



FCWC

Fisheries Committee for
the West Central Gulf of Guinea



REPORT OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF THE FISHERIES COMMITTEE FOR THE WEST CENTRAL GULF OF GUINEA (FCWC)

Cotonou, Benin

13 December 2019



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REPORT OF THE 12TH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF THE FISHERIES COMMITTEE FOR THE WEST CENTRAL GULF OF GUINEA (FCWC)

OPENING CEREMONY

1. The 12th Session of the Conference of Ministers for the Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) took place at the Novotel Hotel Cotonou, Benin on 13th December, 2019. Representatives of ministers in charge of Fisheries from the Six (6) Member States namely Republic of Benin, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Liberia, and Togolese Republic and the Federal Republic of Nigeria attended the meeting.

2. Representatives of the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO), Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT), the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) Zone F and Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) attended the meeting as observers. Also in attendance were representatives from the network of women in fisheries from Benin and FENAPECHE, a fisherman's group also based in Benin. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

3. During his introductory remarks, the FCWC Secretary-General, Mr. Seraphin DEDI NADJE, expressed gratitude for the support he has had from the member states and the Chair of the FCWC as well as the technical and financial partners. This, has allowed for greater successes in the year. He gave an overview of the activities of the Secretariat in the year 2019 and urged each of the Member States to increase its engagement in fisheries cooperation through joint activities, in consonance with the theme of the Conference: 'Joint Actions for Secure and Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries in West Africa.'

4. The Representative of the Minister in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Republic of Benin, Mr Gaston Cossi Dossouhoui chaired the opening ceremony. He welcomed the participants to the conference and expressed appreciation to the ACC for the work done to review the activities of the FCWC in 2019. He also expressed thanks to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the support offered to the FCWC and acknowledged JICA's support in various economic sectors in Benin, including fisheries and agriculture. He reiterated the problem of increasing fishing effort and illegal fishing methods that are contributing to the declining of fish stocks which threatened food security in the sub-region especially small scale. Joint action at sub-regional and regional level is very key to curbing this threat, he noted, and called on the FCWC to operationalize the conference theme in the coming year.

5. The conference was chaired by Mr Dzifa Koshi Hounkali, the representative of the President of the Conference of Ministers, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Production of Togo. He welcomed participants and expressed appreciation to them for attending the conference. He noted that illegal fishing, is a threat to food security and poverty reduction in the sub-region, where majority of fisheries is in the small scale sector. This, he observed, resonates with the theme of the conference, and endorsed FCWC's ambition to rally joint action by Member States to achieve the set objectives.



ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Chairman of the Conference presented the agenda to the participants and it was unanimously adopted. The Agenda is attached as Annex 2.

Address by the Japan Ambassador to the Republic of Benin on the Vision and Prospects for Regional Fisheries Cooperation in West Africa: Case of JICA and FCWC.

7. His Excellency, Mr Konshi Kiyofumi, the Japanese Ambassador to Benin delivered the address, expounding the essence of sustainable fisheries management and called for international cooperation to ensure the sustainability of resources. He reiterated the support of JICA to the sub- region through the FCWC.

PRESENTATION OF MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE FCWC SECRETARIAT

8. Mr. Domtani Ali, Director of Fisheries of Togo and Chairman of the FCWC Advisory and Coordinating Committee presented the report of the Advisory and Coordinating Committee (ACC) meeting held on 11 and 12 December 2019. The said report was organized under the following headings:

- i) Activity Report
- ii) Further initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat;
- iii) Financial Statement and Audit Report of FCWC;
- iv) Presentations on Projects Regional Initiatives; and
- v) Recommendations

Following this presentation, the report was formally adopted with strong recommendations by the Conference of Ministers.

Activity Report

9.a. The 2019 theme: 'Maritime security and sustainable fisheries development in West Africa' was the pillar of FCWC activities during 2019. The activities largely focused on collaboration with various partners, including agencies from the Yaoundé architecture.

9.b. Countries were encouraged to take ownership of the various mechanisms established under the ongoing projects for maritime safety and security in the region.

9.c. A regional workshop on data collection and knowledge sharing methodology in the fisheries sector was organized. An MOU between the FCWC and FAO's Fisheries and Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) has been signed for the continuation of this regular fisheries data collection activity.

9.d. The FCWC participated in the launching of activities of the other components of PESCOAO project, namely: COPACE PESCOAO, DEMERSTEM and GREPPAO, FCWC member countries are encouraged to actively participate in the implementation of the said projects and to designate national focal points for each.



