



REPORT OF THE FIFTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER

18-22 March 2019, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifty-first Meeting of the Council (51CM) of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) was convened in Surabaya City, East Java, Indonesia from 18 to 22 March 2019 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia.
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 Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF), the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO/RAP), and the United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA). The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

3. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council was held on 18 March 2019, and was officiated by the Vice Governor of East Java, Indonesia, the *Honorable Dr. Emil Elestianto Dardak* on behalf of the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) of Indonesia, *Ms. Susi Pudjiastuti*.
4. At the outset, the Director General for Marine and Fisheries Research and Human Resources Development of MMAF and Alternate Council Director for Indonesia, *Prof. Sjarief Widjaja* on behalf of the Council Director for Indonesia and Secretary General of MMAF, *Mr. Nilanto Perbowo* welcomed the Council Directors and their delegations as well as other guests to Surabaya, Indonesia and also to the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He commended SEAFDEC for assisting the ASEAN Member States in the sustainable management of fishery resources especially with regards to combating IUU fishing and promoting the conservation and management of tropical anguillid eel resources as Indonesia is one of the biggest eel producers in the world. In this connection, he requested the SEAFDEC Council Directors to endorse the Policy Guidelines for Regional Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources in Southeast Asia during this 51CM. He also highlighted on the need for capacity building of the stakeholders to address the wide gaps in the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture among the ASEAN Member States. Finally, he wished the participants a pleasant stay in Surabaya and invited them to explore the culture and crafts of Surabaya. His Welcome Statement appears as **Annex 2**.
5. The Director General of the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia *H.E. Eng Cheasan*, in his capacity as the Chairperson of SEAFDEC Council for 2018-2019, also welcomed the participants to the Fifty-first SEAFDEC Council Meeting. He expressed the gratitude of the SEAFDEC Council to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for the warm hospitality and arrangements for the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He mentioned that the City of Surabaya is among the few places with emblems that depict aquatic species, and the City has two aquatic species in its emblem, which are sharks and crocodile. Such species are considered species of international concern, which would be one of the important issues to be discussed at this 51CM, especially in preparation for the CITES-CoP18 to be held in Sri Lanka in May 2019. He also recalled that during the Special Meeting

of the SEAFDEC Council in November 2017, the Council adopted the SEAFDEC Strategies Towards 2030, and commended SEAFDEC for aligning its present and future programs and projects in accordance with the said Strategies. He also congratulated SEAFDEC for the significant progress it has made, especially in strengthening its cooperation and partnership with other international, regional, and national organizations and agencies, as well as non-member governments that share common interest towards the sustainable development of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region. His Remarks appears as **Annex 3**.

6. The Vice Governor of East of Java Province, Indonesia, *Dr. Emil Elestianto Dardak*, on behalf of *Ms. Susi Pudjiastuti*, welcomed the participants and guests of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and to the City of Surabaya. He gave a brief historical background of East Java as well as its local fishing practices. He mentioned that Indonesia acknowledges the important role of SEAFDEC particularly in assisting the Member Countries in promoting sustainable fisheries and conservation of marine resources, which are important for Indonesia in achieving the SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Among others, he mentioned the several efforts that Indonesia is doing to achieve the SDG 14, such as putting as national priority activities to combat IUU fishing, establishing 20 million ha of marine protected areas, and reducing about 70 % of marine plastic debris by 2025. Because of these efforts, the fish stock in the waters of Indonesia has improved and the country is now leading the fisheries trade balance among the ASEAN Member States. He emphasized that regional cooperation through SEAFDEC mechanism is important and expressed the hope that this Meeting would create concrete actions to protect the fishery resources and make the ocean that the countries share much healthier. Lastly, he invited the participants to enjoy their short stay in Surabaya and experience the local culture through its local cuisine and products, and then declared the Meeting open. His Opening Remarks appears as **Annex 4a** and **Annex 4b**.

I. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Opening of the Meeting

7. The Director General of the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia and Chairperson of SEAFDEC Council for 2018-2019, *H.E. Eng Cheasan* welcomed the participants to the Meeting. He reiterated his gratitude to the SEAFDEC Council Directors as well as to the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments for the support extended to him during his term as Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council. While expressing the hope that the same support could also be granted to the incoming Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council, he also encouraged the Council Directors to continue their support to SEAFDEC in the years ahead for the sustainability of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region. His Opening Remarks appears as **Annex 5**.

1.2 Election of the Chairperson for the Year 2019-2020

8. The Director General for Marine and Fisheries Research and Human Resources Development of MMAF, *Prof. Sjarief Widjaja* and the current Alternate Council Director for Indonesia on behalf of the Council Director for Indonesia, was unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council for 2019-2020, in accordance with Article 5, Paragraph 4 of the Agreement Establishing SEAFDEC. While expressing his gratitude to all the Council Directors for the trust given him to serve as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council, he also sought the continued support of the Council Directors as well as those from the regional organizations during his term of duty as the Chairperson.

1.3 Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangement for the Meeting

9. In response to the question raised by the Council Director for Japan about the addition of the fishery subsidies issue the later version of the Agenda of the 51CM, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat explained that it has become necessary to include the Way Forward for Fishery Subsidies and to revise the Agenda of the 51CM, considering that the Regional Technical

Consultation on International Fisheries-related Issues in June 2018 requested SEAFDEC “to facilitate the identification of focal points as well as development of ASEAN common position on fishery subsidies for adoption by the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) to be reflected at the WTO forum upon consideration by the SEAFDEC Council.”

10. The Council took note of the clarification made by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat and adopted the Agenda, which appears as **Annex 6**.

II. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

11. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn* congratulated the Council Director for Indonesia, represented at this 51CM by *Prof. Sjarief Widjaya* on behalf of *Mr. Nilanto Perbowo*, for having been elected as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council for the Year 2019-2020. He expressed the appreciation to *H.E. Eng Cheasan*, the Council Director for Cambodia for serving as the Chairperson of the Council during 2018-2019, and for his efforts in guiding SEAFDEC towards the implementation of programs that cater to the priorities and requirements of the Member Countries.

12. As his term of office with SEAFDEC is going to be completed in September 2019, *Dr. Kom Silapajarn* also thanked the SEAFDEC Council Directors for their support during his term as the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC. He then presented to the Council the Draft SEAFDEC Annual Report for 2018, focusing on the highlights of the activities and major achievements in 2018, in accordance with the SEAFDEC Strategies Towards 2030 adopted by the SEAFDEC Council during its Special Meeting in 2017.

13. During the discussion, the Council Director for Indonesia expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for implementing significant programs and activities in 2018. He specifically urged SEAFDEC to continue providing capacity building activities to enhance the resilience of coastal communities in pursuing sustainable livelihoods and management of the resources. In this regard, the Council was informed that SEAFDEC is developing the second phase of the project “Enhancing Coastal Community Resilience for Livelihood and Coastal Resources Management” for possible support by potential donors.

14. While expressing the appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the warm hospitality extended to the participants in the 51CM, the Council Director for Thailand congratulated SEAFDEC for its achievements and outputs from the programs and projects implemented in 2018 that resulted in the improvement of every aspect in the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture of the region. He also commended the Training Department for implementing the Human Resources Development for Sustainable Fisheries through the conduct of the Training Course on Sustainable Fisheries Management, as well as for conducting on-site training courses on the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), that enhanced the understanding of the stakeholders not only on the concept of sustainable fisheries management, but also on the significance of cooperation among relevant agencies and stakeholders. He also asked SEAFDEC for its continued support especially in the conduct of training courses on EAFM for concerned officers of Thailand in the future. In this connection, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC mentioned that the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will continue to assist SEAFDEC in updating the curriculum and materials of the EAFM training course in order to enhance its promotion in the ASEAN Member States (AMSs).

15. The Council Director for Myanmar expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for providing detailed information on the projects and activities it had implemented in 2018, and looked forward to having continued success in the implementation of projects in the future in close cooperation with the Member Countries.

16. While expressing gratitude to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the 51CM, the Council Director for the Philippines commended SEAFDEC for the accomplishments of its programs

and projects implemented in 2018. He cited that the Philippines has significantly benefitted from the several projects of SEAFDEC, and asked SEAFDEC to document clearly the outcomes of these projects for the benefit of the fisheries sector of the Member Countries. In this regard, the Secretary-General reiterated that several projects implemented by SEAFDEC would be completed in 2019, and the lessons learnt from the implementation of these projects would be summarized and properly documented, and would be subsequently shared with the Member Countries.

17. The Council Director for Lao PDR expressed the appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the warm hospitality extended to the participants of the 51CM. He also congratulated SEAFDEC for its achievements and outputs in 2018, and cited that the activities supported by SEAFDEC in 2018 had contributed to the development of the country's National Strategies on Sustainable Fisheries Development that includes an objective towards attaining improved livelihood of fishers. He then expressed the commitment of Lao PDR to continue working closely with SEAFDEC in the future.

18. While also expressing gratitude to the Government of Indonesia for the warm hospitality extended to the participants in the 51CM, the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam congratulated SEAFDEC for the achievements from its projects in 2018 aimed towards sustainable fisheries and enhanced community benefits. She added that specifically on aquaculture, SEAFDEC should consider the possibility of expanding future collaboration and cooperation not only through the national agencies but also with the research institutes.

19. The Council Director for Malaysia expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for its achievements and outputs in 2018, and the willingness of Malaysia to collaborate closely with SEAFDEC, especially in the implementation of programs and projects in the future.

20. While thanking the Government of Indonesia for hosting the 51CM, the Council Director for Japan also congratulated SEAFDEC for the programs and activities implemented in 2018, and suggested that an amendment should be made to the SEAFDEC Annual Report, especially on the "Conservation and Management of Catadromous Eels" to reflect the fact that *Anguilla japonica* has not been listed in the CITES Appendices.

21. While expressing the appreciation to SEAFDEC for its achievements from the programs and activities implemented in 2018, the Council Director for Viet Nam suggested that SEAFDEC should consider highlighting some successes from its projects in its future annual reports. He also suggested that SEAFDEC could enhance the dissemination of the results and lessons learnt from its projects in the future through the social media.

