



CCSBT-EC/0310/20

18 Activities with other Organisations

Purpose

To brief the Extended Commission on interactions with other organisations during 2003 and proposals for interactions in 2004.

Activities in 2003

Secretariat staff participated in the following meetings/conferences under the auspices of FAO:-

- Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) 21-24 January
- 25th Session of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI) 24-28 February
- Third Meeting of Regional Fisheries Bodies 3-4 March
- Meeting of tuna regional fisheries bodies 28 February

Reports of the meetings other than COFI are at **Attachment A**.

The Secretariat also participated in international observer conference conducted jointly by Canada and the USA in November 2002. A report is at **Attachment B**.

Activities in 2004

Known meetings/conferences of interest to the Extended Commission after CCSBT10 are:

- Annual meeting of CCAMLR - October/November 2003
- Annual meeting of IOTC - December 2003
- Tuna regional fisheries management organisation meeting - March 2004
- Meetings of the WCPFC
- Annual meetings of other tuna regional fisheries management organisations (ICCAT and IATTC)

The FAO is seeking the Extended Commission's agreement to participate in the provision of data and an annual assessment of the SBT fishery under the auspices of its FIRMS/FIGIS system.

Discussion – Meetings/Conferences

The CCSBT Secretariat has attended the annual meetings of the ICCAT and IATTC in the past to build knowledge of the operations of tuna management bodies. Now that the CCSBT is a matured organisation, participation in the annual meetings of

these organisations is not necessary unless there is something specific on the meetings' agendas of direct relevance to the CCSBT. At this stage, the Secretariat is not aware of any issues on the annual meeting agendas for the two organisations of specific interest and it is proposed not to attend.

The CCSBT has not attended the annual meeting of CCAMLR for a number of years. While the annual meeting's agenda usually includes items of general interest and there is an association between the interests of the two bodies, the CCSBT has considered that one of its members attending the meeting can represent the Extended Commission's interests. It is proposed that this arrangement continue for the CCAMLR meetings in October/November and that the Extended Commission nominate a member to represent it.

There is an imperative for the IOTC and the Extended Commission to cooperate because of the confluence of the fisheries being managed by both organisations. Attendance at the IOTC's annual meeting has been part of this process although the Extended Commission did not send an observer to the 2002 meeting on the basis of the limited interest in the specific issues listed for discussion. It is proposed that the Extended Commission not send an observer in 2003 for the same reason. The draft agenda does not include issues of direct interest to the Extended Commission. A copy of the draft agenda is at **Attachment C**. As for CCAMLR the Extended Commission's interests could be represented by one or more of the members in attendance.

The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific (WCPFC) will be managing a convention area which will include part of the SBT fishery. The Extended Commission has a direct interest in the evolution of this Commission and the fishery management arrangements it develops. If the Extended Commission believes that cooperation with the WCPFC is now important the Secretariat could represent the Extended Commission by attending the Precon meetings as an observer. The Secretariat is already on the mailing list for all documentation prepared for these meetings.

A meeting of tuna regional fisheries management organisations will be held at the ICCAT headquarters in Madrid in March 2004. The meeting's agenda has yet to be finalised but will include:-

- external factors affecting the management of fisheries
- status of FIRMS
- incorporation of ecosystems consideration into fisheries management by RFMOs
- relations between RFMOs and UNEP
- trade documentation harmonisation
- cooperation between tuna bodies
- Myers and Worm paper issues

The Secretariat recommends CCSBT participation in this meeting.

Discussion – FIRMS-FIGIS

At CCSBT8 it was agreed in principle to cooperate with the FAO on the FIRMS-FIGIS system with agreement to participate dependent on the budgetary and resource implications. If the Extended Commission agrees to participate the major responsibilities will be:-

- to provide for inclusion in the FIRMS databases fishery assessment and management reports, statistics and other related information
- to collate fishery information or to establish databases jointly with FAO

A principle of the arrangement is that ownership and control over the data and its dissemination remains with organisation providing the information.

The agreement to give effect to participation with the FAO has been developed by a steering committee, in which the CCSBT Secretariat has been involved. A copy of the agreement is at **Attachment D**.

The issue was discussed at the 2nd Extended Scientific Committee but no issues of scientific relevance were identified. It was agreed that the preparation of a SBT status report for inclusion in FIRMS by the Extended Commission was feasible.

The other tuna regional fisheries management organisations (ICCAT, IATTC and IOTC) have advised the Secretariat that they will be signing the agreement with the FAO by the end of 2003.

The Secretariat believes it can manage the responsibilities of participation without additional resources. However, if it is agreed to participate, it will be necessary to send the Database Manager to a training course to become familiar with its operation.

The draft budget prepared for 2004 provides for participation in:-

- the meeting of tuna RFMOs
- two meetings of the WCPFC
- the FIRMS-FIGIS training course

Prepared by the Secretariat

PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

This is the final report approved by the Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies held in Rome on 3 and 4 March 2003.

FAO.

Report of the Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies. Rome, 3-4 March 2003.

FAO Fisheries Report No. 645. Rome, FAO 2003.

ABSTRACT

The Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, on 3 and 4 March 2003. The Meeting reviewed the decisions of the Twenty-Fifth Session of COFI of relevance to Regional Fishery Bodies and FAO Fisheries Circular 985 containing summary information about RFBs. The Meeting discussed external factors affecting the management of fisheries, the status of partnerships between RFBs and FAO to develop the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS), implications for RFBs from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), approaches to incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management by RFBs, relations between RFBs and UNEP and private sector involvement in the work of RFBs.

The Meeting reached a number of conclusions regarding matters meriting the attention of RFBs, governments and FAO.

Distribution:

Members of the Committee
Other interested nations and international organizations
FAO Fisheries Department
FAO Regional Fishery Officers

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies was held on 3 and 4 March 2003 at FAO Headquarters, Rome. Participants included representatives from 27 Regional Fishery Bodies, and from the Coordination Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS). Representatives of the FAO Fisheries Department were also in attendance. The List of Participants is in Appendix B.

