

**REPORT OF
THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ASEAN-SEAFDEC FISHERIES
CONSULTATIVE GROUP**

SEAFDEC Secretariat, Bangkok, Thailand
4 March 1999

OPENING

1. The First Meeting of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 March 1999.
2. The Meeting was attended by a representative of the ASEAN Secretariat and representatives of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (WGF_i) from Singapore and Thailand as well as officers of the SEAFDEC Secretariat and the Departments. The list of participants appears as Annex 1.
3. The Meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Kitjar Jaiyen, Chairman of the ASEAN Sectoral WGF_i, and Mr. Masao Shimomura, Acting Secretary-General of SEAFDEC.
4. Dr. Kitjar welcomed the participants to the Meeting. On behalf of SEAFDEC, the Acting Secretary-General expressed his support on the establishment of the FCG, and the hope that the Meeting, although its first, produce fruitful results. He also informed the Meeting that the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC and the SEAFDEC Council Director for Japan support the establishment of the FCG. He presented the statement of support of the SEAFDEC Council Director for Japan which appears as Annex 2.

Adoption of the Agenda

5. Noting that activities are now being undertaken by SEAFDEC on the Regionalization of the Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries, the provisional Agenda was revised to include this item under Other Proposed Collaborative Projects and also an item on the Adoption of the Report of the Meeting.
6. The Meeting adopted the Agenda which appears as Annex 3.

ASEAN and SEAFDEC Strategic Plans

7. The ASEAN Strategic Plan on Fisheries was presented by the ASEAN Secretariat, highlighting the five Strategic Thrusts for the ASEAN fisheries sector which appears as Annex 4.
8. The Strategic Plan of SEAFDEC which was adopted at the 30th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council (Annex 5), was presented by the Acting Secretary-General. The Plan identified certain program areas to which SEAFDEC would give high priority, e.g., the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
9. The Meeting recognized the need for ASEAN and SEAFDEC to work together considering that SEAFDEC has been viewed as a policy and technical organization, while ASEAN as a political organization, thus mutual benefits could be derived by the members of the two organizations. A strategic alliance should be formed between ASEAN and SEAFDEC in order to pool resources and avoid duplication of efforts.

10. It was also recognized that while collaborative programs are considered as high priority by the FCG, the readiness to implement such programs should always be taken into consideration.

Proposed Programs of Collaboration:

11. The Meeting concurred that the following programs be placed under the FCG collaborative mechanism, and that SEAFDEC and ASEAN shall seek the approval of these projects from the SEAFDEC Council at its 31st Meeting and the ASEAN WGFi, respectively.

(1) *Upgrading of the Traditional Fish Processing Industry for Southeast Asian Countries*

12. As a background information, the Meeting was informed that ASEAN and SEAFDEC have been working on fishery post-harvest technology through the ASEAN-Canada Fishery Post-harvest Technology Project. Implemented by the Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD), the five-year project has established the ASEAN Network of Fisheries Post Harvest Technology. The Network has demonstrated a workable mechanism on fishery post-harvest technology programme within the ASEAN.

13. It was recognized that the ASEAN Network which will be tapped for the implementation of the program on upgrading of the traditional fish processing industry for Southeast Asian countries be put under the framework of the FCG. The detailed project proposal presented by ASEAN WGFi on the program appears as Annex 6.

14. The Meeting supported to incorporate other elements in the program, especially R&D, beyond the collation of information, such as status of fermented fish products industry in the ASEAN.

15. Although individual countries in the region have worked on traditional fish products, the Meeting recognized that these national efforts be reviewed in order to evolve some standards for the region, and subsequently for the Codex Committee for Asia.

16. For this program, the Meeting agreed to propose that MFRD serve as Lead Department for SEAFDEC, while Singapore as Lead Country for the ASEAN.

(2) *Promotion of Mangrove-Friendly Aquaculture in Southeast Asian Countries*

17. The Meeting considered the proposal prepared by ASEAN WGFi on the promotion of mangrove-friendly aquaculture in Southeast Asian countries, which appears as Annex 7.

18. It was explained that the program implemented by the Aquaculture Department (AQD) has emanated from the recommendation of the SEAFDEC Council to implement activities on shrimp farming in mangrove areas. This five-year program plans to address not only shrimp culture but also other aquaculture species that may have potential impact on mangroves.

19. The Meeting recognized that the efforts made by ASEAN and SEAFDEC in relation to this program be put together under one structure. In addition, the Chief of AQD stressed the need to maximize the benefits from inputs made by other organizations related to this program, e.g., NACA, DANCED, in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

20. The Meeting was informed that Thailand is willing to serve as Lead Country for ASEAN for this program. However, this would be proposed to the forthcoming WGFi Meeting in March

1999 in Hanoi, Vietnam. On the other hand, the Meeting proposed AQD as Lead Department for SEAFDEC.