9.e. Under the FCWC Communication and Visibility Strategy a new website has been developed and is functioning.

9.f. Identified activities related to fish trade, exchanges between women fish processors, training in the adoption of new technologies and the establishment of the Regional Working Group to oversee the implementation of the Regional Fisheries Management Plan have not been carried out due to the limited resources of the FCWC.

Further initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat

10.a. The FCWC organized a regional workshop on Decent Work in the Fisheries Sector in collaboration with FAO and the Apostleship of the Sea to promote human rights and safeguard the lives of fishermen. Participants were informed and sensitized on working conditions in the fishing industry and the entire fisheries value chain. Member States and the FCWC are therefore invited to pay more attention to human rights and promote decent work in fisheries.

10.b. A new partnership development involving the FCWC, Côte d'Ivoire and JICA was launched to strengthen the capacity of the organization with developing the 2021-2030 FCWC Strategic plan, the organization of a regional workshop on aquaculture development and the preparation of a regional project to support the region from 2020 onwards.

10.c. A brief summary of regional and international meetings attended by the FCWC as well as all visits received at the FCWC were presented as a key indicator of the credibility and recognition of the performance of the organization.

Financial Statement and Audit Report of FCWC

11.a. The total amount of actual resources mobilized during 2019 including the prior year cash balance is \$1,092,500.76 USD less than 20% of which represents the contributions of MS. MS are encouraged to pay their arrears for the smooth running of the organization.

11.b. All the FCWC accounts have been audited including project accounts. Further, an external audit was financed by Norad. The results of this audit will make it possible to authorize the disbursement of funds for phase 2 of the project for 2020.

11.c. In accordance with Article 14 of the FCWC Convention, the Conference of Ministers is requested to authorise the NORAD-appointed SCG audit firm to continue its work on the audit of project accounts implemented by the FCWC.

PRESENTATIONS ON PROJECTS AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES

The West Africa Task Force (WATF)

12. Mr. Duncan Copeland, Executive Director, and Ms Viviane Koutob, Regional Coordinator of TMT jointly presented the 2019 headline activities and results, and 2020 planned activities under the project 'Fisheries Intelligence and MCS Support in West Africa', which supports the WATF and is funded by Norad. Under the three components, the project will continue to support the FCWC Member States and the Secretariat to implement WATF activities and functions. This includes: at the regional level two regional Task Force meetings, regional trainings, FCWC institutional support, and regular intelligence provision; at the national level focus on the key thematic inter-agency projects identified for implementation in each Member State;



and at the international level focus on the analysis and dissemination of WATF processes and best practice into international dialogue. The project results and upcoming activities were welcomed by the Member States, who reaffirmed their commitment for 2020 activities, including taking further leadership on National Working Group activities.

The PESCAO programme

13. The PESCAO programme activities were presented with the following key achievements: the review of fisheries legal frameworks to combat IUU fishing in all Member States, the development of national plans to combat IUU fishing in Togo, Benin and Nigeria, training of fisheries administration staff from Member States, and partnership development with the Maritime Universities of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, the tendering process to provide FCWC with regional MCS equipment has been completed. A protocol to guide the operation of the Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre (MCS) has been prepared and is being submitted for adoption to this session of the FCWC Conference of Ministers.

Areas of collaboration with JICA

14. JICA is developing bilateral collaboration with some of the FCWC countries; the new approach envisaged is to develop a regional project in order to widen their support to West Africa. Areas for regional projects need to be identified with FCWC Member countries' inputs. A regional workshop on continental aquaculture will be organised by March 2020 while an international expert will be recruited to support the development of the new FCWC Strategic plan 2021-2030.

The Meeting agreed to move forward with the JICA support and identify work areas for the development of a regional project.

Update on the development of regional fisheries strategy and opportunity for the development of small-scale fisheries

15. Dr. Amadou Tall presented the Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (CSFS-FAD) which was prepared by PESCAO, endorsed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, DARD, and validated by the Directors of Fisheries and Aquaculture in West Africa. The framework is composed of 7 strategic policy objectives which include the small scale fisheries as a priority.

CECAF- PESCAO overview of the state of resources and recommended management measures for sustainable fisheries in West Africa

16. Dr Joany Tape, from CECAF-PESCAO gave an overview of the status of the fisheries stock in the region and recalled recommendations on fishing effort to be controlled as a matter of urgency, fisheries data quality and availability to be improved. Member States with FCWC support agreed to work to implement CECAF recommendations on fish stocks and explore options to conduct stock assessment surveys by research vessels of the region.