2. The Chair, Mr. Robin Allen, opened the Meeting by welcoming all participants and expressed the appreciation on behalf of the RFBs to FAO for facilitating the work of the Bureau during the inter-sessional period and for the excellent facilities provided for the meeting. Mr. Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, FAO Fisheries Department, addressed the participants on behalf of the Fisheries Department. Referring to the unprecedented challenges RFBs are facing, he noted their role of promoting responsible behaviour in the fisheries sector. He stated that cooperation and coordination among RFBs is a goal that should be fostered, and commended the RFBs for having seized the initiative. FAO will seek to cooperate with RFBs and complement their decisions. The full text of the Assistant Director-General's statement is in Appendix D.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

3. The Meeting adopted the agenda in Appendix A. A List of Documents provided to the meeting is in Appendix C.

4. It was proposed that the office bearers elected at the second session should continue to hold office until the end of the third session, and election of officers for the next session be held in accordance with the agenda. The meeting agreed, and the officers for the second session are:

Chairperson:	Mr. Robin Allen, Director, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC);
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr. Estabán de Salas, Executive Secretary, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);
Rapporteur:	Mr. Tissa Amaratunga, Deputy Executive Secretary, Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

5. The FAO Fisheries Department provided the Secretariat for the Meeting.

6. The Chair advised that some requests for observer status had been received from a member of COFI and an NGO. The Meeting noted that its purpose is to enhance cooperation and coordination among RFBs, and to that end to discuss matters of mutual interest to RFBs and not to make decisions; it is not a formal body and has no specific rules of procedure. The Meeting declined to approve the requests at this time. Attendance of observers would require administrative and logistical support which is not currently available. In keeping with their internal procedures, some participants suggested that rules for observers would be needed prior to any consideration of their participation.

REVIEW OF THE DECISIONS OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF COFI OF RELEVANCE TO REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES

7. Referring to the draft report of the Twenty-Fifth Session of COFI, the following issues were identified as important to RFBs:

- the value of SOFIA, ASFA, FIGIS and involvement of RFBs; (para 12)
- any regional plans of action in support of the IPOAs; (para 13-22)
- role of RFBs in adopting listings for fishing vessels (e.g. “white lists”); (para 21)
- strengthening RFBs, Compliance Agreement: relevant port State measures; improving and extending catch documentation; decommissioning and scrapping of vessels, hard and soft law; (para 22)
- FAO’s role in disseminating information about RFB’s activities in deep sea fisheries; (para 26)
- international cooperation in making VMS a more effective part of MCS; (para 29)
- any FAO guidelines on ecolabelling should include fish caught in compliance with RFB rules; (para 39)
- harmonization of catch certification noting tuna bodies are considering this; (para 43)
- Status and Trends reporting and strategies, roles for RFBs; (paras 54-63)
- Implications of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management – need for close cooperation within RFBs; (paras 80-89)
- Cooperation with CITES.

8 The Meeting discussed the issue of cooperation with CITES at length, with some participants referring to their cooperation with CITES and others expressing concern about its scientific basis for listing species on CITES appendices. It was noted that FAO members have agreed that FAO become more involved in CITES matters relating to CITES listing with respect to commercially exploited aquatic species in consultation with RFBs, and it was suggested that RFBs in contact with CITES keep other bodies informed. One RFB noted that the Ministries of Environment often deal with CITES so it can only deal with issues indirectly. The FAO Secretariat advised the Meeting it was prepared to continue acting as a conduit between the CITES Secretariat and RFBs.

9 Of the COFI issues relevant to RFBs, one RFB noted that its priority is to focus on areas where it can make a difference in the short to medium term, and this would include strengthening RFBs, IUU fishing, cooperation to make VMS systems more effective and harmonization of catch certification.

10. Others noted progress on practical steps to stop IUU fishing, including a voluntary exchange of enforcement related information, developing a list of types of information that might be exchanged, monthly reporting by species and sub-regions, monthly landing reports of vessels from other member countries. Successful actions taken in relation to non-contracting parties, including open registry States, were reported by several RFBs. The effectiveness of trade information schemes and white lists were discussed. One RFB explained the difficulty in distinguishing unreported fishing and illegal catches.

11. The difficulty in controlling transshipment at sea was discussed, and it was noted that this is prohibited in certain situations and that automatic VMS and surveillance systems can detect transshipment at sea.

SUMMARY INFORMATION ON THE ROLE OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES

12. FAO Fisheries Circular 985 on Summary Information on the Role of International Fishery Organizations or Arrangements and other Bodies Concerned with the Conservation and Management of Living Aquatic Resources was introduced. It was noted in discussion that that RFBs have limited resources to respond to questionnaires such as the one that formed the basis of the survey for Circular 985. The usefulness of the document for RFBs in their ongoing work was noted and it was suggested that FAO consider including the information relating to the institutional frameworks of RFBs in the document on the FAO website..

EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES

13. Several RFBs referred to external factors as a major concern affecting the management of fisheries. External factors can have more significant effects on the stocks than management actions. Participants referred particularly to pollution, dams, river outflows, population growth, hydroelectric establishments, aquaculture and other man-made factors as major concerns affecting habitat modification. There was also concern about loss of genetic diversity. Some other problems noted by RFBs are the impact of trade liberalization and an increasing need for cooperation with environmental organizations or institutions in the area. Post harvest problems were described (which also impact on the quality of data for fisheries management), together with concerns about how consumer and trade patterns are affecting fisheries management. Some RFBs indicated their difficulties in addressing the impacts of consumer preferences, supply and demand. Several RFBs are addressing the problems, some with funding assistance. It was suggested that RFBs can play a positive role in addressing external factors by contributing regional cooperation, knowledge and expertise, and communicating the effects of external factors on fisheries.

STATUS OF PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES AND FAO TO DEVELOP FIRMS

14. Mr. Richard Grainger presented a general introduction to the paper on Implementation of the Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partnership Arrangement: Status and Prospects (Document RFBIII/2003/4), and Mr. Marc Taconet, FIGIS Manager explained the main content. In discussion, one RFB who had been mandated in principle to join the proposed partnership encouraged other RFBs to lend their support to FIRMS. It was noted that RFBs increasingly operate in a global context.

