

**REPORT OF
THE SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (RAC)
Bangkok, Thailand
2-4 September 2009**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (RAC) was organized from 2 to 4 September 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Prospectus of the Meeting appears as **Annex 1**.

2. The Meeting was attended by the RAC Standing Members from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam; the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Advisor, and officials from the SEAFDEC Secretariat, TD, MFRD, AQD and MFRDMD. The Consultation was also attended by the representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO/RAP), Dr. David Lymer; and resource persons, namely: Dr. Teruhisa Komatsu from the Ocean Research Institute of the University of Tokyo in Japan, and Dr. John C. Pernetta, Advisor to the RAC Meeting. The List of Participants appears as **Annex 2**.

1.1 Opening of the Meeting

3. In his opening Statement, the RAC Standing Member from Thailand and out-going Chairman of RAC, Mr. Pirochana Saikliang recalled the several important fisheries management issues that were discussed during the first RAC Meeting held in September 2008, of which the outcomes were submitted to the SEAFDEC Council during its Forty-first Meeting in April 2009. Parallel with the RAC activities, the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments implemented several initiatives and programs aimed at contributing to improved fisheries management and resources utilization in the region. He added that the second Meeting of RAC is therefore envisaged to further look into such fisheries management issues and other relevant emerging issues, to elaborate the regional directions and requirements, and to formulate the recommendations to be further proposed to the SEAFDEC Council for consideration and policy guidance/support. He then emphasized on the need for the active participation of the Standing Members and other participants in the Meeting as well as the collaboration of the Member Countries in order to attain the outcomes from the Meeting and achieve the objectives of the 2nd RAC Meeting. His Statement appears as **Annex 3**.

4. The SEAFDEC Secretary General, Dr. Siri Ekmaharaj welcomed the RAC Standing Members as well as the other participants to the Meeting. He reiterated that the main objective of establishing RAC in 2008 was to provide policy recommendations to the SEAFDEC Council on the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources through improved fisheries management. Since additional important fisheries management-related issues would be discussed during the second RAC Meeting, he stressed that as envisioned the outcomes as well as the activities under the RAC mechanism would be further considered in order that such issues could be addressed by the Member Countries and SEAFDEC, and eventually contribute to the improvement of fisheries management as well as food security, sustainable livelihoods for the people, and economic development and integration of the Southeast Asian region. With that note, he then declared the Meeting opened. His Opening Remarks appears as **Annex 4**.

1.2 Election of the Chairman

5. The RAC Standing Member from Vietnam, Mr. Pham Trong Yen was unanimously elected as the Chairman of RAC.

6. While expressing his appreciation for being elected as the Chairman of the RAC, Mr. Pham Trong Yen reiterated the importance and the contribution of the fisheries sector to economic development, livelihood and food security of the Southeast Asian countries and emphasized on the need to address the issue of environmental degradation brought about by the continuous destruction of important habitats, e.g. mangrove forests, coral reefs, sea grass beds, and fish habitats, among others. Considering that the region's fishery resources are currently over-exploited and at various stages of deterioration, he added that the discussions at the 2nd RAC Meeting should focus on the appropriate fisheries management that could lead to the development of regional policy recommendations and advice to promote the enhancement of the fishery resources in order to ensure the sustainability of fisheries development in the region as a whole.

1.3 Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements of the Meeting

7. The Secretariat presented the background, objectives, agenda and arrangements of the Meeting. The agenda which appears as **Annex 5** was adopted.

II. REVIEW OF THE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND DIRECTIVES FROM THE 41ST MEETING OF SEAFDEC COUNCIL

2.1 Follow-up Activities on the Recommendations Made at the First Meeting of RAC

8. The review of the policy recommendations made at the First Meeting of RAC presented by Ms. Jariya Kankamnerd of SEAFDEC Secretariat, highlighted on the actions undertaken by SEAFDEC in response to the respective recommendations under five general headings, namely: 1) Promotion of innovative fisheries management, 2) Exploration of potential fisheries resources and sustainable utilization, 3) Promotion of aquaculture and feed management, 4) Data and information, and 5) Support for the implementation of RPOA for Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region. The linkage between RAC and the existing SEAFDEC Programs (Departmental Programs and Programs under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG-ASSP Mechanism) were also presented (**Annex 6**). In particular, the inter-linkage between RAC's recommendations and the existing activities undertaken by SEAFDEC were also elaborated on.

