

Re-aligning SEAFDEC Programs Towards Enhanced Sustainability of Southeast Asian Fisheries: Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC

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The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) was established in December 1967 to promote fisheries development in Southeast Asia for the improvement of the food situation in the region. Prior to such event, the First Ministerial Conference for Economic Development of Southeast Asia in April 1966 considered the proposal to establish a “Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center” in Southeast Asia to serve as platform for the promotion of fisheries as means of improving the food situation in Southeast Asia. Upon thorough review of the said proposal, the Second Ministerial Conference for Economic Development of Southeast Asia in April 1967 adopted the proposal, paving the way for the crucial period in the evolution of SEAFDEC, which has now 11 Member Countries, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. SEAFDEC operates through its Secretariat and five Technical Departments, each with specific functions and mandate. The Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand, is tasked to oversee the general policy and planning of the Center; the Training Department (TD) in Samut Prakan, Thailand to promote responsible fishing technologies and coastal fisheries management for responsible resources utilization and sustainable livelihoods; Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD) in Singapore to promote, undertake and coordinate research

and development activities on fisheries post-harvest technology and practices; Aquaculture Department (AQD) in the Philippines to carry out activities in aquaculture research, technology verification, training and information dissemination on a wide range of aquaculture disciplines; Marine Fishery Resources Development and Management Department (MFRDMD) to conduct R&D activities on marine fishery resources assessment and management; and the Inland Fishery resources Development and Management Department (IFRDMD) in Indonesia to carry out R&D activities that support the sustainable development and management of inland capture fisheries. Each Department has its own Program of Work which is reviewed regularly to take into consideration the requirements and priorities of the SEAFDEC Member Countries. Development of the Programs of Work also takes into consideration the need to address the issues and concerns brought about by the changing environment of the Southeast Asian fisheries as reflected in the Resolutions and Plans of Action adopted by the Ministers and Senior Officials of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries, the latest of which is the “Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC: Vision, Mission and Strategies Towards 2030,” to be used by SEAFDEC in developing its programs of work beyond its 50th year of working towards the sustainable development of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of SEAFDEC in 2017, the SEAFDEC Council of Directors convened a Special Meeting in November 2017 to map the future direction of SEAFDEC beyond its 50 years of existence in the region. The “Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC: Vision, Mission and Strategies Towards 2030” that the SEAFDEC Council adopted during the said Special Meeting (SEAFDEC, 2018), would serve as guide for SEAFDEC in developing its future programs of work that aim to enhance the utilization of the region’s fishery sources for the sustainability of the region’s fisheries.

The Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC was developed based on the recommendations of the SEAFDEC Program Committee during its Thirty-ninth Meeting in 2016 and noted by the SEAFDEC Council of Directors during its Forty-ninth Meeting in 2017. As agreed during these meetings, the future direction of SEAFDEC beyond its 50th year, should hinge on the said Resolution to be adopted by the SEAFDEC Council through a Special Meeting, to be convened in conjunction with the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of SEAFDEC. While before, planning of the

programs and activities of SEAFDEC had been structured in accordance with the SEAFDEC Program Framework and Program Thrusts that had been endorsed in 2000s by the SEAFDEC Council, henceforth, the programs and activities would be restructured to take into consideration the revitalized Vision and Mission of SEAFDEC as well as the Strategies for Sustainable Development of Fisheries towards 2030 that form part of the Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC.

Reference

SEAFDEC. 2018. Report of the Special Meeting of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, 15 November 2017, Bangkok, Thailand, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, Bangkok, Thailand; 25 p

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Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC: Vision, Mission, and Strategies Towards 2030

(Adopted on 15 November 2017 at the Special Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council)

We, the Council Directors of SEAFDEC during our Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand on the occasion of the Special Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council on 15 November 2017 organized in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of SEAFDEC,

Recognizing that provisions in various international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982), the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2015), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF, 1995), and relevant International Plans of Action are crucial for the development of programs and activities towards enhancing the practices for sustainable fisheries development in the Southeast Asian region;

Affirming the need to implement actions in line with regional fisheries policy frameworks, particularly the Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region adopted by the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for fisheries during the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020 “Fish for the People 2020: Adaptation to a Changing Environment” in June 2011;

Also affirming the need to support the Member Countries of SEAFDEC in the implementation of regional guidelines and policy recommendations developed by the SEAFDEC in collaboration with the Member Countries;

Bearing in mind the need to enhance cooperation with ASEAN under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) framework, support the implementation of activities under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) mechanism, and take into consideration the “Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation in Fisheries (2016-2020)”;

Recognizing the need for SEAFDEC to continue playing an active role in enhancing the collaboration among the Member Countries, as well as partnerships with prominent regional, international organizations and donor agencies towards the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the Southeast Asian region;