15. Some RFBs noted they had not been approached, and many will bring the matter to the attention of their members. The potential benefits to members and costs to the organization will be considered. It was noted that the project can be broader than resource monitoring, and can also serve as a description of fisheries institutions and management regimes.

16. A strong need for an authoritative database and fisheries trends was recognized. It would be a big step forward in dealing with statements by non-fisheries bodies on the state of

fisheries resources. The Meeting took note of the need for a comprehensive geographical coverage and for statistics to use as a basis for advice on fisheries management.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES FROM THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

17. The Meeting considered the COFI document 2003/Inf.14 on the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 and its Implications for Fisheries, in particular paragraphs 19 and following on specific activities with time-bound goals. In particular, it took note of the following goals:

- Put into effect the IPOA on the Management of Fishing Capacity by 2005; (para 22)
- Put into effect the IPOA to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing by 2004; (para 24)
- Encourage the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) by 2010; (para 25)
- Maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield by 2015; (para 27)

18. The Meeting also took into account the following specified goals of WSSD: (para 11)

- Establish by 2004 a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments.
- Urgently develop and implement national, and, where appropriate, regional plans of action, to put into effect the FAO International Plans of Action;

and in respect of consultation and coordination the need to: (para 12)

- Establish an effective, transparent and regular inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations System;
- Strengthen regional cooperation and coordination between the relevant regional organizations and programmes, the UNEP regional seas programmes, regional fisheries management organizations and other regional science, health and development organizations;

and the call on the international community to: (para 15)

- Further implement sustainable fisheries management and improve financial returns from fisheries by supporting and strengthening relevant regional fisheries management organizations, as appropriate, such as the recently established Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and such agreements as the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

19. One RFB explained that, although management measures are enjoying some success and goals are being set for stock recovery, some stocks would probably not recover to MSY

levels by 2015 without unrealistic reductions in fishing. Another RFB reported that they had reached such a goal set in 1997 for many fisheries, even though the target year was 2010. One RFB noted that external factors present a major problem in implementing this goal, and another explained that attaining the goal will be assisted by measures such as trade documentation schemes, Port State measures, white lists and blacklists.

20. Regarding implementation of the ecosystem approach, while many RFBs are working towards such an approach as mandated by their members, they agreed that this is best done as a step-by-step approach. It is important that data collection systems, a proper decision making process and scientific information be developed as a foundation. Some RFBs report major difficulties with fundamental concerns such as collecting accurate catch statistics. Some RFBs are waiting for the relevant technical guidelines to be developed, which they will then seek to implement. Others are receiving assistance to manage on an ecosystem basis, but external factors, such as civil unrest, are preventing it.

21. One RFB reported its goal to reach MSY has been reached for some stocks earlier than the timeline they had previously set, and noted the trade information scheme appears to have eliminated IUU fishing. Some participants noted that achieving MSY levels had to take account of an ecosystem approach and fluctuations in stock sizes caused by external factors. It was noted that in this context MSY may not constitute an appropriate reference point, especially for multispecies fisheries.

22. It was recognized that WSSD didn't address inland fisheries to the same extent as marine fisheries.

23. The WSSD outputs mix concepts, such as the technical concepts involved in IUU fishing and the more theoretical concepts in developing ecosystem approaches. For the latter, it was suggested that RFBs need to evaluate their decision making systems, particularly in respect of providing proactive measures rather than responding to particular problems as they manifest themselves.

APPROACHES TO INCORPORATE ECOSYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS INTO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BY REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES

24. A number of RFBs reported on their progress in implementing approaches to incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management. These are reported in Appendix E. Several RFBs are engaged in ecosystem modeling to provide insight into the effects of fisheries on the ecosystem.

25. Some participants expressed concern that the ecosystem approach is not clearly understood or defined. During discussion, it was understood that elements are included such as associated species, bycatch and effect on the environment, which some RFBs are addressing. However, it may also include social-economic aspects which most RFBs do not have the resources or mandate to consider. Fisheries management by RFBs may be limited to one or more species or geographic areas, making it difficult for them to adopt an ecosystem approach. A possible response would be collaboration among appropriate RFBs. Participants noted that strengthening RFBs would be needed in order to address ecosystem considerations appropriately.

26. It appeared that only one RFB was mandated by its convention to take ecosystem and precautionary approaches. Another RFB had a flexible enough Convention that it has scope for taking an ecosystem approach in terms of adding other species to its management regime and reviewing catches and bycatches of many other species seen in the fishery. In general, participants recognized that the precautionary approach can be adopted, but it might be necessary for RFBs to reconsider their mandate to facilitate taking an ecosystem approach.

27. The value of observers in collecting data for ecosystem management was discussed. It was noted that one RFB has developed a technical alternative to observers, involving hydraulic sensors in combination with GPS and digital cameras. This is an indication of rapidly evolving technology for observer replacement. However, it was noted that these techniques were not applicable in many small scale fisheries.

28. Some RFBs reinforced the importance of considering external factors, people and socioeconomic considerations as part of the ecosystem approach, noting that small scale fisheries do not receive enough attention in this respect.

RELATIONS BETWEEN REGIONAL BODIES AND UNEP

29. It was recalled that a UNEP representative attended the Second Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies, and encouraged a closer relationship between the RFBs and the Regional Seas Programmes (RSP). There have also been a number of approaches to RFBs by UNEP in the interim to attend UNEP-sponsored meetings relating to fisheries matters such as sustainable fisheries and the effect of subsidies in fisheries. It was suggested that it would be useful for RFBs to share views on the relationship between RFBs and UNEP.