22. After providing their views and comments on the activities of SEAFDEC, the Council approved the Draft SEAFDEC Annual Report 2018 for publication and dissemination to the Member Countries, relevant organizations and the public, taking into consideration the comments and suggestions made at this 51CM. Moreover, SEAFDEC should henceforth consider incorporating the comments made at this 51CM 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 FORTY-FIRST MEETING

23. The Council took note of the results of the Forty-first Meeting of the Program Committee (41PCM) of SEAFDEC (**Annex 7**) convened on 5-7 November 2018 in Langkawi, Malaysia as presented by the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC in his capacity as the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Program Committee. After the discussion, the Council approved the progress of the programs implemented by SEAFDEC in 2018 and endorsed the proposed programs for 2019, as well as the recommendations of the SEAFDEC Program Committee.

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

24. After taking into consideration the recommendations made during the Twenty-first Meeting of the Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (21FCG/ASSP) on 8-9 November 2018 in Langkawi, Malaysia (**Annex 8**) as presented by the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Fisheries, Thailand and SEAFDEC Alternate Council Director for Thailand, *Mr. Bunchong Chumnongsittathum* on behalf of the ASEAN Co-chair for the 21FCG/ASSP Meeting, the Council endorsed the Report of the Twenty-first Meeting of the FCG/ASSP.

25. In relation to the Report of the 21FCG/ASSP, the Council Director for Viet Nam clarified that whether or not fishing vessels not included in the RFVR Database could be considered as illegal fishing vessels is subject to the protocol for submission of data from countries to the RFVR Database. In this regard, the protocol for confirming whether or not fishing vessels not included in the RFVR Database are illegal fishing vessels, should therefore be considered in the future development of the RFVR. In this connection, the Council Director for Japan recalled that during the discussion on this issue at the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, Japan made a suggestion on how to deal with fishing vessels not registered in the RFVR Database, which is for SEAFDEC to revise the Protocol. Meanwhile, the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam proposed that in the Protocol, the statement “whether or not fishing vessels not included in the RFVR Database could be considered as illegal fishing vessels” should be clarified to be able to confirm whether the fishing vessels not included in the RFVR Database are illegal or not. The 51CM confirmed that it would come back to this issue under the relevant agenda.

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

26. The Council was informed on the progress of 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 from SEAFDEC Marine Fishery Resources Development and Management Department (MFRDMD). Specifically, the Council took note of the Interim Report on the Status of Implementation of the Regional Guidelines by the respective AMSs.

27. The Council Director for Indonesia indicated that although the self-evaluation on the implementation of the Guidelines by the respective AMSs is a good starting point, MFRDMD should identify the need of a particular AMS in the implementation of the Guidelines and provide training and other capacity building as necessary. Furthermore, as the Guidelines which has already been endorsed by AMAF provides a comprehensive tool to exclude IUU products from the supply chain, this should be promoted at the international fora such as those of FAO to enhance its recognition by a wider audience. He shared the information on the progress made by Indonesia in implementing a traceability system for fish and fishery products, and that Indonesia has already received the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

28. An observation was made on the Interim Report indicating that almost all AMSs have attained more than 90% achievement rating for implementing the Guidelines. In this regard, the Council suggested that the comments previously made during the 21FCG/ASSP on the transparency of the self-evaluation process and whether the evaluation reflects the achievement of the objectives of the Guidelines, should be considered.

29. The Council Director for Thailand expressed the view that the questionnaire used for the self-evaluation also includes some questions that are not relevant to the country's progress and achievements in combating IUU fishing, particularly the question regarding request for advice or assistance from SEAFDEC (*i.e.* 1.3.3c, 2.1b). He therefore requested that MFRDMD should consider separating the scores from these questions in order that the results from the questionnaire survey would reflect the real achievement of the implementation of the Guidelines.

30. While congratulating SEAFDEC for conducting the survey as it provided the information on the efforts made by the AMSs to ensure that their respective fish and fishery products are not derived from IUU fishing activities, the Council Director for Viet Nam made an observation that only some AMSs could fulfill the legal frameworks for the implementation of the Guidelines. In this connection, further steps should be made by MFRDMD to promote the Guidelines in order that the entry of IUU products into the supply chain could be prevented through, for example, the development of a "blacklist" of fishing vessels that includes either national vessels or those from other AMSs. Moreover, the AMSs should also designate their respective focal points to update the blacklist of fishing vessels to improve the implementation of the Guidelines in the future.

31. In addressing the concerns of the Council, the representative from MFRDMD explained that although the Guidelines is voluntary in nature, implementation of market measures are very important to ensure that fish and fishery products from the AMSs could be traded in the international market, and several aspects in the Guidelines point to the compliance with market measures, *e.g.* vessel registration, traceability system. He added that although the current phase of the promotion of the Guidelines does not intend to provide capacity building for AMSs, this could be taken into account in the future while the engagement of external evaluators could also be considered. Furthermore, he also supported the suggestion on sharing of information on blacklisted fishing vessels among the AMSs to combat IUU fishing in the region.

32. While noting the suggestion to develop the "blacklist" vessels, the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam informed the Council that there had been incidents of foreign vessels encroaching in their waters but such vessels were not apprehended but some could be identified. In this regard, the term "watch list" could be more appropriate. She added that in the Interim Report, a disclaimer should clearly indicate the fact that Brunei Darussalam was not included in the self-evaluation. The representative from MFRDMD clarified that the self-evaluation did not include Brunei Darussalam and Singapore due to budgetary constraints.

33. The Council Director for Japan shared the same concern on the process of the self-evaluation and suggested that MFRDMD should consider finding alternative methods by conducting similar surveys every few years to monitor the progress made by each AMS in the implementation of the Guidelines. On the encroachment of foreign vessels in Brunei Darussalam waters, he suggested that if the flag is known, Brunei Darussalam should contact the flag State of such vessels to confirm whether or not such vessels are IUU fishing vessels, while the watch list would be useful if the name of the vessels is identified even if the flag is unknown.

5.1.2 Regional Fishing Vessels Record

34. The Council took note of the progress made by SEAFDEC Training Department (TD) on the promotion of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) for vessels 24 meters in length and over (**Annex 10**) as presented by the representative from TD. Specifically, the Council was informed on the progress of the discussion and future plans on the development of RFVR for vessels less than 24 meters in length. The Council also considered and provided comments on the draft "Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System by non-AMS" which was prepared by the SEAFDEC Secretariat after accommodating the comments of the Council sought through *ad referendum* circulation for endorsement.

35. With regards to the Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System, the Council Director for Singapore suggested that in the preparation of the Letter of Agreement (LOA) between non-AMSs and SEAFDEC, the flexibility for SEAFDEC to make changes to the Protocol and review the LOA when necessary, should be explicitly specified.

36. While taking note of the progress of promoting the utilization of the RFVR Database, the Council Director for Malaysia suggested that the AMSs should regularly provide their respective updated data to the RFVR Database. With regards to the proposed development of the RFVR for vessels less than 24 meters in length, he suggested that the current RFVR should be fully utilized instead, and then supported the approval of the Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System.

37. The Council Director for Viet Nam mentioned that the country is in the process of completing its national database of fishing fleets by the third quarter of 2019, and thus would only be able to provide data for the RFVR 24 meters in length and over by that time. While expressing support to the development of RFVR less than 24 meters in length, he mentioned that the national database is being developed for vessels 15-24 meters in length, and from such database the possibility of extracting information on vessels 18-24 meters in length as required by SEAFDEC, could be considered. On the draft Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System, which could be changed over time, he suggested that at this stage the RFVR Database should only serve as reference for verification of vessel's information. However, if a particular vessel is not included in the RFVR Database, the port State should communicate directly with flag State to verify the legal status of such vessel.

38. While supporting the Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System by Non-AMSs, the Council Director for Indonesia informed the Council that Indonesia has already provided updated data for the RFVR Database for vessels 24 meters in length and over in March 2019, and suggested that for the time being SEAFDEC should consider enhancing the use of the RFVR Database for vessels 24 meters in length and over instead of expanding the RFVR to also cover vessels less than 24 meters in length.

39. The Council Director for Myanmar informed the Council that Myanmar is planning to submit the RFVR data to SEAFDEC in April 2019. At present, the data is being prepared to comply with the requirements of the eACDS, the Fisheries Information System (FIS), and the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). With regards to the "Protocol for Accessing the RFVR Database System by Non-AMSs," he informed the Council that Myanmar would concur with the decision of the other AMSs on this matter.

40. While supporting the promotion of the RFVR Database, the Council Director for Thailand expressed the concern that the data on the number of fishing vessels provided by the AMSs cover only two to three years, which is not sufficient enough to conclude whether the trend of fishing vessels has really increased or decreased. As for the decreased number of fishing vessels of Thailand in the RFVR Database, he explained that this is due to the issuance of the new Royal Ordinance on Fisheries (2015) with the Fisheries Management Plan (2015-2020) where the number fishing efforts have been adjusted to match with the available resources. While also observing the delay in providing data by several AMSs in the RFVR Database, he suggested that SEAFDEC should work closely with the AMSs to ensure that the data in the RFVR Database is regularly updated.

41. In the case of the delayed submission of the data from the Philippines, the Council Director for the Philippines explained that the Philippines is still in the process of reviewing and updating its fishing vessels database, and that the required data would be submitted to SEAFDEC when such process is completed.

42. The Council Director for Japan reiterated that in dealing with vessels that are not included in the RFVR, the port State should contact the flag State first to obtain the concerned vessel's status, as suggested by the Council Director for Viet Nam. With regards to the sharing of information from the RFVR Database with non-AMSs, he expressed the concern that not all AMSs have submitted the

updated information in the RFVR Database system and thus, such data is not appropriate to be shared. He then encouraged all AMSs to submit their updated data to SEAFDEC based on the agreed timeline.

43. On the development of a “blacklist” of fishing vessels and on the difficulties encountered by Brunei Darussalam in determining vessels to be considered in the blacklist, the Council Director for the Philippines concurred with the suggestion of the Council Director for Brunei Darussalam that a “watch list” should be developed instead, to serve as warning for fishing vessels that are still operating unsustainable fishing practices.

