



REPORT OF THE FIFTIETH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER

26-30 March 2018, Siem Reap, Cambodia

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fiftieth Meeting of the Council of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) was convened in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 26 to 30 March 2018 at the kind invitation of the Fisheries Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

2. The Meeting was attended by the Council Directors for Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam together with their respective delegations, as well as the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and the senior officials of SEAFDEC. The Meeting was also attended by representatives from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO/RAP), Mekong River Commission (MRC), Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), and the United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA). In addition, the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia also took part in the Meeting as Observer. The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.

3. Upon considering the “Guidelines on the Status of Various Organizations and Private Agencies Participation in SEAFDEC Programs” which was approved by the SEAFDEC Council at its 32nd Meeting in 2000 and provides as condition No. 4, that “*When certain country wishes to invite an intergovernmental organization or the Government that is not categorized in any of the above criteria, the country can propose the participation of the organization to the Council Directors with clear justification for their concurrence. With the consensus of the Council Directors, the participation of the organization can be admitted,*” the Council approved the participation of the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia in the Meeting as Observer. In this connection, the SEAFDEC Secretariat was asked to produce a draft detailed procedure for inviting other organizations and non-member governments to attend in the Council Meeting in the future and submit to the Forty-first Meeting of SEAFDEC Program Committee. Furthermore, the Council suggested that the SEAFDEC Secretariat should seek advance approval from the Council for future cases.

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

4. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council was held on 26 March 2018, and was officiated by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Cambodia, *His Excellency Veng Sakhon*.

5. At the outset, the Deputy Governor *His Excellency Ly Sam Rith*, on behalf of the Governor of Siem Reap Province of Cambodia *His Excellency Khim Bun Song*, welcomed the participants to the beautiful city of Siem Reap. He expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for selecting Siem Reap as venue for the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council considering its history and culture, particularly the Angkor Wat recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site. He added that a very important natural resource in the Siem Reap Territory is the Tonle Sap where the richness of its biodiversity is important for Cambodians. He then asked the SEAFDEC Council to provide recommendations in strengthening the conservation, management and

development of the aquatic resource in the Tonle Sap Great Lake for its long-term sustainability. His Welcome Address appears as **Annex 2**.

6. The Director of the Department of Fisheries of Brunei Darussalam, *Mr. Abdul Halidi bin Mohd. Salleh* in his capacity as the Chairperson of SEAFDEC Council for 2017-2018, also welcomed the participants to the Meeting. He expressed the gratitude of the SEAFDEC Council to the Government of Cambodia for extending the warm hospitality and for the arrangements of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He cited that the works of SEAFDEC undertaken during the past decade had been very important for sustainable fisheries development in the region, particularly in combating IUU fishing, including the ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme which was pilot tested in Brunei Darussalam. He mentioned that the one of the most significant events in 2017 was the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of SEAFDEC. In conjunction with the celebration, the Special Council Meeting adopted the “Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC toward 2030” to serve as guide for SEAFDEC in exploring the viable direction in moving towards attaining the sustainability of the region’s fisheries. He also expressed the appreciation to other SEAFDEC Council Directors for extending their support during his chairpersonship and to the international and regional organizations for strengthening their collaboration with SEAFDEC. His Remarks appears as **Annex 3**.

7. The SEAFDEC Council Director for Cambodia and Director General of the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia, *H.E. Eng Cheasan* welcomed the SEAFDEC Council Directors and their delegations as well as other guests to Siem Reap, Cambodia. He congratulated SEAFDEC for initiating close collaboration and cooperation among the Member Countries in implementing programs and activities for the past 50 years that aimed for sustainable fisheries development and food security in the region. While emphasizing on the tangible outputs from various programs of SEAFDEC, he assured that Cambodia would continue to support the future activities of SEAFDEC. He encouraged the Member Countries to sustain the regional collaboration for the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in the region. His Welcome Statement appears as **Annex 4**.

8. The Guest of Honor, the Minister of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Cambodia, *H.E. Veng Sakhon* expressed his pleasure to preside over the Opening Ceremony of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in Cambodia. He recalled that this is the second time for Cambodia to host the Council Meeting since it became a Member of SEAFDEC in 2001. He welcomed the SEAFDEC Council of Directors and distinguished delegates as well as other guests to Siem Reap, Cambodia. He thanked the Governor of Siem Reap Province for his presence and the Fisheries Administration officers for collaborating with SEAFDEC in organizing the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He gave emphasis on the vital role of SEAFDEC and the collaborative efforts of Cambodia in promoting sustainable fisheries by combating IUU fishing. Moreover, he enlightened the Meeting that the MAFF is in the process of amending the Fisheries Law 2006 in accordance with the current situation and recommendation of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Likewise, the country has completed the requirements to ratify two vital international fisheries instruments, the FAO Port State Measures Agreement and the UN Fish Stock Agreement. After expressing confidence that the Meeting will have a fruitful exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences to ensure sustainable fisheries in the ASEAN region, he declared the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council open. His Opening Address appears as **Annex 5**.

I. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Opening of the Meeting

9. The Director of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries, Brunei Darussalam, and Chairperson of SEAFDEC Council for 2017-2018, *Mr. Abdul Halidi bin Mohd. Salleh* welcomed the participants to the Meeting. He reiterated his gratitude to SEAFDEC Council Directors as well as to the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments for the support extended to him during the term of his chairpersonship, and expressed the hope that the same support will be granted to the incoming Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council. He also encouraged the Council of Directors to continue their support to SEAFDEC in the years ahead for the sustainability of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region.

1.2 Election of the Chairperson for the Year 2018-2019

10. The SEAFDEC Council Director for Cambodia, *H.E. Eng Cheasan* was unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council for 2018-2019, in accordance with Article 5, Paragraph 4 of the Agreement Establishing SEAFDEC. While expressing his gratitude to all the Council Directors, he sought their continued support as well as those of the international and regional organizations during his term as the Chairperson of the Council, especially in directing SEAFDEC towards the new and brighter horizon in fisheries.

1.3 Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangement for the Meeting

11. The Council adopted the Agenda of the Meeting, as amended, which appears as **Annex 6**.

II. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

12. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn* congratulated the Council Director for Cambodia, *H.E. Eng Cheasan* for his election as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council for the Year 2018-2019. He also expressed the appreciation of SEAFDEC to the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam, *Mr. Abdul Halidi bin Mohd. Salleh* for serving as the Chairperson of the Council during 2017-2018, and for guiding SEAFDEC in the implementation of programs that cater to the priorities and requirements of the Member Countries. In presenting the Draft SEAFDEC Annual Report for 2017, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC made focus on the highlights of the activities and major achievements in 2017, in accordance with the SEAFDEC mandate and categorized based on the adopted SEAFDEC Program Thrust in 2009.

13. In the ensuing discussion, the Council Director for Lao PDR congratulated SEAFDEC for the activities implemented in 2017 in Lao PDR, particularly on the promotion of fisheries co-management, community-based fisheries management, fisheries resource enhancement, and promotion of ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) through the conduct of training sessions for staff of the Department of Livestock and Fisheries. He also requested SEAFDEC to explore possible funding sources to continue providing on-site capacity building for the local communities in Lao PDR on the application of EAFM to strengthen their capacity in fisheries management.

14. The Council Director for the Philippines commended the Government of Cambodia for the arrangements of the Fiftieth Council Meeting, and expressed appreciation to SEAFDEC for its initiatives in addressing various fisheries-related issues, especially in the development of alternative low-cost feeds for aquaculture species and providing capacity building to Member Countries to combat IUU fishing. She then requested SEAFDEC to continue extending assistance to the Member Countries to enhance their capacity in complying with the global standards and requirements for trade of fish and fishery products.