Being aware the fact that regional guidelines and policy recommendations and frameworks developed under different organizations, mechanism and arrangements beyond Southeast Asian region need to be taken into account; and

Resolved to adopt the Vision, Missions, and Strategies of SEAFDEC towards 2030, as follows:

I. VISION

“Sustainable management and development of fisheries and aquaculture to contribute to food security, poverty alleviation and livelihood of people in the Southeast Asian region”

II. MISSION

“To promote and facilitate concerted actions among the Member Countries to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in Southeast Asia” through:

- i. Research and development in fisheries, aquaculture, post-harvest, processing, and marketing of fish and fisheries products, socio-economy and ecosystem to provide reliable scientific data and information.
- ii. Formulation and provision of policy guidelines based on the available scientific data and information, local knowledge, regional consultations and prevailing international measures.
- iii. Technology transfer and capacity building to enhance the capacity of Member Countries in the application of technologies, and implementation of fisheries policies and management tools for the sustainable utilization of fishery resources and aquaculture.
- iv. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the regional fisheries policies and management frameworks adopted under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC collaborative mechanism, and the emerging international fisheries-related issues including their impacts on fisheries, food security and socio-economics of the region.

III. STRATEGIES

1) Securing the sustainability of fisheries to contribute to food security, poverty alleviation and livelihood of people in the region:

- Assessment of important marine fish stocks in the region and development of guidelines of management measures for such fish stocks;
- Assessment of the status of inland fisheries, and compilation of baseline information on policies and regulations related to inland fisheries in the Member Countries;
- Compilation of scientific data and information including local knowledge on both inland and marine fisheries to support policy formulation and management for sustainable fisheries;
- Development and promotion of regional measures and tools for combating IUU fishing;
- Development of innovative management tools and concepts that are applicable for fisheries in the region;
- Development and promotion of responsible fishing technologies, including energy optimization, carbon reduction and reduction of post-harvest losses onboard fishing vessels; and
- Integration of habitat and fisheries management, and provision of support for the conservation of important fishery resources.

2) Supporting the sustainable growth of aquaculture to complement fisheries and contribute to food security, poverty alleviation and livelihood of people in the region:

- Development, verification and promotion of responsible and sustainable aquaculture technologies, to improve the quality of broodstocks and technologies on seeds production;
- Finding alternatives to fish meal in feed formulation and promote economical use of feeds;
- Development of practical fish health management strategies including the establishment of early warning system for aquatic animal diseases;
- Generation of appropriate technologies for rural aquaculture to provide livelihood and alleviate poverty; and

- Compilation of scientific data and information including local knowledge to support policy on sustainable aquaculture.
- 3) **Ensuring the food safety and quality of fish and fishery products for the Southeast Asian region:**
- Development and promotion of technology to produce high quality, healthy and safe fish and fishery products to meet the international standards;
 - Improving endogenous processing technologies to standard or acceptable levels;
 - Regular monitoring of chemical and biological contaminants to ensure seafood safety; and
 - Promotion of seafood quality assurance systems for fish processing establishments in the region.
- 4) **Enhancing trade and compliance of the region's fish and fishery products with market requirements:**
- Strengthening the cooperation among Member Countries to implement international standards in trade of fish and fishery products within the ASEAN region;
 - Development of regional standards, policies and guidelines to enhance intraregional/international trade; and
 - Development and promotion of traceability system for fish and fishery products in the region.
- 5) **Addressing cross-cutting issues, such as labor, gender and climate change, where related to international fisheries:**
- Provision of platforms for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of emerging international fisheries-related issues on the fisheries and economic sectors in the region;
- Organizing fora to enhance the awareness of Member Countries on international fisheries-related issues and coordinating the development of the ASEAN Common Positions to address the regional concerns on the issues;
 - Monitoring of the possible impacts of and raising awareness on climate change to fisheries and aquaculture, and development of adaptation and mitigation measures in response to such impacts;
 - Development regional initiatives to promote the consideration of environmental and biodiversity conservation issues in fisheries and aquaculture management; and
 - Recognition of the importance of small-scale fisheries, welfare of labor in fisheries, safety at sea, and gender equality in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- 6) **Empowering SEAFDEC to strengthen its roles in the region and to improve its services to Member Countries:**
- Strengthening SEAFDEC's capacity to support ASEAN's efforts to adopt and implement regional policies and guidelines, as well as ASEAN's efforts to monitor the implementation of such regional policies and guidelines;
 - Enhancing the human resource capability of the Member Countries to support, adopt and nationalize regional policies and guidelines;
 - Expanding the network with prominent organizations in relevant fields and engaging actively in international fisheries fora;
 - Enhancing human resources within SEAFDEC organization and pooling expertise in the region to improve the performance of SEAFDEC; and
 - Promoting SEAFDEC to wider international communities to gain more supports from organizations, governments and donors.