Presentation of Ghana's Fisheries Management Plan: 2019 Close season, key results, lessons learned

17. Mr Paul Bannermann (MOFAD) Ghana gave an overview of the 2015 – 2019 Fisheries Management Plan, including the closed fishing season. Impact studies after the closure showed that 80% of industrial



vessels migrated to neighbouring countries. There is a need for more collaboration, consultation, joint fisheries research and explore the implementation of a regional closed season based on a scientific approach.

Presentation of the Work plan and budget

18. Budget and work plan for 2020 was adopted. The 2020 budget is estimated at 1,352,371.14 USD. Member countries contributions for 2020 is estimated at 250,000 USD, the balance will be covered by existing projects.

HIGH LEVEL STATEMENTS

ECOWAS -ECOWAS Regional Fisheries Strategy: Opportunities for the Development of small-scale Fisheries in West Africa

19. Dr Tall, the PESCOAO programme coordinator on behalf of ECOWAS commended the choice of the theme for the coming year, captured in the theme of the conference. He noted that ECOWAS acknowledges the importance of the small-scale fishery in the sub-region, and the threat posed by lack of good governance and responded to it by developing the Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (CSF-SFAD) under PESCOAO Component 1. In operationalising the CSFS-FAD, ECOWAS has engaged the FCWC as a recognised partner to implement activities in the sub-region. To this effect an MOU between the FCWC and ECOWAS has been drafted and anticipated to be signed in early 2020.

FAO High Level Declaration on Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: What are the opportunities for fisheries development in West Africa?

20. Dr. Dismas Mbabazi gave an overview on the Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines, an internationally recognised instrument that deals with small-scale fisheries, which was prepared through a consultative process. The guidelines integrate social development into fisheries development, driving a participatory approach to fisheries management. This instrument complements other international instruments in the development of fisheries, and offers the opportunity for the inclusion of small scale fishers, women, youth, artisanal fishermen and other Non-State Actors (NSAs). such as including traditional /local knowledge in fisheries management, and making the actors an integral part of fisheries research. Fisheries ministers play a key role in the governance of the small-scale fishery. Ministers in the FCWC sub-region should take up the challenge and collaborate to implement the guidelines.

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS AND MINISTERS

Benin

21. Mr. Gaston Dossouhoui recalled that regional cooperation promoted by the FCWC is one of the effective solutions in the sustainable management of shared resources and expressed his support for the implementation of the regional fisheries management plan, to overcome challenges to fisheries in the region.



Ghana

22. Mr Francis Codjoe Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Ghana, expounded three key thematic areas for Ghana's fisheries development fisheries enforcement, aquaculture development, and infrastructural development. Acknowledging the threat to fisheries in the region, he emphasised the need to strengthen ways of developing joint activities in research and data collection in the region in a bid to reduce the weak capacity to boost fisheries research. He reiterated Ghana's quest to acquire appropriate accommodation for the FCWC.

Nigeria

23. Mr Sampson Ime Umoh, the Director of Fisheries representing the fisheries Minister recalled the cooperative effort towards improved management of fisheries in the FCWC which had chalked successes in spite of the enormous challenges facing the industry. He expressed appreciation for the capacity strengthening gestures offered to the sub-region and Nigeria in particular through the FCWC and Norad. He also noted that Nigeria is giving attention to aquaculture to reduce fish import

Liberia

24. Mr William Boeh, the Deputy Director of technical services, representing the Director General of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), expressed gratitude for the MCS capacity strengthening assistance offered to the sub-region and Liberia in particular through the FCWC and its partners. In addition to technical documents that were adopted with the support of the FCWC, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act was also adopted. He thanked the government of Japan for supporting the small-scale fishery in the country with inputs such as outboard motors and expressed the hope for their response to request to help build landing sites for the small scale fishery. Mr Boeh enjoined the Member States to approach fisheries management at a regional level for greater success

Cote d'Ivoire

25. Mr Zoumana Meite representing the Minister of Fisheries, emphasized the importance of the small-scale fishery in West Africa and commended the move of ECOWAS to prioritise it in the face of the threats to the sustainability of this fishery. He expressed the offer of Cote d'Ivoire to support the FCWC in the regional activities towards improved fisheries management in the region. It was in this regard that the country sent a technical expert to the FCWC to formulate a regional aquaculture and fisheries programme.

