



REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF THE ASEAN-SEAFDEC STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (FCG/ASSP)

8-9 November 2018, Langkawi, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

1. The Twenty-first Meeting of the Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) or 21FCG/ASSP was organized in Langkawi, Malaysia from 8 to 9 November 2018. The agenda of the 21FCG/ASSP included discussions on the programs and activities implemented by SEAFDEC in 2018 and those proposed for 2019 under the FCG/ASSP mechanism as endorsed by the SEAFDEC Program Committee at its Forty-first Meeting (41PCM) on 5-7 November 2018, the progress of other proposals implemented under the ASSP Framework as well as the policy considerations on issues of importance to the fisheries sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries. The 21FCG/ASSP was attended by representatives from the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and senior officials of the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments. The List of Participants appears as **Annex 1**.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

2. The 21FCG/ASSP was co-chaired by the representative from Thailand, *Mr. Bunchong Chumnongsittathum* on behalf of the current Chairperson of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF) and by the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn*. In his capacity as the Co-Chair for SEAFDEC of the 21FCG/ASSP, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General welcomed the participants to the Meeting and reiterated that the FCG/ASSP Meeting is a very important forum as it serves as a joint platform for the ASEAN and SEAFDEC for discussing the collaborative programs of activities that address several fisheries-related issues and challenges confronting the region. He added that the recommendations from the FCG/ASSP Meeting are crucial in ensuring that ongoing and future activities of SEAFDEC properly address the fisheries-related priorities and needs of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries. His Welcome Remarks appears as **Annex 2**.

3. The Co-Chair for the ASEAN of the 21FCG/ASSP, *Mr. Bunchong Chumnongsittathum* also welcomed the participants to the Meeting and thanked the Marine Fishery Resources Development and Management Department of SEAFDEC for the arrangements of the Meeting. He cited that the technical cooperation between the ASEAN and SEAFDEC for the development and management of sustainable fisheries has been established since 1998 in order to support the various fisheries activities of the ASEAN Member States (AMSs). He stated that the various programs and activities implemented under the FCG/ASSP mechanism especially on management strategies/measures, combating IUU fishing, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, climate change and mitigation measures, catch documentation and traceability of fish and fishery products are important issues in moving forward to attain sustainability in the region's fisheries. After expressing his insights about the significance of the FCG/ASSP mechanism, he declared the Meeting open. His Opening Remarks appears as **Annex 3**.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

III. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE DIRECTIVES GIVEN AT MEETINGS OF THE SEAFDEC COUNCIL AND ASEAN BODIES RELATED TO FISHERIES

3.1 Follow-up Actions to the Directives Given at the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the Twentieth Meeting of the Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP)

5. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the follow-up actions undertaken by SEAFDEC in response to the directives of the SEAFDEC Council during its Fiftieth Meeting on 26-30 March 2018 and the Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (FCG/ASSP) during its Twentieth Meeting on 30 November-1 December 2017, as shown in **Annex 5** and **Annex 6**, respectively.

6. During the discussion, the 21FCG/ASSP was informed that as recommended during the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, the need for SEAFDEC to negotiate with the ASEAN Secretariat to facilitate the inclusion of the results of discussions on fisheries issues, should be addressed. In this connection, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat informed the 21FCG/ASSP that the FCG mechanism is already in place for discussions on fisheries related issues between SEAFDEC and ASEAN which are reported to the Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF) through ASWGFi.

7. In response to the concern of the representative from Indonesia on the procedure for specific organizations to participate in the SOM-AMAF, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat explained that a number of requests are received from various organizations to take part in this high-level meeting. However, organizations allowed to attend the SOM-AMAF and AMAF are usually those that have no mechanisms to report their works that are beneficial for the ASEAN. As for SEAFDEC, the mechanisms already exist, *i.e.* through the FCG/ASSP and the ASWGFi where SEAFDEC could report their works, and such mechanisms should therefore be mobilized. In cases where there are important issues that SEAFDEC would like to raise to SOM-AMAF, SEAFDEC should communicate with the ASEAN Secretariat requesting permission to attend the SOM-AMAF meeting and indicate the issues to be presented and discussed. The ASEAN Secretariat would then circulate through the FCG/ASSP and ASWGFi for subsequent submission to SOM-AMAF for approval.