15. The Council Director for Indonesia congratulated SEAFDEC for the progress made in its programs and activities in 2017. He suggested that in order to improve better understanding of the SEAFDEC activities, a one-page executive summary should be included at the beginning of the annual report, while a short overview of the programs and projects for implementation in the succeeding year should also be included in future annual reports.

16. The Council Director for Viet Nam expressed the appreciation for the warm hospitality extended by the Government of Cambodia to the participants in the Fiftieth SEAFDEC Council Meeting and congratulated SEAFDEC for its achievements and outputs in 2017 signifying the important role of SEAFDEC in assisting the region toward sustainable development of fisheries. She expressed the concern that although there are a number of programs and projects planned for 2018 that are in line with the new Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC: Vision, Mission, and Strategies Towards 2030, there are still gaps that could be fulfilled by empowering SEAFDEC to strengthen its roles in the region. She also expressed the view that although SEAFDEC has developed several policy frameworks and guidelines, there are still concerns that tend to impede the effective implementation

of these instruments by Member Countries. She therefore suggested that SEAFDEC should consider linking its relevant programs to minimize such gaps, especially during the formulation of future programs and projects. Furthermore, she expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for the support extended to Viet Nam in the aspect of capacity building, resource enhancement, improvement of fish handling, and promotion of the eACDS in the context of Viet Nam. She added that with the efforts of SEAFDEC in promoting rights-based fisheries in the region, Viet Nam had incorporated this aspect in its revised fisheries law, specifically with respect to the sustainable management of the fishery resources. She therefore looked forward to sustaining the close collaboration between SEAFDEC and with the other Member Countries in the future, for the sustainable development of fisheries in the region.

17. While congratulating SEAFDEC for the activities it had undertaken in 2017, the Council Director for Myanmar thanked SEAFDEC for supporting its capacity building programs towards improving fisheries management in Myanmar. He also requested SEAFDEC to share the results of the implementation of the activities on application of fish passage design, as well as on the design and appropriate deployment of Fish Enhancing Devices (FEDs) for small-scale fisheries.

18. After providing their views and comments on the activities of SEAFDEC, the Council approved the Draft SEAFDEC Annual Report 2017 for publication and dissemination to the Member Countries, relevant organizations and the public. However, the Council also encouraged SEAFDEC to consider the comments and suggestions made at this Meeting, during the planning and implementation of SEAFDEC programs and activities in the future.

III. NOTES OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SEAFDEC PROGRAM COMMITTEE ON THE RESULTS OF THE FORTIETH MEETING

19. The Council took note of the results of the Fortieth Meeting of the Program Committee of SEAFDEC (**Annex 7**) which was held from 27 to 29 November 2017, Bangkok, Thailand, hosted by the Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD), as presented by the Secretary-General in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Program Committee.

20. The Council Director for Malaysia commended SEAFDEC for the activities it has undertaken, particularly under the *Program Thrust V: Addressing International Fisheries-related Issues from a Regional Perspective*, on the development and promotion of the eACDS and in addressing the CITES-related issues. Since FAO is planning to convene its 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in July 2018 to discuss issues previously considered during the FAO Sub-committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture, SEAFDEC should consider conducting a Regional Technical Consultation (RTC) for Member Countries to discuss relevant issues during the COFI. In response, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC agreed to explore the possibility of conducting the said RTC.

21. After the discussion, the Council noted the progress of the programs implemented by SEAFDEC in 2017 and approved the proposed programs for 2018, as well as the recommendations of the SEAFDEC Program Committee. The Council then requested SEAFDEC to consider incorporating the recommendations of the Council at this Meeting in its future programs.

IV. NOTE OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE GROUP (FCG) OF THE ASEAN-SEAFDEC STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (ASSP) ON THE RESULTS OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING

22. The Council noted and endorsed the results and recommendations of the Twentieth Meeting of the Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (FCG/ASSP) which was held from 30 November to 1 December 2017, Bangkok, Thailand (**Annex 8**) as presented by *Ms. Seow Hui Ching*, on behalf of the ASEAN Co-chair for the FCG/ASSP Meeting.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

5.1 Issues on Combating IUU Fishing

5.1.1 ASEAN Guidelines for Preventing the Entry of Fish and Fishery Products from IUU Fishing Activities into the Supply Chain

23. The Council took note of the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines for Preventing the Entry of Fish and Fishery Products from IUU Fishing Activities into the Supply Chain (**Annex 9**) as presented by the representative of MFRDMD.

24. While noting that the Guidelines has been disseminated to all AMSs for implementation after its endorsement by the ASEAN in 2015, the Council Director for Indonesia inquired whether the complete report on status in the implementation of the Guidelines by AMSs is available. In response, the Chief of MFRDMD explained that during the Consultation organized in 2017, the initial progress of implementation of the Guidelines was monitored and reported. Furthermore, the extent of implementation of the Guidelines in the region would be updated during the planned conduct of technical visits to the AMSs in 2018, the results of which would be reported to the Council.

25. The Council took note of the information provided by the Council Director for Myanmar that Myanmar has been undertaking efforts in implementing fisheries management measures taking into consideration the provisions stipulated in the ASEAN Guidelines, *e.g.* monitoring of fish transshipment, landing of fish catch across borders, installation of vessel monitoring system (VMS) for all off-shore fishing vessels, application of e-logbook, e-licensing, and certification scheme for monitoring catch and landing.

26. In response to the query of the Council Director for the Philippines on the original purpose of the Guidelines, specifically on the assessment aspect, the Chief of MFRDMD clarified that the Guidelines is meant to introduce and recommend appropriate strategies for AMSs in preventing the entry of products from IUU fishing activities into the supply chain, and to provide guidance for the AMSs in developing, strengthening and implementing effective fisheries management and promoting regional collaboration among the AMSs in strengthening MCS systems for fish and fishery products entering the supply chain. Moreover, the project also aims to assist the AMSs in conducting their respective assessments with regard to the implementation of the Guidelines during the technical visits to be conducted in 2018.

27. The Council Director for Japan expressed the view that the meeting document for this agenda has insufficient information on the progress of works, and requested SEAFDEC to also include in the report for the next annual Council Meeting information on the progress made by each AMS in the implementation of the Guidelines.

5.1.2 Regional Fishing Vessels Record

28. The Council was informed by the representative of TD of the progress made by SEAFDEC on the continued updating of information in the Database of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) for vessels 24 meters in length and over with inputs from the AMSs, as well as the strategies and way forward for the improvement, promotion, and utilization of the RFVR Database as recommended by the Regional Technical Consultation held in 2017. In addition, the Council also took note of the proposed Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System by non-AMSs and RFMOs (**Annex 10**).

29. In the discussion, the Council Director for Japan commended SEAFDEC for its initiative in developing the RFVR Database as a tool to combat IUU fishing in the region, and expressed the view that close cooperation among the AMSs on this initiative should be strengthened. With regards to the “*Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System*,” he expressed the view that the proposed protocol for RFMOs might not be realistic as it is not consistent with the process of RFMOs. He explained that in case of the RFMOs, when an RFMO Member has any doubts as to whether or not a

particular fishing vessel had engaged in IUU fishing, the RFMO Member or the RFMO Secretariat would contact the flag State and request them to provide information on the identity and activities of the vessel. However, if the flag State of the vessel is unknown, the RFMO could contact SEAFDEC to check whether the vessel is in the RFVR Database. SEAFDEC should therefore establish clear procedures to address such request of the RFMOs.

30. The Council Director for Japan added that if a vessel is known to be engaged in IUU fishing, RFMOs have the obligation to prohibit importation of products from such vessel. Therefore, he expressed the view that it might not be possible to ensure that sharing of RFVR Database would not result in barriers to trade.