44. In concluding the discussion, the Secretary-General confirmed that the current RFVR Database could serve as reference for data verification, and supported the proposed development of a “watch list” of IUU fishing vessels. On the Protocol for Accessing of the RFVR Database, he supported the suggestion that sharing of database should be postponed until all AMSs could provide updated data. Considering that most of transshipment vessels within the Southeast Asian waters are mostly less than 24 meters in length, he suggested that the expansion of the RFVR Database to also cover vessels less than 24 meters in length should be considered to enhance the utilization of the RFVR Database in the future.

5.1.3 ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme

45. The Council took note of the progress on the implementation of the ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (ACDS) for marine capture fisheries (**Annex 11**), particularly the pilot testing of the electronic system of the ACDS (eACDS) in Brunei Darussalam, and the expansion of the pilot sites to Myanmar, Malaysia and Viet Nam, as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

46. The Council Director for Brunei Darussalam expressed the gratitude to TD for the development of eACDS as well as to SEAFDEC for making Brunei Darussalam as a pilot site, and to the Government of Japan for the support extended to SEAFDEC that facilitated the pilot testing of the eACDS in Brunei Darussalam.

47. While expressing the appreciation to TD for delivering a comprehensive report, the Council Director for Indonesia also expressed the country’s support to the expansion of the pilot testing of the eACDS to other AMSs to promote the traceability of fish and fishery products and combat IUU fishing in the region.

48. The Council Director for the Philippines sought clarification and raised concern on the accuracy of information on the differences between the electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability System (eCDTS) developed with support from USAID Oceans and the eACDS developed with support from the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF) and SEAFDEC-Sweden Project. In this connection, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat clarified that while the eACDS supports the traceability of fish and fishery products throughout the supply chain, the eCDTS focuses on particular aspect of the process such as the processors. Nevertheless, the Council Director for the Philippines suggested that SEAFDEC should seek the clarification and confirmation from the USAID Oceans on this aspect.

49. The Council Director for Viet Nam expressed the appreciation to the JTF and the USAID Oceans for supporting the expansion of pilot site in Viet Nam, and added that through its implementation in Viet Nam, experiences on the eACDS implementation could be gained and the connection among the various pilot sites in the region could be explored to maximize the implementation of the eACDS. Moreover, since Viet Nam has already conducted a gap analysis of its legal framework based on the traceability system available in the country, these could be used to determine whether the eCDTS could fulfill any gaps in the traceability system. In addition, Viet Nam is planning to also obtain support from the JTF and USAID Oceans, *i.e.* for the JTF to support the

critical point of traceability system from harvest to market; and from USAID Oceans on the technology that supports the traceability system.

50. The Council Director for Myanmar informed the Council that regarding the expansion of eACDS pilot site in Myanmar, two landing sites had been selected, and the Department of Fisheries of Myanmar has been trying to establish the electronic reporting system that links with its VMS. He added that Myanmar would support the use of eACDS to combat IUU fishing and enhance intra-regional and international trade in fish and fishery products, as well as facilitate regional as well as international information sharing. As for the eCDTS, he expressed the concern that countries that are not involved as pilot sites such as Myanmar, are only attending workshops occasionally thus, are not able to fully understand the operationalization of the system.

51. The Council Director for Malaysia commended SEAFDEC for the progress made in the development of eACDS, and looked forward to discussing with SEAFDEC on 22-26 April 2019, the details of pilot test planning for the system in Malaysia.

52. The Council Director for Japan inquired whether the eACDS could help the AMSs in fulfilling the different requirements for exporting fish and fishery products to EU and the US. In response, the Deputy Secretary-General informed the Council that the eACDS comprises key data elements that include the necessary requirements to export to EU and the US market, as well as those of the other importing markets. The Secretary-General added that the import regulations and requirements of importing countries have been considered during the development of the ACDS.

53. Nevertheless, the Council Director for Viet Nam pointed out that Viet Nam has identified the critical points for product traceability, and if these could be controlled in a transparent manner, it means that the traceability system of the country could be reliable. Although both the US Presidential Task Force on Combating IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud, and the EU Regulation No. 1005/2008 aim to ensure product traceability, their manners of controlling IUU fishing activities are different. While the US Regulation puts control on the exporters directly, the EU Regulation imposes control through the exporting government authorities.

54. The Council Director for Singapore viewed that the importance of eACDS should not only be to promote traceability within the country, but also traceability across the value chain. She therefore suggested that SEAFDEC should consider exploring the possibility of connecting the systems of the AMSs to provide for exchange of e-certificates for trade purposes.

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

55. The Council took note of the progress of the promotion of the Regional Cooperation to Support the Implementation of the Port State Measures (PSM) in the ASEAN region (**Annex 12**) as presented by the representative from TD.

56. In promoting the implementation of PSM, the Council Director for Malaysia encouraged SEAFDEC to continue collaborating with partners in organizing human resource capacity building activities for port inspectors to support the implementation of the PSM by the AMSs.

57. Regarding the planned “Regional Training Course on Port State Measures Implementation for Inspectors” scheduled on 22-26 July 2019, the Council Director for Indonesia suggested that SEAFDEC should seek assistance from FAO and relevant RFMOs to provide the resource persons for this training. He also proposed that the training could be conducted in Indonesia.

58. While informing the Council that Viet Nam has recently become a Party to the Port State Measure Agreement (PSMA) on 3 January 2019 and that the country’s national legal frameworks had been revised to support the implementation of the provisions in the PSMA, the Council Director for

Viet Nam requested SEAFDEC to consider supporting the AMSs for implementing the PSMA by providing knowledge on the procedures and protocols for port inspection, as well as for conducting their respective needs assessment.

59. The Council Director for Myanmar informed the Council that with support from FAO, a workshop to review the country's compliance with the provisions of the PSMA has been organized in Myanmar to formulate the national strategies and action plans with the aim of fulfilling the requirements of the PSMA and related international instruments. He also requested SEAFDEC to consider providing capacity building activities to Myanmar officers in support of the implementation of PSM.

60. While expressing the appreciation to SEAFDEC for supporting the capacity building activities towards the implementation of PSM in the region, the Council Director for Thailand expressed the full support of Thailand to the implementation of PSM as this is an important tool to effectively combat IUU fishing. He added that Thailand has currently designated 25 ports along its coastal provinces which are tasked to coordinate with other countries, whether these countries are Parties or non-Parties to the PSMA, in support of the implementation of PSM. He also requested SEAFDEC to encourage the Member Countries to share their respective PSM information to the FAO Port-Lex Database and to scale up the utilization of the Database.

61. Regarding the suggestion made by the Council Director for Japan during the 50th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council for SEAFDEC to tap the expertise of other organizations, *e.g.* the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), in conducting training courses on PSM, the Council Director for Indonesia concurred with such suggestion. In this connection, the Council Director for Japan requested SEAFDEC to follow up on the said suggestion specifically in facilitating information exchange among the AMSs on PSM implementation and strengthening the collaboration among the AMSs in combating IUU fishing in the region. Such collaboration could be mobilized in order that in cases where a particular AMS spots a fishing vessel that is possibly operating illegally or violates sustainable fishing practices, the information could be relayed to the other AMSs for their appropriate action.

62. In addressing the concerns raised by the Council Directors, the Secretary-General mentioned that collaboration with other organizations, *e.g.* USAID, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and FAO, had been enhanced. He added that SEAFDEC had discussed with IOTC during the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in May 2018 on the possible cooperation including the dispatch of resource person(s) to SEAFDEC to support the PSM implementation by the AMSs. He also cited that the training conducted by TD in January 2018 was on general PSM implementation, while the training to be conducted in 2019 would be for port inspectors, and future training sessions could be on other specific topics, *e.g.* risk analysis. SEAFDEC would also convey the suggestion of the Council for the Member Countries to share their PSM information with the Port-Lex Database. In addition, the Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC also informed the Council that SEAFDEC had organized sub-regional dialogues on MCS network in 2018 for strengthening the coordination among the concerned AMSs including PSM implementation.

5.1.5 Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity

63. The Council took note of the progress made by SEAFDEC in the compilation of feedbacks from the AMSs, namely: Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (RPOA-Capacity) in their respective countries, as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat (**Annex 13**). The Council was also informed about the proposed two-year project "Implementation and Assessment of Fishing Capacity and Zoning System for Southeast Asia" by MFRDMD for funding support from the ASEAN dialogue partners, and that such Project would enhance the future activities of SEAFDEC in relation to the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity.

64. The Council Director for Malaysia explained that during the last Meeting of the ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum (AFCF) in 2018, the representative from Malaysia informed the AFCF Meeting regarding the proposed project jointly developed with MFRDMD with funding support from Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). The said proposal had already been submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat and is being evaluated by JAIF, and subsequently the proposal would be circulated by the ASEAN Secretariat to all AMSs for comments and scrutiny.

65. The Chief of MFRDMD provided additional information on how the new proposal would support the RPOA-Capacity, as the new project focuses mainly in assessing the level of fishing capacity. He then sought the cooperation of the AMSs to provide data on catch and effort which are necessary for the analysis and identification of the appropriate level of fishing capacity of the AMSs.

66. The Council Director for Indonesia requested SEAFDEC to consider supporting the AMSs in their efforts to enhance the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity. He recalled the discussion during the 41PCM on the proposed establishment of the RPOA-Capacity Secretariat and sought for more detailed information on the progress of such proposal as well as the funding source to support its operation.

67. The Council Director for Thailand indicated that Thailand has no objection on the proposed establishment of the RPOA-Capacity Secretariat. However, he raised the concern on the need for more detailed information, especially on the main objectives of such proposal. He therefore requested SEAFDEC to provide such information, including the structure and key functions of such Secretariat, as well as the procedures on how the AMSs could appropriately support the implementation of this mechanism.

68. In response, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC explained that the establishment of the RPOA-Capacity Secretariat was only a suggestion during the 41PCM. However, through the new project proposed by MFRDMD, clearer plans could be developed on how SEAFDEC would support the AMSs in the implementation of the RPOA-Capacity in the future.