8. While noting that although there is already an existing mechanism for SEAFDEC to report its work, the representative from Viet Nam expressed the view that as the AMSs is in the process of developing the ASEAN General Fisheries Policy (AGFP), the participation of SEAFDEC at the meetings of high-level authorities of the ASEAN would therefore be useful. In this connection, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat clarified that an *ad hoc* Task Force to Conduct the Feasibility Study on the Development of the AGFP including its Terms of Reference (TOR) has already been agreed by the Special SOM-39AMAF, and the ASEAN Secretariat has already sent out the letters requesting the AMSs to nominate their respective Task Force members. Although SEAFDEC is not included in the Task Force, SEAFDEC and other relevant organizations could still be invited by the Ad Hoc Task Force to attend the discussions, if necessary. He added that the TOR of the Task Force to conduct the feasibility study indicated that the study should be completed in two years. It is therefore expected that after the nomination of the Task Force members from the AMSs, the first meeting of the Task Force could be organized in 2019. In the mean time, the ASEAN Secretariat is also developing a proposal for funding support from the ASEAN dialogue partners to support the Task Force.

3.2 Follow-up Actions to the Directives Given at Meetings of the ASEAN Bodies Related to Fisheries in 2018

9. The 21FCG/ASSP noted the results of the discussions of the ASEAN Bodies Related to Fisheries, particularly at the 26th Meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (26ASWGFi) on 9-12

May 2018 in Thailand, the Special Senior Official Meeting of the 39th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (SSOM 39AMAF) on 27-28 August 2018 in Thailand, the Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting of the Fortieth Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (PREP-SOM 40AMAF) on 8-9 October 2018 in Viet Nam, and the 40th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (40AMAF) on 11 October 2018 in Hanoi, Viet Nam, as shown in **Annex 7** and presented by the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat.

10. Specifically, the Policy Brief “Applying Human Rights-Based and Gender Equality Approaches to Small-Scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia” was submitted for endorsement by the Special SOM-39AMAF in August 2018. However, the 21FCG/ASSP was informed that the Special SOM-39AMAF suggested to have the title of this document changed considering the sensitivity of the issue on human rights. During the subsequent Prep SOM-40AMAF, the Meeting therefore tasked the ASWGFi to review the Policy Brief taking into consideration the suggestion to change its title and also to submit a proposed revised title to the SOM-AMAF for consideration.

11. The 21FCG/ASSP was also informed that the abovementioned Policy Brief only provides clarification on the basic elements of the human rights-based and gender approaches as stipulated in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. However, considering the decision of the SOM-AMAF, the representative from Indonesia suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat should consider discussing this issue again with the SOM Leader of Cambodia in order that the ASWGFi could come up with the suggested appropriate title. Moreover, the representative from the Philippines also suggested that initial discussion should be made between Thailand and Cambodia to address this issue prior to the next ASWGFi Meeting. In this connection, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat reiterated that this matter would be discussed at the ASWGFi Meeting in 2019, in which the ASWGFi was tasked to review the Policy Brief and submit the proposed revised title to SOM-AMAF. The representative from Cambodia therefore agreed with the suggestion of the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat that this matter should be brought back for consultation with concerned officers prior to the next ASWGFi Meeting.

IV. ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) and Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) Collaborative Programs for the Year 2018-2019

4.1 Summary Report on the Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP) Collaborative Programs for the Year 2018-2019

12. The Collaborative Programs under the Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (FCG/ASSP) mechanism for 2018-2019 were reviewed by the 41PCM held in Langkawi, Malaysia from 5 to 7 November 2018. The results of the program scrutiny and the recommendations of the 41PCM (**Annex 8**) were summarized and submitted to the 21FCG/ASSP for subsequent submission to the higher authorities of the ASEAN and SEAFDEC for consideration and endorsement.

13. At the outset, the 21FCG/ASSP was informed that 23 projects have been categorized under the SEAFDEC Strategies adopted by the SEAFDEC Council in 2017, and two projects “Fisheries and Habitat Management, Climate Change and Social Well-being in Southeast Asia” and the “Ocean and Fisheries Partnership” classified as ‘Special Projects.’ The 21FCG/ASSP also noted that two projects were completed in 2018, twenty projects that were implemented in 2018 will be continued in 2019, and one new project will be implemented starting in 2019. Moreover, two Pipeline Projects “Development of Stock Assessment Method and Strengthening of Resources Management Measures on Tropical Anguillid Eels in ASEAN Region” and “Second Phase of Enhancing Coastal Community Resilience for Sustainable Livelihood and Coastal Resource Management” were also scrutinized by the 41PCM.

