

**REPORT OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN-SEAFDEC
FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE GROUP (FCG)**

**Iloilo City, the Philippines
29-30 November 2007**

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Tenth Meeting of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) was held from 29 to 30 November 2007 in Iloilo City, the Philippines with the main objective of discussing the ASEAN-SEAFDEC fisheries collaborative programs, the progress and activities under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership, as well as policy considerations on important issues. The Meeting was attended by representatives from the ASEAN and SEAFDEC Member Countries (except Lao PDR) as well as the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments. The representative from ASEAN Secretariat extended his apology for not being able to attend the Meeting due to prior commitment. The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.

2. The Meeting was co-chaired by SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Dr. Siri Ekmaharaj, and Dr. Wimol Jantharotai, on behalf of the Chairman of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF_i).

3. The Co-chair from SEAFDEC welcomed all participants to the Meeting. He also stressed the importance of this Meeting to discuss the collaborative programs between ASEAN and SEAFDEC, as well as several important issues including the international fisheries-related issues, in order to be further submitted to the SEAFDEC Council and ASWGF_i Meetings for consideration and endorsement. He then declared the Meeting open. His opening speech appears as **Annex 2**.

4. The Agenda which appears as **Annex 3** was adopted.

**2. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE DIRECTIVES GIVEN AT THE
MEETINGS OF SEAFDEC COUNCIL AND THE ASEAN SECTORAL
WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES**

5. The Meeting took note of the follow-up actions on several important policy issues, i.e. the international fisheries-related issues, the support to implementation of the International Plan of Action on Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in Southeast Asia, the promotion of small-scale fisheries, the proposed establishment of a Regional Scientific Advisory Committee for Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (RSAC), the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) including the two follow-up proposals on implementation of ASEAN Roadmap for Integration of Fisheries Sector and an ASEAN Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism, the Regional Plan of Action for Promoting Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region, as well as the financial support for FCG programs.

6. The Meeting also took note that follow-up actions related to program matters that have been accommodated in the programs under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group for the year 2007 and 2008. The report on Follow-up Actions to the

Directives given at the 39th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the 15th Meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF_i) appears as **Annex 4**.

7. The representative from Thailand informed the Meeting of the initiatives on ASEAN Shrimp Alliance (ASA), which has been endorsed at the 29th AMAF in November 2007. Activities under the ASA cover 1) information sharing 2) formulation and harmonization of shrimp standard, creating platform for discussion among experts, and establishing network among the relevant private sectors. In response to the Thailand's proposal, the Meeting agreed that the ASA be placed under the ASSP Program as there have been close collaboration among the ASEAN Member Countries and SEAFDEC. The Meeting also supported that SEAFDEC be a collaborating partner to provide technical support to the ASA, of which the cost for the operation of ASA Secretariat including the development of ASA Website will be the responsibility of Thailand. The technical support could be provision of IT assistance in developing the ASA Website and arrangement for ASA meetings where they are held during or back-to-back with meetings organized by SEAFDEC.

8. The representative from Thailand also took the opportunity to inform the Meeting on the progress of the ASA and requested those ASEAN Member Countries who have not nominated the national focal points to do so as soon as possible to facilitate provision of relevant information to be put in the preliminary website (*www.aseanshrimpalliance.net*). For future ASA meetings, the Meeting requested Thailand to provide in advance the agenda and related documents to all Member Countries for their advance information and necessary preparation.

3. ASEAN-SEAFDEC FISHERIES COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE YEAR 2007-2008

9. The Meeting endorsed the progress and achievements of the activities undertaken by SEAFDEC under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG Mechanism in 2007, and the proposed programs for 2008 which appear as **Annex 5**.

