



**FCWC**  
Fishery Committee For The  
West Central Gulf Of Guinea

---

***REPORT OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF  
MINISTERS (CM) OF THE FISHERIES COMMITTEE FOR THE  
WEST CENTRAL GULF OF GUINEA (FCWC)***

***14-16 DECEMBER 2016  
BOULEVARD PALACE HOTEL - MONROVIA - LIBERIA***

***DECEMBER 2016***

**SECRETARIAT GENERAL** P.O.BOX – BT 62 Tema, GHANA / Email: [secretariat@fcwc-fish.org](mailto:secretariat@fcwc-fish.org)  
Tel: + 233 30 22 20 53 23/ Mob: +233 20 75 86 321

## I. OPENING CEREMONY

1. The ninth Session of the Conference of Ministers (CM) for the Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea took place in Monrovia, Liberia, at Boulevard Palace HOTEL, on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016, following the meeting of the Advisory and Coordinating Committee (ACC) held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016.
2. The Ministers in charge of fisheries and Chiefs of Delegations of five (5) FCWC Member States, namely the Republic of Benin, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Liberia and the Federal Republic of Nigeria attended the meeting. The Minister of the Togolese Republic was excused for his absence.
3. Representatives of the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources of the African Union (AU-IBAR), WorldFish, the European Union Commission (EUC), the African Natural Resources Centre (ANRC) of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) / West African Regional Fisheries Project (WARFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), INFOPECHE, the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO) and the Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) as well as resource-persons from the region attended the meeting as observers.
4. The list of participants is attached as **Appendix 2**.
5. The opening ceremony was chaired by **Honourable Joseph Njuma Boakai Sr.**, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia.
6. **Mr. Séraphin Dedi Nadjé**, the Secretary-General of the FCWC welcomed participants. On behalf of the acting President of the FCWC, her Excellency Mme Ayitey Hanny-Sherry, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development of the Republic of Ghana, he expressed his thanks to the Minister Dr Moses M. Zinnah, and through him, the Government of Liberia, for having accepted to host the ninth FCWC Conference of Ministers. He recalled the context of the meeting and reviewed the points on the meeting agenda. He also announced the theme of the Conference "Fish Trade and Value Addition to Fisheries for Social and Economic benefits of our Population". The FCWC Secretary-General also expressed his thanks to all the partners present at the meeting who strongly support FCWC and, particularly, the special guests of this ninth Session of the Conference of Ministers who are the Representatives from FAO, AU, WorldFish and Liberia Maritime Authority.
7. Through his introductory statement, **Dr Moses M. Zinnah**, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Liberia, welcomed participants and wished a pleasant stay in Liberia. He stressed the socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector in the sub-region and the major constraints to the sustainable increase of this contribution. He highlighted the many challenges and barriers to improved fish trade including, lack of appropriate funding and infrastructure, inadequate technology resulting to high post-harvest losses, tariff and non-tariff barriers, and lack of roads access and electricity in most rural fishing

communities. For this end, the Minister emphasized on the need of trade liberalization through harmonization of policies and regulations to improve the movement of fish products across the region.

8. Honourable Njuma Boakai Sr. underlined the importance of the theme of the Conference. He considered that it is most appropriate and consistent with the Government's priority under the Liberia Agriculture Transformation (LATA) that is geared towards repositioning the agriculture sector at the top of Liberia Agenda for Transformation (AT). He indicated that the LATA is an innovative initiative that is strongly focused on several commodity value chains, including Fisheries, that Liberia has the comparative advantage in transforming the agriculture sector. The Vice-President focused on the important achievements of the Government of Liberia through the institutionalization of legal and regulatory frameworks for sustainable development of the fisheries sector. Before declaring open the Session, Honourable Njuma Boakai Sr. urged the participants to pay special attention in finding ways and means of addressing the following five emerging issues: i) Ensure that FCWC links its activities closely aligned with ECOWAS's and AU's sustainable planning and funding mechanisms and activities in the fisheries sector; ii) Ensure that FCWC Member States ratify and implement the FAO Port States Measures Agreement; iii) Strengthen fish trade and development in the region; iv) Pursue regional approach to the management of fisheries resources, and v) Put mechanisms in place for Member States and Development Partners to increase financial and technical resources for support to FCWC to achieve its mandate.