30. Participants agreed that there should be a strong emphasis on RFBs inputting their management expertise to RSPs, and several participants noted positive relations and *de facto* cooperation in this regard. However, there was general agreement that RFBs should project their competence collectively. One way of doing this would be for FAO to include consolidated information on its website, such as that appearing in Circular 985, and to make such information available to CITES and UNEP. Such information could be housed in FIGIS when it becomes fully operational. In addition, CITES and UNEP Secretariats should receive this information on a proactive basis.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

31. The Meeting acclaimed the following officers for the Fourth Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies:

Chairperson:	Mr. Denzil Miller, Executive Secretary, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);
Vice Chairperson:	Mr. Victor Restrepo, Assistant Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT);
Rapporteur	Mr. Tissa Amaratunga, Deputy Executive Secretary, Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO).

32. It was agreed that the Fourth Meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies will be held after the Twenty-sixth Session of COFI, and will take place in early March, 2005 at FAO headquarters in Rome.

OTHER MATTERS - PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORK OF RFBs

33. The trend of private sector involvement in the work of the RFBs was discussed, and experiences shared. On the whole, participants reported positive results from private sector involvement to date. Many RFBs have projects that involve industry input into such projects as stock assessments, research, a tagging project, funding, liaison and containment initiatives, developing management procedures, VMS testing. In addition, initiatives to seek private sector funding were described.

DRAFT Report of the Third Meeting of Secretariats of Tuna Agencies and Programs

FAO Offices, Rome, 28 February, 2003

Representatives from the following agencies and programs attended the meeting:

CCSBT	B. Macdonald
	H. Chiang
FFA	A. Richards
IATTC	R. Allen
ICCAT	A. Lima
	V. Restrepo
IOTC	D. Ardill.

D. Ardill was elected to lead the discussions and V. Restrepo acted as rapporteur. The meeting agenda is reflected in the discussion points itemized below.

1. The FIRMS Partnership

V. Restrepo provided a summary of the discussions that took place at a meeting held earlier that day between potential FIRMS partners and the FIGIS team at FAO. He explained that the meeting had made progress in making useful changes to the draft partnership agreement (now called "arrangement"), such that the document was now clearer about rights and responsibilities, and about the role of the FIRMS Steering Committee. He noted that the discussions had not been completed for lack of time and, as a result, another meeting was planned for July 2003.

D. Ardill added that an important issue being discussed was to define who the partners would be. The FIRMS meeting had agreed that the partnership would not be between participating institutions and FAO; instead, the arrangement would be between each participating institution and the Partnership (thus, FAO would sign the arrangement on behalf of the partnership).

Participants agreed that there were clear benefits to be obtained by joining the FIRMS partnership. However, some felt that they needed to have a clearer idea of how much work would be involved. For example, some RFMOs would need to adapt the way in which their reports on stock status are written so that they conform to the FIRMS layout.

Participants expressed concern that sometimes the distinction between contributions to FIRMS and contributions to the rest of FIGIS (or to other FAO programs) is not very clear. For example, the draft FIRMS documents often refer to the term "data" when it appears that what is meant is not data but "information" or simply "text". Thus, the use of database jargon in the draft FIRMS arrangement document can cause unnecessary uneasiness on the part of potential participants.

2. Trade documentation

A. Lima explained that ICCAT has been very active in putting together a comprehensive package of measures for combating IUU fishing. Statistical Documents for bluefin, swordfish and bigeye are designed to play a central role, as they can be used to identify problematic flags and such identification is a necessary step leading to other measures such as trade sanctions. However, the statistical

documents need some improvements in order to be effective. Primarily, it would be important to ensure coverage of all oceans, and to improve traceability in order to avoid falsification

Participants discussed ways in which the various statistical documents could be improved. D. Ardill and B. Macdonald indicated that their Secretariats had produced documents which identified loopholes and problem areas. R. Allen referred to a January 2001 meeting which had identified useful ways in which statistical documents could be improved in terms of harmonization. He expressed a need for harmonization in terms of similar definitions of oceans (e.g. differentiating the eastern Pacific from the central-western Pacific) and in containing the same exclusions of certain product types (e.g., bigeye destined for canning) for the various Commissions.

Participants agreed that it would be useful to work together to identify specific ways in which the statistical documents could be harmonized in order to make them more effective for all tuna RFBs. The CCSBT, IOTC and the report of the meeting on Catch Document Harmonization could be used as the basis for this work. CCSBT would initiate the work and submit a draft proposal to the other Secretariats by mid-May. Collaboration would be carried out by e-mail.

Participants then discussed the various uses of statistical documents. All agreed that the term "statistical" was rather a misnomer because of the very limited usefulness of these instruments for the collection of catch statistics. Therefore, the focus of any improvements to the documents should be on the fight against IUU fishing via trade documentation.

Participants also discussed the ways in which statistical document information is handled by the various Commissions. Some Secretariats receive copies of the original documents (e.g. CCSBT), while others only get aggregate summary reports (e.g., IOTC, ICCAT). In an efficient system, there should be rapid electronic validation systems in all oceans and the information for each statistical document should become available in real-time to the Commission in whose area of competence the catches were made. The CCSBT has already worked on developing a database system for tracking such information. Participants agreed that it would be useful to understand the details of this system and B. Macdonald offered to send more information about it.

3. Vessel listings

All Secretariats of tuna agencies and programs are getting increasingly involved in maintaining lists of vessels, both positive and negative (IUU). Several Commissions have started to move towards using lists of vessels authorized to fish in a given convention area to control imports.

Recognizing that many tuna fleets are highly mobile, participants agreed that there is a clear need to identify mechanisms in which to exchange vessel information. For doing so, it would be necessary to identify a common format for exchanging vessel data.

The common format should respect confidentiality requirements. Also, it would be important to create vessel identifiers that would be unique worldwide, and it was suggested that perhaps these keys could be generated by FAO.

Victor Restrepo offered to compile a list of the vessel data collected by each Commission (and international standards such as the Compliance agreement) as a step in finding a common format for the exchange of vessel information.

4. Second World Bigeye Tuna Meeting

A. Lima explained that ICCAT has a research program called the Bigeye Tuna Year Program (BETYP) that is entering its final phase. The BETYP will conclude with a symposium that will be held March 8-11, 2004 in Madrid. The ICCAT Scientific Committee and Commission decided that it

would be a good idea to hold a Second World Bigeye Tuna Meeting, similar to the one hosted before by IATTC, in the two days immediately following the BETYP Symposium. He explained that having the two meetings back-to-back would save on some expenses, especially for those participants who would have to travel to attend both conferences.

