meeting further agreed to add agenda item 7.6 on "Update on the BBNJ process: Outcomes of the 5th session".
7. The agenda of the meeting was adopted. It is attached in Appendix 1.

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

8. On behalf of the Chairperson, Mr. Mannini provided a brief update of the intersessional RSN activities since the Eighth RSN meeting (February 2021). During the intersessional period, the RSN Secretariat has:
  - Maintained information sharing with and among members and partners and prepared FAO internal documents on various aspects of the work of FAO and non-FAO RFABs and RFMOs;
  - Established a regular system of circular letters for the RSN Network;

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the name of each RFBs is used only to refer to their secretaries attending the meeting and not to the respective Commission.

- Established and maintained an up-to-date RSN membership contacts and mailing list;
- Revised and updated the contents of FAO/RSN website;
- Revised, updated, and validated in a fully comprehensive manner 53 RFBs (30 RFABs and 23 RFMOs) fact sheets which have been transferred to a new FAO data system;
- Published “The impact of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture – A global assessment from the perspective of regional fishery bodies: Second assessment”;
- Issued the RSN magazine n. 20: “Beyond COVID-19”;
- Compiled RSN magazine n. 21 (in progress): “Ecosystem approach to fisheries”;
- Prepared and published the Report of the 8th RSN Meeting;
- Coordinated and provided input to COFI-35 Working Document “Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture” (Agenda item 11, COFI/2022/9);
- Coordinated and provided input to COFI-35 Information Paper “Additional information on developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture” (Agenda item 11; COFI/2022/INFO/13);
- Supported the meeting of the Drafting Committee on the Terms of Reference of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats’ Network (27 April 2021);
- Supported the meeting of the Drafting Committee of the draft RSN Terms of Reference and RSN Rules of Procedure of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats’ Network (24 February 2022);
- Organized the Meeting of the Regional Fishery Bodies established within the FAO Framework (25 May 2021);
- Organized the 9th Meeting of RSN (September 2022);
- Contributed to the organization of Regional Consultation on the Development of a Coordination Framework between RFBs in the Indian Ocean, Maputo, Mozambique, 22-24 June 2022;
- Liaised and cooperated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and CBD Secretariat;
- Contributed to the publication “FAO and the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) process. Information package for BBNJ delegates”.

9. The meeting congratulated the RSN Secretariat for the work undertaken during the intersessional period and the support provided to RSN members, especially during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

## **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON PARTICULARLY RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER ISSUES**

10. The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) advised that the 12th meeting of its Advisory Committee (August/September 2021) updated ACAP’s best practice advice and guidelines. In particular, it endorsed two additional mitigation measures for pelagic longline fisheries (the Hookpod-mini and the Underwater Bait Setter), and adopted new guidelines for observers and for electronic monitoring. ACAP’s updated the recommendation to reduce seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries is the simultaneous use of weighted branch lines, bird-scaring lines and night setting, or use of one of the assessed hook-shielding or underwater bait setting devices.

11. Marc Taconet, FIRMS Secretary, made a short presentation on the FIRMS. He updated members on the FIRMS role in supporting SDG14.4.1 which implied (i) the support in the collection, collation, and dissemination of catch and effort through regional and global databases such as the release of the

FIRMS Global Tuna Atlas and the support to regional databases through capacity building: Western and Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC); and (ii) the facilitation and promotion of monitoring of all world stocks status and trends; such as the FAO FIRMS and the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF). He also explained the strategic review of FIRMS for the 2020-30 decade decided by the 12th session of the FIRMS Steering Committee held in October 2021.

12. Mr Aureliano Gentile, information manager, gave a presentation on the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Knowledge Base (FishInfo). He reported that they and the RSN Secretariat updated the contents and upgraded 53 RFB fact sheets with a new harmonized data model and design which have become very popular among relevant stakeholders. He further reported that they upgraded 230 VME records of the VME database with a new harmonized data model and design, upgraded 82 fishing gear type fact sheets with a new harmonized data model and design, updated the FAO Fishing Vessel Design Database which contains 223 fishing design vessels. He finally reported on the development of AquaGRIS, the global information system for aquatic genetic resources which includes a searchable registry of primary and secondary farmed types of more than 600 aquaculture species across six taxonomic categories.

13. The DOALOS presented highlights on (i) the Fifteenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) (May 2022) at which one day served as a preparatory meeting for the resumed Review Conference on the UNFSA, which will be held in 2023; (ii) the General Assembly of actions of States and RFMOs to address the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks (November 2022); (iii) the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (Regular Process) that started a series of regional workshops and launched its new social media channels; (iv) and the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (IPC, June 2022) which focused its discussions on the theme “Ocean observing”.

14. The CWP delivered a short presentation on recent events. The CWP Intersessional meetings and CWP 27 took place from 2 to 5 November 2021 and 20-24 June 2022 respectively. The main outcomes of CWP 27 have been (i) the endorsement of the CWP Handbook for aquaculture; (ii) the revision of the catch concept diagram and definitions; (iii) the revision of the catch and effort concept and definitions, including effort measures by gear category; and (iv) the adoption of the term logbook in the concept of CWP core statistics/capture fisheries diagram for logbook.

15. The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) delivered a joint statement on the successful implementation of the International Year of the Salmon Program. A major IYS signature project, the 2022 Pan-Pacific Winter High Seas (HS) Expedition ended with remarkable achievements. Five expeditions vessels, with 72 scientists aboard, from Canada, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America covered more than 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup> to undertake a survey to study Pacific salmon distribution and winter ecology from February–April 2022. They spent 182 days at sea in total including 96 days on survey, completed 126 survey stations, The first results of 2022 Winter HS Expedition will be presented along with other the IYS findings at the IYS Synthesis Symposium ‘Salmon in a Rapidly Changing World: Synthesis of the International Year of the Salmon and a Roadmap to 2030’ to be held in Vancouver, Canada, from October 4-6, 2022. NPAFC finally stated that the Committee on Enforcement adopted TOR of the NPAFC illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) vessel list in June 2022 and will be endorsed at the 30th NPAFC Annual Meeting scheduled in Busan, Republic of Korea in May 2023.

16. The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) informed the meeting that it has now closed 27 designated Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) areas to bottom fishing, including 15 areas to protect sponges, sea pens and corals and 12 seamount areas, making 372 201 km<sup>2</sup> (or 14 percent) of the NAFO Regulatory Area closed to bottom fishing. All seamount areas in the NAFO Regulatory Area at fishable depth (i.e. shallower than 4 000 m) are now closed. NAFO further informed that it has developed methods to assess “significant adverse impacts” (SAI) on VMEs by fishing, using the criteria

listed in the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas. NAFO finally informed that it is currently revising its “precautionary approach framework” whose results are expected in 2023.

17. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) reminded that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Convention, which came into force on 7 April 1982. At the 40th meeting of the Commission (18-29 October 2021), CCAMLR adopted a “Declaration on the Occasion of the Fortieth Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources” in which Members reaffirmed their commitment to the objective of the CAMLR Convention. Two areas of new development may be of interest to the RSN. One is an increasing focus on the krill fishery whose catches have risen in the last three years to the highest level since the early 1980s at about 400 000 t / year. CCAMLR is developing new approaches to ecosystem-based fisheries management in relation to krill which takes implicit and explicit account of ecosystem requirements. There is also a renewed focus on monitoring and mitigating bycatch and incidental mortality in the krill fishery. The second item of note is the decision of the Commission last year to develop TOR for a special meeting on Marine Protected Areas which would continue CCAMLR’s work towards a representative network of MPAs.

18. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) made a short presentation updating on several areas of ICES work relevant to the RSN. ICES noted that 10 advisory principles have been operational for 2 years now to ensure that ICES advice is based on the best available science and data. ICES will also release a stakeholder engagement strategy (pending Council approval) that will clarify the roles of participation of different actors in the ICES network. It further noted that the Fisheries Overviews for all ICES regions and Ecosystem Overviews are available for all regions except the Faroe Islands, which is scheduled in 2023. ICES noted that the rapid development of offshore wind policies and facilities are impacting fisheries across the North Atlantic on which ICES has several growing scientific expert groups. ICES Annual Science Conference will be held in Bilbao, Spain 11-14 September 2023.

19. The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) asserted that despite it is a relatively young and small organization, this year, the SIOFA Secretariat staff has been significantly boosted by the recruitment of a Science Officer, whose main purpose is to coordinate the newly supported scientific programme. Next year, the Secretariat staff will further increase with the recruitment of a Compliance Officer, which is planned to further enhance the organization capabilities in that important space.

20. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) stated that the 68th IWC meeting is scheduled to meet in Portoroz, Slovenia from 13 to 21 October. It will agree on a balanced budget on the basis of a Budget Reform Strategy and on amendments to the structure of the IWC’s committees and their individual TOR, which is the product of four years of discussion following the Independent Panel Report on the IWC Governance Review. It further stated that IWC intersessional report 2018–2022 (2022) is available now online.

21. The Bay of Bengal Programme-Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) commented that it works with FAO extensively in awareness raising and sensitization on the safety and working conditions of the fishers in the region. The BOBP-IGO and FAO are now working on development of a regional action plan on safety and decent working condition of the fishers, which would lead to a concerted action in this area. A joint publication of the FAO and the BOBP-IGO on “Safety at Sea for Small-Scale Fishers” (FAO, 2021) was translated and printed in 18 languages. BOBP-IGO further commented it has planned to implement specific capacity development plans to combat IUU fishing as a part of the BOBLME Phase II project. It finally commented that BOBP-IGO runs a flagship-training programme on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) under which over 150 Government officials and over thousand community participants have been sensitized.

22. The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) stated that it provides advice to 17 member States which have over 30 million square kilometers of ocean, representing over 20 percent of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the planet and supply over a third of the world’s supply of tuna. The Pacific Fisheries Ministers meeting took place early September in Kiribati where they identified maximizing value from fisheries as key to supporting the economic recovery from COVID-19.

Ministers and Officials were attending the annual 19th Forum Fisheries Committee Ministerial (FFCMin19) meeting and the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM3). It finally brought the attention to the FFA business plan 2021–2025.

23. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) stated that its last annual meeting (November 2021) agreed on a new conservation measure for the North Atlantic shortfin mako shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries. An agreement was reached to roll over the multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas, implying a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna of 62 000 tonnes for 2022. In addition, to reduce the fishing mortality of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna, a new shorter FAD fishing closure was agreed upon. It additionally informed that the annual TAC for yellowfin will remain at 110 000 tonnes and that finally, it was decided that intersessional meetings of Panel 1 will be held in 2022 to review existing measures and, inter alia, develop catch limits and associated catch verification mechanisms for 2023. ICCAT finally stated that it has also established new technical working groups to advance work on catch documentation systems, electronic monitoring, and an ad hoc working group to examine labor standards in ICCAT fisheries. The Commission also adopted new measures on transshipment, vessel monitoring system (VMS) measures and vessel listing requirements.

24. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) pointed out that it is celebrating its 70th anniversary. At the last session of GFCM (November 2021) it adopted 35 decisions, including 21 binding recommendations and 14 resolutions. These include management plans and dedicated management measures for 10 fisheries and 2 new fisheries restricted areas, as well as technical mitigation measures for sea turtles, cetaceans, seabirds and elasmobranchs. It also adopted measures to strengthen the compliance and for aquaculture adopted measures addressing the introduction of non-indigenous species and in support of minimal standards for national legislations towards sustainable aquaculture. GFCM updated on actions emerging from the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (November 2021) and brought the attention to the GFCM capacity development programme MedSea4Fish Project launched in 2022 and recalled that GFCM will be executing agency for the upcoming FAO Deep Sea project.

25. The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) joined others in thanking the RSN secretariat for its organization of this meeting. It also recognized the value of the RSN in creating work connections between RFMOs and RFBs and helping to fostering dialogue to share experiences and support each other in navigating the challenges of the last 2 years. SPRFMO is also celebrating its 10 year anniversary. In terms of COVID effects, in addition to the change from in-person formats to virtual and/or hybrid formats one other example of the change in working practices concerns the SPRFMO Scientific Committee. This subsidiary body has gone from convening one intersessional meeting per year pre-covid to convening 24 intersessional meetings this year. This increase in meetings has had very positive effects on the ability of the SC to deliver on its workplan and provide robust scientific advice to the Commission. SPRFMO also updated its jack mackerel measure, updated its record of vessels measure to ensure that the minimum information is available to support effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities continued to accredit new members into the SPRFMO observer programme.

26. The Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA) commented that since its establishment in 1990 by 19 member governments in the Asia-Pacific region, it has worked closely with FAO, other international organizations, and member governments to support the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region. In the last 2 years, the cooperation with FAO and other international organizations includes organizing the Global Conference on Aquaculture Millennium +20, promoting the progressive management pathway for aquaculture biosecurity, and promoting FAO's Blue Transformation initiative. The collaborative activities with NACA members include training in aquaculture technologies, webinars on emerging aquatic diseases, responses to the impact of COVID-19 on aquaculture, culture-based fisheries, etc. The last NACA Governing Council adopted NACA's Strategic Plan (2020–2024).