## **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

9. The agenda was submitted by the Chairman to participants who adopted it unanimously as indicated in **Appendix 1**.

10. **M. Nemorius N. Peng-Yir** from the Fisheries Commission of Ghana presented, on behalf of the Director of Fisheries of Ghana, Chairman of the ACC, the report of the said Committee which include the key results of the Secretariat for 2016, technical contributions from partners and 2017 Action Plan with the related budget.

## **III. PRESENTATION OF KEY RESULTS OF THE FCWC SECRETARIAT**

### **a) Monitoring of the implementation 2015 recommendations:**

11. For each of the ten (10) recommendations from the 2015 Conference of Ministers, progress made in the implementation is summarized as follow:

**Recommendation 1:** The adoption of the "Fisheries Intelligence and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Support in West Africa" Project.

✓ ***The Project was adopted and its implementation is ongoing.***

**Recommendation 2:** The continuation of the audit of the FCWC annual accounts by the Audit Unit of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development of Ghana pending the recruitment of a private auditor.

- ✓ ***The audit was carried out and the report is available.***

**Recommendation 3:** The provision of executives by Member States to strengthen the FCWC personnel.

- ✓ ***Only Ghana renewed its personnel made available to the FCWC. Communication and Fish Trade Officers were recruited with project support***

**Recommendation 4:** The payment of contributions by Member States: Ministers and heads of delegation committed their states to settle their financial contributions regularly to the smooth running of the Committee's activities.

- ✓ ***Besides the voluntary contribution of Côte d'Ivoire which regularly pays the remuneration of the Secretary General, Benin and Ghana have actually contributed to the 2016 budget. The mandate contributions of Nigeria, Togo, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire are still pending and this is for several years.***

**Recommendation 5:** The collaboration between FCWC and ECOWAS. For this purpose, the Secretary-General is advised to contact the Commission to identify areas of cooperation.

- ✓ ***The institutional cooperation between FCWC and ECOWAS is ongoing under the auspice of AU and EU. For this end, a meeting between the two organizations was held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria. During this meeting an Action Timeline was developed.***

**Recommendation 6:** The inclusion of fisheries in national agricultural investment programs.

- ✓ ***The process of inclusion of fisheries in priority programmes is ongoing through particularly the FAO Blue Economy Initiative, the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the implementation of Malabo Declaration.***

**Recommendation 7:** The ratification of relevant international instruments related to fisheries, such as the Agreement of FAO on Port State Measures, to benefit from partners the necessary supports provided by these instruments.

- ✓ ***The FCWC activities supporting the Member States were realized. This agreement was ratified by Ghana and Togo. The process of ratification is ongoing and in progress in most of the other FCWC Member States***

**Recommendation 8:** The Member Countries and the Secretariat of the Committee are invited to implement the application process and securing fishing authorization documents (licenses) identified under the MoU between FCWC and NAFAG and extend this procedure to all fisheries organizations in the FCWC region.

- ✓ ***The FCWC Secretariat has continued collaboration with Fisheries Professional Organizations (FPOs) in the region and with the Member Countries for control and securing fishing authorizations documents.***

**Recommendation 9:** Establishment of the FAO World University of Fisheries (WFU): The Secretariat of the Committee is invited to continue working with the Government of Korea as well as Member Countries, to support the project at the 2016 FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in order to succeed in this initiative.

- ✓ ***The FCWC Secretariat and Member Countries are supporting the establishment of WFU. Collaboration with the Government of Korea has continued with the admission of four (4) fisheries experts from the FCWC region for "Education and Training in Fisheries Technology and Policy" at the National University of Pukyong (PKNU).***

**Recommendation 10:** Support the Regional Indicative Program of the EU: Continue discussions with EUC, AU, ECOWAS and other West African Regional Fisheries Organizations (RFOs) for the mobilization of financial support from the Regional Indicative Program (European Development Fund) to strengthen regional management capacity and fight against IUU fishing.