31. The Council Director for Indonesia reiterated that during the 49th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, an inquiry was made whether those vessels not listed in the RFVR Database should be considered as illegal fishing vessels, in which case the Council viewed that vessels not listed in the existing RFVR Database may not necessarily be considered as illegal fishing vessels. In this connection, he expressed the view that the Council should set transitional periods, *e.g.* two years, for all AMSs to improve their systems and record; after such transitional periods, vessels that are not in the RFVR Database could already be considered and treated as IUU fishing vessels.

32. While also expressing the concern on confidentiality of the RFVR Database when access to the Database is granted to non-AMSs, the Council Director for Indonesia also inquired what those non-AMSs would provide in return for the RFVR Database. In response, the representative from TD explained that is one of the conditions for those non-AMSs to access the RFVR Database would be the sharing of their respective fishing vessels data.

33. While concurring with the view of Indonesia, the Council Director for Japan expressed the concern that the level of vessel registration system may not be equally well-developed for all the AMSs, and cautioned that the labeling of a fishing vessel as an IUU fishing vessel is a very serious issue. He also expressed the view that vessels that are not in the RFVR Database should be identified as IUU fishing vessels only if a flag State had investigated and found evidence that such vessels have engaged in IUU fishing activities.

34. The Council Director for Viet Nam added that while the information on fishing vessels in the RFVR Database is based on information submitted by the AMSs; there should be a clear system for providing the necessary inputs, *e.g.* the time gap between for reporting, to ensure that the RFVR Database is always updated.

35. While concurring with the view of Viet Nam, the Council Director for Thailand informed the Meeting that some vessels in Thailand are now in periods of transition from fishing to other activities, and thus may not appear in the RFVR Database but the information could be available in the records of the country's Marine Department. In addition, he expressed the view that the protocol for sharing of the RFVR Database with RFMOs may not be necessary, but when requests for information from RFMOs are sent to SEAFDEC, such requests should be treated on a case by case basis.

36. In connection with the absence of the country's inputs for the RFVR Database, the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam indicated that the appropriate data on fishing vessels from Brunei Darussalam would be submitted to TD as soon as possible.

37. After the discussion, the Council requested SEAFDEC to amend the Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Council, and submit the revised Protocol for consideration by the Council again *ad referendum*.

5.1.3 ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme

38. The representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat reported to the Council on the progress on development of the electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS) for Marine Capture Fisheries (**Annex 11**).

39. In the ensuing discussion, the Council Director for Singapore sought clarification from SEAFDEC on whether the ACDS database is set up separately for individual countries and if so, whether there would be any interface between the individual databases. In response, the SEAFDEC Secretariat clarified that in the implementation of the ACDS by the respective AMSs, each AMS will manage their own software and database individually. However, interfacing of the systems across AMSs to facilitate data exchange could also be possible in the future.

40. While expressing the appreciation to SEAFDEC for developing the eACDS for the region, the Council Director for Myanmar looked forward to cooperating with SEAFDEC in strengthening regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing by supporting the implementation of the eACDS at the national level.

41. In response to the comments made by the AQD Chief on the possibility of expanding the application of the ACDS to also cover the traceability of products from aquaculture that are transported from one to another island in case of archipelagic countries like the Philippines, the representative from SEAFDEC Secretariat explained that the application of ACDS for aquaculture could also be developed in the future. In this connection and upon the request from the country, SEAFDEC could look into the details and adjust the system to fit with the systems and practices in transporting aquaculture products when the eACDS is introduced in the archipelagic countries of the region.

42. The Council Director for Thailand commended SEAFDEC for the advancements it has made in developing the eACDS, and expressed the concern that as the ACDS mobile application would involve large groups of people accessing and providing inputs to the system, SEAFDEC should be very cautious and ensure that accessing the system is secured and traceable. The Council Director for Japan also concurred with the concern of Thailand on the need for SEAFDEC to ensure that concerned people could be tracked to ensure the security of the system. In response, the Council was informed that in the development of the eACDS, utmost security could be assured as the passwords are frequently changed, *e.g.* passwords given to fishing masters for every cruise are generated by the system. In addition, the mobile application is also secured as buyers, fish agencies, and processing plants are required to register otherwise access to the system is denied. Furthermore, the Council was informed that the Third On-site Training and Kick-off Pilot Testing for eACDS would be organized in Brunei Darussalam on 2-5 April 2018.

5.1.4 Regional Cooperation to Support the Implementation of the Port State Measures in ASEAN Region

43. The Council was informed about the progress of the promotion of the Regional Cooperation to Support the Implementation of the Port State Measures (PSM) in ASEAN Region (**Annex 12**) as presented by the representative from TD. The results of the regional training on PSM implementation in Southeast Asia for fishery managers organized from 20 to 23 February 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand, including the capacity building needs of the respective AMSs, was also reported to the Council.

44. While congratulating SEAFDEC for organizing the regional training on PSM implementation, the Council Directors for Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam confirmed their respective requirements in terms of capacity building, especially in the aspects of training on PSM implementation (in general) and on port inspection to support PSM implementation, as well as their needs to be able to support the establishment of networks for cooperation and exchange of information on PSM implementation. In the case of Cambodia which received support from FAO in terms of capacity building for the implementation of the PSM under its national program, the Council Director for Cambodia expressed the need of the country for the establishment of networks for cooperation and exchange of information to support PSM implementation.

45. Noting that the on-going SEAFDEC project that supports the implementation of PSM under the JTF-6 would be completed in 2019 but the future activities could be accommodated under the new JTF-7 which would commence in 2020, the Council Director for Indonesia suggested that SEAFDEC

should review the results based on the objectives of the current project, and use this in formulating the activities that should be undertaken under the new JTF-7 project. The Council Director of Singapore informed the Council that it was unclear what would be the plan of activities for the project and suggested for such a plan to be developed. While supporting the suggestion made by the Council Director for Indonesia, the Council Directors for the Philippines and Viet Nam expressed the view that an analysis of gaps in the respective the legal frameworks of the countries and a needs assessment should be carried out by SEAFDEC to be able to come up with the appropriate activities plan which should respond to the needs of the AMSs.

46. After informing the Council that it had taken several years for Japan to ratify the PSM Agreement (PSMA) in 2017 as several internal regulations had to be amended, the Council Director for Japan expressed the challenges that the AMSs would encounter to be able to implement the PSMA. He therefore suggested that for its future project, SEAFDEC should distinguish the activities that target the AMSs that have not yet ratified the PSMA which should include assistance in conducting legal analysis to enable these countries to amend their regulations, from the activities for those AMSs that have already ratified the PSMA which should include capacity building to enable them to implement the PSMA.

47. Considering that SEAFDEC does not have internal expertise for its training on PSM implementation, the Council Director for Japan suggested that SEAFDEC should tap on the expertise of other countries and agencies, *e.g.* Thailand, EU, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). He also suggested some new areas for cooperation among Member Countries, which could include sharing of information on detecting IUU fishing vessels, as this would help the countries that has yet to ratify the PSMA in preventing the landing of fish and fishery products from IUU fishing vessels at their ports.

48. The Council Director for Thailand also shared the difficulties encountered by Thailand in terms of the legal frameworks for the implementation of the PSM considering the multi-agency nature of the implementation. Nevertheless, Thailand is fortunate that its new Royal Thai Ordinance B.E. 2558 (2015) is supportive in the restructuring of the country's legal frameworks. In this connection, the Council Director for Thailand expressed the willingness of the country to share the lessons that were learnt in the implementation of PSM, with the other AMSs in the future. He added that currently Thailand has 22 designated ports, each of which must be manned by a group of staff designated to undertake the required tasks. As this is quite a burden for the country, Thailand is considering the possibility of reducing the number of designated ports in the future.