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

69. The Council took note of the progress of implementation of the RPOA-Neritic Tunas in the region, particularly the results of 2018 stock and risk assessments of the Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*) and king mackerel (*S. guttatus*) in the Pacific Ocean and in the Indian Ocean of the Southeast Asian region, as well as the management recommendations made by the Scientific Working Group for Neritic Tunas (SWG-Neritic Tunas) for these two species, as presented by the representative from MFRDMD (**Annex 14**). In addition, the Council was also informed on the results of the DNA study on the stock structure of longtail tuna.

70. While commending MFRDMD for its efforts in pursuing the stock assessment of the Spanish and king mackerels, the Council Director for Indonesia suggested that MFRDMD should continue to conduct the stock assessment of other species of neritic tunas. However, since the conduct of stock assessment requires long-term CPUE data, he also suggested that data collection schemes of the countries on these species should be enhanced. Furthermore, while he expressed concern on the recommendations to reduce the catch of the Spanish mackerel and increase the catch of the king mackerel in Pacific and Indian Oceans, he suggested that specific working group should be established to consider the results and conclusion of the stock and risks assessments of these two species in order to come up with appropriate management recommendations.

71. On the previous suggestion made by the Council during its 50th Meeting for the possibility of expanding the work of the SWG-Neritic Tunas to also cover stock assessment of other small pelagic species such as anchovies, sardines and scads, the Council Director for Indonesia reiterated his view that the SWG-Neritic Tunas should mainly focus on neritic tuna species rather than on the other small pelagic species considering that these latter species are local stocks and could be managed by the countries.

72. The Council Director for the Philippines recognized the importance of the results of stock and risk assessments of Spanish and king mackerels. However, he also pointed out that these species are bycatch from multi-species fisheries. He therefore suggested that the activities of the SWG-Neritic Tunas should also focus on stock assessment of target neritic tuna species in order to come up with practical and effective management measures that would ensure the sustainable utilization of the species.

73. The Council Director for Thailand expressed the appreciation to MFRDMD for the conduct of stock assessment and that Thailand has no objection on the results of such stock assessment. He also requested SEAFDEC to encourage the AMSs to ensure the sustainable utilization of neritic tuna species especially longtail tuna which is used as raw materials by the fish processing industry in many countries. He also agreed with the proposal to conduct a stock structure study on neritic tunas using microsatellite DNA.

74. The Council Director for Malaysia supported the proposed expansion of the SWG-Neritic Tunas to cover stock assessment of other neritic tuna species, as well as the conduct of future genetic study by MFRDMD. In response, the Chief of MFRDMD explained that MFRDMD is now using microsatellite DNA study to obtain information on the stock structure of longtail tuna.

75. The Council Director for Japan reiterated the concern on the possible duplication of the works of SEAFDEC and RFMOs, especially with IOTC, which has the mandate to manage neritic tunas stocks, although no management measures have been made in place. He also encouraged Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as Parties to the IOTC, to propose to IOTC that the Spanish and the king mackerels which are local stocks should be managed by the countries if there are local stocks migrating in this area. He also requested the AMSs to seriously consider putting into practice the recommendations of the SWG-Neritic Tunas toward the sustainable utilization of the said neritic tuna resources.

76. The Deputy Chief of MFRDMD pointed out that although not an RFMO, SEAFDEC promotes sustainable management of neritic tunas and promotes capacity building on stock and risk assessments for the Southeast Asian region because neritic tunas provide important protein sources for peoples in the region. It is for this reason that SEAFDEC monitors the stock status of both species in Southeast Asia, especially that some countries in the region are Parties to some RFMOs *e.g.* IOTC, as this would facilitate understanding of the strength of the harvest level for neritic tuna resources in the region. SEAFDEC also wishes to confirm that biological information is necessary for the assessments and management of stocks which is insufficient in the Southeast Asian region as well as in other several regions of relevant RFMOs, thus the collection and arrangement of those data is necessary. The exchange of biological information such as genetics, growth and spawning of neritic tuna stocks between the Southeast Asian region and the regions of relevant RFMOs will help further the development of assessments and management of the stocks from these regions.

77. With regards to the concerns raised on the utilization of the results of the stock and risk assessments of the Spanish mackerel and the Indo-Pacific king mackerel, the Chief of MFRDMD stated that currently, there are not much studies on neritic tunas undertaken by IOTC. In this connection, he agreed with previous suggestions that the results of the stock and risk assessments of neritic tunas undertaken by the SWG-Neritic Tunas should be shared with concerned RFMOs, *e.g.* IOTC, for appropriate action.

78. Furthermore, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General also mentioned that initial discussions had already been made by SEAFDEC with the IOTC on the future sharing of the results of the stock and risk assessment of neritic tunas. He also encouraged the AMSs to consider utilizing the results of the assessments conducted by the SWG-Neritic Tunas as basis to properly manage neritic tunas in their respective waters.

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

79. The Council took note of the progress of implementation of the JAIF-supported project “Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources and Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture,” and the adopted “Policy Guidelines for Regional Conservation and Management of Tropical Anguillid Eel Resources in Southeast Asia” (**Annex 15**), as presented by the Chief of SEAFDEC Inland Fishery Resources Development and Management Department (IFRDMD).

80. While expressing support to the Policy Guidelines developed by IFRDMD, the Council Director for Indonesia mentioned that in 2019-2020, Indonesia would collaborate with FAO to develop the electronic database for tropical anguillid eels, establish the country’s NPOA for eel species, and conduct training of trainers for the local communities on the aquaculture of eels. He added that some local communities have already been practicing restocking of tropical anguillid eels. He then requested SEAFDEC to consider developing a digital map of the distribution of anguillid eels in Southeast Asia as well the methodologies for stock assessment and restocking of eels, and transferring the technology for breeding and feed development of anguillid eels culture.

81. The Council Director for Myanmar expressed the gratitude to SEAFDEC for extending support to AMSs from 2017 to 2019 for improving the collection of statistics and data to determine the status of tropical anguillid eels in the AMSs, and promoting the aquaculture of eel species. He informed the Meeting that Myanmar has only one tropical anguillid eel farm which focuses on eel fattening, and that the country also has long coastline that embraces rich habitat for juveniles of tropical anguillid eels. He therefore requested SEAFDEC through the JAIF-supported project to consider providing technical support for the development of the aquaculture of tropical anguillid eels in Myanmar, and that the format for fisheries data collection should be provided by SEAFDEC to Myanmar. He also suggested that SEAFDEC should consider conducting awareness training courses in the AMSs to support the establishment of the catch statistics on anguillid eels.

82. The Chief of IFRDMD informed the Council that IFRDMD is formulating a new project which aims to develop the method for stock assessment of anguillid eels including standardized CPUE data. Furthermore, IFRDMD would also examine the information on eel biodiversity to facilitate the development of a digital map of anguillid eel distribution in the region, and would conduct genetic and stock analysis of the anguillid eels which are essential for development of the appropriate method of eel stock assessment. In addition, IFRDMD would explore the possibility of adopting the existing ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme for enhancing the traceability of anguillid eel fisheries in Southeast Asia.

83. In response to the concern raised by the Council Director for Japan on whether the new project of IFRDMD would come up with data collection and stock assessment methods for anguillid eels rather than on the transfer of aquaculture technology, the Deputy Secretary-General explained that improvement of survival ratio and the development of aquaculture technology for anguillid eels was a part of the ongoing JAIF-supported project which will be completed during 2019, but not for the new project.

84. While agreeing with the results of the anguillid eel surveys in the AMSs, specifically the findings that glass eels are not found in the waters of Thailand and the aquaculture of anguillid eels is not practiced in the country, the Council Director for Thailand expressed the support of Thailand in the development of stock assessment methods and strengthening of measures for management of

tropical anguillid eel resources in Southeast Asia. He therefore requested that the involvement of officers from the Department of Fisheries of Thailand in data collection at the project sites would be considered, as well as the participation of such officers in relevant training courses and other related activities.

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

85. The Council took note of the report made by the Chief of SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department (AQD) on the progress in the development of “Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia” (**Annex 16**). Specifically, the Council was informed on the results of the “ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia” organized on 20-22 August 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as on the development of the “Regional Technical Guidelines and Mechanism for Early Warning System for Aquatic Diseases.”

86. While commending AQD for its efforts in developing the Regional Guidelines, the Council Director for Indonesia provided the following suggestions for the amendment of the Guidelines:

- Part 3: Add “Aquaculturist Community” defined as group of persons engaged in aquaculture
- Part 4.3: Additional inputs:
 - Prevent the spread of suspected diseases from their own farms to other farms
 - Perform treatments to reduce potential virulence
 - Document any information related to clinical signs, mortality, etc.
- Part 5: Additional inputs:
 - The aquaculturist and the aquaculturist community inform FHO or extension worker about any abnormal occurrences in the fish farm
 - FHO or extension worker inform competent authority (CA) about all abnormal occurrences in the fish farm and the presumptive diagnostic results
 - CA analyzes the report from FHO whether it is necessary to perform confirmatory examination or not. If it necessary, CA performs confirmatory examination and make the final report
- Part 6.2: Additional inputs:
 - Immediate recognition of signs of disease, or an emerging disease, or unexplained mortality, in aquatic animals at farm level by the aquaculturist/aquaculturist community
 - FHO/CA inspects, collects, and documents all information including samples related to abnormal occurrences and chorological occurrences
 - FHO informs CA about abnormal occurrence outbreak in the fish farm and also report the presumptive results
 - CA analyzes the report from FHO whether it is necessary to do confirmatory examination or not. If it is necessary, confirmatory examination can be started. The final report should consist of conclusion that the abnormal occurrence could differentiate the listed or emerging disease
- Part 6.3: Additional inputs:
 - Aquaculturist provides FHO/CA with information on abnormal occurrence/disease signs, as well as any movements of live animal prior to disease
 - Aquaculturist community do prevention the spread of the suspected disease at their farm to another location
 - Aquaculturist/aquaculturist community do any possible treatment to reduce of potential damage
 - Aquaculturist/aquaculturist community do documentation of any information related to clinical sign, mortality rate, etc.
- Part 7.3.3: Additional input:

- Add FHO and Competent Authority
- Part 7.4: Additional input:
 - Add FHO and CA Staff

87. The Council Director for Thailand expressed the concern that since the countries were given short period of time to review the Regional Guidelines, Thailand could not provide any comments on the Guidelines at the moment. He therefore reiterated that SEAFDEC should make sure that documents requiring immediate approval of the Council are provided at least two weeks in advance, so that the Council would have adequate time for consideration. While expressing the appreciation to AQD for the development of the Regional Guidelines, the Council Directors for Malaysia and Singapore also shared the same concern with Thailand that more time would be necessary before any consideration on the Regional Guidelines could be made.