- ✓ ***The FCWC Secretariat is supporting the design process of the Program "Improvement of Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa (PESCAO)". The project document is being adopted by the EUC and ECOWAS.***

**b) Presentation of planned activities:**

12. The FCWC Secretariat implemented most of planned activities in 2016. Two key developments can be noted at the institutional level: (i) the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement, conferring diplomatic status to the Committee, and (ii) the ongoing linking process of FCWC and SRFC to ECOWAS under the auspice of AU and EU.

13. The main results obtained include:

- ✓ The strengthening of the partnership through, on the one hand, the follow-up of the collaboration between ECOWAS and the RFOs of West Africa and, on the other hand, the signing of three new financing agreements with FAO, ATLAFCO and WorldFish. These agreements concern respectively (i) the implementation of TCP/RAF/3512 to strengthen the systematic collection of data on fisheries in West Africa, (ii) review of the legal framework for fisheries in the FCWC Member States, and (iii) operationalization of national, regional and international instruments and promotion of fish and fishery products trade in the region.
- ✓ Support to the operationalization of the West Africa Task Force (WATF) to combat IUU fishing: organization of consultations on the cost of IUU fishing in the sub-region; support to MCS activities at the request of WATF members; holding two meetings of the WATF; organization of a regional training workshop on the analysis of fisheries information, strengthening of the breadth of the MCS at regional level and regional cooperation and submission of study reports; conducting training workshops at the national level and engaging experts to support implementation and capacity building of the members of the WATF's National Working Groups.
- ✓ Strengthening the legal framework for the establishment of the FCWC through the follow-up of the signing of the headquarters agreement respectively by the ministers in charge of fisheries of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as regular support to the facilitation of actions for the ratification of relevant international fisheries management instruments by the FCWC Member States.

**c) The FCWC financial statement:**

14. The estimated amount of the 2016 budget is **USD 1,006,000**. The cumulative amount of financial resources mobilized to finance activities during the period is USD 660,810.76, including USD 480,000 representing the contribution of partners, this is about 72% of the budget. The financial contribution of the Member States has been mobilized at around 45%. Although this rate is up to 15% compared with the previous year, it remains relatively low to ensure the proper functioning of the Committee.

15. The 2016 technical report and financial statement received discharge from the Conference of the Ministers.

**IV. PRESENTATION OF THE FCWC FINANCIAL REGULATION AND OPERATING MANUAL**

16. The Conference of Ministers took due note of the Rules of Procedure, the Financial Regulation and the Operating Manual prepared by the FCWC Secretariat. It instructed the ACC to deeply review the documents to facilitate the analysis during its next session for eventual approval.

## V. PRESENTATION OF PARTNERS

### IV.1 The West Africa Task Force (WATF)

17. **M. Duncan Copeland**, Representative of Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT), provided an update on the 'Fisheries Intelligence and MCS Support in West Africa' project, and the WATF initiative it supports. The 2016 activities and results, and the proposed 2017 Work Plan were reviewed. The presenter then focussed on looking ahead beyond the current project phase, which ends in October 2017. Following a positive Mid Term Review of the project, the funder Norad (Norwegian Government) has invited the development of a Phase 2, with the target of this starting in November 2017 to ensure continuity of activities.

18. Priorities proposed for the second phase will be to continue to i) support the regional communications platform and intelligence support; ii) build on capacity building efforts, with a focus on analytical skills; iii) continue to strengthen the National Working Groups; iv) build the technical team, with focus on regional expertise; v) strengthen political support; vi) build cooperation between the WATF and other States (Neighbouring / Flag / Port / Market); and vii) ensure activities complement, coordinate with, and build on other initiatives in the region. A Phase 2 was welcomed by the meeting, noting that the lessons learned from Phase 1 should be incorporated.