49. While taking note of the existing program of FAO that supports the AMSs in the implementation of PSM including capacity building and legal analysis, the Council requested SEAFDEC to coordinate closely with FAO in addressing the requirements of particular AMSs since its support is meant not only to the countries that ratified, but also to those that are yet to ratify the PSMA. Aside from its support for PSM implementation, FAO also have supporting program for combating IUU fishing in general. In this regard, the Council Director for Indonesia suggested that SEAFDEC and FAO should consider discussing these options and come up with the appropriate support that FAO and SEAFDEC could provide to the AMSs to enable the countries to implement the PSMA.

50. In this connection, the Council Director for Myanmar indicated the efforts of Myanmar in implementing the PSM as landing of fish catch at ports in Thailand from Myanmar-flagged vessels would need to comply with the PSMA requirements. He therefore sought the assistance of SEAFDEC in addressing this concern through the conduct of training or workshop.

51. After the discussion, the Council agreed that SEAFDEC could proceed with the activities for 2018 as planned, *e.g.* consultations and conduct of on-site training activities in one pilot country including gap analysis to be carried out prior to the conduct of such training activities. However, for 2019, SEAFDEC should reformulate the project, especially the objectives and activity plan as well as the coordination mechanism, taking into consideration the recommendations made by the Council,

and submit the project proposal for consideration during the next SEAFDEC Program Committee Meeting.

5.1.5 Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity

52. The Council took note of the progress made by SEAFDEC in addressing the request of the AMSs for SEAFDEC for the compilation of the feedbacks emanating from the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity in the region, and the recommendation for AMSs to implement management measures based on the results of the stock and risk assessment of longtail tuna and kawakawa in Southeast Asia (**Annex 13**), which was presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

53. During the discussion, the Council Director for Thailand cited that in order to reduce fishing capacity in the waters of Thailand, the Marine Fisheries Management Plan (2015-2019) was established after the revision of the country's fisheries law. The Management Plan aims to reduce fishing capacity and fishing efforts, *e.g.* for demersal fishes by 40% in the Gulf of Thailand and 10% in the Andaman Sea, and for pelagic fishes by 30% in the Gulf of Thailand and 20% in the Andaman Sea. In order to achieve this target, Thailand has withdrawn all illegal fishing vessels from the system, which include 826 trawlers and 1,200 push netters. The number of fishing days was also reduced by 5 days/month. In addition, Thai-flagged vessels are now operating only in Thai waters, not in the coastal waters of other States or in the high seas.

54. The Council Director for Indonesia explained that reduction of fishing capacity should be up to the respective AMSs to implement, as it would be difficult for a particular country to make decision to sacrifice the welfare of its fishers by reducing their fishing capacity. He mentioned that in the case of Indonesia, its Tuna Fisheries Management Plan was established in 2015 and deregistered more than 1,300 fishing vessels which are mostly tuna vessels. Indonesia is also member of several RFMOs, *e.g.* IOTC, Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) that control the amount of tunas to be caught in different waters under their jurisdiction. In this regard, SEAFDEC should not duplicate the efforts of these RFMOs in controlling the amount of catch in the Southeast Asian waters based on the results of the stock and risk assessment of economically-important fishes such as the neritic tunas.

55. While agreeing with Indonesia that SEAFDEC should avoid duplicating the works of concerned RFMOs, the Council Director for Japan suggested that SEAFDEC should consider working on this aspect in a more systematic manner, and should focus on its role as a technical organization. He also suggested that SEAFDEC should refocus its activities on the management of fishing capacity of priority shared stocks in the region other than tunas, *e.g.* Indo-Pacific mackerels, that are not covered by any RFMOs.

56. The Council Director for Myanmar supported the scientific cooperation for management of fishing capacity among Member Countries and requested SEAFDEC to continue extending the activities that contribute to such scientific cooperation to Myanmar and other AMSs in the future.

57. After taking note of the suggestion that during the Regional Technical Consultation on Fish Trade-related Issues to be organized in preparation for the forthcoming COFI in 2018, the Council noted that SEAFDEC would request the AMSs to provide updated information on the progress made with regards to the management of fishing capacity in their respective countries.

5.2 Regional Cooperation to Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in the ASEAN Region

5.2.1 Regional Plan of Action on Sustainable Utilization of Neritic Tunas in the ASEAN Region

58. The Council took note of the progress in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Sustainable Utilization of Neritic Tunas in the ASEAN Region (RPOA-Neritic Tunas) presented

by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat which appears as **Annex 14**. The Council specifically noted the results of 2016 stock and risk assessments of longtail tuna (LOT) and kawakawa (KAW), and the proposed management measures for LOT and KAW in the region. Nevertheless, it was also explained that most of the catch-efforts data used for the stock assessment are from Thailand.

59. The Council Director for Japan expressed its support to the proposed way forward for the RPOA-Neritic Tunas, including expansion of the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Working Group (SWG) to other shared stocks, such as anchovy, sardines, Indo-Pacific mackerels; enhancing data collection on fishing efforts through ACDS or other similar CDS; and securing the respective national budget allocations to support the future operation of SWG activities. However, he also expressed the concern on future utilization of the results of the SWG activities as these are currently focused on species already covered by RFMOs, *i.e.* LOT and KAW. He therefore suggested that SEAFDEC could continue its activities on the stock and risk assessments of neritic tunas provided that these are undertaken in coordination with the relevant RFMOs.

60. Moreover, the Council Director for Japan also expressed the view that although the activities of IOTC also cover LOT and KAW in the entire Indian Ocean, a form of coordination has already been established between SEAFDEC and the Scientific Committee of the IOTC for the stock and risk assessments of LOT and KAW. For the Pacific Ocean, however, he suggested that since the scientific information is already available from the SEAFDEC activities, SEAFDEC could provide such information to WCPFC for their information.

61. Furthermore, the Council Director for Japan also cited that when other countries (*e.g.* Tanzania and EU) came up with the proposal to manage the tuna stocks, the proposal was always opposed by coastal countries including the AMSs. Considering that scientific information is already provided by SEAFDEC indicating that the total allowable catch of LOT and KAW in the Eastern Indian Ocean should be reduced, he suggested that the countries in the region should take its own initiative in submitting their proposals for the management of such species to the IOTC.

5.2.2 Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources and Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture

62. The Council took note of the report made by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat on the Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources and Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture (**Annex 15**). The Council also noted the updated plan for implementation by SEAFDEC in 2018, particularly the conduct of the Second Regional Meeting in June 2018 to come up with a concept paper for the next Animal Committee Meeting of CITES to be organized in July 2018. In addition, the Council was informed that SEAFDEC will conduct a genetic study to assess population connectivity of *Anguilla bicolor* in the AMSs.

63. The Council Director for Viet Nam expressed the apology for the country's inability to confirm the survey plan and submit their response to the questionnaire on anguillid eels while awaiting for feedbacks from the relevant Departments to provide the concerns that were encountered while implementing the relevant activities. SEAFDEC was however assured that the official information in the accomplished questionnaire would be submitted as soon as possible.

64. In the ensuing discussion, the Chief of AQD suggested that the possibility of including the hatchery production of eel seeds should be considered under the eel projects, considering that in many countries in the region, trading of eel seeds from the wild is controlled. He mentioned that in the Philippines for example, catching of eels smaller than 15 cm in length is prohibited therefore, promoting the hatchery production of eel seeds would be able to supplement the declining eel juveniles from natural stocks. While considering the suggestion of the Chief of AQD, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat reiterated that the aquaculture component of this project would focus more on improving the survival rate of glass eels in aquaculture.

65. The Council Director for Myanmar informed the Meeting that two anguillid eel species are found in the inland and coastal waters of Myanmar, and that the Department of Fisheries of Myanmar

has been conducting regular data collection starting in 2018. He also provided an updated information on trading of live anguillid eels, and that based on the recommendations from the First Regional Meeting held in January 2018, the DOF of Myanmar is now developing the necessary regulations that would control the export of anguillid eels.