## **COORDINATION AND COOPERATION AMONG RFBs**

27. The RSN Secretary reported on the on-going initiative to develop regional coordination and cooperation frameworks among RFBs in certain regions which was also requested by the 34th FAO Committee on Fisheries. The First Regional Consultation on the Development of a Coordination Framework among RFBs in the Indian Ocean took place from 22–24 June in Maputo, Mozambique to promote and establish effective regional cooperative frameworks among RFBs to develop concerted approaches on matters of common concern, including on combating IUU fishing. Seven RFBs and two Regional Economic Communities (RECs) relevant to the western Indian Ocean attended the meeting. The Second Regional Consultation is focused on the Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean and is scheduled from 30 November to 2 December 2022 in Accra, Ghana.

28. The RSN Secretary replied to some queries by stating that this initiative also involves RECs and that it will include all relevant stakeholders. He finally added that FAO and participating regional organizations will disseminate the outcome of the regional consultation to RFMO and RFAB members, and relevant stakeholders for endorsement and guidance/support.

29. CBD Secretariat explained the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be submitted for adoption at the 15th meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties (CBD COP 15) in December 2022. This framework will contain a new set of global goals and targets for biodiversity and the wide range of services it provides. A number of RFBs, as well as FAO, have provided robust inputs to the negotiations on the post-2020 framework thus far. CBD also updated on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with regional seas organizations (RSOs) and RFBs which was created by CBD, FAO and UNEP in 2016. Following its first meeting it became a regular forum, to meet every 2 years. This initiative is focused on bringing together RSOs and RFBs to (i) enhance the mutual understanding, (ii) share lessons, both within and across regions, on cross-sectoral collaboration at the regional level, (iii) identify various approaches to enhance coordination and collaboration across RSOs and RFBs (iv) discuss the role of regional organizations and regional collaboration in translating global level commitments to the regional and national levels

30. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) stated that partnership, cooperation and coordination are essential pillars for successful long-term conservation and sustainable use of the marine living resources. It further stated that the Interim Fisheries Coordinating Mechanism (IFCM) comprising WECAFC, CRFM and the Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) was established to facilitate closer cooperation and coordination among these three Caribbean RFBs. Additionally CRFM and OSPESCA also have a formal cooperative agreement which makes possible high level meetings like the Second Joint High-Level Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture from CRFM and OSPESCA member countries (October 2019). CRFM also stated that about 12 joint Working Groups comprising these RFB and other partners have been established under WECAFC as cooperative arrangements to address areas of common interests. It finally stated that the Caribbean RFBs are strengthening cooperation and collaboration with environmental IGOs such the UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

31. The European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) Secretary made reference to the effective collaboration among the organizations of the Joint GFCM/EIFAAC/ICES Working Group on Eels and looked forward to continued collaboration. At EIFAAC 31, held in Ireland on 22–24 June 2022, the Commission requested the development of (technical) guidelines on responsible stocking of fish in inland waters. Given that stocking is an important subject for all inland fisheries RFBs, EIFAAC is seeking collaboration with other RFBs to develop joint guidelines. So far, the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) has shown interest to participate in the development of the guidelines. Other RFBs are invited to join in this activity.

32. GFCM informed the meeting that cooperation with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), ICCAT and IOTC, has enabled the exchange of technical information toward the GFCM Regional VMS and control systems. It further mentioned that technical collaboration and interchange of knowledge and experience has taken place with several RFMOs and advisory bodies, in particular



NAFO, ICES and colleagues from FAO, CBD and the Mediterranean Action Plan of UNEP on area-based management and in particular other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). GFCM commented that it has worked with ICES on methods for the provision of advice in support of decision making, with EIFAAC on European eel and other species of common interest.

33. The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) pointed out that it is working with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Both organizations have a shared interest in Pacific salmon productivity and overlapping geographic areas of focus. The aim is enhancing the current understanding of Pacific Salmon status and trends, climate change impacts and associated management implications; promoting the collection of, and access to, data, models and other information; and identifying gaps in knowledge and needs that should be addressed. It is hoped the MOU will be approved by the respective governing bodies in late 2022 or early 2023.

34. SIOFA informed that it is working on further strengthening its cooperation with relevant organizations in the region, including CCAMLR, SWIOFC, IOC and IOTC, through a series of data exchanges, letters of intent and increased participation in meetings such as those organized by FAO under the RSN.

35. IWC stated that it has submitted a proposed project capsule within the framework of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna II project. The objective of the capsule is to improve the understanding of cetacean bycatch in tuna fisheries – and the available solutions for mitigation – in collaboration with RFMOs, national governments, fishing industry and other stakeholders. The proposed project is geographically focused in two regions: the western-central Pacific and the Indian Ocean. A range of activities are proposed to collaboratively identify and fill data and knowledge gaps and build capacity and awareness of both the issue and the solutions for monitoring and mitigation.

36. FFA informed it has developed strong cooperation links with the CRFM. Both organizations exchange information of common interest which in some cases is crucial to make informed decisions.

37. ICCAT commented that it strengthens its cooperation with other organizations through frequent exchanges and a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC).

38. SPRFMO indicated that the 10th Meeting of the SPRFMO Commission continued to make arrangements for consultation, cooperation, and collaboration with such other organizations by: Renewing the MOU with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS); Extending the Arrangement with CCAMLR; joining the International MCS Network; and, approving SPRFMO's participation in the Deep-Sea Fisheries under the Ecosystem Approach project of FAO funded by GEF.

39. BOBP-IGO commented that one of the key areas where it needs stronger cooperation is on assessment of the status of the fish stocks and their management. It further commented that BOBP-IGO has instituted the BOB Policy Research group, a virtual knowledge network of trans-disciplinary group of experts from the member countries, which will work on mutually agreed regional and international issues. BOBP-IGO has taken steps to formalize its relations with the institutions of higher learning through MOUs, thus facilitating student exchange and inter-institutional cooperation within and across the countries. BOBP-IGO finally added that as a follow-up to the Indian Ocean-RFBs meeting organized by RSN at Mozambique meeting, BOBP has initiated dialogue with few regional bodies and other countries in the region. BOBP-IGO has developed a joint action plan identifying the areas of working together with Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, an IGO with its headquarters at Dhaka, Bangladesh.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) AND RULES OF PROCEDURE (RoP) FOR THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

40. Members debated on the long-standing topic of RSN membership with differing views expressed. The meeting decided to create a list including members and permanent observers as annex I of the RoP. CCAMLR agreed to be included in the RFMO list in Annex 1 albeit CCAMLR is a conservation organisation with only some of the attributes of an RFMO since CCAMLR activities have a broader scope. Participants also decided to give full powers to the interim Chair and Vice-chair. Finally, due to the special nature of RSN, they decided that decisions will be non-binding, consensual and by electronic communication during the intersessional period. The adopted RoP are included as Appendix 2.