### V.2 The Project proposal for EU support to a the Program “ Improvement of Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa (PESCAO) ”

19. The presentation was made by **Mrs. Isabelle Viallon** from the European Union Commission. She specified that the project is part of EU Regional Programming and focuses on regional issues in complementarity with cooperation at national level including WARPF. Three priorities were identified during the Abuja meeting held in February 2016. These priorities which constitute the three results of the Project are the following: (i) Regional governance; (ii) MCS and IUU fishing and (iii) Shared marine resources.

20. Expected support to FCWC can be summarized as follow: Increased cooperation with ECOWAS and SRFC; and institutional strengthening (under Component 1); Recruitment of a permanent SCS expert; grant to support the activities of the Task force and equipment (including regional VMS); support to Member States in partnership with EFCA (training sessions, national IUU plans, etc.; and demand based (Component 2). Under Component 3 it is planned to call for proposals to the attention of scientific institutes, fishermen organizations, international organizations etc. FCWC and coastal States will be involved for all projects in their geographic area of competence. This is a first step in formalized cooperation and a good way for RFBs and coastal Countries to raise political awareness on fisheries issues. It's also important for FCWC credibility and the FCWC Member States should be engaged in the implementation process of the project.

21. Mrs. Viallon informed the participants of next steps, particularly, the EU Member States consultation (first quarter 2017), the signature by ECOWAS (first semester 2017) and the starting of the implementation (2018).

### **V.3 The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)**

22. The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) was presented by **Mr. J.L. Kromer** from AfDB. It is a global multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims at enhancing responsible fisheries through transparency and participation. It intends to publish regular information on: i) fishing rights holders, licenses and fishing agreements) ; ii) how much is paid for the right to fish and iii) how much fish is caught in a specific country. The FiTI is currently in its conceptual phase (April 2015 - March 2017). Each FiTI compliant country would have to establish a National Multi-Stakeholder Group with equal representation of Government, private sector and the civil society which will be expected to jointly provide and agree on the information to be published. The steps for a country to become FiTI compliant were explained as well as the 5 sign-up steps.

23. The presentation also highlighted why a country should become FiTI compliant. It is expected that over time the FiTI will allow governments to make better and more informed decisions to ensure the long-term sustainability of marine resources. Indirect benefits of becoming FiTI compliant include a contribution to fight IUU fishing and corruption, social stability, improved food security and enhanced trust for investment. The next critical step will be the second FiTI conference which will be held in Bali, Indonesia, on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 during which the global FiTI standards will be approved, the first international FiTI Board will be launched and it is expected that more countries will express interest in becoming FiTI compliant.

24. In addition to the previous communication, **Mr. Mohamed Salem Louly** from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Economy of Mauritania and FiTI Focal Point, made a presentation on "Mauritania on the way to the implementation of the FiTI ". The purpose of the communication is to review progress made by Mauritania in the implementation of FiTI.

25. Mr. Louly first highlighted the importance of the contribution of the fisheries sector to the national economy. He then placed the process of transparency in the sector in its historical context, recalling, in this respect, the various steps, beginning with the reflection initiated in October 2012 on the desirability of integrating the fisheries sector into the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (ITIE), to the launching of the FiTI Initiative by His Excellency, Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz, President of the Republic, at the High-Level Conference on Transparency and Sustainable Development in Africa, held in Nouakchott on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

26. The actions taken so far by the country on the way to implement the initiative include i) the reform of the legal and institutional framework (New strategy 2015 - 2019 and the new Fisheries Code); ii) national consultation for the formation of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group; iii) contribution to the development of the founding principles approved at the first FiTI international conference held in Nouakchott in February 2016



and iv) the substantial financial effort made by Mauritania to support the design phase planned during a period of 24 months. Finally, Mr Louly outlined the roadmap for future actions, which are in line with the steps defined in the "Guidelines for countries engaged in the implementation of FiTI", recently disseminated by the International Secretariat of the Initiative.