66. In addition, the Council Director for Myanmar also cited that Myanmar supports the revised work plan of SEAFDEC for 2017-2019 on the management schemes for anguillid eels. For resources management and conservation, as well as for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture of the tropical anguillid eel resources, he requested SEAFDEC to consider extending technical assistance to Myanmar in improving the survival rate of eel juveniles in aquaculture, and expressed the willingness of Myanmar to cooperate with SEAFDEC in the planned genetic study of eels.

67. The Council Director for Thailand provided the updated figures of the country's exportation of anguillid eels, indicating that in 2016 Thailand had exported 62 tons of *A. bicolor* to China, which could have been from eel collectors who use Thailand as channel for marketing eels to other countries. In this connection, Thailand would conduct field surveys on the production and trading of anguillid eels, and would share the information with the other AMSs.

68. The Council Director for the Philippines reiterated the original objectives of the projects of SEAFDEC on anguillid eels to come up with scientific results that could be reflected during the next CITES CoP. In this regard, the projects of SEAFDEC should respond to such objectives by using the scientific data gathered by SEAFDEC for the implementation of SEAFDEC projects on conservation and management of anguillid eels. Therefore such data should be made available prior to the next CITES CoP in 2019, and the project output would form the basis for defending the inclusion of this species from being listed in the Appendices of CITES. For the information of the AMSs, the Council reiterated that the deadline for submission of proposals for listing of species to the CITES Appendices is 24 December 2018.

69. The Council Director for Japan provided the information that the CITES International Technical Workshop on Eels (*Anguilla* spp.) would be organized on 18-20 April 2018 in London, and that the official invitations should have already been sent to relevant AMSs, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Viet Nam. He added that Japan would attend this Workshop to share information from the perspective of countries consuming Japanese eels, and encouraged the AMSs or SEAFDEC to make presentations with respect to the efforts of the region in the conservation of *A. bicolor*. In this connection, the Council was informed that SEAFDEC also received the invitation to attend the Technical Workshop and to present the results of its works on anguillid eels during the Workshop.

5.2.3 Regional Policy Recommendations for Development and Use of Alternative Dietary Ingredients in Aquaculture Feed Formulations: Establishment of the Regional Database of Alternative Feed Ingredients in Aquaculture

70. The Council took note of the progress made by AQD in establishing the "Regional Database of Alternative Feed Ingredients in Aquaculture" which is a follow-up of the "Regional Policy Recommendations for Development and Use of Alternative Dietary Ingredients in Aquaculture Feed Formulations" (Annex 16). Specifically, the Council was informed that AQD is planning to organize the Workshop on Regional Database on Alternative Feed Ingredients in Aquaculture tentatively on 8 May 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.

71. The Council Director for Myanmar shared his comment that the Regional Database should also include additional information, such as other key ingredients and factors (e.g. amino acid, fatty acid, vitamin), models (software modeling and statistical information), resources (education, associations and organizations, universities), about us (who we are, team, partners), feedback/questions (to improve the database). He suggested that AQD should also look into relevant information from the International Aquaculture Feed Formulation Database (IAFFD) through the website: <http://www.iaffd.com/home.html>, and the National Animal Nutrition Program through <https://animalnutrition.org/feed-databases>. Considering the usefulness of this database for

aquaculture stakeholders of the AMSs, he therefore supported the plan of SEAFDEC to continue working on this initiative.

72. While also expressing full support to the establishment of Regional Database, the Council Director for the Philippines suggested that more alternative ingredients, particularly agricultural by-products should also be included in the Regional Database.

5.2.4 Establishment of the Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreak in Southeast Asia

73. The Council noted the progress of the establishment of the “Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia” (**Annex 17**), which was presented by the Chief of AQD. The Council was also informed of the progress of the proposed ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation (RTC) on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia to be organized on 28-30 June 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. The RTC will be organized in collaboration with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) with the support from the Government of Japan through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

74. The Council Director for Singapore asked SEAFDEC to revise the title of the project by removing the word “establishment” as the establishment of such a system would be decided and coordinated under the ASEAN mechanism.

75. During the discussion, the Council Director for Indonesia recalled its request during the Forty-eighth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in Nha Trang, Viet Nam to establish a regional early warning system that would keep other countries informed when a certain disease occurs in one country, and sought clarification whether such request could be addressed through this RTC. In this regard, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General explained that SEAFDEC had already discussed this concern with NACA, the ASEAN Network of Aquatic Animal Health Centres (ANAAHC), and SEAFDEC/AQD, and agreed to conduct the RTC to come up with recommendations that would address the concern raised by the SEAFDEC Council.

76. The Director General of NACA added that this RTC is only an initial step towards the establishment of emergency preparedness and response system. During the RTC, SEAFDEC/AQD would outline various preparations, including the conduct of gap analysis of the existing system for each AMSs on disease outbreaks to serve as basis for identifying the appropriate system that could be adopted during outbreaks of transboundary diseases at national and local levels. While expressing the willingness of NACA to assist AQD in facilitating the arrangements for the RTC, he informed the Council that NACA has already approached its partners at the University of Hawaii that have experience on disaster early warning system. Although aquatic animal disease may not be their priority, but their experience in the development of surveillance and monitoring systems as well as the platform for decision making could be explored and mobilized.

77. While supporting the conduct of the RTC, the Council Director for Myanmar looked forward to seeing the results of the RTC which could be used as basis in setting up the country’s quarantine measures and enforcement policy for the effective management of transboundary diseases in cooperation with the private sector.

5.2.5 Supporting Program for Implementing the Regional Approaches for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF)

78. The Council took note of the progress in advancing the regional approaches in securing sustainable small-scale fisheries (**Annex 18**) including, the steps taken by SEAFDEC to clarify the basic concepts of the FAO-SSF Guidelines as recommended by the SEAFDEC Council at its Forty-ninth Meeting in 2017, and the policy brief “Applying Human Rights-Based and Gender Equality

Approaches to Small-Scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia,” as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

79. In the discussion, the Chief of MFRDMD made an observation that small-scale fisheries is an important fisheries sub-sector for coastal communities in Southeast Asia. In this connection, the “supporting program” or “regional approach” should also explore the possibility of providing alternative livelihoods to coastal fishers who are fully dependent on coastal resources that are declining.

80. While agreeing on the need to explore alternative livelihoods that could be provided to small-scale fishers, the Council Director for Indonesia reiterated the provisions in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.6 which calls for the “prohibition by 2020, of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing; and the elimination of subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing,” and that the countries should refrain from introducing new fisheries subsidies. Considering that the World Trade Organization (WTO) has made a multilateral commitment to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goal 14.6, and that the WTO decision on fisheries subsidies is targeted to be adopted by 2019, SEAFDEC should consider finding the ways and means of addressing the issues on fisheries subsidies for small-scale fisheries in the region as soon as possible.

81. In a related development, the Council Director for Thailand provided the information that the Department of Fisheries of Thailand in collaboration with “Too Big To Ignore” will organize the Third World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress on 22-26 October 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with a theme on transdisciplinary and transformation for the future of small-scale fisheries. The overall goal of the Congress is to provide opportunities for researchers, students, young professionals, practitioners, fishers, and fishers’ organizations, environment groups, and policymakers to share information about all the aspects of small-scale fisheries and to formulate action plans and capacity development programs to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. In this connection, the other AMSs were encouraged to participate in this Congress.

82. In response to the query of the Chief of AQD on the aspect of human rights approach in the SSF Guidelines, the representative from SEAFDEC Secretariat clarified that issues on human rights are embedded in many documents, *e.g.* ASEAN Human Rights Declaration that comprise economic, social and cultural rights which could include support (small subsidies) to help secure the well-being of community dependent on the small-scale fisheries. In addition, addressing the issues on human rights could serve as basis for promoting small-scale fisheries.

83. After the discussion, the Council supported the policy brief “Applying Human Right-Based and Gender Equality Approaches to Small-Scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia” for further promotion and dissemination by SEAFDEC as proposed.