(3) *Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles in Southeast Asian Countries*

21. A program of the Marine Fishery Resource Development and Management Department (MFRDMD), this has been implemented with active involvement of ASEAN. In this project proposal prepared by ASEAN WGF_i on the program (Annex 8), one of the major activities is the gathering of information on national programs on sea turtle conservation and management and coming up with a compiled ASEAN-SEAFDEC publication on sea turtle conservation and management which can be presented in international forum.

22. The Meeting proposed that Malaysia be Lead Country for ASEAN for this program considering the extent of existing activities undertaken by Malaysia in the conservation of marine turtles. On the other hand, MFRDMD was proposed as Lead Department for SEAFDEC.

23. The Meeting agreed to recommend to the 31st Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the ASEAN Sectoral WGF_i to endorse the three proposed projects to be placed under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC collaborative mechanism.

(4) *Other Proposed Collaborative Projects*

4.1 Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

24. The Meeting was informed that the project on the Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries has been initiated by SEAFDEC. In the series of meetings convened by SEAFDEC for the initial discussion on the Code of Conduct, representatives from ASEAN have been involved.

25. Under the global FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which was already adopted, some provisions may not be relevant for the region. Hence, the need to customize

26. This project does not attempt to establish another Code of Conduct, but it involves the development of regional guidelines to assist the countries in the region during the implementation of the Code of Conduct. The guidelines may be reviewed by ASEAN and SEAFDEC to suggest common guidelines acceptable by all countries in the region.

27. The Meeting supported the close collaboration between ASEAN and SEAFDEC for this project, and that the approval of the WGF_i as well as that of the SEAFDEC Council will be sought for the implementation of this project.

28. The Meeting agreed that SEAFDEC will develop the proposed Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries into a collaborative project of SEAFDEC and ASEAN under FCG. However, it is important that the views of the countries in the region be sought during the formulation of the common guidelines that will fit into the global Code of Conduct and applicable for the region.

29. This project will be presented for the consideration of the SEAFDEC Council at its forthcoming 31st Meeting in Japan, and the next meeting of WGF_i for endorsement to SOM-AMAF

Strengthening ASEAN and SEAFDEC Collaboration

30. The Meeting agreed that the FCG shall serve as the forum for strengthening the ASEAN-SEAFDEC collaboration. However, other directions of technical collaboration between ASEAN and SEAFDEC should continue, e.g., ASEAN participation in working groups organized by SEAFDEC in the implementation of its activities.

31. In order to understand better and be familiar with the activities of SEAFDEC, it was reiterated that ASEAN may be represented in the SEAFDEC Council meetings. On the other hand, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General as Co-Chairperson of the FCG, report the activities of the FCG to the SEAFDEC Council, while the Co-Chairperson for the ASEAN also report the activities of FCG to the SOM-AMAF.

32. The Meeting discussed various avenues where ASEAN and SEAFDEC could participate actively in the FCG. It reviewed the original proposal made by the SEAFDEC Alternate Council Director for Singapore, and agreed that the original idea of minimizing the number of meetings and adhering to the principle of need-to-meet basis. However, it was also recognized that the ASEAN-SEAFDEC working relations should receive greater attention of these two organizations and some ways should be devised to recognize it.

33. Anticipating greater involvement of ASEAN and SEAFDEC in regional collaboration activities, it was agreed that FCG could at least meet once a year, during the WGF_i or Program Committee meetings. The need could signify the request of either party for the scrutiny of programs it formulated.

Regional Fisheries Policy Working Group

34. The Meeting took note of the activities of the Regional Fisheries Policy Working Group in SEAFDEC including the establishment of an Open Forum Policy.

Mechanisms on the Regional Working Group for the Aquaculture Sector

35. The FCG also took note of the proposed Working Group for the Aquaculture Sector, as a forum for the discussion of the programs on aquaculture for the region. Starting with the Seminar-Workshop on Aquaculture Development in Southeast Asia (ADSEA), the experts to be organized into the working group for the aquaculture sector, will be actively involved in the program formulation as well as in monitoring the progress of the implementation of such aquaculture programs.

Concluding Matters

36. On behalf of ASEAN WGF_i, Dr. Kitjar thanked the participants for their contributions in making the FCG mechanism clear and understandable. He asked the participants who will be attending the forthcoming SEAFDEC Council Meeting, to assist the Co-Chairperson for SEAFDEC in the presentation of the FCG collaborative mechanism to the SEAFDEC Council.

37. The Acting Secretary-General also thanked the participants for their active participation in the discussions during the Meeting. He assured the FCG that the recommendations made at this Meeting will be presented to the forthcoming SEAFDEC Council Meeting.

Adoption of the Report

38. The Meeting adopted the Report of the First Meeting of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group and agreed that the Report will be presented to the 31st Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the next meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral WGF_i.

Acknowledgment

39. The delegates expressed their appreciation to the SEAFDEC Secretariat and the ASEAN Sectoral WGF_i in Thailand for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

40. The Meeting was held in the spirit of ASEAN-SEAFDEC cooperation and cordiality.