9. In order to ensure that the priority activities identified by RAC would be taken up by SEAFDEC, the Meeting recommended that the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments should, where possible and relevant, incorporate the required activities into the existing programs. In this connection, the Meeting was informed that under the existing SEAFDEC programs, several Technical Working Groups (TWGs) have already been established, e.g. the TWG on small pelagic fisheries (MFRDMD) and the TWG on Tuna Information Collection in Southeast Asia (TD), and that some of the priority issues and requirements of RAC could therefore be accommodated into the responsibilities of the TWGs under the existing SEAFDEC programs.

10. However, the RAC Standing Member from Japan explained that in some cases the TWGs established under the existing SEAFDEC programs may have different objectives and focus from those of RAC. In this regard, the Meeting suggested that the TWGs under RAC and the TWGs under the existing SEAFDEC programs may be separately established or the TWGs should closely coordinate with RAC in order to ensure that the interest of RAC would be appropriately incorporated in the TWGs activities, and that the current RAC mechanism and the budget required to support the establishment of separate TWG for RAC, should also be explored, e.g. Cost-sharing by Member Countries.

2.2 Directives from the 41st Meeting of SEAFDEC Council

11. The Meeting took note of the directives made by the SEAFDEC Council during its 41st Meeting, with particular focus on those that have close linkage between the functions of the SEAFDEC Program Committee and those of RAC. The Meeting also noted that the recommendations of the SEAFDEC Council should be taken into consideration in the discussion and development of regional directives and in the work plan of activities to be undertaken under the RAC mechanism.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATION ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ISSUES

3.1 Enhancement of Fisheries Resources/Stock

- ***Conservation and Restoration of Seagrass and Seaweed Beds to Achieve Sustainable Fisheries: A Japanese Case Study***

12. The initiatives of Japan in conserving and restoring sea grass and seaweed beds in order to achieve sustainable fisheries as demonstrated through a case study (**Annex 7**), were presented by Mr. Teruhisa Komatsu of the Ocean Research Institute of the University of Tokyo, Japan. In the presentation, he highlighted on the importance of sea grass and seaweed beds as primary producers in the coastal ecosystems and in stabilizing the bottom sediments and maintaining water quality as well as in enhancing biodiversity and providing habitat for several aquatic species. He then informed the Meeting about the strategies adopted by Japan in assessing the distribution of sea grass and seaweed beds, e.g. using satellite mapping, hydro-acoustic methods; and the various measures undertaken in the restoration and creation of sea grass and seaweed beds, e.g. deployment of artificial reefs, etc. He also introduced the concept of “Sato-Umi” which denotes high productivity and biodiversity in the coastal sea with human interaction as means of conserving fishery resources. With regards to the fishing gear that could be used in sea grass and seaweed bed areas, he expressed the view that push net and trawls should be prohibited while gill net and fish traps could be allowed as they are non-destructive for sea grass/seaweeds.

13. The Advisor to the RAC Meeting, Mr. John Pernetta informed the Meeting about the collaborative activities undertaken by UNEP/GEF/SCS and SEAFDEC in the integration of fisheries and ecosystem including the establishment of fisheries *refugia*. He mentioned that sea grass beds were among the main habitats focused under the UNEP/GEF/SCS-SEAFDEC activities considering their importance to the marine ecosystem and fishery resources, as well as their economic values in the South China Sea (SCS) area. However, he added that there is still very little data available on the extent and areas of sea grass beds in the Southeast Asian region. He cited the several projects/activities that were undertaken by the UNEP/GEF SCS, e.g. activities in response to the major threats on sea grass beds (e.g. land-based activities, destructive fishing activities such as push net and trawling), transplantation of sea grass (e.g. in Thailand and Philippines although success rates varied probably reflecting the different species used), and the establishment of important habitats as fisheries *refugia* (e.g. sea grass beds in Phu Quoc, Vietnam). He emphasized that understanding by the local people and the collaboration of local communities are among the key factors for successful establishment of fisheries *refugia* and implementation of activities on conservation/restoration of habitats.

- ***Management Activities for Improving the Productivity of Tidal Flats***

14. The paper on Improving the Productivity of Tidal Flats: An Attempt to Rehabilitate the Fishery Resources and Habitats (**Annex 8**), was presented by Mr. Akito Sato of the SEAFDEC Secretariat. He outlined the functions and productivity of tidal flats which are important habitats for various marine species, particularly shellfish, shrimps, crabs, demersal fish species, seaweeds, corals, etc. Studies and diagnosis, e.g. of the physical environment, biological environment, and bivalve resources could therefore be done to evaluate the productivity of tidal flats. He also elaborated on the

countermeasures for improving the production of the tidal flats, such as appropriate management of bivalves (in various stages of life cycle) and by improving the fishing ground environment.