10. The Meeting took note of the offer made by the representative from the Philippines to be the ASEAN Lead Country for the Program on Deep Sea Fisheries Resources Exploration in the Southeast Asia, and the Program on Information Collection of Highly Migratory Species in Southeast Asian Waters. This would be further submitted to the ASWGF_i for consideration

4. ASEAN-SEAFDEC STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (ASSP)

4.1 Status of ASSP

11. The Meeting took note that the ASSP has been established with the signing of the Letter of Understanding (LOU) on 2 November 2007 during the 29th AMAF and 7th AMAF+3 Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting noted that existing projects and activities under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG Mechanism could be consolidated under the ASSP Program. The Meeting agreed that future FCG meetings will be referred to as "the _ Meeting of Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership Program (FCG/ASSP)". ASEAN and SEAFDEC will actively seek funding to support the implementation of ASSP Program, e.g. SEAFDEC from Sida, FAO, etc. and ASEAN from the ASEAN-dialogue partners, AMAF+3, etc. The Updated Information and Status of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) appears as **Annex 6**.

12. As far as Japan is concerned, the representative from Japan expressed his concern that if funding support for ASSP activities is requested to AMAF+3 Meeting, which is usually attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, such request would be further passed to the Fisheries Agency. He therefore suggested that proposal for funding support be submitted to the Fisheries Agency during the SEAFDEC meetings. While noting the request of Japan, the Meeting was informed that in the ASEAN Protocol, request for funding for ASEAN projects including ASSP projects has to be submitted to AMAF and it is for AMAF to decide whether it should be submitted to AMAF+3 for consideration.

4.2 Progress of the Proposals Implemented under ASSP

13. The Meeting took note of the progress of the proposals under the ASSP framework, namely 1) ASEAN-SEAFDEC Cooperation in the Implementation of the ASEAN Roadmap for Integration of the Fisheries Sectors, and 2) Concept for the Establishment of a Regional Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism for Southeast Asia.

14. With regards to the *ASEAN-SEAFDEC Cooperation in the Implementation of the ASEAN Roadmap for Integration of the Fisheries Sectors*, the Meeting was informed that the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Consultation on the ASEAN Roadmap for the Integration of the Fisheries Sector will be co-organized by FAO, NACA, WorldFish Center, and SEAFDEC and hosted by the Department of Fisheries Thailand from 16 to 18 January 2008. It is envisaged that the Workshop would come up with supporting mechanism for the implementation of the Roadmap, and follow up actions, and identify future collaboration with other organizations in the implementation of the Roadmap.

15. While taking note of the concern expressed by the representative from Vietnam that the invitation for participation in workshops related to the Roadmap now falls under the umbrella of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and not the Ministry of Fisheries due to the country's recent reorganization, the Meeting suggested that internal communications should be made in order to convince responsible agency that the issues to be discussed at the workshop would focus on fisheries which had been under the responsibility of the former Ministry of Fisheries. This will ensure that the workshop would be participated in by appropriate representatives from Vietnam.

16. Considering that Myanmar is the Lead Country for the implementation of the ASEAN Roadmap for Integration of Fisheries Sector, the Meeting suggested that invitation be also extended to the Country Coordinator for the Roadmap to ensure close coordination and communication on the relevant activities.

17. With regards to the *Concept for the Establishment of a Regional Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism for Southeast Asia*, the Meeting was informed that the proposal, based on request from AMAF, has been discussed during the Workshop on the Concept for the Establishment of an ASEAN Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism held in Bangkok, Thailand from 6 to 8 November 2007. The Meeting requested SEAFDEC Secretariat to circulate the report of the Workshop together with all annexes to all Member Countries and SEAFDEC Departments once it becomes available. Summary and Recommendations of the Concept for the Establishment of a Regional Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism for Southeast Asia appears as **Annex 7**. The Meeting supported the further development of a Concept Proposal to be submitted to the next meeting of ASWGFi for consideration and advice for future direction.