Participants agreed that this was an excellent idea. A. Lima explained that the financial support he would likely need from participating tuna Secretariats is that they covered the travel costs of their own staff.

A. Lima also explained that there would be a Steering Committee that would decide upon all of the organizational matters of the meeting, such as the themes and the balance between time spent in presentations and time spent in discussions. He stated that the Steering Committee should be comprised by one staff member from each interested Secretariat and asked that nominations be provided to him in the near future.

5. Any other business

Consolidation of resolutions

Several participants expressed concern that the number of recommendations/resolutions adopted each year by all tuna Commissions is increasing rapidly and that it is increasingly difficult for members of one Secretariat to quickly understand what other Commissions are doing.

A. Lima indicated that ICCAT was studying a project to consolidate all of its recommendations into a document, organized by subject, that would only contain the operative paragraphs. It was not known whether the Commission would like to use this compendium as an informal guide, or eventually as a substitute for the current way of adopting resolutions in which the entire compendium would be updated every year.

D. Ardill indicated that IOTC is exploring a different approach, by creating a database that would facilitate the searching for resolutions on particular topics. He suggested that he would make the design available to anyone interested once it became operational.

Participants agreed that this is a complex topic that needs to receive further attention. The matter could be considered again in a future meeting of tuna agencies and programs.

Assessment Methods

D. Ardill suggested that one way in which tuna agencies could benefit from increased collaboration could be from holding a joint meeting focusing on methods. One potential topic identified was the design of operating models and the use of simulation tools in evaluating management strategies. B. Macdonald explained that CCSBT is already doing substantial work on this issue for southern bluefin.

Participants agreed that there were some methodological issues in which it would be useful to collaborate with each other. However, it was not immediately clear if the best way would be by holding jointly-sponsored meetings, or by one agency holding a meeting and inviting other agencies to attend. Neither idea was discarded and it was agreed that the Secretariats would communicate with each other on this subject as opportunities for collaboration arose.

Next meeting

It was agreed to hold the fourth meeting of tuna agencies and programs in Madrid, March 2004, coinciding with the planned third world bigeye meeting.

Attachment B

Report on the International Fisheries Observer Conference, New Orleans, U.S.A., 18-21 November 2002 (R.B. Kennedy, 29 November 2002)

I attended the International Fisheries Observer Conference held during November 2002. Over 200 participants¹ from over 20 countries attended the conference.

The conference comprised of 8 main themes, these being:

- What is the best mix of observer presence and compatible technologies?
- How do observer programs achieve optimal coverage?
- What is the observer's role in violation situations?
- How are observer data used to regulate fisheries?
- How should contractor performance be measured?
- How should observers be selected and trained?
- What is meant by observer support, and why is it important?
- Lessons learned: What guidance can be provided to new observer programs?

I found the conference highly interesting and I think it would be extremely useful for our members (particularly those with new observer programs) to attend the next observer conference, which might be held in Sydney in 2004.

Three issues and opportunities were raised at the conference that I think are worth special mention, including:

(1) The need to avoid sampling bias in an observer program

There are numerous forms of sampling bias, but two that seemed particularly prevalent and important were "selection bias" from non-random selection of vessels, and "observer effect" caused by vessels operating in a different manner when observers are on board.

The draft CCSBT observer standard mentions random observations of fishing operations. Our draft standard also states that "The scheme should ensure that, within the main fishing areas and seasons, all representative vessels, areas, and time periods have an equal probability of being sampled". From the presentations at the conference, I would say that this is an extremely important aspect of our standard that CCSBT members should strive to achieve.

Our draft standard does not mention the issue of "observer effect". However, at the conference, it was well recognised that when there is a low observer coverage (e.g. below 30%), then the presence of observers on board can effect the way that a vessel fishes

¹ including scientists, observers, observer program managers, and observer providers.

during a trip. A partial solution used by one program was to assign observers to a vessel for all trips during a 2 month period. The concept behind this strategy was that a vessel would find it too costly to alter their fishing practices for a two month period, which helped to minimise the “observer effect”. I think it might be valuable for our standards to mention the issue of an “observer effect” and to recommend that members adopt appropriate strategies to minimise this effect.

(2) Opportunities provided by new technologies

There has been continued development of systems for direct electronic logging of observer and related data. Robust, water proof hand held PC's are available at a reasonable cost for live data entry, and these can attach to a variety of peripheral devices, including GPS, measuring boards and calipers). A future option for CCSBT could be to develop and deploy software for use with hand held PC's for standard SBT observer trips. This could have numerous benefits in relation to efficiency, data standardisation, data quality, and time frames for data availability.

Remote monitoring systems were also presented that can be used to supplement observer data. These included video systems that can monitor the catch during hauling, or bird activity when deploying. Systems also exist for counting the number of hooks set. These systems can be used in the absence of an observer to collect basic data and could potentially provide a means of extending the “observer” coverage.

(3) The importance of skilled long-term observers

Throughout the conference, it was stressed that quality data collection is reliant on skilled observers. In addition, it was clear that there is a considerable “learning curve” for observers and that actual experience is also particularly important for collection of quality data.

The conference devoted considerable time to issues with respect to recruiting and training of observers, including ways of retaining good observers. These aspects of the conference (and probably the next conference) would be particularly valuable to managers of CCSBT observer programs. In addition, one presenter from NOAA Fisheries in Seattle invited other countries to visit their observer program and to even participate in the U.S. observer training. This might be a worthwhile opportunity for some of our members to consider.

