



**Joint ASEAN-SEAFDEC Declaration
on Regional Cooperation for Combating Illegal, Unreported and
Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of
ASEAN Fish and Fishery Products**

WE, the Senior Officials of ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries met on the occasion of the “High-level Consultation on Regional Cooperation in Sustainable Fisheries Development Towards the ASEAN Economic Community: Combating IUU Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Fish and Fishery Products,” in Bangkok, Thailand on 3 August 2016;

Recognizing the provisions in international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982), Agenda 21, which was adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF, 1995), and the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU, 2007);

Guided by the ASEAN Charter, which aims to ensure sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations and to place the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the people at the center of the ASEAN community building process;

Bearing in mind that fisheries in the Southeast Asian region had developed rapidly during the last decade contributing significantly to the improved economy and food security of the region, however, IUU fishing is a serious concern and threatens the sustainability of the region’s fisheries management and conservation measures, fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems, as well as economic viability and food security;

Aware of the existing national, regional and international initiatives in combating IUU fishing undertaken by the ASEAN Member States (AMSS), relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and other regional and international organizations;

Recalling 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” held in June 2011;

Conscious of the need to meet food safety and quality requirements; such as through implementing the ASEAN Guidelines for the Use of Chemicals in Aquaculture and Measures to Eliminate the Use of Harmful Chemicals, ASEAN Good Aquaculture Practice (GAqP), ASEAN Shrimp GAP, and continue developing ASEAN standards in line with relevant regional and international instruments such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Agreement of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures;

Taking into consideration the importance of working conditions of labor in fisheries sector as outlined in the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers;

HEREBY DECLARE OUR INTENT, without prejudice to the sovereign rights, obligations, and responsibilities of ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries under relevant international laws and arrangements, to combat IUU fishing in the Southeast Asian region and enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN fish and fishery products by:

1. Strengthening Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programs under national laws and regulations for combating IUU fishing and enhancing cooperation among relevant national agencies within the country for effective implementation of laws and regulations for combating IUU fishing;
2. Intensifying capacity building and awareness-raising programs, including information, education and communication campaigns;
3. Enhancing traceability of fish and fishery products from capture fisheries through the implementation of the “ASEAN Guidelines for Preventing the Entry of Fish and Fishery Products from IUU Fishing Activities into the Supply Chain,” and “ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme for Marine Capture Fisheries”;

4. Enhancing traceability of aquaculture products, through the implementation of all ASEAN GAPs with certification scheme based on regulations of respective countries, and traceability systems that are harmonized with those of major importing countries;
5. Managing fishing capacity with a view to balance fishing efforts taking into account the declining status of the fishery resources in the Southeast Asian region, and establishing conservation measures based on scientific evidence;
6. Promoting the implementation of port State measures through enhanced inter-agencies and regional cooperation in preventing the landing of fish and fishery products from IUU fishing activities from all foreign fishing vessels, and encouraging the use of the “Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR)”;
7. Enhancing regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary fisheries resources through regional, sub-regional, and bilateral arrangements in combating IUU fishing, particularly poaching by fishing vessels, transshipment and transportation of fish and fishery products across borders of respective countries;
8. Regulating the quality and safety of ASEAN fish and fishery products all throughout the supply chain to meet standards and market requirements as well as acceptability by importing countries, and development and promotion of ASEAN seal of excellence/label;
9. Addressing issues on labor (safe, legal and equitable practices) in the fisheries sector in the Southeast Asian region through strengthened cooperation among relevant national agencies within the country as well as establishing regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation and collaboration via relevant ASEAN platforms, and helping to support the development and implementation of relevant labor guidelines for the fisheries sector;
10. Enhancing close collaboration between the AMSs and relevant RFMOs in combating IUU fishing; and
11. Undertaking collective efforts in developing preventive and supportive measures to strengthen rehabilitation of resources and recovery of fish stocks to mitigate the impacts of IUU fishing.

WE HEREBY DECLARE AND ENCOURAGE THAT

This Joint ASEAN-SEAFDEC Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Combating IUU Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Fish and Fishery Products be implemented by the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries; and that AMSs and SEAFDEC with support from donors and collaborating partners, strengthen their efforts to implement programs to combat IUU fishing and enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN fish and fishery products.