88. After the discussion, SEAFDEC was asked to reseek the Council’s approval of the Regional Guidelines *ad referendum*, after accommodating the suggestions made at this 51CM, and subsequently submit the Regional Guidelines to the ASEAN mechanism for endorsement, based on the following suggested timeline:

Timeline	Actions
3 April 2019	SEAFDEC Secretariat to circulate the Regional Guidelines to the Council after accommodating the comments raised during the 51CM, for additional comments if any
17 April 2019	The Council Directors to send further comments on the Regional Guidelines back to the SEAFDEC Secretariat for inclusion in the revised Regional Guidelines
26 April 2019	SEAFDEC Secretariat to circulate the final draft Regional Guidelines to the Council for approval
10 May 2019	The Council Directors to convey their approval of the Regional Guidelines to the SEAFDEC Secretariat
13 May 2019	Upon the Council’s approval, SEAFDEC Secretariat to circulate the Regional Guidelines to the FCG-ASSP Focal Points for approval and subsequent endorsement to the 27 th Meeting of ASWGF _i for endorsement

5.3 Ensuring the Food Safety and Quality of Fish and Fishery Products in ASEAN Region

5.3.1 Regional Guidelines on Cold Chain Management for Seafood

89. After taking note of the progress of the development of the “Regional Guidelines on Cold Chain Management of Fish and Fishery Products in ASEAN Region” as presented by the Chief of SEAFDEC Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD), the Council approved the Regional Guidelines (**Annex 17**).

90. While expressing the appreciation to MFRD for developing the Regional Guidelines that provide minimum standards for the AMSs in the implementation of cold chain management and considering the complexity of small-scale fisheries in the region, the Council Director for Indonesia requested MFRD to consider preparing an action plan to support the implementation of the Regional Guidelines by the AMSs. He added that such action plan could include capacity building for the stakeholders involved in the cold chain management especially the middlemen.

91. In order to promote and enhance the implementation of the cold chain management system for fish and fishery products in the ASEAN region, the Council approved the submission of the Regional Guidelines to the ASEAN mechanism for endorsement.

5.4 Others

5.4.1 Way Forward for Fishery Subsidies

92. The Council took note of the recommendations made during the Regional Technical Consultation (RTC) on International Fisheries-related Issues organized on 20-22 June 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand, particularly on fishery subsidies (**Annex 18**) as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

93. During the discussion, the Council Director for Viet Nam suggested that SEAFDEC should work closely with FAO for collective inputs on the reference points (*e.g.* overcapacity, overfishing) for fishery subsidies. While sharing the concern of Viet Nam on the frequent discussions convened to discuss fishery subsidies at the WTO but considering the limited resources of the AMSs that constrain the countries from sending delegates to attend such discussions at the WTO, the Council Director for Malaysia expressed the apprehension that the idea of developing the ASEAN common position on fishery subsidies is no longer practical as the common position has to be endorsed by the ASEAN mechanism prior to the WTO negotiations, in which case it might no longer be timely to use such positions during the discussions.

94. While sharing the view that the WTO negotiations on fishery subsidies are frequently occurring, the Council Director for Japan mentioned that Japan regularly sends officers to attend the negotiations at the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland and observed that most of the participants are trade experts who are less familiar with fisheries issues. He therefore suggested that the AMSs participating in the negotiations should also send fisheries experts and alerted the AMSs that the WTO negotiations on fishery subsidies in 2019 would be very critical as several new proposals could be anticipated in view of the approaching timing of the Ministerial meeting.

95. While reiterating a provision under SDG 14 that includes the prohibition of certain forms of fishery subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, elimination of subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, among others, the Council Director for Indonesia supported and agreed with the aforementioned views expressed by the Council Directors for Viet Nam and Japan. Meanwhile, in responding to the comments made by the Council Director for Japan, the Council Director for Malaysia expressed the difficulties in sending fisheries representatives to the WTO meetings due to budgetary constraints. It is in this connection that sending of representatives from Malaysia is properly planned to make sure that fisheries experts are sent to take part in WTO meetings that discuss fisheries-related issues, *i.e.* fishery subsidies. Furthermore, he also mentioned that in order to minimize the cost of sending delegates directly from the fisheries agency to the WTO negotiations, a task force led by the Malaysian Ministry of International Trade based in Geneva could also be utilized to participate in the negotiations.

96. In conclusion, the Secretary-General informed the Council that SEAFDEC would work closely with FAO in updating the information on the results of discussions on fishery subsidies which would be shared with the Member Countries.

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

97. Representatives from the collaborating partners of SEAFDEC attending the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council were invited to inform the Council of their programs and activities

relevant to the sustainable development of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region, as well as the potential areas of cooperation with SEAFDEC.

98. The Interim Executive Director of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF), *Dr. Hendra Yusran Siry*, on behalf of the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat and Coral Triangle Initiative and its six Member Countries, thanked SEAFDEC for the invitation to attend this valuable meeting. He also thanked the Government of Indonesia for the excellent hospitality in hosting the 51CM. He recalled that the collaboration between SEAFDEC and CTI-CFF started in 2015 and the 5-year Memorandum of Understanding to conserve the marine biodiversity in Southeast Asia and Coral Triangle Area was signed during the Forty-seventh Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council. He continued that since then, the CTI-CFF and SEAFDEC conducted several activities particularly with respect to the implementation of the EAFM. He also expressed the intention of CTI-CFF to collaborate with SEAFDEC in promoting the sustainability of sharks and rays fisheries in Southeast Asia and the Coral Triangle. Finally, he expressed the hope that the cooperation between SEAFDEC and CTI-CFF would continue to address the challenges and issues concerning oceans governance and marine biodiversity. His Statement appears as **Annex 19**.

99. The representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization/Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO/RAP), *Dr. Simon Nicol* expressed the gratitude to SEAFDEC for inviting FAO/RAP to the 51CM, and to the Government of Indonesia for the hospitality and arrangements made for the Meeting. He pointed out the importance of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region and the degradation of aquatic resources, and the role of SEAFDEC in strengthening the regional cooperation and in supporting the efforts of the ASEAN Member States in combating IUU fishing in the Southeast Asian region. He also mentioned the importance of promoting the RFVR and the implementation of the PSM, and appreciated the efforts of SEAFDEC for promoting responsible fisheries, gender equity, and youth opportunities. He also expressed the hope for strengthened collaboration with SEAFDEC on combating IUU fishing, and implementation of the “Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication,” among others. While reaffirming the intention of FAO to continue collaborating with SEAFDEC, he also mentioned about the forthcoming programs to be implemented in the region with funding support from GEF, such as the BOBLME – 2 (Strategic Action Plan Implementation), Indonesian Seas Large Marine Ecosystem Project (Governments of Timor Leste and Indonesia), GoTFish (Gulf of Thailand), and capacity development on inland fisheries in the Lower Mekong Basin. His Statement appears as **Annex 20**.

100. In the Statement of the Director-General of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) *Dr. Cherdsak Virapat*, read for him by the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, he expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for the invitation extended to NACA to participate in the 51CM although NACA could not send any representative to attend the Meeting due to conflict of schedule. While expressing the appreciation to SEAFDEC for supporting several collaborative activities throughout the past five years, *Dr. Cherdsak* also provided information to the SEAFDEC Council that FAO in collaboration with NACA is planning to organize the “Global Aquaculture Millennium +20 Conference” in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China in September 2020, with the objectives of: 1) reviewing the present status and trends in aquaculture development; 2) evaluating the progress made in the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration and Strategy on Aquaculture Development Beyond 2000 and the Phuket Consensus 2010; 3) addressing the emerging issues in aquaculture development; 4) assessing the opportunities and challenges for future aquaculture development; and 5) building the consensus on advancing aquaculture as a global, sustainable and competitive food production sector. He reiterated the concerted desire of NACA and SEAFDEC to find opportunities to strengthen collaboration and coordination in aquaculture development activities in the region and beyond. His Statement appears as **Annex 21**.

101. The representative from the United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA), *Dr. R. Craig Kirkpatrick*, expressed the gratitude to SEAFDEC for the opportunity that enabled the USAID/RDMA to participate in the 51CM. He also thanked the Government of Indonesia for the hospitality and leadership during the Meeting. He reiterated that USAID will continue the collaboration with SEAFDEC and its Member Countries, and

partners in combating IUU fishing, promoting sustainable fisheries management, and conserving marine biodiversity in the Southeast Asian region. He cited that the collaboration between USAID Oceans and SEAFDEC since 2015, which has drawn regional interest, involved works on electronic catch documentation and traceability, sustainable fisheries management, human welfare, and public-private sector engagement. In 2018, SEAFDEC and the USAID Oceans Fisheries Partnership worked together closely to develop the first known sub-regional fisheries management plan endorsed for the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape. Starting in 2019, the Partnership has been working closely with the governments of Thailand and Vietnam to integrate the Partnership's technology and learning in their respective local fisheries. Finally, he expressed the continued commitment of USAID in strengthening the relationship with SEAFDEC to promote its leadership and advance the priorities of its Member Countries towards national and regional priorities. His Statement appears as **Annex 22**.

102. After the Statements of the collaborating partners of SEAFDEC, the Council Director for Indonesia encouraged SEAFDEC to explore the possibility of collaborating with RFMOs that have common interest with that of SEAFDEC, *e.g.* with the IOTC.

