OVERVIEW ON THE FISHING SECTOR IN THE EGYPTIAN COAST OF MEDITERRANEAN

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ABSTRACT

Egypt is one of the most important countries in North Africa, occupies an area of about one million. Egypt drives its fish production from three main 7million km^2 with a population exceeds 7 resources: marine (Mediterranean and Red seas), inland (lakes and Nile River) and aquaculture. Thirty years ago, marine fisheries were provided about 25% of Egyptian fish production decreased to 9% by the day. The Egyptian Mediterranean coast (GFCM-GSA 26) extends from the Libyan boarder in the west, till the Palestinian boarder in the east, covering a distant of nearly one thousand km long that produces an annual average of 50 thousand ton of valuable marine species. The main fishing gears operated in the area are trawling, purse-seining and lining especially long and hand lining. The fishing grounds along the Egyptian Mediterranean coast are divided into four regions; Western region (from Alexandria to El-Salloum), Demietta region, Nile Delta region and Eastern region (Port Said and El-Arish). To the west of Alexandria, some 540 Km including El-Salloum Bay, the fish production is very low because this area is mostly rocky and the fishery depends on small-scale fishermen with small boats as well as the continental shelf is very narrow. More than 70% of fish production comes from the area from Alexandria to Port Said where the bottom is suitable for trawling and the continental shelf is the widest. Based on commercial catch, stock assessment studies revealed that the Egyptian fish stocks have severely declined as a result of both growth and recruitment overfishing. Some regulatory measurements were applied in a trial to overcome this situation, but unfortunately these measurements still not enough to recovery our fisheries. It is recommended that effort must be controlled and decreased. Really, it is not clear how much the reduction should be, but the available assessment suggests a target reference point of about 40% of the current effort. Also, it may be possible to improve the exploitation pattern as well as alter the overall effort. The timing and geographical location of recruitment and spawning should be identified and protected as well as the link between spawning and recruitment in the area should be established. Furthermore, the whole life cycle of the different species should be studied to describe their population dynamics and consequently applying the fishery management models. Fishery statistics recording system should be improved. For the importance of scientific surveys in stock assessment, NIOF started a long-term monitoring program to evaluate the

fishery and ecological status of our marine resources using its two research vessels El-Salsabil and El-Yarmouk. Now, we have a set of data on oceanography, hydrobiology and ichthyology covering years (2007-2008) and we will continue the collection of these data till 2012. At the same time, we try to gain more experience in acoustic surveys, eggs and larvae surveys and how to apply the stock assessment methods which depend on scientific surveys.