Attachment C

December 2002

**Seventh Session****Victoria, Seychelles, 2 - 6 December 2002****PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

- 1) **Opening of the Session**
- 2) **Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the Session (IOTC-S7-02-01) [for decision]**
- 3) **Consideration of requests to accede as Cooperating Non-contracting Parties [for decision]**
- 4) **Admission of observers [for decision]**
- 5) **Progress report of the Secretariat (IOTC-S7-02-04) [for discussion]**
- 6) **Report of the 5th Session of the Scientific Committee (IOTC-S7-02-05) [for discussion and decision]**
- 7) **Management issues**
 - a) **Consideration on the Terms of Reference for a Control and Inspection Committee (6th Session Report, para. 39)**
 - b) **Draft Resolution on an Action Plan to ensure the effectiveness of the conservation programme for bigeye tuna in the IOTC Area of competence, (6th Session Report, para. 42) and**
 - c) **Draft Recommendation relating to the establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System (6th Session Report, para. 42).**
 - d) **Other Resolutions and/or Recommendations on conservation and management**
- 8) **Matters arising from the Sixth Session (IOTC/S/06/01/R[E]) [for discussion and decision]**
 - a) **Contracting and collaborating party reports on implementation status of IOTC resolutions (Inf. document with the collection of resolutions)**
 - b) **Consideration on the establishment and Terms of Reference of a Finance Sub-Committee (6th Session Report, para. 88)**

- 9) **Programme of Work and Budget for 2003/4 (IOTC-S7-02-06) [for discussion and decision]**
- 10) **Proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure**
 - a) **Proposal from India to change Rule VII 2.: Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons [for discussion and decision];**
- 11) **Any other matters [for discussion and decision]**
 - a) **Relationship with other Bodies.**
- 12) **Date and Place of the Sixth Session of the Scientific Committee and the Eighth Session of the Commission [for decision].**
- 13) **Election of the Chairperson and two vice-Chairpersons**
- 14) **Adoption of the report**

Revised Partnership Arrangement

From the “AD HOC MEETING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCES MONITORING SYSTEM”

The attached final draft Partnership Arrangement is essentially three parts and consists of:

1. Preamble:

Recognising the origins of the need to develop the FIRMS through a variety of partnerships.

2. Articles:

Article 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

Article 2. PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

Article 3. PARTNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 4. PARTNERS BENEFITS AND RIGHTS

Article 5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3. Annexes:

These three Annexes currently contain ‘Notes’ that will not be included in the text of the Partnership Arrangement.

Annex 1. Current FIRMS Partners on the date of signature by the two Parties.

To be updated and revised on each new Partnership Arrangement.

Annex 2: Outline and detailed arrangements on the nature of information and the conditions under which it is made available under this partnership arrangement, including any institutional collaborations and additional entitlements that a partner may wish to include.

To be defined entirely according to the requirements of the parties, not necessarily the attached guideline, within the scope of, but not limited to, the FIRMS Information Management Policy.

Annex 3. (DRAFT) Rules of Procedure of the FIRMS Steering Committee

To be considered as an appropriate first task of the FSC, the attached may be completely replaced or revised.

**Partnership Arrangement
providing for international cooperation
in the development and maintenance of the
Fisheries Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)**

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries:

- provides guidance which may be used where appropriate in the formulation of international agreements and other legal instruments, both binding and voluntary;
- calls for the promotion of international cooperation and coordination in all matters related to fisheries, including information gathering and data exchange, and fisheries research, management and development; and
- recognises that the special requirements of developing countries in implementing the Code need to be taken into account.

RECOGNIZING that partnerships between international and national institutions will assist in meeting the objectives of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, including the implementation of International Plans of Action and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries.

RECOGNIZING ALSO that such partnerships may occur at many levels, including

- global and regional fisheries organisations and arrangements (Regional Fishery Bodies);
- national agencies and research institutions;
- global and regional network partners providing complementary information; and
- programmes and projects through which the objectives of this arrangement may be promoted.

NOTING that international and national fisheries institutions have a wide variety of mandates and responsibilities, which may change over time, and that Partnership Arrangements should reflect such mandates and responsibilities and adapt to new and changing institutional circumstances, as appropriate. Also noting that the Regional Fishery Bodies have an obligation to disseminate information on the status of fisheries and fish stocks, or to provide assistance to their member countries for that purpose.

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the (**Note:** *agreement, memorandum of understanding, or exchange of letters concerning these recognitions; and noting the appropriate detail*) that exists between the partners to this arrangement.

NOW THEREFORE the (*Institution name*), (hereinafter, the 'Partner'¹) and the FAO, a partner, acting in the interest of furthering the FIRMS objectives, have agreed a Partnership Arrangement:

- to establish the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the partners; and
- to specify the detailed provisions on the nature, scope and conditions under which information is made available.

¹ Or replace throughout with an institution acronym.

Article 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

- 1.1 The principal objective of this arrangement is to establish a framework between the Partners as listed in Annex 1 that will promote development and extension of fisheries status and trends reporting to all fishery resources by:
 - 1.1.1 building a community of responsible institutions that will report in an objective way on fisheries status and trends, thus contributing to the promotion of responsible fisheries management; and
 - 1.1.2 developing, sharing and maintaining services for the collation, management and dissemination of information through a system for Fisheries Resources Monitoring (FIRMS), hereafter referred to as the "FIRMS Partnership".

Article 2. PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

- 2.1 This arrangement is based on the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 information on fisheries is shared and appropriately disseminated;
 - 2.1.2 contributions remain within the full control and ownership of the Partner which has primary monitoring or management responsibility over resource and fishery units, including control of what and when information is made available, and how it is processed; and
 - 2.1.3 whenever possible, the Partner will maintain the documentation on information sources, ownership, data origins and collection methodologies, and on their rules on dissemination and publication.

Article 3. PARTNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 FAO will provide a FIRMS Secretariat with the following responsibilities:
 - 3.1.1 to support the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) with roles and responsibilities as described in Article 5;
 - 3.1.2 to implement decisions of the FSC in accordance with the Information Management policy and Rules of Procedures established by the FSC;
 - 3.1.3 to coordinate and administer financial inputs, in conformity with FAO financial rules and regulations, to the development of FIRMS and for the conduct of this partnership;
 - 3.1.4 to maintain databases for the presentation of fishery information;
 - 3.1.5 to make available the information provided under this arrangement;
 - 3.1.6 to supervise the implementation of FIRMS Partnership services, including
 - 3.1.6.1. the application of systems of information quality control for presentation and consistency purpose;
 - 3.1.6.2. the development and implementation of software and information methodologies; and
 - 3.1.6.3. the development and implementation of training tools and methods, and the conduct of training, as appropriate.
 - 3.1.7 where required, to receive and process information inputs from the Partner, in particular for developing country institutions;
 - 3.1.8 where required, to collate, control and process information on the status and trends of fisheries; and
 - 3.1.9 to seek to ensure that the FIRMS Partnership will include global level information on the status of fisheries in accordance with agreed information management policies of the FSC.