18. In discussion of the above Concept, the Meeting was clarified that the development of the Regional Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism will be conducted independently from that of the SEAFDEC Regional Scientific Advisory Committee for Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (RSAC). The Meeting noted that the first will be implemented under the ASEAN Framework while the latter be developed as a advisory body under the SEAFDEC Framework. Within the ASEAN-SEAFDEC collaborative spirit, the ASWGF_i will take into consideration and receive advice from SEAFDEC/RSAC as well as from other organizations, e.g. FAO, NACA, etc.

19. The Meeting noted that the mechanism aims to provide common guidelines applicable for the ASEAN Member Countries to be implemented to ensure that management of fisheries complies with the international instruments for fisheries management.

20. The Meeting took note of the proposal made by Thailand during the 29th AMAF on the concept for the Establishment of an ASEAN Regional Fisheries Development and Management Mechanism within the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF_i) Framework. As a follow-up action, the Meeting agreed to recommend that the Thailand's initiative to the 29th AMAF be placed under the ASSP Program.

5. POLICY CONSIDERATION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

5.1 Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia

21. The Meeting took note of the progress of SEAFDEC and the ASEAN Member Countries in implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in Southeast Asia under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG Mechanism since 1999, starting from the regionalization of the CCRF, and the support to implementation of the CCRF. The Meeting also took note of the Regional Seminar on Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia organized on 22 October 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the priority needs and recommendations for futures implementation of the CCRF as identified at the Seminar. The Executive Summary of the Regional Seminar on Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), Bangkok, Thailand, 22 October 2007 appears as **Annex 8**.

22. The Meeting congratulated SEAFDEC for the international recognition received for its initiatives in implementing the CCRF as SEAFDEC was elected as a Vice Chair on Small-scale Fisheries by the Regional Fisheries Bodies for the biennium 2005-2006 and 2007-2008, and was awarded the Margarita Lizárraga Medal for the biennium 2006-2007 by FAO.

23. In response to the request of the representative from Vietnam, the Meeting agreed that SEAFDEC could assist the Member Countries in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region subject to policy support from the SEAFDEC Council. Vietnam also requested SEAFDEC to provide assistance to reduce the gap among Member Countries in the implementation of IPOAs on IUU fishing and Over-Capacity. The Meeting noted that the request has been accommodated under the FCG Program on Supporting Implementation of the CCRF in the ASEAN Member Countries, while the HRD activities to support implementation of the CCRF could also be accommodated under the planned 2-year

program on HRD for Poverty Alleviation to be supported by the ASEAN Foundation, which is expected to start in early 2008.

24. While responding to the recommendations made by the representative from the Philippines, the Meeting suggested that the Member Countries should copy the returned FAO Questionnaire evaluating the implementation of the CCRF on the biennial basis to SEAFDEC for consolidation. The consolidated report should be produced and circulated during the next SEAFDEC Program Committee Meeting. The Meeting also requested SEAFDEC to provide the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to Member Countries in order to standardize the countries' evaluation exercise.

5.2 International fisheries-Related Issues

25. The Meeting took note of the initiative of SEAFDEC on international fisheries-related issues, and the establishment of new modality for regional cooperation in addressing international fisheries issues as part of the regional collaborative ASSP framework.

26. The Meeting also noted the important international fisheries-related meetings to be organized in 2008, and the international issues which are envisaged to have implication to fisheries in the region, i.e. Fisheries Subsidies, Endangered Aquatic Species, Port State Measures, Traceability, Certification and Labeling, and Climate Change, Welfare of Fishing Crew and Fishing Labour, Emerging Fish Diseases, ASEAN Shrimp Alliance, EU Catch Documentation Scheme for Importation of Capture Fisheries Products from Foreign Countries, and Small-scale Fisheries.

27. In response to the concern raised by the representatives from the Philippines and supported by Japan and Malaysia, the Meeting noted the importance to look into the requirements for *welfare and safety of fishing crew and fisheries labour*, under International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labor Organization (ILO). As Japan has already established an inter-agency taskforce as well as an internal taskforce within the Fishery Agency to tackle labor issues onboard fishing vessels, the Meeting requested Japan to provide relevant information on the issues to SEAFDEC Secretariat to be further shared with the other Member Countries in order to ensure the readiness of other Member Countries on the issue.