5.2.5 Supporting the Implementation of Gender Perspectives in ASEAN Fisheries and Institutions

84. The Council considered the concept note on “Support for the Integration of Gender Perspectives in Fisheries within SEAFDEC and Its Member Countries” (**Annex 19**) as presented by the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC. Specifically, it was proposed that a SEAFDEC Gender Strategy should be developed to provide a framework to facilitate the efforts of SEAFDEC in integrating gender in its future programs and projects, and the draft Strategy should be submitted to the Forty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Program Committee for comments and subsequently to the next meeting of the SEAFDEC Council for consideration.

85. While expressing support to the development of SEAFDEC Gender Strategy, the Council Director for Myanmar requested SEAFDEC to support the conduct of gender analysis and training in Myanmar. The Council Director for Lao PDR also articulated his support to the development of the Gender Strategy. Meanwhile, the Council Director for Indonesia, while also expressing support to this initiative, emphasized that the development of SEAFDEC Gender Strategy must be in the context of the ASEAN perspective.

5.2 Other Emerging Issues

5.2.1 CITES-related Issues

86. The Council took note of the updated information on CITES-related issues and the results of the Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29) held on 18-22 July 2017 in Switzerland, particularly on the commercially-exploited aquatic species (**Annex 20**) as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

87. During the discussion, the Council Director for Indonesia provided additional information on the results and follow-up actions of the AC29 as Indonesia was assigned as Chair of the intersessional working group on sharks and rays. The task of the group is to review the measures and regulations agreed under RFMOs, the Convention on highly migratory species, and role of RFMOs in supporting the development of sharks non-detriment findings (NDFs). He added that Indonesia as the Chair of the working group, will write a report on the status of the follow-up actions. With regard to the submission of the questionnaire circulated by CITES Secretariat on the status, trade, and conservation of non CITES-listed anguillid eels, he explained that the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries has sent the questionnaire to the Ministry of Forestry and Environment (MoFE) of Indonesia and asked them to complete the questionnaire since MoFE is the Management Authority of CITES for Indonesia. Regarding the issues on the conservation of the Banggai cardinal fish, Indonesia is now in the process of drafting a Ministerial Decree for the conservation of the cardinal fish based on results of the consultation process with concerned stakeholders in Central Sulawesi.

88. The Council Director for Japan appreciated the effort of SEAFDEC in strengthening the coordination among the Member Countries during the CITES CoP17 in Johannesburg, South Africa. He encouraged the Member Countries to secure the attendance of their representatives from fisheries agencies in the next CITES CoP18. With regard to the possible sharks species that could be listed in the CITES Appendices during the CITES CoP18 in 2019, he informed the Meeting that the short-fin mako shark and blue shark are likely to be proposed for listing. Moreover, on the submission of the CITES-questionnaire on status, trade, and conservation of the non CITES-listed anguillid eels, the Council Director for Japan urged the Member Countries to provide their feedbacks in the said questionnaire. Otherwise, he also suggested that SEAFDEC Secretariat could consider filling out the questionnaire on behalf of the Member Countries based on results of the consultations between SEAFDEC and the Member Countries.

5.2.2 Supporting the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development

89. The Council took note of the executive summary and outcome of the Ocean Conference and the future cooperation with the UN Environment Programme in relation to the fisheries and environmental aspects (**Annex 21**), which was presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

90. The Council Director for Myanmar indicated that since Myanmar had established a national committee for SDG 14, he requested SEAFDEC to compile the information on the efforts of the Member Countries with respect to SDG14 and provide such information to the Member Countries. In this regard, it was suggested that the information to be provided should not only focus on fisheries concerns but also on environmental aspects, and that SEAFDEC should also raise the awareness of the Member Countries to be able to understand the cooperation between SEAFDEC and the UN Environment to work together in reducing the impact of fisheries to the environment.

91. On the query of the Council Director for Indonesia about the progress of implementation of the project “Establishment and Operation of Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand,” the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat explained that the project has already been implemented since 2017. In this regard, the Council Director for Indonesia expressed concerns on the commitment of Indonesia to allocate counterpart fund for the project that

was made in 2014 as MMAF has changed its budgeting priorities since 2015, while the country is still interested in taking part of the project.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

92. The Council Director for Indonesia informed the Council that the Government of Indonesia will host the “Our Ocean Conference 2018” on 29-30 October 2018 in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. The Conference that would be jointly organized by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia would focus on six areas of actions, namely: marine pollution, marine protected areas, climate change, sustainable fisheries, maritime security, and sustainable blue economy. He also informed the Council that official invitations would be extended by the Indonesian Government to top leaders of other AMSs very soon, and he encouraged all the AMSs to consider participating in the Conference.

93. The Council Director for Thailand provided an update of the activities undertaken by Thailand under the ASEAN mechanism. Specifically, Thailand hosted two regional meetings in Bangkok in 2018, namely: 1) the ASEAN Regional Forum on Sustainable Fisheries Management and Food Security in Southeast Asia on 13-14 March 2018; and 2) the 8th Meeting of the ASEAN Shrimp Alliance on 21-22 March 2018. The results from these two meetings would be reported for consideration of the 26th Meeting of the ASWGF on 9-12 May 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.

VII. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NON-MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

94. The EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Cambodia, *Mr. Aymeric Roussel* thanked SEAFDEC for inviting the EU Delegation to attend the Meeting as Observer. He informed the Council that this Meeting is important for the European Union (EU) as issues on the sustainability of aquaculture are discussed like development of alternative feeds and aquatic animal diseases monitoring, as well as combating IUU fishing which the priority of the EU. He appreciated the efforts of SEAFDEC in addressing the issues on developing aquaculture feed alternatives and disease monitoring and prevention being worked out through cooperation and collaboration at the national and regional levels. As one of the largest markets for seafood products from aquaculture and capture fisheries, he stressed that it is important for the EU consumers to be ensured that the products they consume do not come from IUU fishing activities. Moreover, he also cited that combating IUU fishing is the key priority work for the EU, and that EU appreciates the efforts of the ASEAN Member States through cooperation and collaboration in combating IUU fishing in the region as demonstrated during the adoption of the Joint ASEAN-SEAFDEC Declaration for Combating IUU Fishing. Finally, he expressed the wish that the EU Delegation would have the opportunity to attend the future SEAFDEC Council Meetings and looked forward to establishing future collaboration with the other countries in the region.

95. The representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, *Dr. Susana V. Siar* expressed her gratitude to SEAFDEC for inviting FAO to the Meeting and for the opportunity to give a statement on areas of mutual interest and cooperation. She congratulated SEAFDEC and its Member Countries on its many achievements during the past year and informed the Council that FAO appreciates the efforts being undertaken by SEAFDEC in strengthening regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing and in working towards making the region free from IUU fishing. FAO is looking forward to strengthening its collaboration and coordination with SEAFDEC on a number of key areas such as PSMA and combating IUU fishing, aquaculture related works, SDG 14, climate change, EAFM, SSF Guidelines and regional projects. She announced that a handbook to support SSF Guidelines implementation “Towards Gender-Equitable Small-Scale Fisheries Governance and Development” is now published and available online and in print. She reaffirmed the commitment of FAO in working with and strengthening collaboration with SEAFDEC in the coming years. Lastly, she thanked the host of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, the Fisheries

Administration of Cambodia for their excellent arrangements and warm hospitality for this 50th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. Her Statement appears as **Annex 22**.

