



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR
THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE



Fourth Session of the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF)

Split, Croatia, 13–17 May 2013

**Report of third session of the Committee on Administration and Finance
(CAF)**

Marrakech, Morocco, 14 May 2012

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its third session in Marrakech, Morocco, on 15 May 2012. The session was attended by delegates of 19 GFCM Members as well as observers from non-GFCM Member nations (the Russian Federation and Ukraine) and from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
2. The meeting was called to order by the CAF Chairperson, Mr Hachemi Missaoui, who welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to the government of Morocco for hosting the session in Marrakech and for the excellent organization of the event.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

3. The Chairperson referred to the Statement of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Union and its Member States as provided in CAF:III/2012/Inf.4.
4. The agenda, attached in Appendix X, was adopted without changes.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

5. Ms Judith Swan, invited expert, presented the conclusions of the Task Force on administrative and financial issues and pointed out that a comparative study carried out during the exercise revealed that the CAF was only used marginally, this limited use being due, among other reasons, to its narrow scale of functions.
6. The Task Force, therefore, recommended that the CAF play a more incisive role, which would include financial monitoring, to be managed under the Framework Programme (FWP). It was

suggested that funds, other than annual contributions, be collected by the GFCM through the CAF, in compliance with the GFCM Agreement.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

7. The Executive Secretary, Mr Abdellah Srour, introduced the “Report of the Secretariat on Administrative and Financial Issues” (CAF:III/2012/2), summarizing the main actions related to the administration and financial situation of 2011. This overview touched on topics such as staffing, GFCM Task Force, GFCM new headquarters, activities related to the Black Sea, meetings, publications, the status of ratification of the GFCM Agreement as amended in 1997, the status of payment of the contributions made by Members to the autonomous budget and reviews of the statement of the expenditures made in 2011, including extrabudgetary baby projects.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Recommendations adopted under Article V of the GFCM Agreement

8. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat had officially transmitted the text of recommendations and resolutions adopted at the thirty-fifth Session of the Commission (Italy, May 2011) to Members and observers. After a “grace period”, the relevant decisions entered into force on 28 September 2011.

Specific actions of GFCM for the Black Sea

9. In compliance with the decision of GFCM to increase the activities of the Commission in the Black Sea, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee on the significant outcomes of the first meeting of the GFCM ad hoc Working Group on the Black Sea (Romania, January 2012). Moreover, he underlined that, during the intersessional period several contacts were made between the GFCM Secretariat and Georgia, Russian Federation, Ukraine, not currently Members of the Commission.

Activities and functioning of the Secretariat

10. The Committee was informed that the intersessional activities of the Secretariat included the organization and coordination of 28 meetings agreed by the Commission, including 15 meetings of subsidiary bodies and the annual session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), 7 meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ). In addition, GFCM held 6 meetings related to the Task Force established during the thirty-fifth session to modernize and improve its legal framework and organized several meetings with partner organizations and selected GFCM Members and non-GFCM Members to enhance collaboration. The Secretariat had produced 35 technical and administrative documents.

11. The Committee was reminded that Mr Abdellah Srour was formally elected Executive Secretary of the Commission during the thirty-fifth session of the Commission and that, following his appointment, the freezing of the post of Deputy Executive Secretary for 2012 was decided. The Data Compliance Officer (Professional Category P-2), Mr Federico De Rossi (Italian citizen), was recruited in October 2011. The post of Bio-Statistician (left vacant in August 2011 and shifted to P-4 Fishery Resources Officer) will be filled by Mr Miguel Bernal (Spanish national) in July 2012. Moreover, the post of Office Clerk (G-3) was filled by Ms Florence Dickens (British citizen) in November 2011. Two FAO retirees, Mr Abdallah Ben Hamida (Tunisian citizen) and Mr Gianni Alessio (Italian citizen), carried out the tasks of the Security Guards on a temporary basis at the new headquarters. Finally, the recruitment of a Scientific Editor/Translator (P-2) as agreed at the thirty-fifth session was ongoing.

New GFCM headquarters

12. The Committee was informed that the GFCM Secretariat settled down in its offices located in Palazzo Blumenstihl in September 2011. The move to its new HQs required considerable effort made mainly by FAO Corporate Services, Security, GFCM Secretariat and Fisheries department, all of whom covered all logistical and technical arrangements.