41. After long discussions, the participants decided to remove the section “definitions” from the RSN draft TOR since they could not reach any consensus in this regard. CECAF mentioned that there was no reference to “languages” to which the RSN Secretary responded that it was due to the lack of funding. The adopted TOR are included as Appendix 3.

## **PRESENTATION, REPORTING AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES OF COMMON INTEREST**

42. Ms Sarah Fagnani, fishing operations and technology Specialist, gave a presentation on the regional fishery bodies and small-scale fisheries: Scaling up the engagement of small-scale fisheries in regional management processes. She pointed out that on the occasion of the 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), a desk study on small-scale fisheries (SSF), with focus on RFMOs have been selected on the basis of straddling or shared stocks and highly migratory fish stocks simultaneously being targeted by large-scale industrial and SSF, and/or where SSF catch the majority or consistent amount of stock/species under the organizations’ mandate. She added that selected RFMOs have been chosen in relation to the relevance of SSF to coastal communities to food security, livelihoods and economic development, including when coastal States are least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The said Desk review will be complemented by key informant interviews. The meeting welcomed the initiative.

43. In response to several queries from several members, Ms Fagnani argued that tuna is also included in SSF managed by relevant RFMOs because tuna represents less volume but has more value. She additionally agreed that SSF is important for ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and that unfortunately indigenous people are not included in the study. CRFM stated that it has an action plan in process on SSF to reduce fish import by 2025 in order to benefit local consumption and food security. SPRFMO finally remarked that international cooperation is essential and brought the example of the agreement signed Peru due to its large SSF fleet.

44. Ms Tarub Bahri, FAO Fishery Resources Officer, gave a presentation on “Regional Fishery Bodies and climate change: Status of climate adaptive fisheries management”. The purpose of the presentation was to inform about FAO's work on climate change, highlight areas of relevance for RFBs, and explore collaboration opportunities with the RSN. The overall goal was to discuss the current status of mainstreaming climate change in transboundary fisheries management. She gave an overview of FAO's work on building knowledge base on climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation responses, as well as a snapshot of the FAO field climate change programme on fisheries and aquaculture. The presentation recalled that species distribution and richness are highly impacted by climate change both in marine and inland systems, with consequent governance implications. She also provided a summary of literature findings on actions taken by a selected number of RFBs on climate change, showing that while there is a high level of awareness of climate change impacts, there is room to enhance concrete climate action in transboundary fisheries management.

45. The presentation was welcomed by the meeting and raised high level of interest in several RFBs. The meeting suggested carrying out a more exhaustive review of RFBs’ work on climate change. The meeting further suggested that the RSN continues interacting on climate change topics in future sessions and during the intersessional period, so as to allow more in-depth conversations and exchanges on

lessons learned and good practices. The meeting called for future collaboration among members of the RSN as well as between FAO and specific RFBs. The meeting finally suggested that FAO provides a methodological framework for data limited contexts.

46. PSC pointed out that as part of the International Year of Salmon, PSC is incorporating environmental indicators in salmon management. Since the North Pacific ecosystem experiences climate change, it is widely recognized that salmon productivity and ecology are changing as well. Salmon forecasting and assessment methods should incorporate this change as much as possible. To this end, PSC: (i) released a report introducing the concept of (and limitations to) incorporating environmental indicators in salmon assessment models which summarizes discussions from the workshop on recommendations for future action (11 May 2021); (ii) undertook a comprehensive review of the subregional and species-specific management regimes executed under PSC treaty to assess the extent to which environmental indicators are used in assessment and forecast methods; (iii) launched a series of monthly seminars on climate change, Pacific salmon, and associated management challenges.

47. NACA called for a common voice for public awareness on the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to mitigating climate change trends even though the sea and inland waters store a large amount of carbon dioxide and excess heat. Aquaculture plays an important role in mitigating global warming, which cannot be ignored. NACA is willing to cooperate with other interested international organizations and countries on this matter.

48. Several participants informed about a number of forthcoming initiatives that could contribute to strengthening climate adaptive fisheries management, namely the thematic session of the Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front on “Climate Change and Biodiversity in the Common Fishing Zone” (14–16 November 2022), the ICES-PICES-FAO 5th International Symposium on the Effects of Climate Change on the World’s Oceans (17–21 April 2023, Bergen, Norway) (<https://www.ices.dk/events/symposia/Pages/eccwo5.aspx>), the GFCM scientific session under the Forum on Fisheries Science on the incorporation of climate change in fisheries management (2024).

49. Ms Amber Himes-Cornell, FAO fishery officer, gave a presentation on the area-based fisheries management (ABFM) in the post 2020: What role can RFBs have in recognizing OECMs? She recalled that FAO COFI34 noted the relevance of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) to achieving a number of SDGs and global biodiversity targets, and requested FAO to produce and disseminate practical guidelines to support Members in their identification and implementation. She pointed out that RFBs may play a critical role in OECM identification by establishing regional processes for recognizing OECMs, by convening countries to facilitate technical discussion on regional issues, by sharing lessons learned/experiences, by encouraging transboundary conservation and encouraging Ministries of Fisheries to engage in the OECM process. She added that RFMOs may also play the critical role in designing and implementing their own spatial measures and including OECMs in regional and management including in the BBNJ.

50. CBD recalled that OECMs are not only related to sustainable use but also to conservation since it is a significant component of EAF. It further recalled that FAO is uniquely placed to assist in the OECMs implementation. NEAFC encouraged other members to give visibility to their work in this area. GFCM commented that FAO guidelines may enlighten States since at the moment they are hesitating about the potential benefits of OECMs.

51. The team leader of FAO’s Fishing Technology and Operations Team (NFIFO), Raymon van Anrooy, made a presentation on Safety at sea and decent working conditions in fisheries. He explained that fisheries is still the most dangerous occupation and that the new estimate of the annual number of fatalities in fisheries has increased to over 100 000 fishers. Fisheries management by RFBs can reduce risks in fisheries (e.g. through safety training and equipment requirements) and increase risks for fishers (e.g. through measures that affect negatively vessel stability, delay maintenance or cause a race to fish). Special reference was made to four international binding instruments that specifically promote safety in fisheries: The 2007 Working in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the 1995 Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel Convention (STCW-F) and the 2012 Cape Town Agreement of the International Maritime Organization

(IMO) and the 2009 Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) of FAO. He noted that ratification and implementation of the ILO and IMO conventions requires assistance of RFBs. The FAO-IMO-ILO policy brief on “Joining forces to shape the fisheries sector of tomorrow” provides useful additional information. The policy brief is available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb0627en>

52. He also presented the main findings of the recent FAO study “Regional fisheries bodies and their role in improving safety and decent work on fishing vessels”. Secretariats of 37 RFBs participated in a survey, which showed that safety at sea is a priority or important for 86 percent of the RFBs. Decent working conditions on board of their fishing vessels are a priority or important for nearly 70 percent of the RFBs. Management measures, especially for safety of observers, are often the entry point for work on safety and decent work standards by RFMOs. RFB secretariats support safety in fisheries through trainings and manuals, awareness raising materials, and fisheries management measures. RFB secretariats consider the development of action plans necessary to integrate safety and decent work better in the management of fishing fleets under their mandates.