103. In conclusion, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC thanked the representatives from the international and regional organizations for their collaboration and cooperation which are valuable for the implementation of the programs and activities of SEAFDEC.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 CITES-related Issues

104. The Council took note of the progress of the international and regional initiatives in addressing CITES issues including the development of common positions of the SEAFDEC Member Countries on the proposed listing of aquatic species into the CITES Appendices (**Annex 23**) as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

105. The Council Director for Japan pointed out one possible factual error in the Secretariat report on the results of the discussions during the Sixth FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of CITES Concerning Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species. The representative from SEAFDEC Secretariat explained that the three species of sea cucumbers proposed for listing in the CITES Appendices received different determinations, *i.e.* the proposal on *Holothuria fuscogilva* does not meet the CITES Appendix II listing criteria; there was insufficient evidence to make a determination on *H. nobilis*; while the proposal on *H. whitmaei* meets the CITES Appendix II listing criteria.

106. Moreover, the Council was also informed that the Positions of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries on the Proposed Listing of Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species into the CITES Appendices at the CITES-CoP18 that had already been endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council *ad referendum*, had been submitted to the FCG/ASSP Focal Points for endorsement to the ASWGFi. Upon endorsement by the higher authorities of the ASEAN, the AMSs should reflect such Positions during the decision making at the CITES-CoP18.

107. The Deputy Secretary-General also explained that SEAFDEC was invited to attend the 15th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement Network to be organized on 2-4 April 2019 in Sandakan, Malaysia, where the aforesaid ASEAN-SEAFDEC Common Position would be presented.

108. The Council Director for Japan informed the Council that Japan is still in the process of finalizing the country's position toward the proposals to list commercially exploited aquatic species into the CITES Appendices. Nevertheless, he cited that Japan would oppose the proposed listing of the mako sharks as the species is considered highly migratory and is subject to management by concerned RFMOs. However, sea cucumbers which are more sedentary and subject to national

fisheries management, are also targeted for capture posing risk for illegal trade. Considering that the habitats and behavior of mako sharks and sea cucumbers are different, subjecting the species for listing in the Appendix II of CITES should not necessarily be treated in the same manner. Nonetheless, Japan would also take into consideration the positions of the AMSs in developing the country's final position on these species for the CITES-CoP18.

7.2 Revision of the Resolution and Plan of Action after 2020

109. The Council took note of the progress of the evaluation and revision of the Resolution and Plan of Action 2020 (RES&POA-2020), including the identification of priorities and issues necessary for revising the RES&POA-2020 (**Annex 24**), as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

110. While noting the proposed timelines presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat on the appointment of national focal points for the revision of the RES&POA-2020 by May 2019, the Council Director for Malaysia suggested that such timelines to designate national focal points prior to the conduct of the regional meeting to evaluate the implementation of the RES-POA2020, should be adjusted in order that some advance works could be undertaken prior to their attendance in the meeting. The Council Director for Myanmar also supported the adjustment of the timelines for the revision of the RES&POA-2020 as suggested by the Council Director for Malaysia.

7.3 Japanese Trust Fund (2020-2024)

111. The Council took note of the procedures and schedule of the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF) for 2020-2024 (**Annex 25**) as presented by the Deputy Secretary-General and Japanese Trust Fund Project Manager of SEAFDEC, and that this new JTF would be an extension phase of the existing JTF-6 which is scheduled to be completed in 2019. Moreover, the Council was also informed that upon consideration of the JTF projects by the 41PCM, SEAFDEC will send the respective project annual plans for approval by the Fisheries Agency of Japan, and the implementation of the projects under the extended JTF would start in 2020.

112. While expressing the appreciation to the Government of Japan for extending support to SEAFDEC through the JTF for the sustainable development of fisheries in the AMSs, the Council Director for Indonesia suggested that the new phase of JTF should consider the conduct of more capacity building activities that focus on technology transfer aiming to increase production and on value adding of fish and fishery products, as well as on the enhancing the conservation of fisheries.

113. The Council Director for Thailand also expressed the gratitude to Japan for sustaining its support to the AMSs through the JTF, and informed the Council that Thailand has sent an official letter of appreciation to the Government of Japan through the Fisheries Agency of Japan for the support extended to SEAFDEC that enabled it to implement projects during the past decades.

VIII. FUTURE DIRECTION OF SEAFDEC

114. During the Closed Session of the Fifty-first 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 during the Closed Session of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council as follows:

- Regarding the invitation for Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste to attend the SEAFDEC meetings, SEAFDEC has sent invitation to Timor Leste to attend the SEAFDEC Program Committee Meeting (PCM) in 2018, but since SEAFDEC did not receive any response from them, SEAFDEC will no longer invite them to the PCM.

However, SEAFDEC could still consider inviting Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea to participate in the technical meetings organized by SEAFDEC as deemed relevant.

- On the MOU between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) of Indonesia and SEAFDEC, the MMAF agreed to change the “establishment of MOU” to “signing of specific Arrangement” to facilitate the implementation of the activities of IFRDMD. In this connection, the Arrangement between SEAFDEC and the Agency for Marine and Fisheries Research and Human Resources (AMAFRHR) of the MMAF of Indonesia which was approved by the Council *ad referendum*, has already been signed.

115. The Council also expressed the following views on important matters pertaining to the operations of SEAFDEC as raised by the Secretary-General:

- On the MOUs between SEAFDEC and institutions in China, SEAFDEC was reminded that it should seek approval of the Council prior to signing of any collaborative arrangements with non-Member Countries. In addition, the nature of cooperation should be carefully considered in establishing future collaborations with non-Member Countries.
- On the Regional Fisheries Policy Network (RFPN), five members are currently funded by the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project, and three by the JTF. While the funding from SEAFDEC-Sweden Project will be completed in 2019 although the funding from JTF could still be continued, possible options to maintain the RFPN program in the future was considered since the RFPN program provides capacity building opportunities for staff of the Member Countries to work at the SEAFDEC Secretariat for one year. In this connection, SEAFDEC could request nominations for RFPN members from countries on rotational basis, *e.g.* representatives from three countries to the RFPN in each year, and for countries that do not have sufficient number of staff, such countries may not send their representatives to the RFPN. Nevertheless, countries could still send additional staff as RFPN members at their own funding arrangement.
- Considering that the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project would be completed by the end of 2019, and that the final Project evaluation would be conducted by mid of 2019, it is possible that members of the evaluation team would visit some Member Countries to assess the achievements of the Project. In this connection, the comprehensive report of the activities and achievements of the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project should be sent to the Project participating countries to provide the necessary information for such evaluation.

116. The Council also raised the following issues that need consideration:

- On the restructuring of the agencies in Singapore, all food functions would be placed under the responsibility of Singapore Food Agency of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources starting the first of April 2019. With such arrangement, the new Marine Aquaculture Center (MAC) will take over the responsibility in the implementation of the MFRD Programmes.
- While the on-going support of TD to Malaysia for the development of training syllabus on fishing gear design, vessel design, and marine engineering, among others was being acknowledged, TD was also requested to support the conduct of training on extension methodologies for extension officers from Malaysia. Moreover, the Council Director for Malaysia also proposed that SEAFDEC could consider supporting relevant experts from Member Countries to join its delegation for international meetings/important visits on rotational basis.
- On the need of Indonesia for the establishment of sustainable mariculture set up including procedures for site selection, zoning, impacts from feed to sea pollution, and also on

responsible fishing practices, SEAFDEC should consider conducting R&D of the design of the mariculture set up as well as environmental friendly fishing gears, *e.g.* efficient materials and design of FADs, and fishing gears and equipment.

- While conducting research on anguillid eels, SEAFDEC should also focus on the development of artificial seed production techniques considering that the increased supply of artificial seeds would reduce fishing pressure on wild seeds, however, the experience of Japan indicates that production of artificial seeds of eel species would be very challenging due to certain problems such as the availability of juvenile feeds.
- Given the recent poor catches of Japanese glass eels, China has recently imported large amounts of American glass eels from the Caribbean countries. Although there is no proposal for listing of anguillid eels into the CITES Appendices during 18th Session of the CoP CITES in 2019, it is possible that the US might propose the American eel as well as other eel species as look-like species to be listed in the CITES Appendices at the CoP, and this would impact on the trade of tropical anguillid eels in the region.

117. The Council also shared their views on the future direction of the regional fisheries development, and when SEAFDEC undertakes the revision of the RES&POA-2020, the following areas should be taken into consideration:

- Marine debris and micro-plastics (linked to food safety issues)
- Environmental friendly fishing gears
- Sustainable mariculture set up
- Full-cycle breeding and aquaculture technologies for selected high-value species such as eel
- Alternative feed ingredients from land-based sources to replace fish meal
- Impacts of intensive aquaculture, *e.g.* parasites and pollution
- Aligning of SEAFDEC programs with blue economy

118. The Council suggested that SEAFDEC should consider moving towards a more environment-friendly practices in organizing meetings, workshops, and other events, replacing paper copies with electronic documents. Nevertheless, the minimal use of paper copies could still be considered (*i.e.* one set of hardcopy documents could be provided to the Head Delegate of each Member Country).

119. On the possibility of the Member Countries not hosting SEAFDEC Departments, to increase their respective Minimum Regular Contribution (MRC) to SEAFDEC as raised by the Council Director for the Philippines, to lessen the burden of countries hosting the Departments, the Council expressed the difficulties faced by several countries in changing the amount of their respective MRC, and suggested that countries not hosting Departments should therefore consider sharing the results of their national programs for the benefit of the other countries in the region.

IX. MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTER

9.1 Operation of SEAFDEC Training and Research Vessels

120. The Council took note of the report on the Operations of SEAFDEC Training and Research Vessels (**Annex 26**) as presented by the representative from TD. For the M.V. SEAFDEC 2, the Council took note of the utilization of the vessels in 2018, and endorsed its proposed operational plan for 2019. Specifically, the Council noted that in 2019 the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 would be used for the conduct of mid-water trawl survey in Malaysian waters, while the request of Viet Nam to utilize M.V. SEAFDEC 2 for the conduct of fisheries resources survey in Viet Nam in 2019 was postponed to 2020. With regard to the M.V. SEAFDEC, the Council took note of the utilization of the vessel in 2018, and the proposed utilization of the vessel in 2019 for maintenance of the Tsunami Warning System in the Andaman Sea in collaboration with the National Disaster Warning Center of Thailand.

121. The Council Director for the Philippines made an observation that the use of the M.V. SEAFDEC and the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 is mainly based on requests made by the Member Countries and for other uses such as the deployment of tsunami warning system in the Andaman Sea. He therefore suggested that SEAFDEC should consider developing a program for the utilization of the vessels that address the common concern of the Southeast Asian countries.