- 3.2 The Partner will contribute to FIRMS according to its mandate, including responsibilities, *inter alia*:
- 3.2.1 to present for inclusion in FIRMS databases fishery assessment and management reports, statistics and other related information in a timely manner and according to its own policies on ownership, transparency and quality assurance, as referred to in Annex 2;
 - 3.2.2 to collate fishery information, or to establish databases jointly with FAO or with others;
 - 3.2.3 where compatible with their mandate, to receive and process information inputs from the Partner, in particular for developing country institutions;
 - 3.2.4 in general to ensure collaboration with and participate in the work of the FSC, including in the identification of information that will complement each Partner's information sources and prevent duplication, and in attending meetings of the FSC.

Article 4. PARTNERS BENEFITS AND RIGHTS

- 4.1 The general benefits of this arrangement are to enable the Partners:
- 4.1.1 to assist them fulfilling their commitment to improving transparency and accuracy of information of fishery resources status, while respecting confidentiality and security under which the information has been submitted, in ways that satisfy the owners of information concerned.
 - 4.1.2 to make available to the public, through dissemination channels referred to in Annex 2, information on fisheries status and trends in ways that provide background for, and facilitate interpretation of, fishery resources assessments and fishery management advisory reports. This information covers, *inter alia*:
 - 4.1.2.1. the distribution and population dynamics of a fishery resource;
 - 4.1.2.2. the techniques, nature, conduct and production of the fishery for that resource;
 - 4.1.2.3. the fishery management systems in place or being developed, and
 - 4.1.2.4. indicators of the effect of such management.
- 4.2 In addition to what may be provided for in Annex 2, the Partner will, for FIRMS purposes, have access to:
- 4.2.1 FIRMS system tools for the editing, dissemination and maintenance of information;
 - 4.2.2 FIRMS information and databases beyond the restrictions normally applied under FAO dissemination policy, e.g. to geographic information system (GIS) layers or other value-added products;
 - 4.2.3 FIRMS Secretariat services for training in the use of information tools and standards, for use of the shared software library and other information products.

Article 5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 Eligibility of partners
- 5.1.1 National institutions, mandated by a national government, and intergovernmental bodies, mandated by national governments, that hold responsibilities for the preparation or publication of fisheries information relevant to the framework of the partnership may become a Partner.
 - 5.1.2 Only one institution per country endorsed by its national government may become a FIRMS Partner. That institution may act as focal point to other institutions in a given country, as appropriate.
- 5.2 FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC)

- 5.2.1 The FSC is constituted of one member of each Partner, including FAO in its capacity of Partner.
- 5.2.2 FAO will in addition provide the Secretariat to the FSC.
- 5.2.3 The FSC will be activated when the FIRMS Partnership has entered into force.
- 5.3 In administrative matters, the FSC will:
 - 5.3.1 meet at regular intervals, as appropriate or required.
 - 5.3.2 adopt its rules of procedures and any amendment thereof;
 - 5.3.3 make decisions according to the Rules of Procedures (see Annex 3), within the scope of this Partnership Arrangement.
 - 5.3.4 identify potential partners that will contribute to the achievement of the FIRMS objectives, and prioritise their eligibility, intending to ensure that:
 - 5.3.4.1. their reporting complements what FIRMS already covers;
 - 5.3.4.2. their internal information policies are in conformity with quality assurance rules and standards provided for in the FIRMS Information Management Policy;
 - 5.3.4.3. their mandate fits the FIRMS thematic scope; and
 - 5.3.4.4. the additional workload generated can be absorbed by the FIRMS Secretariat.
 - 5.3.5 declare a Partner withdrawn based on inactivity of the Partner in FIRMS; and
 - 5.3.6 discuss and advise on any other matters pertaining to FIRMS.
- 5.4 In technical matters, the FSC will:
 - 5.4.1 monitor the development and performance of FIRMS and advise on improvements;
 - 5.4.2 consider Partners' requests on additional analyses or presentations;
 - 5.4.3 discuss, advise and take decisions on further system developments;
 - 5.4.4 formulate, adopt and keep under review the Information Management Policy;
 - 5.4.5 review and comment upon the resources made available for the furthering of FIRMS objectives whether made in kind or financial, and advise the FIRMS Secretariat on their allocation.
- 5.5 Cost sharing the FIRMS Partnership
 - 5.5.1 FAO will cover the costs of FIRMS development, FSC administration and the provision of the Partner entitlements under this arrangement through regular and trust fund arrangements, to the extent that these funds allow.
 - 5.5.2 The Partner will cover the costs of information contributions to FIRMS, attendance at FSC meetings and additional FIRMS services, which might include information system functionality or customisation for the specific use of the Partner, to the extent that available funds allow.
- 5.6 Entry into force, amendment and termination of this arrangement
 - 5.6.1 This arrangement will enter into force on the date following the signature of five Partnership Arrangements.
 - 5.6.2 A Partner may withdraw from this arrangement, after giving three months notice to the FIRMS Secretariat who will inform the other Partners.
 - 5.6.3 FAO can terminate its service as the FIRMS Secretariat. FAO will give twenty-four months notice to FSC before this termination.
 - 5.6.4 This arrangement can be reviewed by the Partners as deemed appropriate by FSC through its Rules of Procedure. The arrangement can only be amended or terminated with the consensus of all Partners.

