



PLAN OF ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FOR FOOD SECURITY FOR THE ASEAN REGION TOWARDS 2020

(ADOPTED)

On the occasion of the ***ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security Towards 2020: Fish for the People 2020 “Adaptation to a Changing Environment”***, the Senior Officials of ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries met in Bangkok, Thailand on 16 June 2011.

Guided by the Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020, and the need to enhance collaboration among government agencies that have responsibility for fisheries and fisheries-related issues in order to harmonise policies, plans and activities that support sustainable fisheries, food security and safety at the national and regional levels, the Senior Officials adopted the following Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020 to be used as a guideline to develop programs, projects and activities for the implementation of the Resolution.

A. PLANNING AND INFORMATION

1. Integrate the planning of marine capture fisheries, inland capture fisheries and the aquaculture subsectors to promote the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, including harvesting and post-harvest in both capture fisheries and aquaculture.
2. Strengthen the capacity to plan for sustainable fisheries in the context of changing socio-economic and ecological environments through the mobilisation of the most up-to-date data and information and the provision of appropriate policy summaries for decision makers.
3. Strengthen national statistical mechanisms for fisheries and aquaculture and the exchange of statistical data and related information. Include other non-routine data and information such as fish consumption surveys as well as mobilising local and indigenous knowledge with the aim of improving the valuation of fisheries and monitoring their performance, to address the needs of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and adaptation to climate change.
4. Enhance regional fishery information systems and mechanisms to facilitate sharing, exchange and compilation of statistics and information that are required at the sub-regional and regional level and apply, where appropriate, regionally standardised definitions and classifications for statistical data to facilitate regional compilation, analysis and data exchange.
5. Coordinate, decentralize and enhance the sharing of relevant statistics and information of fisheries related statistical data and information between the national fisheries and other authorities including those responsible for food security, environment, trade, aquaculture, water resources, agriculture/forestry, wetlands, migration/employment and rural development.

6. Further develop simple and practical indicators in support of planning and monitoring of sustainable fisheries.

B. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

7. Regularly review, update and strengthen national fisheries policy, legal and institutional frameworks through consultation and engagement of government agencies, the private sector, fishers, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.
8. Accelerate the development of fisheries management plans based on an ecosystem approach, as a basis for fisheries conservation and management.
9. Take measures to prevent unauthorised fishing and eliminate the use of illegal fishing practices by building awareness of their adverse impacts, strengthening law enforcement, developing and promoting responsible and selective fishing gears and practices, enforcing regulations and encouraging alternative means of livelihoods.
10. Establish and implement comprehensive policies for an ecosystem approach to fisheries management through effective systems (i) to provide licenses to fish (boats, gear and people), (ii) for community fishing rights/rights-based fisheries, (iii) that provide for the development of supporting legal and institutional frameworks, (iv) encourage and institutional cooperation, and (v) that aid in streamlining co-management.
11. Adopt co-management at all levels and with all relevant stakeholders in the process of planning and policy formulation for management, conservation and rehabilitation of habitats and protective geographical features, as well as policy formulation on the use and management of natural and human resources to ensure that climate change responses are integrated into fisheries policy frameworks.
12. Strengthen the capacity of fisheries communities and the capability of fisheries related organisations, NGOs and the private sector to better implement necessary actions towards enabling the communities and local organisations to increase resilience, improve livelihoods, alleviate poverty, adopt alternative livelihoods adapt to climate change in support of achieving sustainable development, and encourage the participation of women and youth groups in the process.
13. Enhance and promote the participation of local communities, fisheries associations and other stakeholders in fisheries management and co-management. In addition, communities should take part in fisheries and stock assessments by providing data, local ecological knowledge, and status of the stocks.
14. Raise awareness of the need to develop financial incentives, especially for small-scale stakeholders and cooperatives, e.g. micro-credit, with national and regional institutional assistance for the responsible development of fisheries enterprises and developmental activities that will optimise socio-economic returns and food security.
15. Increase the efficient use of the alternative energy sources and reduce the use of carbon fossil energy by using appropriate fishing gear and fishing boats designs in fishing operations.
16. Encourage good and appropriate employment practices in accordance with domestic laws and regulations.
17. Develop guidelines and enhance the capacity of relevant authorities and communities to collaboratively resolve conflict with other stakeholders and with other competing users of resources.
18. Investigate the potential of under-utilised fisheries resources and promote their exploitation in a precautionary manner based upon analysis of the best available

scientific information.