14. With regards to the project “Comparative Studies for Management of Purse Seine Fisheries in the Southeast Asian Region,” the 21FCG/ASSP agreed with the suggestion made by the representative from Indonesia that the proposed activities for 2019 should focus on enhancing the capacities of the Member

Countries, *i.e.* providing technical assistance to the Member Countries in establishing their respective national reference points towards and harvest control rules of transboundary stocks, and in the analysis of the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and Total Allowable Effort (TAE) of target species.

15. As for the Pipeline Project “Development of Stock Assessment Method and Strengthening of Resources Management Measures on Tropical Anguillid Eels in ASEAN Region,” which is proposed for its Phase II, the 21FCG/ASSP was informed that this Phase of the Project is planned for implementation starting 2019 with possible funding support from Japan-ASEAN Integrated Fund (JAIF). In this regard, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat viewed that as SEAFDEC Secretariat is still in the process of securing the necessary funding from JAIF for the project, the 21FCG/ASSP could only take note of this pipeline project, and the endorsement could be made when the detailed proposal is available for submission to the appraisal and approval process of ASEAN. He reiterated that in addition to the proposal for Phase II of the Project, SEAFDEC should also submit the Project Completion Report as well as the Project Financial Report which are required for the consideration of Phase II of the Project.

V. PROGRESS OF SEAFDEC-RELATED ACTIVITIES/PROPOSALS UNDER THE ASEAN FISHERIES RELATED BODIES

5.1 ASEAN Ad hoc Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security (AHSCCC-FS)

16. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the results of the Sixth Meeting of the Ad hoc Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security (AHSCCC-FS) on 18-19 January 2018 in Lombok, Indonesia, and the Seventh AHSCCC-FS on 28-30 June 2018 in Da Nang, Viet Nam as presented by the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat, which appear in **Annex 9**.

5.2 ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum (AFCF)

17. The 21FCG/ASSP noted the presentation of the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat on the results of the Tenth Meeting of the ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum (AFCF) on 7-8 May 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand, which appears as **Annex 10**.

5.3 ASEAN Shrimp Alliance (ASA)

18. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the progress of activities of the ASEAN Shrimp Alliance (ASA) including the results of the Eight Meeting of the ASEAN Shrimp Alliance on 21-22 March 2018 in Thailand which was presented by the representative from Thailand as the interim Secretariat of the ASA, and shown as **Annex 11**.

19. During the discussion, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat sought clarification on the next meeting of the ASA which was planned to be organized back-to-back with the ASWGFi in 2019 in Viet Nam. He expressed the concern that since the Meeting of ASWGFi usually takes three (3) days while that of AFCF takes two (2) days, and with the ASA Meeting which was proposed to be held back-to-back with the ASWGFi and AFCF Meetings, this could result in longer meeting days. In this connection, the representative from Viet Nam informed the Meeting that this issue would be discussed with Thailand, especially on the timing and arrangement of the next ASA Meeting, considering that the meetings of ASA and AFCF could be arranged for one day each only or could be organized parallel with each other.

VI. POLICY CONSIDERATION ON INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES-RELATED ISSUES

6.1 Combating IUU Fishing (Progress on implementation/development)

6.1.1 Progress on the Implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines for Preventing the Entry of Fish and Fishery Products from IUU Fishing Activities into the Supply Chain

20. The Meeting noted the progress made by MFRDMD on the promotion of the ASEAN Guidelines for Preventing the Entry of Fish and Fishery Products from IUU Fishing Activities into the Supply Chain (Guidelines) as shown in **Annex 12**, particularly the results of the consultations carried out by MFRDMD with the AMSs for the self-evaluation of the extent of implementation of the Guidelines by the respective countries.

21. During the discussion, a query was made regarding the scoring of the extent of implementation of the Guidelines by each AMS. In response, the representative from MFRDMD explained that through self-evaluation each AMS determined their own score according to the five actions indicated in the Guidelines, namely: 1) Managing of the fishing activities within an ASEAN Member States (AMSs); 2) Regulating transshipment and landing of fish/catch across borders; 3) Preventing poaching in the EEZ of ASEAN Member States; 4) Controlling illegal fishing and trading practices of Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF), Reef-based Ornamentals and Endangered Aquatic Species; and 5) Strengthening the management of fishing in the high seas and Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) areas. He added that the detailed report of the self-evaluation would be made available by the end of 2018.