#### **V.4 The West Africa Regional Fisheries Project (WARFP) - Liberia**

27. **Mr. Yevewou Z. Subah**, Coordinator of the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project - Liberia presented the key activities and results, impacts, lessons learned and way forward in the project implementation process. The objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of Liberia to govern and manage targeted fisheries, reduce illegal fishing and increase local value added to fish products. The Phase I was closed in September 2016 and now Liberia is in a transition to phase II (expected in 2018). The participants welcomed the results achieved.

#### **V.5 The Ghana Fisheries Management Plan**

28. The presentation was made by **Mrs. Matiuda Quist** from the Fisheries Commission of Ghana. Mrs. Quist highlighted the five (5) main key issues identified through stakeholder consultations and that had to be addressed. They include the following: i) Excessive fishing effort exerted in all fisheries; ii) Inadequate information on Fisheries Biology and Stocks; iii) Weak enforcement of Fisheries Regulations; iv) Low levels of protection of marine Biodiversity and v) Inappropriate procedures in certifying fish for export. This led to the development of the Fisheries management Plan (FMP) of Ghana which is a national policy for the management of the Marine Fisheries sector from 2015 - 2019. To address these key issues, stakeholders from all fisheries bodies were consulted to give their inputs. A number of interventions were finally agreed upon and documented. Among these interventions is the enactment of closed season for all categories of fisheries but at different levels. The closed season was implemented for one month starting from 1<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 for the trawling vessels which target the demersal resources.

#### **V.6 The FAO Blue Growth Initiative**

29. The Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) was presented by **Mr. Martinus VanDerKnaap**, from the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF). The reaction to the presentation was that BGI and Blue Economy remain vague terms and that there should be more sensitization on the process and on how to distinguish the BGI from the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). There seem to be some similarities between the EAF and BGI with respect to environmental, economic and social aspects.

30. The advantage of the BGI process was recognized by the participants that during stakeholder meetings both grass-root people and high-ranking officials are consulted. The BGI process can support the fisheries sector, but also other sectors related to

oceans should be studied (like energy, extractive activities like oil, manganese nodules, algae, etc.).

### **V.7 The Programme “Improve Food Security and Reduce poverty through intra-regional fish trade in Sub-Saharan Africa”**

31. The FishTrade was presented by M. Theodore O. Antwi-Asare from the University of Ghana. It is a [European Commission](#) funded project implemented by [WorldFish](#), the [NEPAD](#) (New Partnership for Africa’s Development) and the [AU-IBAR](#). The program aims to strengthen value chains and, with a focus on sustainability, give better access to intra-regional markets and subsequently improve food and nutritional security and income in sub-Saharan.

32. Soon after the stakeholder consultations and technical launch of the program (2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015), WorldFish finalized Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with nine African Universities where students were involved in the field research. The Universities are Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR-Malawi), University of Western Cape (South Africa) and University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in Southern Corridor; University of Felix Houphouet-Boigny (Côte d’Ivoire), University of Ibadan (Nigeria), Cheikh Anta Diop University (Senegal) and University of Ghana (Ghana) in the Western Corridor; University of Douala (Cameroon) in Central Corridor; and Makerere University (Uganda) in the Eastern Corridor.

33. Research results from the FCWC countries (Western Corridor) show massive movement of fish from country to country. Challenges and opportunities have been identified including trade barriers to Fish Trade among members, such as road barriers, bad roads, unclear import/export procedures, and cumbersome documentation. Recommendations were put forward for inclusion in national and regional policies and strategies for catalyzing trade, especially for the women processors and traders.

34. There is an urgent need to involve Universities in fisheries field research in order to align university teaching and research with national and regional fisheries development priorities. This will make Universities more relevant to national/regional development agenda as well as ensure that graduating students have higher chances of finding jobs, either in Departments/Ministries responsible for fisheries or the private sector.