28. The Meeting suggested that SEAFDEC should look into the issue during the planned SEAFDEC-Sida Regional Technical Consultation on the implications of international conventions and their implementation as relevant to fisheries in the Member Countries, planned to be organized by SEAFDEC in 2008. However, the Meeting also noted that internal communications among the national agencies is very important to ensure that the common/coordinated position be properly reflected by the Member Countries.

29. The representative from Japan informed the Meeting on the planned implementation of the *EU Requirements for Catch Documentation Scheme* on imports of all fisheries products, which would be introduced soon. The Catch Documentation Scheme must demonstrate whether the products are caught in compliance with the conservation measures. Thus, the fisheries products (excluding aquaculture) to be exported to EU would need to be accompanied with Catch Documentation to be issued by the government of the respective country or authorized representatives. As this regulation would have impact to the trade of fisheries products of the region, the Secretariat and Member Countries are urged to visit the EU Website to obtain relevant information for necessary preparation.

30. With regards to *Fisheries Subsidies*, the Meeting was informed that Indonesia has prepared the Draft Legal Text and submitted to the Chairman of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules (NGR). The Chairman's Texts is expected to be available within December 2007, for discussion among the NGR Members. The Meeting requested Indonesia to present the Draft Legal Text to the next Meeting of ASWGF in order for Member Countries to understand better their proposals so that views and comments can be obtained. The Meeting took note of the offer made by the representative from Thailand to be the ASEAN Lead Country for the issue on Fishery Subsidies.

31. With regards to the *Endangered Aquatic Species*, the representative from Japan informed the Meeting of his observation during the COP14-CITES that there were several aquatic species proposed for listing in CITES Appendices but not adopted, e.g. red and pink coral, Porbeagle Shark, Spiny Dogfish, Bangai Cardinal Fish. The representative from Japan further stated that these proposals would be probably raised again at the next COP and therefore careful consideration should be given to them. He also informed that COP14 had produced an Action Plan on Sharks and requested the Member Countries and SEAFDEC to carefully study this, as implementation of such measures would affect fisheries of the region.

32. While noting that the proposals made by CITES Secretariat on establishment of a Fisheries Working Group and a new post of a fisheries officer were rejected, Japan requested the Member Countries to carefully prepare their readiness for the forthcoming COP-CITES as these two proposals may be raised again during the next COP-CITES.

33. The representative from Indonesia informed the Meeting that Indonesia plans to develop more detailed scientific information on Bangai Cardinal Fish to be used as basis for discussion at the next COP-CITES.

34. With regards to the *Port State Measures*, the Meeting was informed that the Measures are expected to be a legally binding instrument for vessels operating on the high seas, which may also include those vessels landing in adjacent EEZs. The Measures may also apply to all vessels with fishery products, including fishing vessels and carrier vessels, as the definition of fishing vessels is very broad.

35. The Meeting was informed that FAO, APFIC and SEAFDEC will co-organize a Regional Workshop on Port State Measures in Southeast Asian Countries and China at the end of March 2008, with the introduction of a draft legally binding instrument on Port State Measures as one of the Agenda. The Meeting requested SEAFDEC Secretariat to coordinate with FAO to circulate the Draft Legally-binding Instrument on Port State Measures to Member Countries when the document is available. Sufficient time should also be given to Countries to investigate the document before the Workshop.

36. The Meeting noted that although some SEAFDEC Member Countries are not members of FAO (i.e. Brunei Darussalam and Singapore), FAO may still seek cooperation from these countries to comply with the Measures. In this connection, SEAFDEC would encourage all Member Countries to participate in such Workshop. For non-FAO members, SEAFDEC will provide the channel for their participation as Member Countries of SEAFDEC.