5.6.5 The FSC will hold a first session within one year from the date of entry into force of this arrangement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Partners affix their signatures:

<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Name:</i>
<i>Position:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

For and on behalf of: **The (Partner- name):**

<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Name:</i>
<i>Position:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

For and on behalf of: **Secretariat: on behalf of the FIRMS Partnership
(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)**

Note: *The following three Annexes will be attached to the Partnership Arrangement to be discussed between the new Partners. 'Note' text is indicative, not for inclusion in the signed document.*

Annex 1.

Current FIRMS Partners on the date of signature by the two Parties.

Note: *To be revised for each new Partnership Arrangement*

	<i>Institutional Partner</i>	<i>Date of Signature</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
...		

Annex 2:

Outline and detailed arrangements on the nature of information and the conditions under which it is made available under this partnership arrangement, including any institutional collaborations and additional entitlements that a partner may wish to include.

Note: Fisheries data and statistical information will be provided by the FIRMS Partners mandated to develop and use it in ways that support their work programmes, and which are reported to the public in ways that can also be achieved through the FIRMS Partnership.

This Annex is a specific text to be agreed by the signatory partners. The following is a general outline of the possible contents of the Annex in relation to important issues that the signatory partners need to agree in support of the main text of the arrangement, including but not limited to the following:

1. ***Data and statistical information:***

Types and scope of information to be contributed. Considerations will be made on the standards to be used in this Partnership Agreement, referring to the FIRMS Partnership's Information Management Policy.

2. ***Metadata and information management:***

Methods of collection; bibliographical sources, ownership and responsibilities, including criteria and methods used in authentication and verification; processing methods and transmission protocols; and dissemination channels.

3. ***Data and information security:***

Confidentiality, transparency and feedback.

4. ***Collaborative institutions:***

The institutions that a partner wishes to be included in aspects of this arrangement, and the related information ownership and responsibilities details.

5. ***Additional entitlements:***

When further partnership efforts need to be extended this item may be revised by mutual consent.

Note: *This Annex may be structured in any way that the partners wish to agree, not necessarily as above.*

Annex 3.

(DRAFT) Rules of Procedure of the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC)

Note: Below are normally appropriate committee Rules of Procedures, which may be entirely revised or replaced at the first meeting of the FSC, or at subsequent meetings through a revision submission from a new partner at its first attendance.

FSC will adopt and revise its own Rules of Procedures. Such Rules of Procedure will inform new FSC membership of its current responsibilities and capacities at signature, appropriately recognising that the FIRMS Partnership will immediately respond to its revision submissions.

Note: The following current Rules of Procedures is adopted as Annex 3 to a new Partnership Agreement, noting the capacity of a new partner to seek immediate revision at the FSC, i.e. the standing Rules of Procedures (as amended) at the time of signature.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. SESSIONS

The FSC will meet at least once every three years. It may meet upon request of X Partners communicated to the Secretariat or upon proposal of the FSC Secretariat. The FSC Secretariat will announce the session X months before the session starts.

2. AGENDA

A provisional agenda for each session will be prepared by the FSC Secretariat in collaboration with the participating institutions. The first item on the provisional agenda will be the adoption of the agenda. If funds are made available to the FIRMS partnership, the agenda will comprise an element entitled "handling of financial matters". The agenda will be distributed with the announcement of the session.

3. PARTNERS' REPRESENTATIVE

Partners will communicate to the FSC Secretariat the names of its Representative, alternate Representative, and other members of its delegation prior to sessions (one month prior?).

4. DOCUMENTATION

Relevant documents for each session will be, if possible, distributed by the Secretariat to all Partners (at least two months?) before the session. (Each Partner will be responsible for the timely distribution of its documents in accordance with the mailing list supplied by the FSC Secretariat).

5. OFFICERS

At the start of the Session, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman appointed at the previous session will call the session to order. In their absence, the FSC Secretariat will call the session to order. Following adoption of the agenda, the FSC will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its members; they will remain in office until the election of the new Chairman and new Vice-Chairman at the next session. The outgoing Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be eligible for re-election. (Task or mandate of the chairman?)

6. EXPENSES

The expenses incurred by delegates, including Representative and alternate Representative, attending sessions of the FSC will be borne by the Partner, unless otherwise provided for.

7. WORKING LANGUAGE

English will be the working language of the FSC.

8. DECISION MAKING

Decisions of the FSC will be taken by consensus of all Partners attending the session. If all attempts to achieve consensus fail then the chairman (in consultation with the Secretariat?) may decide that decision be made by a simple majority of votes cast by those present at the session. Each Partner is entitled to one vote. (When necessary, the Chairman may exercise a casting vote).

9. REPORTS

At each session the FSC will adopt a report of the session, which will include inter alia all decisions and recommendations. The report will be distributed by the FSC Secretariat to the Partners, and to other individuals or organizations as requested by the FSC. FAO should make the report available as widely as possible.

10. MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Although recommendations and decisions of the FSC are not binding on Partners, the FSC will monitor and ask the Secretariat to report on the implementation of recommendations and decisions.

11. INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

The FSC may arrange such intersessional activities as are required for its effective functioning, including inter alia holding informal preparatory meetings, holding meetings of regional or subject groups, preparation of working papers, and communication by correspondence.

12. AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure may be adopted by the FSC by a two-thirds majority of the Partners provided that a majority of the Partners to the FIRMS Arrangement will be present. A proposal for the amendment of the Rules of Procedures will be communicated to the Partners by the FAO Secretariat with at least three months notice prior to the session where such amendment(s) will be discussed. The Secretariat will seek to ensure that all Partners acknowledge receipt of proposed amendment(s). The Secretariat may suggest that an amendment proposal be adopted by the majority of the Partners voting through mail system, in which case the vote can take place through such mechanism unless any objection is received by the FSC Secretariat from any Partner within X months after such proposal was made.

13. NEW PARTNERS

New potential Partners will apply to the FIRMS Secretariat. The Secretariat will inform the Partners of such application which will be considered by the FSC at the session following such application, in line with Article 5.3.4 of the FIRMS Partnership Arrangement.

Note: Information Management Policy – to be developed
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The Information Management Policy of FIRMS Partnership will review, advise and recommend changes to the databases presented on FIRMS with a view to the identification and elimination of information duplication and data inconsistencies.