## **VI. PLANNING OF THE 2017 FCWC ACTIVITIES**

35. The Secretary-General aims to diversify areas of intervention and partners in order to progressively cover the different axes of the FCWC mandate. Thus, for the year 2017, the FCWC Secretariat intends to pursue the ongoing activities including i) fighting against IUU fishing; ii) promoting fish trade; iii) strengthening the systematic collection of data on artisanal fisheries in West Africa; iv) enhancement of collaboration with research and regional fisheries management programs; v) continued collaboration with regional programs and institutions for African and regional integration.

36. The total budget for the financial year 2017 amounts to **One Million Eighty-Three Thousand Five Hundred US Dollars (USD 1,083,500)**, of which USD 250,000 are expected from Member States' contributions.

37. The 2017 FCWC Work Plan and Budget receive discharge from the Conference of Ministers. Copies are provided in **Appendix 3**.

## **VII. INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENTS FROM AU, WORDFISH AND LIBERIA MARTIME AUTHORITY**

38. **Dr. Mohamed Seissay** from the AU-IBAR made a statement on Africa Union Policy on fish trade and value addition on fisheries resources for coastal country development, on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR. He informed the participants the AU, in partnership, with the WorldFish and the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) with support of the EU, is implementing a Project '**Improving Food Security and Reducing Poverty through intra-regional Fish Trade in sub-Saharan Africa**' and a Project on '**Strengthening Institutional capacity to enhance governance of the fisheries sector in Africa**'. These are some of the actions AU-IBAR has embarked in this region within the framework of the implementation of the pan Africa fisheries and aquaculture policy and the Malabo Declaration.

39. These projects include components for enhancing the capacities of Member States and other stakeholders to better integrate intra-regional fish trade into their development and food security policy agendas. Of significant importance is to support the Member States and regions to formulate realistic regional fish trade policies that would first and foremost promote intra-regional fish trade. Dr. Seissay recalled that the Member States within this sub-region are beneficiaries. He pledged that AU-IBAR is willing and open to collaborate with the FCWC in the implementation of activities in this sub-region ensuring generation of synergies, minimizing duplication and wastage of much needed resources.

40. **Dr. Sloans Chimatiro** from World Fish Center made a statement on Research to value to informal fish trade in West Africa, on behalf of the Africa Regional Coordinator of WorldFish. He recalled the importance of the theme of the Conferences as Trade is a paramount in fisheries management. For this reason, WorldFish in partnership with AU-IBAR and the NEPAD is implementing the Fish Trade Program. It is through this Program WordFish has made a modest contribution to the 2017 FCWC Work Plan.

41. He reported that their work research was carried out through national Universities, where they provide scholarships to students to conduct research and use the data to compile their thesis at either Master or Doctorate levels. So far they have an agreement with nine Universities in four regions of Africa; three of these are in the FCWC region, namely Universities of Ghana, Felix Houphouet-Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire and Ibadan in Nigeria. The quantification of the structure, products and value of cross-border informal trade undertaken led to important recommendations on policies, certification procedures, standards and regulations to govern cross-border fish trade.

42. Dr. Sloans focusses on the urgent need for Governments to: i) revise their national cross-border fisheries data collection methods to ensure that all fish species and quantities being traded informally are also recorded; ii) each fish processors and traders, better processing and handling techniques, respectively; iii) revise their National Trade Policies with the aim to integrate fish in the product portfolio/annex and secure greater market access for fish products and to promote regional integration through greater fish trade by harmonizing and reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to fish trade, road blocks and fees for cross-border fish traders; iv) ensure that compliance with import and export approval processes is not burdensome for traders, especially women; v) put in place common conformity assessment procedures to be used by all countries to test, inspect and certify fish products for imports and exports; vi) implement the ECOWAS Inter-State Road Transit (ISRT) scheme which helps to ensure that goods in transit flow easily without having to pay duties or other fees; vii) reduce inconsistencies in documents required for exports and imports of fish, in line with the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS); viii) promote the establishment of Fish Traders Associations; ix) ensure a safe work environment and profitable livelihood for women; x) support FCWC in order for the institution to be able to coordinate the development and implementation of national and regional fisheries development plans that are coherent with the AU's regional integration agenda.