This Joint Declaration is adopted on 3 August 2016. In attendance during the adoption are:

- 1) *Pg. Kamalrudzaman bin Pg. Haji Md Ishak*, Senior Special Duties Officer, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei Darussalam
- 2) *Dr. Kao Sochivi*, Deputy Director General, Fisheries Administration, Kingdom of Cambodia
- 3) *Dr. Achmad Poernomo*, Senior Advisor to the Minister for Public Policy, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Republic of Indonesia
- 4) *Mr. Hideki Moronuki*, Senior Fisheries Negotiator, Fisheries Agency, Japan
- 5) *Mr. Xaypladeth Choulamany*, Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao People's Democratic Republic
- 6) *Datuk Hj. Ismail bin Abu Hassan*, Director General, Department of Fisheries, Malaysia
- 7) *Mr. Khin Maung Maw*, Director General, Department of Fisheries, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- 8) *Mr. Sammy A. Malvas*, Regional Director, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Republic of the Philippines
- 9) *Dr. Tan Lee Kim*, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Corporate and Technology), Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, Republic of Singapore
- 10) *Dr. Theerapat Prayurasiddhi*, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kingdom of Thailand
- 11) *Mrs. Nguyen Thi Trang Nhung*, Deputy Director, Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation, Fisheries Administration, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam



Thailand hosts ASEAN-SEAFDEC cooperative forum and joins hands with other countries in developing Joint Declaration to enhance sustainable fisheries development in the region and combat IUU fishing

Thailand hosts a regional cooperative forum for sustainable fisheries towards the ASEAN Economic Community, and joins hands with other Southeast Asian countries to come up with Joint Declaration to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing that would foster multi-lateral cooperation for enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN fish and fishery products in compliance with international standards and regulations to ensure sustainable food security of the region.

On 3 August 2016 at 9.00 hrs. at Ballroom B, 23rd floor of the Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center at Central World, Bangkok, Thailand through its Department of Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives hosted the “High-level Consultation on Regional Cooperation in Sustainable Fisheries Development Towards the ASEAN Economic Community: Combating IUU Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Fish and Fishery Products.” The Consultation was officiated by *Dr. Theerapat Prayurasiddhi*, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. At this event, high-level officials from ASEAN and SEAFDEC Member Countries came up with the “Joint ASEAN-SEAFDEC Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Fish and Fishery Product.” In attendance were over 100 delegates from ASEAN-SEAFDEC countries, comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam, officials of ASEAN, SEAFDEC as well as representatives from relevant international/regional organizations.

“Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated or IUU fishing is considered as serious threat to the sustainability of fishery resources and marine environment, and is under serious concern of several countries including the ASEAN,” said *Dr. Theerapat Prayurasiddhi*, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Thailand has always joined hands with Southeast Asian countries and others in taking part to develop policy frameworks for combating IUU fishing. It is therefore a great pleasure for Thailand to host this High-level Consultation as it signifies the country’s seriousness towards combating IUU fishing, and enhancing cooperation with other countries to solve the issue. IUU fishing problems are however complicated considering the nature of fishery resources that are shared by several countries, labor-related issues, while products are being intra-regionally traded prior to exportation. These problems could not be addressed by countries individually, but require cooperation among concerned agencies and with regional collaboration to enhance the effectiveness in combating of IUU fishing.

Development of Joint Declaration by high-level officials of ASEAN and SEAFDEC at this Consultation is therefore a signal that demonstrates the seriousness in enhancing cooperation among countries to combat IUU fishing, taking into consideration aspects on: strengthening of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programs; Enhancing traceability of fish and fishery products from capture fisheries and aquaculture; Managing Fishing Capacity; Enhancing regional cooperation; Addressing quality and safety requirements; Addressing issues on labor in fisheries sector; and Enhancing fishery resources to mitigate impacts from IUU fishing.

Dr. Adisorn Promthep, Director-General of the Department of Fisheries further explained on the reformation of Thai's fisheries policy with the new Royal Ordinance on Fisheries 2015 that corresponds with current fishery situation and emerging international requirements, with the establishment of Marine Fisheries Management Plan to address problems on overfishing capacity, by freezing the registration of new fishing vessels. The fishing license regime was also rectified by replacing the open-access to fisheries with limited-access, with application of the MSY system. Monitoring, control and surveillance system has also been enhanced through the establishment of Port-in/Port-out controls. Catch Certificate Scheme has been developed to enhance the traceability of fish and fishery products, and a system has also been established to support the implementation of Port State Measures. Furthermore, on 10 May 2016, Thailand also submitted the Instrument of Accession to the Agreement on Port State Measures, which is one of the key international agreements aimed at combating IUU fishing; and it is anticipated that Thailand's accession to the PSMA will enhance control over foreign-flagged fishing vessels and prevent the entry of IUU fish and fishery products into the country.

It is expected that this High-level Consultation would lead to closer cooperation among the ASEAN Member States to combat IUU fishing and enhancing the competitiveness of fish and fishery products from ASEAN, while the possibility for development of common ASEAN fisheries policy needs to be further explored leading to clearer picture toward sustainable fishery resources utilization in the light of the ASEAN Economic Community.

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