22. The representative from the ASEAN Secretariat inquired whether there is an existing mechanism that could be used to verify the results of the self-evaluation by each AMS to ensure the transparency of the process, *e.g.* peer review by other AMSs or by external bodies. He also expressed the view that the AMSs should continue their efforts in implementing the Guidelines.

23. The representative from Indonesia shared the experience of Indonesia during the self-evaluation exercise that was undertaken by MFRDMD which involved meeting with relevant technical persons from concerned agencies in Indonesia to discuss and clarify each item in the questionnaire. During such meeting, discussion was also made on how the country could move forward to further the implementation of each actions of the Guidelines. Nevertheless, she also agreed with the view raised by the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat that engaging independent assessors could also properly guide the AMSs on the aspects of the Guidelines that should be considered and implemented.

6.1.2 Progress on the Regional Fishing Vessels Record for Vessels 24 m in Length and Over

24. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the progress of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record for Vessels 24 m in Length and Over (RFVR) as shown in **Annex 13**, and presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat, and was informed that SEAFDEC has developed a draft Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System in response to the recommendation of the 24th Meeting of the ASWGFi in 2016, which is in the final process of submission to the SEAFDEC Council for consideration *ad referendum*.

25. During the discussion, the 21FCG/ASSP also noted the absence of data from Viet Nam since 2016. In this regard, the representative from Viet Nam explained that the classification of the country's size of fishing vessels is now being changed from horsepower to length class, and as a result its national database would be modified accordingly. Furthermore, Viet Nam has recently modified the definition of its fishing vessels to also include carrier vessels, and is still in the process of completing the database for these vessels. Nonetheless, she assured the 21FCG/ASSP that Viet Nam should be able to provide the data for the RFVR by the end of 2018.

26. With regard to enhancing the utilization of the RFVR Database, the representative from Viet Nam also expressed the view that the objective of the Database should be clarified, because if it could be confirmed that fishing vessels not included in the RFVR Database are considered as illegal fishing vessels, then the RFVR would be very useful to support the implementation Port State measures (PSM). In such a case, the Database should also be made accessible to relevant users such as the authorities at ports.

6.1.3 Progress on the ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme

27. The Meeting noted the progress on the development of the electronic system of the ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS) being pilot tested in Brunei Darussalam and also the expansion of pilot site to Viet Nam and Myanmar (**Annex 14**) as presented by the representative from TD.

28. While expressing the confusion of having two traceability systems, *i.e.* the eACDS developed by SEAFDEC and the Catch Documentation and Traceability (CDT) developed by the USAID Oceans, the representative from Thailand inquired whether it is possible for these systems to be combined and come up with only one harmonized system that could be applied by the countries. In response, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC explained that the two systems have the same fundamental principles based on the ACDS concept. However, the eACDS was developed to ensure its applicability for multi-species catch such as those from trawlers or purse seiners, while the CDT focuses mainly on tunas.

29. The representative from TD also informed the Meeting on the differences between the CDT and eACDS, *i.e.* the CDT has less key data elements than the eACDS; the CDT focuses on large-scale tuna fisheries while eACDS could also be applied for small-scale fisheries; and the data for CDT could be derived directly from fishing vessels including the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data, while eACDS can also use the data from logbooks to be manually inputted into the system.

30. The representative from Viet Nam also shared the view that having two systems such as the eACDS and CDT is complicated, and there should be a unified system that could be used by the countries. Meanwhile, the representative from Indonesia shared the experience on the implementation of the CDT in Bitung, Indonesia as one of the learning sites of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Oceans, and explained that the CDT will adopt the existing catch documentation system which would be linked from catch to market. The representative from the Philippines also shared the experience on the implementation of the CDT in another learning site in General Santos City, Philippines. He added that the Philippines is also developing a traceability system for other commodities, and will explore whether the eACDS could be applicable.

31. The representative from Indonesia reiterated that during the USAID Oceans Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting on 16-18 July 2018, the TWG recommended that the USAID Oceans should make presentations to the AMSs on the mechanism of the CDT from catch to market.