122. The Council Director for Japan expressed the concern on the decreased utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 in 2019, while recognizing several reasons thereof. He added that the low utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 would pose problems in the future if SEAFDEC wants to acquire new research vessels with support from the Government of Japan. He therefore encouraged the other Member Countries to consider maximizing the utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 in the future.

123. The Council Director for Cambodia expressed the appreciation to TD for coordinating the fishery resources survey in the waters of Cambodia in 2018 using the M.V. SEAFDEC 2. Such survey came up with data that could be compared with the data from previous surveys conducted in the past 10 years in Cambodia, providing an understanding of the changes in fishery resources especially the demersal resources in Cambodian waters.

124. The Council Director for Malaysia expressed the appreciation to TD for considering the request of Malaysia to use the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 for the mid-water trawl survey in the waters of Malaysia in September 2019, and added that the details of the survey would be discussed with SEAFDEC including the necessary arrangements for such survey.

125. After commending TD for the sustained operations of the SEAFDEC Training and Research Vessels, especially for the conduct of the “Collaborative Research Survey on Marine Fisheries Resources and Marine Environment in the Gulf of Thailand,” the Council Director for Thailand informed the Council that the survey had provided opportunity to the Thai researchers involved in the survey, not only in strengthening their capability to conduct fisheries and oceanographic research, but also in establishing network among researchers in the Gulf of Thailand sub-region.

126. In responding to the query of the Council Director for Japan regarding the possible use of M.V. SEAFDEC 2 for training course for Thai researchers and crew from the Department of Fisheries (DOF) of Thailand, the representative from TD explained that the current training is basic fishing technology upon request from the DOF under the Departmental Program of TD. However, during this training the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 was not used because the vessel was under renovation. Nevertheless, the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 could be used to support advanced training course on fishing technology and marine resource survey for officers from Thailand during the later part of 2019.

127. The Chief of MFRDMD expressed the view that recently, the scientific echosounder of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 has not worked properly and such equipment needs to be upgraded so that the vessel could be used for surveys of small pelagic fishery resources. In this connection, the representative from TD mentioned that TD has considered acquiring a new scientific echosounder for the M.V. SEAFDEC 2. However, prior to acquiring a new one, TD made use of the scientific echosounder of DOF Thailand to test the compatibility of such equipment with the set up of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2.

128. The representative from TD also expressed the appreciation to the DOF Thailand for lending its scientific echosounder to TD as well as for allowing TD staff to participate in the survey in the Andaman Sea in 2018 which was coordinated by DOF Thailand using the Norwegian research vessel the R.V. Fridtjof Nansen and with support from FAO and Norwegian Government, as it has enabled the TD researchers to acquire the techniques on mid-water trawl survey that could be extended to other AMSs.

129. Considering that the utilization of the M.V. SEAFDEC 2 is upon request by the Member Countries, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC encouraged the Member Countries to make maximum use of the vessel in the future. Nevertheless, during the first few months of 2019, the vessel could not be utilized because the vessel is being overhauled with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He added that in 2018 the vessel was used to support the collaborative research survey in the Gulf of Thailand in collaboration with Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia with support from the Japanese Trust Fund. However, such SEAFDEC-supported surveys could not be conducted more frequently due to high budgetary requirements.

9.2 Collaborative Arrangements between SEAFDEC and Other Organizations

130. The Council took note of the collaborative arrangements established between SEAFDEC and other organizations that include: a) international/regional organizations, non-Member Governments and donors; and b) agencies within the Member Countries in 2018 until the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council (**Annex 27**), as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

131. The Council also noted that three Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed by AQD with three technical institutions in China. In this connection, the Chief of AQD clarified that these MOUs were intended to provide broad frameworks for collaboration, of which the detailed project proposals would be formulated later and coursed through SEAFDEC Secretariat for approval by the Council. However, no project has been formulated nor undertaken to date under these MOUs. He added that the MOUs were established in parallel with the terms indicated in the Philippine Government partnership with China on fisheries and aquaculture, specifically on the condition to “focus only on aquaculture training, exchange of experts, conduct of symposiums and applied R&D, including technology transfer.”

132. In this regard, the Council Director for Japan requested AQD to provide such details in writing to the Council Directors, and reiterated that SEAFDEC should adhere to the regulations that collaboration with organizations and agencies of non-Member Countries and shall seek the approval of the SEAFDEC Council prior to entering into any terms of agreements or arrangements.

133. The Council Director for Cambodia expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC for involving Cambodia in the collaborative project “Strengthening the Effective Management of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in the AMSs with GIS and Remote Sensing Technology,” and indicated Cambodia’s commitment to support and provide necessary data and information to supplement data collection for the implementation of this project in Cambodia.

9.3 SEAFDEC Gender Strategy

134. The Council took note of the progress of the development of the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy as presented by the representative of the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

135. While supporting and endorsing the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy, the Council Director for Indonesia informed the Council that Indonesia has a solid commitment to mainstream gender as part of its national development strategic plan and national regulations. He added that gender mainstreaming in the country’s fisheries sector had been strengthened through the conduct of activities including household business diversification, product development, and small-scale aquaculture. In this connection, he invited SEAFDEC to consider conducting pilot projects on gender in Indonesia as necessary, to enhance the implementation of the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy in the Member Countries.

136. The Council Director for Thailand expressed the appreciation to SEAFDEC on the development of SEAFDEC Gender Strategy which covers all important aspects, specifically the designation and empowerment of the SEAFDEC Gender Focal Persons (SGFP). He therefore requested SEAFDEC to also consider establishing gender focal points for the AMSs to facilitate

cooperation between SEAFDEC and AMSs in support of the integration of gender perspectives in the fisheries sectors at the national and regional levels.

137. The Council Director for Japan expressed the view that since the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy is voluntary in nature, the word “shall” in the introductory sentence of the **Strategies** should be replaced with “should.” Furthermore, in response to the concerns raised on the rationale of Strategy 3.1, it was clarified that the intention of the Strategy is not to achieve equal number of female and male participants, but for the Member Countries and other organizations to strive towards providing equal opportunities for the participation of female and male representatives to the events organized by SEAFDEC.

138. To reflect such view and clarification, the Council made the following suggestions to revise the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy:

- An introductory sentence of the Strategies should be revised to read *“In order to achieve the objectives, the following strategies should be implemented:”*
- Strategy 3.1 should be revised to read *“Strive towards providing equal opportunities for the participation of male and female representatives from Member Countries and other organizations in events organized by SEAFDEC”*

139. After the discussion, the Council approved the revised SEAFDEC Gender Strategy for implementation by the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments (**Annex 28**).

9.4 Procedures for Inviting Other Organizations and Non-member Governments to Attend the SEAFDEC Council Meeting

140. The Council took note of the proposed Procedures for Inviting Other Organizations and Non-member Governments to Attend the SEAFDEC Council Meeting (**Annex 29**), as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

141. During the discussion, the Council Director for the Philippines sought clarification from SEAFDEC on how SEAFDEC would proceed if the consensus of the Council could not be reached with respect to the participation of other organizations and non-member governments in SEAFDEC Council Meetings. In response, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat explained that as described in the Proposed Procedures, in case there is no consensus, the SEAFDEC Secretariat could not extend invitations to other organizations and non-member governments to attend the Council Meeting.

142. The Council also noted that under the Guidelines on the Status of Various Organizations and Private Agencies Participation in SEAFDEC Programs which was approved by the SEAFDEC Council in 2000, requests for participation of organizations and private agencies in SEAFDEC programs should be made by the concerned Member Country(s) with the concurrence of all the Council Directors. However, in cases where SEAFDEC receives the requests directly from other IGOs or Governments to attend the Council Meeting, the Council agreed that SEAFDEC Secretariat can also propose the attendance of such IGOs and governments to the Council Meetings.

143. After the discussion, the Council approved the Procedures for Inviting Other Organizations and Non-member Governments to Attend the SEAFDEC Council Meeting.

9.5 Procedures for Endorsement of Policy Documents to the ASEAN Mechanism

144. The Council was informed on the Procedures for Endorsement of Policy Documents to the ASEAN Mechanism which was developed taking into consideration the discussions during the

21FCG/ASSP Meeting as reported by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat (**Annex 30**). Specifically, the Council was informed that during the 21FCG/ASSP, the Meeting agreed that policy documents submitted to the FCG/ASSP should be those that have already been endorsed by the SEAFDEC Council. The Council was also informed on the establishment of the FCG/ASSP Focal Points comprising members from the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries in order that matters requiring urgent consideration could be considered and endorsed by the FCG/ASSP *ad referendum*, prior to their submission to the ASWGFi.

145. The Council noted that this issue was raised because of the discussions on submission of policy documents and common positions that passed through the FCG/ASSP Meeting to the SEAFDEC Council Meeting and then to the ASWGFi Meeting following the sequence of these meetings. However, after consideration of the documents by the FCG/ASSP Meeting and submission to the SEAFDEC Council Meeting, the SEAFDEC Council might have further comment on the documents. Therefore, the FCG/ASSP Focal Point was established to assure that the documents submitted to the ASWGFi Meeting has passed through the appropriate FCG/ASSP mechanism.

146. The Council Director for Japan expressed his view that it might not be necessary for Japan to be included in the FCG/ASSP Focal Points, considering that Japan is not a member to ASEAN and the SEAFDEC Council is higher than the FCG/ASSP Focal Points, and that the issues that had already been decided by the SEAFDEC Council could not be amended by the FCG/ASSP Focal Points. In this regard, this 51CM confirmed that the SEAFDEC Council of Directors is the highest authority to make final decisions under the SEAFDEC mechanism; while the FCG/ASSP is joint mechanism between ASEAN and SEAFDEC to serve as channel for regional programs and policy documents submitted for endorsement through the ASEAN mechanism.