53. He finally shortly gave an overview of FAO activities on safety at sea and decent work in fisheries and offered to technically support RFB Secretariats’ work on improving safety and decent work in fisheries with awareness raising and capacity building activities, as well as advice on guidelines, safe vessel design, legal assistance, and with the introduction of requirements for insurance and social protection for crew.

54. BOBP-IGO expressed appreciation for the collaboration with FAO on awareness creation, capacity building and action planning on safety at sea in fisheries. He added that specific risk transfer mechanisms, such as insurance, need to be further developed for small-scale fisheries to address the needs. CCAMLAR referred to the specific requirements for insurance of vessels operating in polar environments, and that maritime authorities and search and rescue agencies are highly interested to collaborate with fisheries on vessel safety. WECAFC, RECOFI and CACFish expressed appreciation for the capacity building support provided by FAO on safety for small-scale fishers, train-the-trainers sessions on safety at sea, advocacy on labour conditions and fisheries insurance development.

55. The meeting noted that cross sectoral approaches are needed and that climate change requires adaptation in small-scale fisheries, particularly on the aspect of safety. FFA and CRFM referred to the importance of safety and decent working conditions for their regions, that binding instruments supporting safety and decent work on small-scale fishing vessels are lacking and that ratification of the current international fishing safety instruments for industrial fishing fleets is low. COPESCAALC informed the RSN of the many dive accidents among conch and lobster fishers in the Central American and Caribbean regions. The meeting agreed that joint efforts will be required to create awareness on this problem among fishers and to provide guidance on how to reduce the number of accidents in diving.

56. Kim Friedman, FAO Senior Fishery Resources Officer, gave a presentation on “CITES listing of commercial aquatic species: Opportunities and challenges for RFBs in CITES CoP19, Panama 2022”. He explained that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Appendix I, lists species threatened with extinction while appendix II lists species not necessarily now threatened with extinction, may become so unless international trade in specimens of such species is subject to strict regulation in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. The role of FAO is advising whether scientific data and technical information “meets” the CITES listing criteria. He further explained that CITES Parties have shown a growing interest and confidence in listing aquatic species in CITES appendices despite the fact that CITES delegations are typically somewhat removed from the fishery sector. He added that CITES Parties need greater awareness of RFB work and their conservation efforts and that there are opportunities for RFBs to be involved in areas that overlaps with CITES’ interest.

57. The meeting agreed that it is necessary to have a common voice to advocate for the fisheries sector and bring the message that there is no need to choose between sustainable use or conservation as both are compatible. CITES Secretariat recalled that all RFBs have been invited to work with the CITES Secretariat to improve coordination and synergies, but that there was scope to improve this cooperation.

58. The RSN Secretary and DOALOS reported on the new agenda item: “7.6 Update on the BBNJ process: Outcomes of the 5th session”. They informed the meeting that the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (General Assembly resolution 72/249) (the BBNJ process) held its latest session took place in August 2022 and will be resumed in the near future. DOALOS commented that by the end of the session, the Chair delivered a new refreshed text, and also commented that plenary sessions are available at the UN TV, as well as the summaries by the facilitators.

59. NEAFC commented that RFBs may play an important technical role in some elements of the international legally binding instrument (ILBI) package like area-based management tools (ABMTs) or environmental impact assessments (EIA) but only a few States are aware of this, which has a negative impact in the drafting process. ICCAT encouraged RSN secretariat to keep RSN members updated on the ongoing BBNJ process negotiations and entrust it with giving visibility to RFBs work. Mr Mannini recalled the booklet: “FAO and the BBNJ process” (FAO, 2020) which puts special emphasis to RFBs and was presented during the Fifth BBNJ session.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF RFBs’ PERFORMANCE REVIEWS: COMMUNICATION OF IMPROVEMENTS AND EFFECTIVENESS**

60. The Chair invited the meeting to consider current experiences on implementation of performance reviews, including communication of improvements and effectiveness.

61. CCAMLR updated the meeting that it undertook the first performance review in 2008 (CCAMLR, 2008) which resulted in wide-ranging recommendations that were taken up in the Commission and Scientific Committee. The second performance review of CCAMLR was conducted during the 2016/17 intersessional period at which it evaluated, among others, the implementing the recommendations from the First Performance Review and other recommendations to accommodate ongoing matters, including marine protected areas, the fight against IUU fishing and supporting measures to accompany compliance and implementation matters.

62. CECAF stated that an independent review of its performance was conducted, during 2011, through interviews with key stakeholders and desk study and was presented to the 20th session of CECAF. The main conclusions and recommendations focused on CECAF area of competence, stocks, participation of members, communications or human and financial resources among others. CECAF members decided that CECAF should remain an RFB under article VI of the FAO Constitution but more support is needed.

63. NASCO commented that its third performance review is ongoing and the independent review panel is expected to finalize it in 2023. NASCO asked other members to share information about performance review practices, methodology and ways of implementation and regretted that neither FAO guidelines nor performance indicators are available.

64. SPRFMO explained that its first performance review was completed in December 2018. The Panel identified a number of findings and recommendations for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to consider related to MCS, increase Secretariat staff, financial resources, stocks and on how the organisation might address its future challenges. All recommendations have been fully addressed and the Commission will discuss plans for the 2nd performance review during its 2023 meeting.

65. SIOFA affirmed that as this year marks the first 10 years of SIOFA, a performance review process has been started and will be soon underway.

66. IOTC stated that a performance review is carried out every five years in line with the recommendations of the Kobe process. To this end, Technical Committee on Performance Review was established to prepare a Work Plan with concrete actions on the recommendations of the Performance Review Panel Report. This Committee has proven critical for the said review and the implementation process.

67. PSC informed that in early 2011, the Commission created a Steering Committee (two Commissioners from each country) to launch and guide the external review. The PSC performance review assessed performance of the Commission on the financial execution of the Secretariat in supporting the work of the Commission; the Commission procedures; and the information exchange between the Commission and the Secretariat. It commented that each RFMO considering performance reviews will need a custom-tailor approach to maximize feasibility and acceptance of the findings. He further commented it is important to set up a tracking group for the recommendations. PSC is ready to share the experience.