Togo

26. Mr Dzifa Koshi Hounkanli representing the Minister of agriculture livestock and fisheries congratulated the Member States on the on-going activities coordinated by the FCWC. He expressed gratitude to Norad, the European Union and JICA and other partners for their initiatives and cooperation with the FCWC to strengthen the sub-region's capacity in fisheries management. He also congratulated the FCWC Secretariat for the good results in these initiatives while resounding the MS request for the improvement of management and administration of the FCWC Secretariat with the support of ECOWAS. He reiterated the need for the implementation of the FCWC regional fisheries management plan to substantiate the theme for the coming year and achieve good success.



Presentations by Fishers' Groups

27. A representative of Benin's national federation of fishermen, FENAPECHE, Mr David Houngue expressed gratitude to the FCWC for deciding to give the small-scale fishery attention in 2020, noting that the small-scale fishery has been neglected.

28. On maritime security, Maxime Ahoyo from the Prefecture Maritime guaranteed the support of his organisation to the FCWC in protecting the maritime domain to create an enabling environment for fishermen.

29. Madam Victorie Gomez, the President of the network of women in fisheries in Benin thanked the meeting for acknowledging the women's role in the fisheries industry.

DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Adoption of the RC MCS Protocol

30. The protocol to guide the operation of the Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre (MCS) was adopted by the Conference of Ministers.

Election of The Bureau

31. In accordance with Articles 7.1 and 7.3 of the FCWC Convention, the FCWC Conference of Ministers elected a new Bureau, composed as follows:

President: Benin

Vice-President: Cote d'Ivoire

Adoption of the report of the Advisory and Coordination Committee

32. The Report of the 12th FCWC Advisory and Coordination Committee was unanimously adopted as presented, including annual working plan and related budget for 2020.

33. Regarding the Audit work, discharge was given to the Secretariat for year 2019 accounting and in accordance with Article 14 of the FCWC Convention, the Conference of Ministers authorise the SCG audit firm to continue its work on the audit of project accounts implemented by the FCWC under NORAD and related partners.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE 12th FCWC CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

34. In accordance with the procedure for setting the date and venue of the FCWC Conference of Ministers, the 13th FCWC Conference of Ministers should be held in December 2020, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

35. The Chairman of the Conference and the host country in connection with the Secretariat will fix the precise date of the holding of the Conference and inform the Member States.



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2019 CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS WERE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

36. Recommendation 1: Identification of a new Secretary-General: Member states are to identify and propose suitable candidates to the position of Secretary-General in replacement of the current one, two years before the end of his tenure, scheduled for 2023. The process of replacing a Secretary General of an organization being sensitive and can have a direct impact on the organization, MS are invited to be proactive to provide the qualified candidate for the position.

37. Recommendation 2: Restructuring of the FCWC: As an MOU is anticipated to be signed between the FCWC and ECOWAS, ECOWAS is therefore requested to be involved in the process and provide support relating to the restructuring of the organization.

38. Recommendation 3: Due diligence in the procurement of a regional monitoring centre, RC-MCS: Contract with service provider is expected to be signed and equipment delivered by early 2020. The major challenge concerning the RC MCS remains its full functionality, however this challenge can be mitigated by FCWC involving countries national experts to run the system.

39. Recommendation 4: Improvement of small-scale fisheries with the theme of the Conference for year 2020: 'Joint Actions for Secure and Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in West Africa. The aim is for the building of improved landing sites, regular data collection as well as address fishermen migration in this segment of the fisheries sector.

CLOSING CEREMONY

40. The New Chairman of the Conference of Ministers, the Minister of MAEP, Mr. Gaston Dossouhoui affirmed his commitment to provide the best leadership to FCWC re-echoing the achievement thus far of the organisation. He thanked all participants and closed the meeting at 1:00 pm