43. Dr. Sloans also stressed the need for Governments to be supported at national, regional and international levels. For example, ECOWAS should support its Member States to implement the Customs Union, which comprises a common external tariff (CET) with a common customs nomenclature, in order to make customs procedures more transparent, readily followed and decrease delays at borders. On the other hand, international and national research institutions, national Universities should support Governments to make evidence-based policy decisions on cross-border fish trade through research and innovation and disseminating knowledge generated through research.

44. **Mr. Germain Dasylva**, FAO Representative in Côte d'Ivoire, made declaration on behalf of the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa. He welcomes the fact that the theme of the Conference is in line with its strategic objectives and its Regional Initiative to support sustainable intensification of production and development of the value chain. He pointed out three points considered as important for FAO regarding the fish trade and, more generally, the sustainable management of natural resources were noted. These include: i) the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing, negotiated under the auspice of FAO which encourages all countries to accede to it; ii) the Blue Growth Initiative, which also contains a set of decisions, adoption of practices and regulatory measures that make better use of oceans, seas and coastal areas; iii) the reduction of post-harvest losses through fish processing, which contributes to value fish products and to improve incomes of fishing communities, particularly women. For FAO, the framework offered by FCWC appears to be one of the most appropriate for the sharing of experiences between countries, in particular the recently introduced FAO-Thiaroye fish-smoking technology. FAO reiterates its availability and commitment to continue supporting FCWC, particularly for these three initiatives and instruments.

45. **Dr. James Kollie, Jr.** from Liberia Maritime Authority made a statement on challenges and opportunities for regional fisheries management to issues of maritime security. He pointed out that “maritime security” is indeed “national security” and requires and deserves all the necessary attention by various state actors. He noted that national and transnational crimes and criminal activities taking place in the maritime environment include but not limited to terrorism, human trafficking, armed robbery against ship, drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants, and IUU fishing. He recognized the complexity and expansively of the nature of criminal activities in the maritime environment. This is exactly why extensive cooperation between law enforcement agencies within national governments and between Members States are extremely important. And that is why the role and responsibilities of FCWC remain particularly important and critical with criminal activities such as piracy and illegal fishing, in the environment since borders are unmanned and there are no physical barriers. It is a coincidence that IUU fishing is right at the top of the list of threats – ahead of trafficking of human beings, narcotics and arms, and that West African countries are becoming increasingly concern about this threat which now a key economic factor.

46. Dr. Kollie mentioned the lack of comprehensive Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programs of most African States coastal waters or maritime domain as a critical challenge confronting the fight of several maritime related security issues including IUU fishing. Another challenge noted is the lack of increased collaboration and cooperation between coastal and port States. Despite the challenges to strengthen fisheries governance and enhance maritime security, opportunities for national and regional fisheries management remain promising but security implementation will require a more concerted effort at the national, regional et global levels.

47. Dr. Kollie concluded by calling for the harmonization of the laws of States by adhering to all the relevant international legal instruments and integrating these conventions into their domestic laws and training the staff responsible for their implementation, in particular in the judicial system. He also encouraged the FCWC States Members to continue to strengthen their collaboration as they seek to deal with the issues of fisheries resources management in spite of the threat posed by IUU fishing.

## **VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

48. The meeting was concluded by the nine (9) following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** *Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulation and Operating Manual.* The Member States will deeply review the documents for submission to the next Ministerial Conference. They committed themselves to submit their observations to the FCWC Secretariat by the end of the first quarter of 2017 for taking into account.

**Recommendation 2:** *Fisheries Intelligence and MCS Support in West Africa’ Project.* The Member States support the development of a second phase of the project to continue to build and strengthen the West African Task Force (WATF).

**Recommendation 3:** *Regional Fisheries programme in Western Africa (PESCAO)*. The Member States urge the EUC to continue associating the FCWC Secretariat General in the ongoing process.