68. NAFO pointed out that at its 39th Annual Meeting in 2017, the Organization decided to review the Organization's performance with regard to its mandate and objectives. The review was completed in 2018 and assesses NAFO's performance during the period 2011-2017, with special attention to the follow-up to the recommendations stemming from the 1st Performance Assessment Report (PR1) which was undertaken in 2011.

## **DISCUSSION ON RSN FOCUS PRIORITIES AND PROPOSED INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

69. The RSN Secretary kindly requested the meeting to provide a list of priorities for the intersessional period taking into account the limited resources. The meeting pointed out that RSN has a great potential which should be better exploited. It further added that among other tasks, the RSN Secretariat should reinforce the exchange of information and lessons learned among members and keep raising public awareness of RSN and RSN Members' work.

## **RSN CHAIR'S STATEMENT TO COFI-35**

70. The meeting agreed to work by electronic correspondence with the assistance of the RSN Secretariat which was entrusted with compiling the participants' views and bring them together in a consolidated text that was finally submitted to the Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 35) under the Written Correspondence Procedure (WCP). The RSN Chair's statement to COFI-35 is attached as Appendix 4.

## **REVIEW OF COFI-35 OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION ON THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR RFABS/RFMOS**

71. The RSN Secretary presented this agenda item and informed the meeting that COFI-35 had acknowledged the work of RFBs and RSN. The Committee highlighted the key role of RFMOs, RFABs and other regional initiatives for fisheries and aquaculture sustainability. He further noted that the Committee mandated FAO to continue providing support for RFMOs/RFABs, including through RSN and to develop cross-sectoral cooperation between RFMOs/RFABs and regional seas conventions and programmes, as well as urging Members to engage effectively in all RFMOs to which they are parties.

72. The RSN Secretary further reported on some strong outcomes by COFI-35 with impact in the work of RFBs: (i) endorsement of a new COFI Subcommittee of Fisheries Management; (ii) endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment; (iii) significant emphasis on Small Scale Fisheries throughout the meeting and report, and recommendation of a SSF Forum to be conducted biennially before COFI; (iv) support for the Blue Transformation vision and for making it the focus of a very well received SOFIA report; (v) strong support for global aquaculture development alongside effective Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture, expected to be endorsed in March 2023 at the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (SCA); (vi) significant focus on RFAB/RFMOs, not only but particularly in relation to the new WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies, among others.

73. Concern was expressed that at some points of the COFI agenda not all observers who wished to speak were given the opportunity

## **ELECTION OF RSN CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

74. The meeting agreed to elect the RSN Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the next two terms. Mr Darius Campbell, NEAFC Secretary was appointed as Chair and Ms Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen, FFA Director General, Vice-chair. However, at the kind request of Mr Campbell, it was decided that the two would operate jointly as RSN Co-Chairs.

75. The meeting expressed its gratitude to Mr Guillermo Compeán (IATTC) and Mr Yugraj Singh Yadava (BOBP-IGO), outgoing Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson respectively, for their work and support to the Network.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

76. The meeting commended the RSN Bureau for extending the RSN by one day before holding the COFI session and arranging the hybrid format for those participants who could not attend the meeting in-person. The meeting agreed that future RSN sessions will last two and half days, divided into: two days before the opening of COFI and half a day just before its closing. Members also supported to keep the hybrid format.

77. The meeting also thanked the Government of Japan for its support for the RSN intersessional activities.

## **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

78. The meeting agreed that the report would be prepared by the RSN Secretariat and adopted electronically.

## **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

79. Mr Guillermo Compeán closed the meeting on Friday 9 September 2022 at 13.00 hours (Rome time).

## **AGENDA OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

(Hybrid meeting)

2, 3 and 9 September 2022 (09:00-17:00 hours Central European Time)<sup>2</sup>

MEETING PLACE: FAO HQ

### **First Session, Friday 2 September 2022**

Room: Philippines (C277) and Ethiopia (C285)

From 09:00 hours to 17:00 hours

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Meeting arrangements
- 3) Adoption of the Agenda
- 4) Presentation of reports:
  - 4.1. Report of the Chairperson
  - 4.2. Reports from members on particularly relevant developments related to their organizations and other issues
- 5) Coordination and cooperation among RFBs
- 6) Presentation and discussion of proposed texts:
  - 6.1. Terms of Reference for the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network
  - 6.2. Rules of Procedure for the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network
- 7) Presentation, reporting and discussion of issues of common interest:
  - 7.1. Desk study on regional fisheries bodies and small-scale fisheries

### **Second Session, Saturday 3 September 2022**

Room: Philippines (C277) and Ethiopia (C285)

From 09:00 hours to 17:00 hours

(Agenda item 7 cont'd)

- 7.2. Regional Fishery Bodies and climate change: status of climate adaptive fisheries management.
- 7.3. Area-based fisheries management in the Post-2020: What role can RFBs have in recognizing OECMs?
- 7.4. Safety at sea and decent working conditions in fisheries
- 7.5. CITES listing of commercial aquatic species: Opportunities and challenges for RFBs in CITES CoP19, Panama 2022
- 7.6. Update on the BBNJ process: Outcomes of the 5th session.

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<sup>2</sup> Rescheduled from 11 and 17 July 2020.



- 8) Implementation of RFBs' performance reviews: communication of improvements and effectiveness
- 9) Discussion on RSN focus priorities and proposed intersessional activities
- 10) RSN Chair's statement to COFI-35

**Third Session, Friday 9 September 2022**

Room: King Faisal (D263) and Ethiopia (C285)

From 09:30 hours to 12:00 hours

- 11) Review of COFI-35 outcomes and discussion on their implications for RFABs/RFMOs
- 12) Election of RSN Chair and Vice-Chair
- 13) Other matters

**APPENDIX 2**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE  
FOR THE  
REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

**Membership**

1. Members consist of Regional Fishery Body (RFB) Secretariats, as listed in Annex I, which normally delegate their chief executive or an alternate to participate in the Network, as defined in the terms of reference of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN). Annex I may be updated as the membership evolves.

**Officers**

2. The Network shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its Members for a term that includes two formal meetings of the Network. In normal circumstances this will be for a period of four (4) years.

3. In the absence of consensus, the Chair and the Vice-Chair shall be elected by a majority vote of those present at the RSN meeting.

4. The Chair, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair, shall preside at meetings of the Network, intervene for the RSN based on the RSN discussion at the sessions of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event of the Chair and the Vice-Chair not being able to preside at a meeting, the Network shall appoint another representative from among its Members to take the Chair for that meeting.