ANNEX 1 - List of Participants

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ANNEX 2

**PROGRAMME OF THE 12th MINISTER CONFERENCE
Cotonou, Benin 11-13 DECEMBER 2019**

AGENDA

Advisory and Coordination Committee (ACC) Session

Time	Topics	Speakers
Day 1: Program		
08.30 –09.00	Arrival and registration of participants/distribution of documents	FCWC
09.00 –09.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opening ceremony <input type="checkbox"/> Opening remarks by the Secretary General of the FCWC <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming address by the representative of the Host Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee break and group photo 	FCWC Benin
TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN THE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF THE FCWC SECRETARIAT		
09: 45- 10:00	Break and Group Photo	
10:00 - 12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Approval of the agenda <input type="checkbox"/> FCWC 2019 Activity Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary of the 2019 theme ○ Follow-up on recommendations ○ Project activities and achievements ○ Additional initiatives led by the Secretariat ○ Financial status and audit report of the FCWC ○ Discussions and recommendations 	FCWC/Participants
12.30- 14.00	Lunch	
REGIONAL INITIATIVES AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
14.00- 15.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Project - Fisheries Intelligence and Support for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in West Africa, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of products, lessons and recommendations ○ Priority work plan 2020 ○ Discussion and engagement of States 	FCWC/WATF TMT Coordinator
15.00- 15.15	Coffee break	



15.15- 16.30	<input type="checkbox"/> FCWC-PESCAO PROJECT - Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary of activities, products, lessons and recommendations ○ Priority work plan 2020 ○ Review of the draft Protocol establishing the FCWC's Regional Fisheries MCS Centre ○ Discussion and engagement of States 	FCWC/PESCAO Coordinator/ TA
16:30 -17.15	<input type="checkbox"/> JICA - Presentation of the areas of collaboration, progress achieved and prospects for 2020	JICA-CI
17.15 -17.30	Closing of the day	BENIN/FCWC

Day 2: PROGRAM

Time	Topics	Speakers
THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS AND ASPECTS OF COLLABORATION IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT		
09.00- 10.45	<input type="checkbox"/> ECOWAS - Update on the development of Regional Fisheries Strategy and opportunity for the development of small-scale fisheries <input type="checkbox"/> CECAF-PESCAO : Overview of the state of resources and recommended management measures for sustainable fisheries in West Africa <input type="checkbox"/> Ghana: Closure of fisheries 2019 ; key results, lessons learned and ways forward for regional collaboration. <input type="checkbox"/> Discussions and recommendations	ECOWAS COPACE PESCAO MOFAD Ghana
10.45 – 11: 00	Coffee Break	
FCWC 2020 ACTIVITY PLANNING AND BUDGET		
11:00- 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the 2020 Work Plan and Budget • Discussions and validation 	FCWC
13:00 – 14.30	Lunch	
THEMATIC VISIT OF COTONOU NEW FISHING PORT		
14:30- 16: 00	<input type="checkbox"/> To be confirmed with Benin - Progress and Prospects <input type="checkbox"/> Discussions	COTONOU/FCWC
16:00 – 16.15	Coffee Break	
Documents and reports for Ministers		
16.15 – 18.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the final report of the Advisory and Coordination Committee (ACC) • Closing ceremony of the session 	FCWC /ACC



Day 3: The Conference of Ministers (CM) Session

Hours	Topics	Speakers
08.30 – 09.00	Arrival and registration of the various delegations and Ministers followed by the distribution of documents	Host Authority FCWC SG
09.00 – 10.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opening ceremony <input type="checkbox"/> Opening speech by the Secretary General of FCWC <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome by the Minister in charge of fisheries of the Republic of Benin <input type="checkbox"/> Opening remarks by the President of the Conference of Ministers (Togo) <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee break and group photo, visit of the stands 	FCWC SG Benin Government Togo Government
10.00- 10:15	Break and Group Photo	
10.15 – 11.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption of the agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption of the Report of the Advisory and Coordination Committee <input type="checkbox"/> ECOWAS High Level Declaration - ECOWAS Regional Fisheries Strategy: Opportunities for the Development of small-scale Fisheries in West Africa. <input type="checkbox"/> FAO High Level Declaration on Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: What are the opportunities for fisheries development in West Africa? High-Level Statement by the Japan Ambassador to the Republic of Benin on the Vision and Prospects for Regional Fisheries Cooperation in West Africa: Case of JICA and FCWC. 	Participants FCWC Ministers ECOWAS FAO Japan Ambassador to Benin
11.30 – 13.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements by Heads of Delegations and Ministers • Venue and date of the 13th FCWC Ministerial Conference • Election of the FCWC's Conference of Ministers new board 	Participants FCWC Ministers
13.00 – 14.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the report of the Advisory and Coordination Committee • Closing ceremony 	Participants FCWC Ministers
14:00 – 16:30	Lunch	
16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of the day 	Participants FCWC Ministers



FCWC

Fisheries Committee for
the West Central Gulf of Guinea

The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) facilitates cooperation in fisheries management between the member countries: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.

For more information go to:

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