19. Enhance joint ASEAN programmes to better protect the livelihoods of small-scale producers and for a more equitable distributions of benefits gained from both intra and extra regional trade of fish and fishery products.
20. Adjust existing programs to take into consideration the effects of climate change, focusing on the programs for (i) managing fisheries and habitats, (ii) reducing fishing capacity and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, (iii) strengthening local organisations, and (iv) promoting safety at sea and other priority areas. Develop indicators and reporting measures to assess how actions of the programs build resilience to climate change.

MARINE FISHERIES

21. Strengthen regional and national policy and legislation to implement measures and activities to combat IUU fishing, including the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat IUU fishing, and promote the awareness and understanding of international and regional instruments and agreements through information dissemination campaigns.
22. Establish and strengthen regional and sub-regional coordination on fisheries management and efforts to combat IUU fishing including the development of regional/sub-regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) networks.
23. Facilitate consultative dialogue among fisheries legal officers to share, at the sub-regional/regional level, perspectives of the respective legal and regulatory framework in terms of developing MCS-networks and to implement efforts to combating IUU fishing.
24. Build up capacity among Member Countries, including functions for regional and sub-regional cooperation, to effectively meet the requirements of port state measures and flag state responsibilities.
25. Conduct research on the impacts of various gear types and methods, including light fishing, trawls and push nets, on ecosystems and populations of aquatic animals and also the effects of fishing vessel discharges and waste disposal on marine ecosystems, to promote the use of selective fishing gears and sustainable devices.
26. Take reference from the FAO International Guidelines on Managing By-catch and Reducing Discards, where applicable, to identify and find solutions to ASEAN by-catch problems, including the excessive catch of juvenile fish.
27. Optimise the use of inshore waters through resource enhancement programs such as promoting the installation of artificial reefs and structures, encouraging coordinated and effective planning for coastal fisheries management programs, undertaking environmental impact assessment studies, restocking of commercially important fish species, as appropriate, and give priority to human resources development for the implementation of such programs.
28. Ensure the inclusion of fisheries objectives in the management plans of future Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and promote the adoption and use of the refugia concept in line with the ASEAN/SEAFDEC Regional Guideline on the use of Fisheries Refugia in Capture Fisheries Management, where appropriate.
29. Recognising the different management approaches that are required, sustainably manage major critical coastal habitats, such as mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass; and develop and disseminate information and guidance on appropriate tools and interventions.

30. Strengthen efforts to address safety at sea, including considerations of working conditions and socio-economic development, and ensure that these considerations are addressed by all concerned authorities while improving monitoring and control of the status of conditions, especially on small fishing boats.
31. Assess the possible impact of government subsidies on fisheries, particularly the impact on the special requirements and the needs of small-scale fisheries in the region.

INLAND FISHERIES

32. Establish and implement comprehensive policies and supporting legal and institutional frameworks for an ecosystem approach to inland fisheries management by integrating fisheries and habitat management that devolves co-management to the local authority and stakeholders, and at the same time strengthens the rights of communities and develops rights-based fisheries.
33. Undertake campaigns to promote awareness of the importance of freshwater fisheries for local food security, and the importance of rehabilitating and restoring habitats for migratory freshwater fish, restocking indigenous fish species to enhance productivity and encouraging culture-based freshwater fisheries, where appropriate.
34. Develop inter-agency coordination (national/sub-regional) on multiple-use water resources of the wetlands/flood-plains to sustain freshwater fisheries, mitigate conflicts between users and also encourage better coordination to address trans-boundary inland fisheries management issues.
35. Ensure the sustainability of inland fisheries by maintaining ecological health of the ecosystem, particularly the inter-connectivity of habitats and the specific management needs during the dry season. Develop mitigating measures for the adverse impacts on inland fisheries that may be caused by the construction of water infrastructure and alteration of water ways.
36. Encourage coordinated planning on the use of inland rivers, water-bodies and flood plains through (i) resource enhancement programs, (ii) inland wetlands and fisheries management programs, (iii) environmental impact assessment studies with regards to structures that might impact on aquatic resources, (iv) the consideration of restocking of locally and/or commercially important inland fish species, and (v) giving priority to human resources development for the implementation of such programs.
37. Formulate guidelines to promote the use of practical and simple indicators for inland/flood-plain fisheries within the national inland fisheries management framework, to facilitate (i) timely local level fisheries management decisions with due respect to the large number of people/farmers that take part in fishing (ii) dialogue to ensure that the inter-connectivity of fish migration path is kept as a tool for management/conservation measures, and (iii) adaptation to the effects of climate change within catchments.
38. Monitor the impact of the structures that might affect migration and spawning of fish through a consultative process that involves collaboration with the regional organisations.