5. In the event of the Chair and the Vice-Chair vacating their RSN role or their RFB positions intersessionally, the RSN Secretary shall invite an interim chair to execute all associated duties and preside at the next meeting of the Network. That interim chair shall solicit nominations for replacement officers intersessionally and seek to elect new officers under the agenda for that meeting.

6. The FAO provides the RSN Secretary and necessary staff who shall perform such duties as the Network may require. Such duties include, but are not limited to, support to the meetings of the Network, maintenance of the Network's web pages, maintaining a list of active members, and any intersessional work.

**Meetings**

7. The Network shall hold meetings in association with the biennial meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries.

8. The biennial meetings of the Network shall be convened in Rome.

9. Notice of the date and venue of each meeting of the Network shall normally be communicated at least two (2) months in advance of the meeting to all Members and to such non-members as may have been invited to participate in the next meeting of the Network under paragraph 14 and 15.

10. Intersessional ad hoc meetings may be convened at global and regional levels as decided by the members.

11. The RSN will establish, when deemed appropriate, working groups to review or examine specific issues and report back to the RSN.

**Non-Members**

12. Fisheries related institutions and arrangements, including formal networks, as listed in Annex I shall be accorded permanent observer status for RSN meetings.

13. Meetings of the Network shall not be open to public participation.

14. Participation by non-members (other than permanent observers) in the meetings of the Network

shall be considered by the Chair in consultation with Members if the non-member's presence would aid discussion of particular agenda items.

15. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 17 below, any non-member who is invited to attend a meeting of the Network, may submit information and, subject to the direction of the Chair, participate in discussion at a meeting of the Network.

16. In exceptional circumstances, the Network may decide that particular agenda items at that meeting require meeting attendance to be for Members only.

### **Agenda and documents**

17. The Chair, in consultation with the secretary, shall prepare a provisional agenda and shall normally circulate it at least two (2) months in advance of the meeting to all Members and non-members invited to attend the meeting.

18. Members may request the Chair to insert an item in the provisional agenda. The Chair shall thereupon circulate the proposed item to all Members of the Network, together with any accompanying documents.

19. The first item on the provisional agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda. The Network, in its meeting may, by general consent, amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item.

20. Documents not already circulated shall be distributed with the provisional agenda, or as soon as possible thereafter

### **Decisions**

21. Decisions of the Network shall be non-binding and shall be taken by consensus of those members present at the meeting.

22. Decisions of the Network taken intersessionally shall be adopted by consensus of members which respond to electronic communications circulated by the Chair.

### **Reports of meetings**

23. A draft report of the meeting will be circulated electronically for comments after the meeting.

24. The Network shall approve the report of the meeting electronically.

25. Reports of Meetings of the Network shall be placed on the Network's website.

26. The Network shall determine the procedures in regard to press communiqués.

### **Amendment of Rules**

27. The Network may, by consensus, amend its Rules of Procedure.

Proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure must be circulated to Members, through the Chair, at least four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting at which they will be.

## **Annex I of the RSN Rules of Procedure**

### **LIST OF RSN MEMBERS AND PERMANENT OBSERVERS**

**As of September 2022**

#### **RSN MEMBERS**

##### **Regional fisheries management organizations**

CACFish: Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission

CCAMLR: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

CCSBT: Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna

CTMFM: Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front

GFCM: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

ICCAT: International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission

IWC: International Whaling Commission

LVFO: Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization

NAFO: Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

NASCO: North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

NEAFC: North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

NPFC: North Pacific Fisheries Commission

PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission

RECOFI: Regional Commission for Fisheries

SEAFO: South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization

SIOFA: Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement

SPRFMO: South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

WCPFC: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

##### **Regional fisheries advisory bodies**

APFIC: Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission

ATLAFCO: Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

BCC: Benguela Current Commission

BOBP-IGO: Bay of Bengal Programme–Intergovernmental Organization

CECAF: Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic

CIFAA: Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa

COPPESAALC: Commission for Small-scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean

COREP: Regional Commission of Fisheries of Gulf of Guinea

CRFM: Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism  
 EIFAAC: European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission  
 FCWC: Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea  
 FFA: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency  
 GLFC: Great Lakes Fishery Commission  
 LCBC: Lake Chad Basin Commission  
 LTA: Lake Tanganyika Authority  
 MRC: Mekong River Commission  
 NAMMCO: North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission  
 OLDEPESCA: Latin American Organization for Fishery Development<sup>3</sup>  
 OSPESCA: Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus  
 SEAFDEC: Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center  
 SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
 SRFC: Subregional Fisheries Commission  
 SWIOFC: Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission  
 WECAFC: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

#### **RSN PERMANENT OBSERVERS**

ACAP: Agreement on the conservation of albatross and petrels  
 ACFR: Advisory Committee on Fishery Research  
 CCPS: Permanent Commission for the South Pacific  
 CWP: Coordinated Working Party on Fishery Statistics  
 FIRMS: Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System  
 GESAMP: Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection  
 ICES: International Council for the Exploration of the Sea  
 NACA: Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia and the Pacific  
 PICES: North Pacific Marine Science Organization  
 RAA: Red de acuicultura de las Americas  
 United Nations, Specialized Agencies of the United Nations and Related Organizations

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<sup>3</sup> Currently non-active

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FOR THE  
REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

**Background**

**The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN)** was established in the margins of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 1999 to facilitate exchange of information and identification of common interests among Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and Arrangements (RFMO/As) through FAO. RSN has agreed the following:

**Terms of Reference  
for the  
Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network**

**1. Legal Status**

The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network is a forum organized with the support of FAO with functional autonomy from each Regional Fishery Body (RFB) to serve the common interests of the member organizations. The RSN is a platform for the exchange of information and identification of common interests among RFB's and the intergovernmental organizations they liaise with. The RSN does not make decisions binding on its members nor represent individual members.

**2. Seat**

The RSN Secretariat is located at the FAO headquarters in Rome. FAO provides the secretariat of the Network, including supporting staff for the convening of its meetings and, among others, is responsible for meeting logistics, oversight and functioning.

**3. Areas of work**

The RSN will encourage information exchange and the identification of common interests among RSN member secretariats, in particular RSN will:

- i. identify and address common challenges and constraints faced by the Secretariats in achieving goals of the member organizations;
- ii. develop strategies and mechanisms to address those challenges and constraints;
- iii. share experiences and lessons learned;
- iv. foster and facilitate cooperation and collaboration, and improve the effectiveness, of RFBs secretariats;
- v. raise public awareness of the importance of RFABs, RFMO/As, and the RSN;
- vi. advocate for RSN members when requested;

- vii. promote the definition of common standards and policies related to responsible fisheries, RSN member administration, and correlated issues;
- viii. promote recommended practices;
- ix. convene its meetings on agreed schedules and intersessionally as appropriate;
- x. provide the appropriate support to its members, as required, including in terms of the necessary coordination and representation of RSN members in international fora and processes, such as COFI and others;
- xi. facilitate exchange of information, including through the production and distribution of a newsletter and the operation of an updated website; and
- xii. undertake other activities to achieve its purposes as agreed by the members.