**Recommendation 4:** *Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)*. The FCWC Member States have been encouraged to join the initiative within the framework of sustainable fisheries resources management policies. The FCWC Secretariat was invited to continue working together to support the initiative in the region.

**Recommendation 5:** *West Africa Regional Fisheries Project (WARFP)*. The WARFP Coordination is encouraged to finalize the Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire project documents for the next phase. They recommend to involve the FCWC in the coordination of WARFP in the sub-region.

**Recommendation 6:** *Sustainable fisheries resources management*. The FCWC Secretariat is invited to support the Member Countries towards development and implementation of a Regional Fisheries Management Plan, which could facilitate:

- Harmonization of management measures on shared stocks;
- Development of law to support the implementation of closed season;
- Stock assessment at regional level especially for the trans-boundary stocks
- Identification of sensitive areas for MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) within the sub region
- promotion of integrated approach to monitoring and tracking vessel activities;
- Exchange and sharing of information and data
- Exchange of personnel and expertise in fisheries.
- Collaboration with regional bodies on MCS strategies to combat IUU fishing

**Recommendation 7:** *FAO Blue Growth Initiative (BGI)*. FAO is invited to assist in formulating BGI interventions for countries in the sub-region in the form of pilot projects and contribute to creating the enabling environment. Special attention should be given to aquaculture in general and mariculture in particular. It was further recommended that FAO align the BGI with institutions of the AU and that BGI should not become a stand-alone activity. Specific attention to be paid to the reduction of post-harvest losses and the preparation of harmonized (sub) regional fisheries management plans (particularly with respect to coordinated closed seasons). The Member States recommend recommended that FAO take the lead in these two issues.

**Recommendation 8:** *WordFish/NEPAD/AU-IBAR Programme "Improve Food Security and Reduce poverty through intra-regional fish trade in Sub-Saharan Africa"*. Universities should be involved in fisheries field research in order to align university teaching and research with national and regional fisheries development priorities. In connection with the theme, Member States are invited to provide the necessary

technical support for research and to pay particular attention to fish trade at national and regional level for the improvement of people.

**Recommendation 9:** *2017 FCWC Work Plan.* Member States request the support from AU for the implementation of the activities programmed by the FCWC in particular the preparation of the regional fisheries management plan and the mid-term evaluation of the FCWC regional plan to fight against IUU fishing.

## **IX. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU**

49. The Conference elected a new Bureau in accordance with Articles 7.1 and 7.3 of the FCWC Convention. The new Bureau is composed as follow:

- ✓ President: **LIBERIA**
- ✓ Vice- President: **NIGERIA.**

## **X. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TENTH FCWC CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS**

50. The tenth Session of the FCWC Conference of Ministers is expected to take place in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2017. The Chairman of the Conference and the host country in connection with the Secretariat are called upon to set the practical procedures for its holding and inform the Member States.

## **XI. DECLARATIONS OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS**

51. Statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Republic of Benin, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Federal Republic of Nigeria were recorded by the ninth session of the Conference of Ministers. States have successively recalled the importance of the fisheries sector in their economies in terms of contribution to food security, fight against poverty and unemployment. They stressed the need to adopt common policies and strategies for sustainable management of shared resources and development of equitable intra-regional fish trade. They expressed their deep gratitude to all development partners including FAO, EU, ADfB and World Bank for their regular support to FCWC through projects and programs of common interest. Finally, they encouraged the Secretary-General of the Committee for the work done and renewed their commitment to fulfil their obligations for the achievement of the Committee's objectives. Copies of the declarations attached to this report as **Appendix 5**.

## **XII. OTHER MATTERS**

52. A Declaration was made by the Civil Society in Liberia, including women fish processors and traders who require a little more attention and support from FCWC to develop their activities.

53. The Delegation of Liberia wished greater collaboration in dealing with pending cases of illegal fishing in the region.

### **XIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

54. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations unanimously adopted the report.

### **XIV. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

55. The Chairman of the Conference of Ministers closed the meeting at 1:30 pm.