96. The representative from the Mekong River Commission (MRC), *Dr. Phattareeya Suanrattanachai* expressed the appreciation for the invitation extended by SEAFDEC to MRC to attend the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. She informed the Council that MRC is an inter-governmental organization established in 1995 by the 1995 Mekong Agreement, and works directly with the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam with the aim of ensuring that the Mekong River Basin is developed in the most efficient manner mutually benefiting all member countries, while minimizing harmful effects on the people and the environment. In addition, she stated that SEAFDEC has supported the MRC in strengthening institutional platforms such as the Technical Advisory Body (TAB) on Fisheries for developing and implementing a regional fisheries management and development strategy. MRC and SEAFDEC signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the “Promotion of Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Lower Mekong Basin and Southeast Asia” in August 2017. MRC and SEAFDEC co-organized the Regional Consultation for the Mekong Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy (BFMS) and for the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) for senior fisheries managers. Finally, she informed the Council that in 2018, MRC has continued to implement the roadmap of the project-based action plan development as a base document for the Mekong Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development strategy. Two tentative regional expert groups consultations on fisheries are planned to take place in May and July to finalize the draft action plan. Her Statement appears as **Annex 23**.

97. In response to the Statement of MRC, the Chief of IFRDMD expressed the gratitude and appreciation to MRC for hosting the visit of the IFRDMD staff and sharing their knowledge on inland fisheries in Mekong region. The visit was conducted as follow-up of the MOU between SEAFDEC and MRC, and to explore the possibility of establishing collaboration between MRC and IFRDMD.

98. The Director General of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), *Dr. Cherdasak Virapat* expressed his appreciation for the invitation extended by SEAFDEC that enabled NACA to participate in the Meeting, and congratulated SEAFDEC on its 50th Anniversary in November 2017. He provided information on the activities implemented in collaboration with SEAFDEC, namely: proposal on ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia which will be held around the middle of 2018 in Thailand; the 16th Meeting of the Asia Regional Advisory Group on Aquatic Animal Health (AGM15); Strengthening Capacities, Policies and National Plans of Prudent and Responsible Use of Antimicrobial in Fisheries; Emergency Regional Consultation for Prevention and Management of Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) in the Asia-Pacific. He reiterated that NACA and SEAFDEC would find the opportunity for strengthening the collaboration and coordination on important aquaculture development activities in the region and beyond. His Statement appears as **Annex 24**.

99. On behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Government, the representative from the United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA), *Ms. Cristina Vélez Srinivasan* expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for the invitation to attend the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. She also expressed the appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia for hosting the Meeting. While congratulating SEAFDEC for celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2017, she mentioned that the USAID Oceans collaborated with SEAFDEC since 2015 to support the region in protecting and conserving marine resources and enhancing the sustainable fisheries including catch documentation and traceability mechanisms, sustainable fisheries management plan for Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, the Andaman Sea, and the Gulf of Thailand as well as enhancing awareness on gender equity and equality, and labor concern in the fisheries sector. She then reiterated that USAID would continue to support and build on these partnerships in the years ahead. Her Statement appears as **Annex 25**.

100. After the presentations, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn*, thanked the representatives from non-member government and from the international and regional organizations

for their collaboration and cooperation which are valuable in the implementation of the programs and activities of SEAFDEC.

VIII. FUTURE DIRECTION OF SEAFDEC

101. During the Closed Session of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council attended only by the Heads of Delegations of the Member Countries, the Council was informed by the SEAFDEC Secretary-General on the follow-up actions undertaken by SEAFDEC in accordance with the recommendations and suggestions raised in the Closed Session of the Forty-ninth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in 2017. Specifically, the Council noted that the SEAFDEC Secretariat had invited Timor Leste to attend the 40th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Program Committee in 2017 as Observer, but there was no response from them. On the proposed Dinner Meeting to be convened on the eve of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council to discuss issues related to the Future Direction of SEAFDEC, the SEAFDEC Secretariat found it difficult to make the arrangements for such meeting due to the late arrival of some Council Directors in Siem Reap. Moreover, the Council also took note of the participation of the ASEAN Secretariat during the 20th Meeting of the FCG/ASSP in 2017.

102. The Council also recommended the way forward in addressing the issues related to the future direction of SEAFDEC:

- **Commitment and Support for the Implementation of the Adopted Guidelines by the SEAFDEC Member Countries**

SEAFDEC has developed several guidelines for the sustainable development of fisheries in the region which had been endorsed by the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries as well as by the high level authorities at the SOM-AMAF and AMAF. However, these guidelines have not been fully utilized and implemented by the countries due to the voluntary nature of the said guidelines. In this connection, the Council recommended the following actions that SEAFDEC should undertake:

- Negotiate with the ASEAN Secretariat to also include discussions on fisheries issues during SOM and subsequently at the AMAF.
- Member Countries to show strong commitment to implement the adopted guidelines through the formulation of national action plans, taking into consideration the situation in each country.

- **Invitation to Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste to SEAFDEC Meetings**

SEAFDEC to continue extending invitation to Papua New Guinea to attend SEAFDEC technical events in 2018 and to Timor Leste to attend the technical events and the Program Committee Meeting in 2018. In case there is no response to the said invitations, SEAFDEC may stop sending out the invitations.

- **MOU between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) of Indonesia and SEAFDEC**

The Council Director for Indonesia proposed to establish a formal collaboration between the MMAF and SEAFDEC through signing of an MOU for the purpose of setting up of a framework for the enhancement of cooperation in the fields of marine affairs and fisheries. After the discussion, the Council agreed to give two months for the Member Countries to consider this matter internally, and to subsequently provide feedbacks to SEAFDEC by the end of May 2018.

- **Delay in Transferring of Budget for Fisheries *Refugia* Project to Participating Member Countries**

Some participating countries, *i.e.* Cambodia and Philippines, inquired on the status of the fisheries *refugia* project as the budget allocated for the project sites has not been transferred up to the present. In this regard, it was clarified that the inability to transfer the budget was due to several technical and administrative reasons. The participating countries were therefore requested to send official letters to SEAFDEC Secretariat explaining the situation, and for the SEAFDEC Secretariat to take appropriate action with the Project Director and the UNEP Task Manager for them to address this issue and alleviate the problem.

- **Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020**

Considering that the Resolution and Plan of Action has specific timeframe towards 2020 which would be approaching very soon, the document should be reviewed in order to ensure that it is still up to date. Moreover, as the Resolution and Plan of Action was endorsed under the ASEAN mechanism, the need to review this document should be raised at the forthcoming meetings of the FCG/ASSP and ASWGF. Upon consideration by these two meetings, the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries agreed to designate their respective focal points to review the Resolution and Plan of Action.

- **Sharing of Lessons and Experiences from DOF of Thailand in Combating IUU Fishing**

In the process of implementation of the PSMA and amendment of its legal frameworks to comply with the requirements of the PSMA for combating IUU fishing, the DOF of Thailand has gained the experience, *e.g.* on vessel inspections, establishment of the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC), that could be shared with other AMSs through regional training programs to be organized by TD.

- **Discussion on CITES-related Issues at Future Meetings of the SEAFDEC Council**

Considering the sensitivity of CITES-related issues, this agenda should be placed in the closed session which is to be attended only by the delegates of the Member Countries.

IX. MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTER

9.1 Operation of SEAFDEC Training and Research Vessels

103. The Council was informed of the Operations of SEAFDEC Training and Research Vessels (**Annex 26**) as reported by the representative from TD. Specifically, the Council took note of the utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 in 2017, and endorsed its proposed operational plan in 2018. The Council also took note of the proposed utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC in 2018.

104. With regards to the planned utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 for the “Marine Fisheries Resources and Environment Research Survey in the Gulf of Thailand” tentatively scheduled during May-July 2018, the Council noted that such survey is still subject to discussion with Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam. In this regard, the Council Director for Viet Nam explained the process of obtaining approval from the relevant national authorities of Viet Nam which would take at least one month; and requested SEAFDEC to notify Viet Nam through official letter on the updated schedule of the survey after discussion with the other participating countries in order to expedite such process. While expressing support to this activity, the Council Director for Cambodia cited that Cambodia is now undertaking the processes to finalize the survey stations, and would try to also expedite the process of obtaining approval from Cambodian authorities so that the planned survey cruise could be carried out during the proposed period.