32. Furthermore, the 21FCG/ASSP was informed that the pilot site of eACDS in Brunei Darussalam is currently undergoing verification process, and any system error is being fixed by SEAFDEC in order that the eACDS could be introduced to the other SEAFDEC Member Countries.

6.1.4 Progress on the Regional Cooperation for Implementation of the Port State Measures

33. The 21FCG/ASSP took note on the progress of the Regional Cooperation for the Implementation of the Port State Measures (**Annex 15**) as presented by the representative from TD.

34. In the discussion, the representative from Viet Nam concurred that the works of SEAFDEC on Port State Measures do not duplicate with those of FAO. She added that early in 2018, FAO started supporting the efforts of the countries to undertake gap analysis of the implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), considering that some AMSs have already ratified the PSMA while there are still some countries that are compiling the necessary documentations for ratification. She then suggested that a network comprising focal points from the AMSs should be established to fast track the communication between and among countries to support the PSM implementation. She also supported the plan of SEAFDEC to continue organizing the training for inspectors to support the implementation of the PSMA in the future.

35. While expressing support to the establishment of PSM network among the AMSs, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General suggested that once established the contact details of the focal points could be made available in the SEAFDEC website. He also agreed on the proposal for SEAFDEC to conduct in the future, training for inspectors in collaboration with partners including FAO.

6.1.5 Progress on the Implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (RPOA-Capacity)

36. The 21FCG/ASSP was informed on the progress of implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (RPOA-Capacity) as shown in **Annex 16**, and presented by the

representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat. The 21FCG/ASSP also noted that the SEAFDEC Secretariat has sent out questionnaires to the AMSs to follow-up on the progress made by the countries in the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity.

37. In the discussion, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat inquired whether the results from the questionnaire survey could be submitted to the ASEAN mechanism. In response, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat indicated that only three countries have so far provided their response to the questionnaires. The 21FCG/ASSP therefore asked the other countries to send their accomplished questionnaires to the SEAFDEC Secretariat by December 2018 in order that the results could be analyzed and reported to the forthcoming ASWGFi Meeting.

38. In this regard, the Chief of MFRDMD explained that with the collaboration of the Department of Fisheries Malaysia, MFRDMD also plans to conduct an assessment of the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity once the project proposal receives the necessary funding for implementation. Therefore, he cited that MFRDMD could not yet confirm at this stage that the results of the questionnaire survey could be generated in time for reporting to the next ASWGFi Meeting.

39. With regards to the proposed establishment of a permanent technical/policy coordination unit for the management of fishing capacity (RPOA-Capacity Secretariat), the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat inquired whether there could be a particular AMS that volunteers to serve as the RPOA-Capacity Secretariat. In this connection, the Meeting viewed that more detailed information would be necessary and the terms of reference for the RPOA-Capacity Secretariat should be developed prior to undertaking further discussions with the AMSs on this matter.

6.2 Promotion on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in ASEAN Region

6.2.1 Regional Plan of Action for Sustainable Utilization of Neritic Tunas in the ASEAN Region

40. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the progress in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for Sustainable Utilization of Neritic Tunas in ASEAN Region (RPOA-Neritic Tunas) shown as **Annex 17** and presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

41. In responding to the query of the representative from Thailand about the ASEAN mechanism in relation to tunas, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat informed the Meeting that there is an ASEAN Tuna Working Group (ATWG) under the ASEAN Joint Committee on Agriculture and Forest Product Promotion Scheme (Joint Committee). Such ATWG is a collaborative mechanism between governmental and private sectors to strengthen trade promotion on tuna although its meetings are usually attended by the AMSs that have tuna fishing industry such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Considering that the ATWG is not under the ASWGFi framework, but when necessary, the recommendations on tuna fisheries management arising from the FCG/ASSP through the ASWGFi could be shared to the Joint Committee.

42. The representative from Thailand emphasized that a series of data has been collected under the RPOA-Neritic Tunas that could be used in coming up with management recommendations, and which could also be used to support management for the sustainability of the neritic tunas in the region. She also emphasized that as the South China Sea area is not covered by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), management of neritic tunas in this area should be undertaken by relevant countries in the region. In response to her query on the availability of tuna fisheries management mechanism in the ASEAN, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat clarified that as the ASEAN and SEAFDEC have no management function and mechanism similar to the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), hence issues on fisheries management of shared and migratory fish stocks should be under the purview of concerned RFMOs.

