STATEMENT OF INFOFISH

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The Implications of the On-Going and Potential Future Collaborative Efforts between INFOFISH and SEAFDEC

Honorable Chairman, Secretary General, Distinguished Council Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great honor to associate myself with this important SEAFDEC event. It is heartening to acknowledge the growing cooperation and collaboration between INFOFISH and SEAFDEC. At this point, let me also express our wish that everyone is safe and in good health amidst these challenging times.

INFOFISH set up in 1981 as a project of Food and Agriculture Organization, with Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, became an Intergovernmental Organization with ten member countries in 1987. Since its inception, INFOFISH has established itself as the premier regional organization responsible for disseminating trade, price, marketing and technical information to the industry. It also serves as a channel of conveying results of research and developmental work to the global industry, thus facilitating trade and investment. In this respect the dissemination machinery of the organization, which consists of regular publications such as "INFOFISH International" and "INFOFISH Trade News", an extensive communication network, as well as trade and commodity conferences, training programmes, industry seminars etc conducted by INFOFISH play an important role in promoting fisheries trade and investment in the region.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the organisation’s focus and activities. Instead, INFOFISH has adapted to the new circumstances, made some changes in approach, and adopted new communication technology. Accordingly, webinars, podcasts and online trainings are currently being used as the vehicle to ensure that information dissemination and activities for member countries are uninterrupted.

Amidst the new challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to acknowledge that the regional industry continues to grow while its needs are developing. All the more, there is an urgent need to strengthen domestic markets and local stakeholders for the survival of the industry. Moreover, regulatory requirements and increased emphasis on safety and quality related issues continue play crucial roles. In this respect the FISHINFONetwork set up by FAO, with INFOFISH as the Asia-Pacific arm, could play a very important role. The network consists of sister organizations in Latin America (INFOPESCA), Africa (INFOPECHE), Arab Region (INFOSAMAK), Eastern Europe (EURO) and China (INFOYU).

Recognizing the long term relationship between SEAFDEC and INFOFISH and the mutual benefits both organizations could achieve through enhanced cooperation, we are delighted with the recent signing the MoU between SEAFDEC and INFOFISH. This MoU is significant milestone in our ongoing co-operation and collaboration. Let me take this opportunity to thank SEAFDEC for mooting this thought.

INFOFISH expertise in gathering and disseminating knowledge on fisheries and aquaculture policy, practice, and data will continue to underpin its on-going activities, projects, and events as well as new planned projects. The organization’s activities will also focus on capacity building via various training programmes through which a platform for sharing of knowledge between Member Countries for the mutual benefit of all parties is developed. Emphasis will also be on the Sustainable
Development Goals (SDGs), implementation of guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, IUU fishing, traceability, climate change etc. In this context, the MoU we have signed brings in line all the activities being planned for the coming year.

As spelt out in the MoU, our areas partnership comprise, cooperation on exchange of information including publications, cooperation for joint research and capacity building activities of mutual interest; participation in each other organization’s training activities and other activities/cooperation which may be mutually determined. In this regard, let me record our sincere appreciation to SEAFDEC for granting of 5 allocations for Observers from INFOFISH member countries at the Regional Training on Port State Measures Implementation for Inspectors which took place from 22-26 July 2019. We are also grateful to the opportunity to be able to participate at SEAFDEC’s Teleseminar on Way Forward for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Southeast Asia held from 24 – 26 August 2020. INFOFISH also looks forward to availing SEAFDEC’s assistance on Post-Harvest Losses/Fish Handling, Training of Trainers (TOT) on Fish Handling Techniques On-board Fishing Vessels as well as Online Training of eACDS.

We are pleased to also have had SEAFDEC participate at INFOFISH Training Webinar on Market Intelligence and Market Analysis which was held on 23 June, 2020 that provided training on market analysis skills development. We are also organizing a Virtual Regional Training Programme on Certification with technical support from FAO-Globefish, Rome and the invitation is also extended to SEAFDEC to participate. The programme is scheduled from 11-12 November 2020 and the aim of this two-day activity is to cover certification schemes criteria, implementing tools and guidelines to capacitate the government on Certification for Sustainable Fisheries. Similar programmes being planned is the Regional Workshop/Training on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the aim of assisting INFOFISH Member Countries in harmonising relevant SDG targets, particularly SDG14, with their national policies. This activity is being planned with assistance from FAO-Globefish. Other areas of cooperation and collaboration are through upcoming potential consultancies through which the technical expertise of SEAFDEC could be availed.

INFOFISH is optimistic in this milestone endeavour through the MoU with SEAFDEC to strengthen the co-operation and collaboration as we work towards a resilient industry. I conclude by wishing a very successful and productive Council session.

Thank you.