#### **4. Principles**

The RSN will promote respect, mutual goodwill, and transparency, accord each other all reasonable exchange of information and assistance as expected among institutions committed to the conservation and management of capture fisheries and aquaculture resources and their related ecosystems.

The RSN Secretariat will operate according to FAO rules and procedures.

#### **5. RSN structure**

The secretariats of all RFBs that have joined the RSN delegate their chief executive or their alternate to participate in the Network. These participants elect a Chair and Vice-Chair who serve for a fixed term as outlined in the RSN Rules of Procedure. The FAO provides a Secretary and his/her staff. The Chair (or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair) of the RSN works closely with the Secretary of the RSN to plan meetings as required and to set the agenda, as well as the other activities to be carried out within the framework of the Network. The Chair may be consulted in the implementation of decisions or recommendations taken by consensus at the RSN meetings.

#### **6. Meetings**

The RSN meets periodically in the margins of every COFI session, according to the RSN Rules of Procedure. However, intersessional *ad hoc* meetings may be convened at global and regional level.

The RSN will establish, when deemed appropriate, working groups to review or examine specific issues and report back to the RSN.

#### **7. TORs Revision**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed upon request of ten Members to make changes, as deemed necessary, which will be submitted to the FAO RSN Secretary for their circulation among all members of the RSN no later than two months prior to any RSN meeting in accordance with the RSN Rules of Procedure.

## STATEMENT FROM THE RSN'S CHAIR TO COFI-35

### COFI/2022. Agenda item 11. Document COFI/2022/9

#### Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture

Mr Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network, also known as RSN<sup>4</sup>, was established in 1999 as an FAO-led initiative, and now brings together the secretariats of 54 regional fishery bodies (RFBs) and partner organizations, including 11 FAO RFBs. Since its inception, RSN meets regularly in the margins of COFI meetings, with the support of FAO. FAO also provides the Network with a part-time Secretariat which allows it to maintain joint contacts and activities during the intersessional period.

Twenty years after its establishment I am pleased to report that RSN has evolved not only in terms of membership and participation but, in particular, as a special technical forum to facilitate and promote the exchanges of views, information, and experiences between the different secretariats concerning the issues of common concern. The RSN does not make binding decisions on its members, nor does it receive financial support from its members.

At present the network is gradually becoming a coordination mechanism for the undertaking important activities: firstly, research and publication of technical information related to RFBs and secondly, giving more visibility to the work of RFBs within the international community.

I would like to mention a few examples of RSN outputs. For instance, the RSN Magazine<sup>5</sup> started as a short newsletter and is now a detailed publication of contributions from the secretariats, academics, UN agencies, and research centers. The RSN secretariat has recently fostered technical publications related to RFBs providing an overview of the work of the world's regional fisheries management organizations and advisory bodies<sup>6</sup>, and a cooperative assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture – A global assessment from the perspective of regional fishery<sup>7</sup> bodies<sup>8</sup>.

FAO and the RSN secretariat have also created and regularly updates in a fully comprehensive manner 54 RFBs fact sheets<sup>9</sup>. These fact sheets are published on a dedicated FAO web page as a heavily cited and reliable source of information on each RFB among academics, IGOs, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Last Friday and Saturday 2 and 3 of September, prior to COFI-35, 43 members of the Network participated in the 9th meeting of the RSN<sup>10</sup>. This represents 75 percent of the current regional fisheries management organizations and advisory bodies of the world. Crucial topics on the international agenda on fishery and aquaculture governance at both the global and regional scale were discussed. These included the impact of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture sustainability, area-based management tools including OECMs, safety at sea and decent working conditions, the relevance of the RFB performance review practices, and a revised Terms of Reference and Rules of

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/rsn>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/rsn/magazine>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/publication/262004?lang=en>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/publication/268452?lang=en>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/publication/281600?lang=en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/organization/search>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/meeting/41363>



Procedure for the RSN. The report of the meeting will be prepared and disseminated by the RSN Secretariat via the FAO website.

All of this occurs with limited financial resources from FAO, which remains as the chief concern and constraint to the further development of the Network. In this regard, I wish to gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the European Union and Japan, which allowed support for the establishment (through FAO and RSN) of regional coordination frameworks among RFBs in the Western Indian Ocean and Central Eastern Atlantic Ocean.

Mr Chair,

I would like to conclude by noting that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. The regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework that encompasses the whole ecosystems and their efficient preservation and protection, while providing opportunities for participating states to sustainably benefit from the services they render.

In this respect, I would like to highlight the uniqueness of RSN Network that provides an international forum with which to convey global policies to the regional and individual country level and help ensure their implementation at the regional level. This is of special importance at a time when an increased awareness through the international community should be increasingly aware of the essential role played by RFBs for the conservation and sustainable management of all living aquatic resources. Therefore, in order to continue to improve their performance, RFBs should be further strengthened through the global processes.

On behalf of all the inter-governmental organization members of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network, I wish to thank you, COFI, the COFI bureau and FAO for the positive consideration given to the RSN and reiterate my hope that the recognition of the value of this network as an important tool to reach the goals and commitments identified and adopted by COFI will allow for its consolidation and further development in the future.

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Forty-four regional fishery bodies (RFBs) participated at the Ninth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-9). The meeting brought together RFBs with diverse mandates from all geographic regions, including FAO and non-FAO regional fishery bodies, marine and inland fishery advisory and management bodies, the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) and other invited organizations. RSN-9 followed the Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI-35), which was held from 5 to 9 September 2022. As was the case with COFI, RSN-9 took place in hybrid format, in presence and virtually, via videoconference, to facilitate the participation to those who could not attend in person. The meeting was convened over three days. The meeting allowed participants to exchange views and discuss both global fisheries management and development issues in aquaculture, as these related to regional and global processes of particular relevance to RFBs. In addition, RSN-9 provided the opportunity to discuss the development and strengthening of the RSN, which included the adoption of the RSN terms of reference and the subsequent amendment of the RSN rules of procedure, as well as a space for reflection on the outcomes of COFI-35 and their implications for regional fishery bodies. The meeting had a high level of participation, which underlined the role of the network as a unique forum in which to foster cooperation, facilitate discussion and share experiences.

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