43. While responding to the query of the representative from the Philippines on how the policy recommendations on neritic tunas are recognized and receive policy support from the ASEAN mechanism, the

representative from the ASEAN Secretariat informed the Meeting that the ASWGFi only took note of the results of the stock assessment. Nevertheless, if the AMSs could reach a consensus to consider the policy measures, then the ASWGFi can endorse the recommendations for consideration by SOM-AMAF.

44. While confirming that the ASEAN and SEAFDEC do not have management mandate for fishery resources, the representative from Indonesia expressed the concern that since WCPFC does not cover the management of neritic tunas, SEAFDEC could therefore continue to provide support to AMSs to improve their capacity to manage their tuna resources, and convey the results of their works to the relevant RFMOs.

45. In response to the concern raised by the representative from Thailand for SEAFDEC to explore the possibility on how the management recommendations on neritic tunas could be put into practice in the Southeast Asian region, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General indicated that as for the Gulf of Thailand which is not within the jurisdiction of the WCPFC, issues on the management of neritic tunas should be discussed at the sub-regional forum for the Gulf of Thailand in order to formulate the sub-regional joint management plan of the species. For the South China Sea area which also involves non-SEAFDEC Member Countries such as China, management of neritic tunas in such area may be beyond the mandate of SEAFDEC. As for the Andaman Sea, SEAFDEC can share the results of its works on neritic tunas with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) which has the management mandate in this sub-region.

6.2.2 *Progress on the Conservation and Management of Catadromous Eel Resources and Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture in the Southeast Asia*

46. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of the progress made by the SEAFDEC Secretariat in collaboration with IFRDMD and AQD on the Conservation and Management of Catadromous Eel Resources and Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture in the Southeast Asia (**Annex 18**). Specifically, the 21FCG/ASSP also noted the Policy Guidelines for Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eels in Southeast Asian Region which was developed during the Second Regional Meeting on Enhancing Sustainable Utilization and Management Scheme of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources in Southeast Asia organized on 18-19 October 2018 in Thailand.

47. The Chief of AQD inquired about the timeline for the implementation of activities on the conservation and management of eels considering that the AQD scientists involved in the project would be retiring from the service soon. In response, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat reiterated that the first phase of the project will be completed by mid 2019, and second phase would continue for another two years.

48. The representative from Myanmar expressed his support to the implementation of the project, especially the study on genetic diversity and structure, and informed the Meeting that Myanmar is now improving its eel fisheries management considering the importance of this species to Myanmar.

49. With regards to the Policy Guidelines for Conservation and Management of Anguillid Eels, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General reiterated that this is important considering that catadromous eel species had been discussed by the Conference of Parties (CoP) to CITES during the past few years. He encouraged the 21FCG/ASSP to endorse the Policy Guidelines through the ASEAN mechanism in order that this could be raised at the CITES CoP 18 to be organized in Sri Lanka on 23 May-3 June 2019 and the AMSs would be able to justify to CITES that measures for the management of tropical anguillid eels are in place.

50. The 21FCG/ASSP noted that the SEAFDEC Secretariat will seek approval of the Policy Guidelines from the SEAFDEC Council *ad referendum*, and subsequently circulate to the 21FCG/ASSP countries' head delegates requesting comments within two weeks for *ad referendum* endorsement to ASWGFi. The Policy Guidelines will also be shared and consulted with the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement (AWG-CITES & WE) prior to submission to SOM-AMAF for endorsement.

51. The representative from the ASEAN Secretariat clarified that those policy documents submitted to the FCG/ASSP were already endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council. He also suggested that FCG/ASSP focal points should be established in order that matters that require urgent consideration could be considered and endorsed

by the FCG/ASSP *ad referendum*. In this connection, the 21FCG/ASSP requested the ASEAN Secretariat to send letters to the AMSs requesting for nominations of their respective FCG/ASSP focal points while SEAFDEC should also send a letter to Japan, requesting for nomination of its FCG/ASSP focal point.

6.2.3 Progress of the Establishment of an Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response System for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia

52. The 21FCG/ASSP noted the Establishment of the Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems (AEPRS) for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia (**Annex 19**) which was an offshoot of the ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia on 20-22 August 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.