C. AQUACULTURE

39. Ensure that national programs and policies on aquaculture address social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable aquaculture to improve food security, livelihoods, employment and poverty alleviation by (i) providing the mechanisms and enabling environment for good aquaculture practices, efficient markets and fair trade, (ii) strengthening the capacity of small-holder farmers, and (iii) promoting inter-agency collaborations.
40. Develop and implement ASEAN guidelines for environment-friendly and responsible aquaculture and good aquaculture practices that cover (i) the integration of quality and safety management systems for products with significant trade potential, (ii) the harmonisation for chemical use and food safety in aquaculture, (iii) the development of product traceability systems from farm to market, and (iv) harmonization of the quarantine and inspection/sampling procedure and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures for aquaculture products to secure food safety.
41. Integrate aquaculture into rural development activities within the context of multiple-use of land and water resources through inter-agency coordination in policy formulation, project planning and implementation, stakeholder consultation, extension services and technology transfer; participate in and provide support to regional initiatives that will assess the role of aquaculture in poverty alleviation for better policy formulation.
42. Implement measures or strategies at national and local level to (i) monitor and regulate aquaculture operations, (ii) prevent over development, and (iii) ensure that activities are carried out in an environment-friendly manner. This also includes effectively enforcing regulations to avoid conflict in the use of common resources and adopting the concept of environmental capacity as a strategy to prevent aquatic pollution brought about by intensification of aquaculture activities.
43. Provide government support for research and development (R&D) on (i) improving existing genetic resources, (ii) assessing the impact of climate change on broodstock management, and (iii) the feeding and disease management of broodstock.
44. Promote the production and distribution of specific pathogen-free (SPF) and quality seed through the (i) establishment of certified government or private hatcheries as sources of quality seed, (ii) dissemination of new breeding technologies and techniques for the effective distribution and maintenance of genetically improved strains, and (iii) implementation of sound policies that will promote better hatchery management practices, including the responsible collection and use of wild broodstock and seed.
45. Apply the concept of aquatic biosecurity by providing support to (i) research for development of domesticated, genetically improved, specific pathogen-free (SPF) cultured species, and (ii) the small-scale hatchery operators and farmers so as to enhance their access to healthy broodstock and improve their ability to adopt, at the farm level, the established techniques for aquatic animal health care.
46. Formulate and implement complementary and supportive policies that will (i) build the capacity of small-scale farmers and hatchery operators in adopting simple broodstock and hatchery technologies and innovations, (ii) enhance small-scale farmers and hatchery operators' access to quality broodstock and SPF seeds produced through farmer-friendly broodstock management methods, and (iii) foster strong cooperation between the public and private sectors engaged in development and dissemination of quality broodstock and seed stock.

47. Encourage good and appropriate employment practices in accordance with domestic laws and regulation.
48. Raise awareness of the need to develop financial incentives and micro-credit, with national and regional institutional assistance, for the responsible development of aquaculture enterprises and developmental activities that will optimise socio-economic returns and food security.
49. Reduce the risk of negative environmental impacts, loss of biodiversity, and disease transmission by regulating the introduction and transfer of aquatic organisms in accordance with the Regional Guidelines on the Responsible Movement of Live Aquatic Animals and Plants.
50. Continue the national efforts to control serious disease outbreaks by providing government support to (i) R&D to improve the ability to handle new and emerging diseases and surveillance of transmission of diseases to wild populations and (ii) regional initiatives on harmonisation of regional disease control standards, disease reporting and implementation of contingency plans to handle new and emerging diseases.
51. Further enhance the capabilities in the diagnosis and control of fish diseases within the region through (i) continued support in development of technology and techniques for disease identification, (ii) promotion of the widespread use of affordable, field-friendly, rapid and standardised diagnostic tests, and (iii) the establishment of regional and inter-regional referral systems, including the designation of reference laboratories and timely access to disease control experts within the region.
52. Develop regional warning systems on aquatic animal health and diseases to inform other Member Countries of relevant epidemiological events and to raise awareness of new diseases that may pose risks. Build emergency preparedness capacity through rapid and timely responses to reduce potential catastrophic consequences of diseases.
53. Improve the efficient use of aquatic feeds by strictly regulating the quality of manufactured feed and feed ingredients and support continued research for developing suitable alternative protein sources that will reduce the dependence on fish meal and other fish-based products. This effort will include the consideration of ingredients not derived from wild caught fish, encouraging the culture of species requiring no or low fish meal content in their feed and applying effective feeding management practices, taking into account the need for cultural and social acceptance of alternative feed ingredients.
54. Improve human resource capabilities for responsible aquaculture through (i) closer public and private sector collaboration in R&D, paying particular attention to the need for advanced skills in biotechnology and assessment of the efficacy and economics of the use of probiotics and immunostimulants; and (ii) effectively implementing aquaculture education and extension services.
55. Formulate and implement national policies and strategies that will enable the aquaculture sector to mitigate and/or adapt better to the impacts of climate change. These strategies should include providing support to R&D on climate change, increasing resilience, and strengthening the overall capacity of various stakeholder groups and fostering cooperation within the aquaculture sector and with other sectors.
56. Where applicable, encourage good practices in aquaculture such as the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

57. Encourage Member Countries to take a precautionary approach to safeguard the environment from the acceleration of offshore aquaculture, and to consider developing regional guidelines on responsible marine (inshore to offshore) aquaculture.