105. The representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat shared the concern that if the approval from concerned countries could not be sought in time, this survey might have to be postponed. However, since the budget that was secured for the survey in 2018 should be spent within the year,

the representative from TD therefore suggested that the schedule should not be very much delayed otherwise the survey would also run across rough seas during the monsoon season.

106. The Council Director for Japan expressed the view that the total number of days at sea of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 is relatively low compared to the normal utilization of other research vessels which should be at least 150 days per year. He also encouraged the other Member Countries to make more use of the vessel in the future, although cost-sharing would be applied to countries utilizing the vessel.

9.2 Alignment of SEAFDEC Programs with the Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC Towards 2030

107. The Council took note of the results of the alignment of SEAFDEC programs with the Resolution on the Future of SEAFDEC Towards 2030 (RES-2017), which was adopted by the Special Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council on 15 November 2017, as presented by SEAFDEC Secretariat (**Annex 27**). The Council also noted that such alignment exercise was made in response to the request of the SEAFDEC Program Committee during its Fortieth Meeting in 2017.

108. While agreeing with the alignment of SEAFDEC projects under the FCG/ASSP mechanism and Departmental programs with the new six (6) Strategies in the RES-2017, the Council was also informed that SEAFDEC programs would be reported following the new Strategies during the SEAFDEC Program Committee Meetings starting from its Forty-first Meeting in 2018, as well as in the SEAFDEC Annual Report of 2018 onwards.

9.3 Collaborative Arrangements Between SEAFDEC and Other Organizations

109. The Council took note of the establishment of collaborative arrangements between SEAFDEC and other international/organizations, donors, and agencies of non-member countries in 2017 until the Fiftieth Meeting of the Council. The Meeting also endorsed the proposed expansion of the collaboration between SEAFDEC and the United States Department of Interior (US-DOI) on “Implementing the Lower Mekong Fish Passage Initiative in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam;” and the establishment of the Memorandum of Understanding between SEAFDEC and Burapha University, Thailand. The document appears as **Annex 28**.

110. Concerning the cooperation for “Implementing the Lower Mekong Fish Passage Initiative in Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam,” the Council Director for Thailand explained that Thailand has recently received a communication from the US-DOI requesting for an adjustment of the timeline for the construction of fish passage from the original schedule in 2019 to the end of 2018; and that the US-DOI agreed to cover all construction cost without any counterpart payment from Thailand. In this connection, Thailand would forward the updated information to SEAFDEC to adjust the workplan accordingly.

111. In response to the query of the Council Director for Indonesia on the extent of coordination with IFRDMD on the proposed cooperation between SEAFDEC and the US-DOI, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC explained that the US-DOI would primarily mobilize the experience of TD from the previous fish passage project supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Although IFRDMD may not be involved directly in the process of the fish passage construction, the staff of IFRDMD would still be able to take part in the capacity building activities.

9.4 Establishment of MOU between Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and SEAFDEC

112. The Council discussed the proposal of the Establishment of MOU between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and SEAFDEC at the Closed Session among the heads of delegations (**Annex 29**).

9.5 Changing of Name of AQD’S from Technology Verification and Demonstration Division to Technology Verification and Commercialization Division

113. The Council took note of the proposed change of the name of AQD’s “Technology Verification and Demonstration Division” to “Technology Verification and Commercialization Division” in order that AQD can give more focus on the translation of research results into commercial production systems with increased involvement of the private sector and the fishery industry as a whole.

114. In response to the comments made by the Council that the term “commercialization” might connote that the technologies developed by AQD is intended for financial gains, the Chief of AQD informed the Council that the intention of the said change is to mainly ensure that the technology developed by AQD is ready for adoption by the industry without any implication in term of financial gains. After thorough discussion, the Council approved that the name of the “Technology Verification and Demonstration Division” to be changed to “Technology Verification and Extension Division,” that was subsequently accepted by AQD.

X. FINANCIAL MATTERS

10.1 Adoption of Audited Financial Report for the Year 2016

115. In accordance with Article 6, Paragraph 2 (ii) of the Agreement Establishing the Center, the Council endorsed the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements of the Center for the year ended 31 December 2016 including that of the Secretariat and the four Departments for the Year 2016 (**Annex 30**) as audited by the official auditors of the Center, *Mr. Phongtorn Duangphanya* from P&A Audit Company Limited, Thailand.

10.2 Un-audited Financial Report for the Year 2017, and Status of the Financial Situation in the Year 2018

116. The Council took note of the Un-audited Consolidated Financial Report for the Year 2017 (**Annex 31**), which comprised the Un-audited Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2017, the Un-audited Statements of Income and Expenditures for the Year 2017, and the Un-audited Fund Balances as of 31 December 2017.

117. The Council was informed that the Audited Financial Statements of SEAFDEC for the Year 2017 would be submitted to the Council Directors during the next Council Meeting in 2019, such as those for the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year 2017, the Secretariat Financial Statements for the Year 2017, the Training Department Financial Statements for the Year 2017, as audited by Auditor *Mr. Phongtorn Duangphanya* of the Auditing Firm P&A Audit Company Limited. Meanwhile, AQD’s Financial Statements for the Year 2017 will be audited by Auditor *Ms. Cyril Jasmin B. Valencia* of Auditing Firm Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co., and MFRDMD Financial Statements for the Year 2017 by Auditor *Mr. Mohd Badaruddin bin Ismail* of Auditing Firm Adib Azhar & Co. (AF1446). On the other hand, the Financial Statements for IFRDMD in 2017 will be audited by *Mr. Ir. Jayen C. Purewanto* from the General Inspectorate III Division of the Indonesian Government Internal Audit.

10.3 Proposed Budgetary Requirements of the Center for the Year 2019

118. The Council noted the budget allocation for the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments, and approved the proposed budgetary requirements of the Center for the Year 2019 as shown in **Annex 32**.

10.4 Other Financial Matters

119. The Council Director for Brunei Darussalam expressed the concern regarding the long-term engagement of the current Audit Firms that examine the SEAFDEC Financial Statements. In this

regard, the SEAFDEC Secretariat agreed to the request of the Council to change the Audit Firms every five years.

XI. CONCLUDING MATTERS

11.1 Adoption of the Meeting Report and Press Statement

120. The Council adopted the Report of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council as well as the Press Statement on 29 March 2018 as shown in **Annex 33**.

11.2 Date and Venue of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council

121. In considering the date and venue of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, the Council Director for Indonesia informed the Council that the Government of Indonesia would accept the responsibility of hosting the next Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in Indonesia in April 2019.

122. The Council expressed its appreciation to the offer of Indonesia to host the next Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in April 2019 in Indonesia, and requested the Secretary-General to discuss with the Council Director for the Indonesia to finalize the exact date and venue of the next Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council.

11.3 Vote of Thanks to the Host Government

123. On behalf of the Council Directors, the Council Director for Japan expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for hosting and for the arrangements of the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He also congratulated the Chairperson of the Meeting for the successful conduct of the Meeting, and looked forward to enhancing the SEAFDEC programs and activities in order that SEAFDEC could continue performing its role in the sustainable development of fisheries in our region. He also expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat of the Meeting especially the staff of the Fisheries Administration of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the smooth arrangements of the Meeting and for the memorable stay of the Meeting participants in Cambodia. His Remarks appears as **Annex 34**.

XII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

124. The Chairperson expressed his appreciation to the Council Directors and the representatives from regional and international organizations as well as the SEAFDEC Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, and officers for the support accorded him during the Meeting. He also expressed his sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Meeting for their hard work which led to the success of the Meeting. With that note, he declared the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council closed. His Closing Remarks appears as **Annex 35**.