37. The Meeting also expressed concern that in some countries, the agency responsible for the Port State is not necessarily the fisheries agencies. However, it was clarified that if the Member Countries of FAO adopt the Port State Measures, FAO would communicate with the national fisheries agencies to ensure that the activities comply with the Measures.

38. The representative from the Philippines informed the Meeting that the Philippines has developed databases on commercial fishing vessels operating within international waters, and is planning to establish the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in the near future.

39. Singapore requested the other Member Countries attending this workshop to seek clarification from FAO on the definition of fishing vessels under the Measures, and the implication of these Measures to the Member Countries in the region.

40. In this connection, the Meeting requested Member Countries to carefully investigate the applicability of the draft binding instrument and prepare their inputs for discussion and finalization of the instrument at the FAO Technical Consultation on drafting of a legally-binding instrument on Port State Measures, scheduled in June 2008.

41. With regards to *Environmental Impact to Aquaculture*, the representative from the Philippines made observation that the issues have implication to fisheries due to the requirement of importing countries on good aquaculture practices. The Philippines offers to be the ASEAN Lead Country jointly with AQD and with support from other SEAFDEC Member Countries to pursue this as a regional collaborative program.

42. Regarding the *Traceability, Certification and Labelling*, the representative from Japan explained that, in the case of a Catch Documentation Scheme, tracing of the fisheries products origins from the point of catch to the point of export/import requires a lot of effort and documentation. The representative from the Philippines, in this regard, proposed a regional collaborative project on the application of a farm-based Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) in aquaculture emphasizing the value chain approach with the Philippines as the ASEAN Lead Country.

43. On the *Emerging Fish Diseases*, the Meeting requested AQD to provide SEAFDEC Secretariat the important information and recommendations from the planned International Workshop on Emerging Fish Diseases to be organized in December 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand, which may have linkages with international fisheries related issues.

44. With regards to *Small-scale Fisheries*, the Meeting took note of development of small-scale fisheries related initiatives, including the International Conference on Small-scale Fisheries to be organized in October 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand.

45. Considering the above issues, the Meeting suggested that issues should not be addressed in isolation but considered their interrelationship and linkages. The Meeting requested SEAFDEC Secretariat to prioritize the issues as agreed at this Meeting and communicate with all Member Countries on their willingness to take the leading role on each of the issues. The Meeting requested SEAFDEC Secretariat to conduct in-depth review of the issues and prepare information papers, outlining proposed common/coordinated positions and policy recommendations on relevant issues for discussion. Along this line, the Meeting proposed that the RTC on International Fisheries-related Issues should be organized in February or the first week of March 2008 in order that the recommendations be submitted in time for the meetings of the SEAFDEC Council and ASWGFi for policy consideration and decision.

5.3 Policy Recommendations for Sustainable Fisheries Development in the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Region

46. The Meeting took note of the progress and policy recommendations derived from the implementation of the 2-year program on Sustainable Fisheries Development in the BIMP-EAGA Region with support from the ASEAN Foundation (**Annex 9**). The Meeting also supported the recommendations and considerations for future fisheries development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to be further submitted to the meetings of the SEAFDEC Council and the ASWGFi for endorsement.

5.4 Other Matters

47. The Meeting viewed a video presentation entitled “AQD Magic”, commemorating the 35th Anniversary of SEAFDEC AQD and accomplishments over the years. The video is meant for the general public and the thousands of visitors to AQD every year. In this connection, the Meeting expressed appreciation to AQD for its achievements made and contributions to sustainable aquaculture development in the region and congratulated AQD and its staff.

6. CONCLUSIONS

48. The report of the 10th ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG Meeting was adopted on 30 November 2007. The Meeting agreed that the report be submitted to the 40th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the 16th Meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGFi) for consideration and endorsement.

7. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

49. The Co-chair for SEAFDEC thanked cooperation of the Member Countries and his ASEAN Co-chair during the Meeting. He therefore declared the Meeting close. His Speech appears as **Annex 10**.

Annex 1

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