D. OPTIMAL UTILISATION OF FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

58. Introduce and provide support for the development and application of technologies that optimise the utilisation of catch, reduce post-harvest losses, wastes and discards in commercial and small-scale fisheries and processing operations, through improved processing, facilities and infrastructure development, on-board and on-shore handling, storage, distribution and marketing of fish and fishery products.
59. Promote the production of and preserve the diversity of traditional fish products by assisting producers to secure stable supplies of quality raw materials, meet food safety requirements and to improve product identity, nutritive value and marketing. In the process, promote One Village One Fisheries Product (FOVOP) and other initiatives to promote local fishery products.
60. Develop traceability systems, with mechanisms as needed to certify or validate the information, for the whole supply chain, and establish regulations and enforcement schemes in line with international standards. Align Member Countries' inspection systems and incorporate strengthened port inspections in the process as a means to improve inspection systems.
61. Strengthen fish quality and safety management systems that support the competitive position of ASEAN fish products on world markets, including moving towards ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation of national fish inspection laboratories, strengthening capacity and acknowledging the recognized national laboratories, risk analysis and equivalence agreement such as the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and promote the implementation of the quality and safety management systems among small and medium enterprises in the ASEAN region.
62. Encourage relevant control agencies at all levels in applying appropriate legislation and coordinated activities regarding the handling, processing, distribution, storage, marketing, quality and safety of fish and fishery products.
63. Promote and conduct training programs and develop training materials to upgrade the technical skills and competencies of personnel in the public and private sectors on fisheries post-harvest technology and food safety management system.
64. Raise awareness of the need to develop financial incentives and micro-credit, with national and regional institutional assistance for the responsible development of fisheries and aquaculture enterprises and developmental activities that will optimise socio-economic returns and food security.
65. Encourage good and appropriate employment practices in accordance with domestic laws and regulations.
66. Develop standards and guidelines for aquaculture products handling and transportation, hygienic vessel design and construction, and include training of fish handling as part of the requirement for issuance of permits at all levels for fish vessel crews, and encourage new workers to enter the industry where needed.

E. FISH TRADE

67. Strengthen cooperation among Member Countries to implement international standards with regards to trade on fish and fishery products within the ASEAN region.
68. Establish regional/ASEAN standards applicable for fishery and aquaculture products that are in line with international requirements and applicable to the region. Harmonise standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures as inputs for the establishment of the ASEAN Policy Guidelines on Standards and Conformance, to increase the competitiveness of fishery products on regional and international markets.
69. Strengthen cooperation and mechanisms among Member Countries to work towards common positions that could be reflected in international fish trade related fora, such as World Trade Organisation (WTO), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Office International des Epizooties (OIE), Codex Alimentarius Commission, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
70. Engage the private sector (e.g. ASEAN Seafood Federation) in addressing trade related issues, and in collaborative efforts to promote and sustain regional and international trade.
71. Assist small-scale producers to comply with standards on safety and quality of fish and fishery products by providing support programs including training.
72. Assist small-scale producers from both capture fishery and aquaculture in securing and maintaining access to markets at the national, regional and international levels, and in the process, develop marketing systems that are not capital intensive and accessible for local producers.
73. Encourage and provide guidance to develop/improve branding of fish and fishery products that demonstrate the eco-friendly and socially acceptable nature of ASEAN fish products (e.g. one community one fishery product), including organic standards and coordination of Halal requirements.
74. Encourage the implementation of appropriate international standards and strengthen programs relevant to Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures, R&D, as well as capacity building and awareness raising on fish trade related issues, and information dissemination recognising the different status of development in Member Countries.
75. Strengthen risk assessment and R&D related to the use of Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) products in fisheries and aquaculture, including food safety issues.

F. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY FORMULATION

76. Increase participation and involvement of Member Countries in international fora and technical committees such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Codex Alimentarius Commission; Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO); Office International des Epizooties (OIE); Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs); and World Trade Organisation (WTO); and promote ASEAN interest, recognising that fisheries policies of relevance to the ASEAN region are increasingly discussed and agreed upon at the global level.