147. The Council Director for Singapore observed that the issue seemed to be that policy documents yet to be approved by Council was already channeled into the ASEAN Mechanism. As such, she suggested that an option was to rearrange the FCG/ASSP meetings to be convened after the Council Meetings. With regards to this suggestion, the Council Director for Viet Nam explained that such change would require amendment of the TOR of the FCG/ASSP. Furthermore, convening the FCG/ASSP Meeting has always been after the Program Committee Meeting (PCM) and prior to the Council Meeting in order that programs and matters that had been approved by the PCM could be scrutinized by the FCG/ASSP Meeting prior to their submission for endorsement by the SEAFDEC Council and the ASEAN mechanism.

148. The Council reiterated that with the establishment of the FCG/ASSP Focal Points, matters that need to be submitted to the ASWGFi could be coursed through the FCG/ASSP Focal Points after approval by the SEAFDEC Council without waiting until the next FCG/ASSP Meeting.

9.6 Future of RFPN after 2019

149. The Council was informed by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat on the status after 2019 of the Regional Fisheries Policy Network at the SEAFDEC Secretariat (**Annex 31**), which is currently being supported by the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project and the Japanese Trust Fund. The Council was also informed that after 2019 funding from the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project would no longer be available to support the RFPN although the JTF could still be availed of.

150. After the deliberation, the Council agreed that the RFPN should be continued with support from the JTF. Specifically, the JTF would support four (4) RFPN members in each year on a rotational basis, following the alphabetical order of the SEAFDEC Member Countries. For countries that do not wish to send an RFPN member with support from the JTF, the opportunity would be passed on to countries in the next order. Nevertheless, countries other than the four that gets JTF support, could consider sending their staff as RFPN members at their own funding arrangement.

9.7 Other Matters

- **Formation of Singapore Food Agency**

151. The Council Director for Singapore informed the Council on the following changes in the government structure of Singapore in relation to the operations of SEAFDEC/MFRD:

- A new statutory board Singapore Food Agency (SFA) will be formed on 1st April 2019 from the merger of Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) and part of 2 other statutory boards. This re-organisation will bring together related functions and streamline processes to provide a more holistic oversight of Singapore's food safety, food security and all other relevant food-related matters. SFA will continue to uphold Singapore's commitment to implement the MFRD programmes.
- SFA's Marine Aquaculture Centre (MAC), will replace PHTC as the Collaborating Centre to implement the MFRD programmes.

152. The Council was also informed that such statements had been incorporated in the Plan of Operation and Program of Work: Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD) Programmes (Revised 2019) which appears as **Annex 32**.

- **Rules for Paperless SEAFDEC Meetings**

153. The Council Director of Japan proposed that future SEAFDEC meetings should be paperless, (*i.e.* replacing hard copies of documents with electronic formats of the working documents to be presented and shared by meeting participants, or participants can download the document files from the SEAFDEC website and print if necessary), unless the SEAFDEC Secretariat is requested to provide some participants with hardcopies of the working documents prior to the meetings. In response, the Deputy Secretary-General informed the Council that at least the SEAFDEC annual meetings, such as the Program Committee Meetings and Council Meetings, would be paperless, while SEAFDEC would try its best to make other technical meetings paperless as deemed practical.

154. Upon the request of the Council, the Rules for Paperless SEAFDEC Meetings (**Annex 33**) was developed by the SEAFDEC Secretariat and supported by the Council.

- **ASEAN Meeting on Combating IUU Fishing in Partnership with the EU**

155. The Council Director for Thailand informed the Council that the Department of Fisheries, Thailand in association with the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument or E-READI will convene the ASEAN Meeting on Combating IUU Fishing in Partnership with the EU on 4-5 April 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting aims to develop and create an operational network that would enable easy communication between the relevant enforcement agencies and national authorities, and share and exchange of information between relevant flag States, coastal States, port States, and RFMOs with the AMSs. He added that the invitation letters had already been sent to the AMSs by the ASEAN Secretariat, and it is expected that the Meeting would provide opportunity for the AMSs to share ideas, discuss and identify work, priorities, and best practices that will be used for developing the scope and work plan for the establishment of ASEAN IUU fishing task force.

X. FINANCIAL MATTERS

10.1 Adoption of Audited Financial Report for the Year 2017

156. 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 2017 including that of the Secretariat and the four Departments for the Year 2017 (**Annex 34**) 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 2018, and Status of the Financial Situation in the Year 2019

157. The Council took note of the Un-audited Consolidated Financial Report for the Year 2018 (**Annex 35**), which comprised the Un-audited Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2018, the Un-audited Statements of Income and Expenditures for the Year 2018, and the Un-audited Fund Balance as of 31 December 2018, as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat.

158. With regards to the Minimum Regular Contribution (MRC) in 2019, the Council noted the commitment expressed by the Council Director for Viet Nam that the country's MRC in the amount of USD 26,000 will be transferred to SEAFDEC, but requested SEAFDEC to send again the official letter which is needed to facilitate the internal procedures for transferring the money from Viet Nam to SEAFDEC.

159. The Council Director for Indonesia informed the Council that Indonesia will transfer the MRC to SEAFDEC by the end of March 2019, while the Council Director for Myanmar will transfer the MRC to SEAFDEC by April 2019.

160. The Council endorsed the Status of the Financial Situation for the Year 2019 (**Annex 36**), which includes the un-audited financial report at the end of 2018.

161. The Council approved the new auditing firms for the period 2018-2022 and noted that the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year 2018, Secretariat Financial Statements for the Year 2018, and the Training Department Financial Statements for the Year 2018 would be audited by Auditor *Mr. Pongsakorn Suwannasaksin* of the Auditing Firm P. Polymaths Audit Company Limited. Meanwhile, AQD's Financial Statements for the Year 2018 would be audited by *Mr. Orvil Deroja* of the KPMG R.G. Manabbat & Co.; and MFRDMD Financial Statements for the Year 2018 would be audited by *Mrs. Rosdelima Binti Mohd Ali Jaafar* of the Messrs Rosdelima & Co. (AF 1563). The Audited Financial Statements of SEAFDEC for the Year 2018 would be presented during the Fifty-second Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in 2020.

10.3 Proposed Budgetary Requirements of the Center for the Year 2020

162. While expressing satisfaction with the manner of which the budget is utilized by SEAFDEC, the Council approved the proposed budgetary requirements of the Center for the Year 2020 as shown in **Annex 37**. However, in order to give more time for consideration by the Council of the proposed budgetary requirements of the Center, the Council Director for Japan suggested that the necessary documents should also be provided to the SEAFDEC Council of Directors in advance.

163. After the discussion, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General expressed the gratitude of SEAFDEC to the Council for endorsing the proposed budgetary requirements of the Center for the year 2020.

10.4 Other Financial Matters

164. On the concern raised by the Council Director for the Philippines regarding the utilization of the accumulated funds, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General explained that such funds are used for

important events that have not been previously allocated with funds (*e.g.* celebration of the 50th Anniversary of SEAFDEC), renovations and maintenance of buildings and facilities, acquisition of office equipment, and so on. However, he assured the Council that the SEAFDEC funds including the accumulated funds are spent in the most prudent, modest, and cost-effective manner.

165. Moreover, the Council Director for the Philippines also suggested about the possibility of rearranging the agenda of the future SEAFDEC Council Meetings, specifically the agenda involving the financial status of the Center which should be presented before the agenda on any matter that requires budgetary consideration or decision by the Council.

XI. CONCLUDING MATTERS

11.1 Adoption of the Meeting Report and Press Statement

166. The Council adopted the Report of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council and the Press Statement on the results of the Meeting on 22nd March 2019 as shown in **Annex 38**.

167. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC on behalf of SEAFDEC expressed his utmost gratitude to the Chairperson of the SEAFDEC Council for excellently orchestrating the 51st Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in Surabaya City, Indonesia. He also thanked the organizers from Indonesia for the outstanding arrangements that made all non-Indonesian participants very comfortable during their stay in Surabaya City.

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

168. In considering the date and venue of the Fifty-second Meeting of the Council, the Council Director for Japan informed the Council that the Government of Japan would accept the responsibility of hosting the next Council Meeting in Tokyo, Japan in March or April 2020.

169. The Council expressed the appreciation to the offer of Japan to host the next Council Meeting in Japan, and requested the Secretary-General to discuss with the Council Director for Japan to finalize the exact date and venue of the next meeting of the SEAFDEC Council.

11.3 Vote of Thanks to the Host Government

170. The Council Director for Myanmar, on behalf of the SEAFDEC Council of Directors expressed the appreciation of the Council to the Government of Indonesia for hosting and for the excellent arrangements of this 51CM. He also congratulated the Chairperson of the Meeting for the successful conduct of the 51CM, and looked forward to enhancing SEAFDEC to enable it to continue performing its role in the sustainable development of fisheries in our region. He also expressed the gratitude to the Secretariat of the Meeting especially the staff of MMAF of Indonesia for the smooth arrangements of the Meeting and for the memorable moments in Surabaya City, Indonesia. His Remarks appears as **Annex 39**.

XII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

171. The Chairperson expressed the appreciation to the SEAFDEC Council of Directors and the representatives from regional and international organizations as well as to the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Chiefs of Departments for the support accorded him during the 51CM. He reiterated that the recommendations obtained from the 51CM would strengthen the cooperation among Member Countries and expressed the hope that all the decisions made would accelerate the implementation of SEAFDEC programs and activities in 2019 benefiting all the Member Countries through mutual respect and cooperation. He also expressed his sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Meeting for their hard work which led to the success of the 51CM. With that

note, he declared the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council closed. His Closing Remarks appears as **Annex 40**.

172. On behalf of SEAFDEC, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC expressed his sincere thanks to the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia for the warm hospitality during the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in the beautiful City of Surabaya. He also thanked the Chairperson of the Meeting for his excellent leadership during the 51CM. He stated that the Meeting obtained a very fruitful discussion to assess and address the issues that would enable SEAFDEC and the Member Countries to set the direction and policies for the implementation of SEAFDEC programs and projects. He assured the Council that SEAFDEC would do its best to support the Member Countries to ensure that they are on track in achieving the SDG 14 by implementing sustainable fisheries management and responsible fishing practices in the region. This 51CM has therefore created concrete actions toward sustainable fisheries development in the region. He also extended his appreciation to the members of the organizing team of the Government of Indonesia as the host country, for their unstinted support for this important Meeting.