Status of ratification of the Amendments to the GFCM Agreement

13. The Committee was informed on the status of acceptance of 1997 amendments to the GFCM agreement, that remained unchanged, i.e. 21 Members had deposited their instruments of acceptance while Egypt (remitting its contribution) and Israel had not yet done so.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Member contributions to the autonomous budget

14. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the “Call for funds” letter was sent in May 2011. By December 2011, most Members had settled their contributions. In total, nineteen Members deposited their instruments of acceptance and remitted their contributions; Greece, Libya, Monaco and the Syrian Arabic Republic had deposited their instruments of acceptance but had not paid their contributions; while Israel had neither deposited its instrument of acceptance (nor participated in the vote for the selection of Executive Secretary), nor paid its contribution.

2011 Financial situation: autonomous budget and extrabudgetary resources

15. The Committee was informed on the main expenditures incurred during the intersessional period, set according to the priorities and work plan adopted.

16. Information on the status of GFCM extrabudgetary resources (i.e. voluntary contribution from Members for specific activities) received from FAO, EU and Italy was provided.

17. The Committee thanked the Secretariat for the thorough presentation made on administrative and financial issues.

Provisional GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2012 and 2013

18. The discussion of the Committee then focused on “GFCM Budget and Member Contributions for 2012–2013” (CAF:III/2012/3).

19. The proposed budget for the given period had been prepared assuming that the need for strengthening the Secretariat in terms of technical staff would imply the creation of one additional post (Legal and Liaison Officer P-3). The upgrade of the Administrative Assistant G-5 to Programme Assistant G-6 to better reflect the responsibilities and job profile of the position was also included in the proposal.

20. The total sum of the autonomous budget for 2012 was estimated at USD 1 866 036, while that for 2013 was estimated at USD 2 062 877. Those figures would represent a 9.24 percent increase in 2012 in relation to 2011, and a 10.55 percent increase in 2013 in relation to the budget proposed for the previous financial year.

21. The budget proposal for 2012–2013 was also prepared assuming that FAO would continue to contribute to the Secretariat with EUR 46 000 per annum along with technical backstopping and that

the Government of Italy would continue to disburse EUR 100 000 yearly to cover part of GFCM running costs.

22. The Committee decided to cancel the outstanding amount USD 6 055 as a contribution of Bulgaria, given that such contribution referred to a period previous to the ratification of the GFCM Agreement by the Bulgarian competent authorities.

23. The issue of the considerable increase of the contribution of Monaco from 2011 onwards, despite the absence fisheries and aquaculture activities carried out in waters under its jurisdiction, was also raised. In this respect, the Committee was asked to reconsider its financial rules related to the calculation of Members contributions.

24. Several delegations further intervened to share Monaco's concern and favored the identification of an appropriate solution. Upon a proposal by the Executive Secretary, the Commission unanimously agreed to apply, considering the particular situation of Monaco, an ad hoc rule allowing the payment of membership fees only (10 percent). This ad hoc rule would no longer be applicable as soon as any evidence of fishing and/or aquaculture activities be detected. It was also agreed that Monaco would pay its contribution for 2011 in full.

25. Some delegates expressed their concern about the proposal of a budget increase of over 9 percent for 2012, bearing in mind the period of austerity affecting the GFCM region.

26. The EU delegate acknowledged the effort made in terms of effective initiatives and logistic challenges undergone by the Secretariat throughout 2011. He also highlighted the importance of analyzing the budget proposal for the new period by adopting a holistic approach which would take into account not only the proposed expenditure per se, but also the planned activities and their effectiveness.

27. The GFCM Chairperson stated that this critical period was not only caused by the present economic crisis but also the need to be courageous and opt for the effective modernization of the Commission and the improvement of its legal and institutional framework, as foreseen in the GFCM Task Force. He stressed the need to focus on issues like the Black Sea area, the preservation of fishing capacity, the valorization of aquaculture and other related activities.

28. The Committee agreed that a final decision on staffing, budget adoption and priorities would be taken during the week, further to the review of the 2012 work plan.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE FOURTH SESSION

29. It was agreed that the date and venue of the fourth session would be decided by the Commission at its thirty-sixth session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

30. This report was adopted on 19 May 2012.