53. During the discussion, the representative from the ASEAN Secretariat commended AQD for facilitating the development of the AEPRS as this has been considered a priority issue by the SOM-AMAF. He also requested that once the regional technical guidelines/mechanism for early warning system for aquatic animal diseases is already available and approved by the SEAFDEC Council, then SEAFDEC should submit this to the FCG/ASSP for endorsement to ASWGF.

6.2.4 Updates on the Establishment of the Regional Database of Alternative Feed Ingredients in Aquaculture

54. The 21FCG/ASSP noted the progress of the Regional Database of Alternative Feed Ingredients in Aquaculture (**Annex 20**) which was officially launched on 13 July 2018 with the web address <http://afid.seafdec.org.ph/> as presented by the Chief of AQD.

6.3 Ensuring the Food Safety and Quality of Fish and Fishery Products in ASEAN Seafood

6.3.1 Progress on the Regional Guidelines on Cold Chain Management for Seafood

55. The Meeting took note of the Regional Guidelines on Cold Chain Management for Fish and Fishery Products in the ASEAN Region (**Annex 21**) which was developed by MFRD and finalized during the End-of-Project Meeting on Cold Chain Management for Seafood in April 2018 in Singapore.

56. During the discussion, and considering that this Regional Guidelines has not yet been submitted to and endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council prior to submission to this Meeting, the 21FCG/ASSP suggested for the Guidelines to be submitted to the SEAFDEC Council at its forthcoming meeting in 2019. Upon the approval of the SEAFDEC Council, the Guidelines would be circulated for endorsement by the FCG/ASSP focal points, and subsequently submitted to the ASEAN mechanism.

57. The 21FCG/ASSP requested the SEAFDEC Secretariat and ASEAN Secretariat to carefully look into the agenda of the future FCG/ASSP meetings to ensure that the documents submitted for consideration by the FCG/ASSP are those that have already been endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council and within the purview of the FCG/ASSP.

6.4 CITES Issues

58. The 21FCG/ASSP noted the progress of the international and regional initiatives on CITES related issues including the results of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Animal Committee (AC30), particularly on the commercially exploited aquatic species that are of concern to the Southeast Asian region (**Annex 22**). The 21FCG/ASSP also noted that the SEAFDEC Secretariat will organize the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Technical Consultation on the Proposal to CITES CoP18 prior to the CITES CoP18 to facilitate the development of the ASEAN common/coordinated position on the proposals to CITES CoP18. Subsequently, the ASEAN-SEAFDEC common position once endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council will be submitted to the ASEAN mechanism.

7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Way Forward for Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Regional Towards 2020

59. The 21FCG/ASSP took note of proposal on the Way Forward for Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020 (RES&RPOA 2020) shown as **Annex 23** and presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

60. The 21FCG/ASSP also recalled that the proposal was developed in response to the directive of the SEAFDEC Council during its Fiftieth Meeting in March 2018 considering that the RES&POA 2020 would be approaching its timeline of 2020 very soon. While noting that the proposed workplan includes a review of the progress in the implementation of the RES&POA 2020, and review of the contents of the RES&POA 2020 whether it should be revised and how should it be revised, the representative from Singapore also suggested that the number “2020” indicated in the workplan should be dropped from the revised version of the RES&POA to avoid confusion.

8. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT OF THE MEETING

61. The 21FCG/ASSP considered and adopted its recommendations and the Report of its Twenty-first Meeting as presented by the SEAFDEC Secretariat on 9 November 2018.

62. The results of the Meeting will be submitted to the higher authorities of the ASEAN and SEAFDEC for consideration and appropriate action.

9. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

63. The Co-Chair for the ASEAN of the 21FCG/ASSP, *Mr. Bunchong Chumnongsittathum* expressed his appreciation to the representatives of the 21FCG/ASSP for their active participation and for providing valuable inputs to the Meeting. He also thanked the Department of Fisheries Malaysia, SEAFDEC/MFRDMD, and SEAFDEC Secretariat for the excellent arrangements of the Meeting. His Closing Remarks appears as **Annex 24**.

64. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn* thanked the representatives from the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries for their cooperation and active participation during the Meeting and for providing constructive comments and suggestions as well as policy recommendations. He also expressed his appreciation to the SEAFDEC Departments for their cooperation and support, and the Secretariat of the Meeting for the excellent arrangements, and then he declared the Meeting closed. His Closing Remarks appears as **Annex 25**.