15. As an example of improving the production of tidal flats, he cited the management of Matsuo Tidal Flats in Kumamoto Prefecture, facing the Ariake Sea of Japan, which include such activities as monitoring the trends of short-necked clam production, fishing ground management by fishermen, and resources enhancement activities. He added that after the implementation of such activities, the fishermen started to recognize the importance of fishing ground management to ensure the favorable environmental conditions and the long-term existence of the clams. He then suggested possible activities that could also be undertaken in the Southeast Asian region, i.e. survey of bivalve resource distribution in tidal flats, conduct of studies on the ecological conditions (water quality, habitats, sediment characteristics and species) and recovery measures of the coastal waters, as approaches in the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded fishing grounds.

- ***Initiatives on Resources Enhancement***

16. A presentation on the various initiatives on resources enhancement in the Southeast Asian region (**Annex 9**) was made by Dr. Yuttana Theparoonrat from SEAFDEC/TD. In particular, he elaborated on the initiatives undertaken by SEAFDEC and the Member Countries, which include the deployment of artificial reefs, installation of fish aggregating devices as well as fish enhancing devices, promotion of stock enhancement, and development of fishery *refugia*.

17. With regards to Artificial Reefs (ARs), the Meeting while reiterating the comment made by the SEAFDEC Council that implementation of activities on ARs should be based on the priority of Member Countries, noted that the SEAFDEC projects supported by the Japanese Trust Fund could also incorporate some aspects on ARs into the planned activities, but particular focus should be targeted on resources enhancement for small-scale fisheries.

- ***Stock Enhancement: Lessons Learned and Possible Policy Implications***

18. The initiatives of SEAFDEC/AQD on stock enhancement of aquatic species which are listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices or are heavily-exploited and economically-important in the region, as well as the important lessons learned from the activities (**Annex 10**), were presented by the SEAFDEC/AQD Chief, Dr. Joebert Toledo. He mentioned that the research and development activities focused on the strategies of sea ranching and stock enhancement for several species, e.g. seahorses, humphead wrasse, donkey's ear abalone, sea cucumber, angel-wing clam and giant clams. In addition, verification of the developed and established technologies were also conducted, e.g. growth and survival of hatchery-reared giant clam in ocean nurseries, and socio-economic analysis of the stock enhancement of abalone and giant clam.

19. Moreover, the lessons learned from the initiatives and experiences of SEAFDEC/AQD were also summarized indicating that the key elements for successful stock enhancement program could include: 1) Establishment of seed production technologies with emphasis on the preservation of the species genetic diversity, 2) Use of genetically sound production technologies and release procedures to minimize impacts on the wild population, 3) Conduct of impact assessment on the species concerned, habitats and fisheries conditions before and after the stock enhancement activities, 4) Development and adoption of release strategies to maximize survival rate, and 5) Involvement of the stakeholders in the stock enhancement activities. Furthermore, he stressed that other socio-economic aspects should also be taken into consideration in order to achieve a successful stock enhancement program.

20. In this connection, the Meeting suggested that in the implementation of stock enhancement programs, the impact on the genetic diversity and population structure should be carefully monitored, and that appropriate stock enhancement strategies should be developed and implemented to minimize

the adverse impact of the stock enhancement activities to the fish stock and the environment, e.g. Parent stock should come from the same areas. The Meeting while noting that SEAFDEC/AQD has already transferred the technologies particularly on seed production of various marine and freshwater fish species, also suggested that training should also be provided to enhance the capacity of Member Countries in assessing the impacts of stock enhancement programs on the population of concerned species and the environment.

21. Considering that SEAFDEC/TD and SEAFDEC/AQD are implementing programs with similar goals of enhancing the fishery resources and fish stocks, the Meeting suggested that SEAFDEC/TD and SEAFDEC/AQD should consider implementing a collaborative pilot project with integrated activities on habitat and stock enhancement, as well as monitoring the impacts of such activities. Nevertheless, the Meeting also took note of the fact that in comparing the approaches on habitat conservation/management and stock enhancement, the cost for establishing nursery for stock enhancement program could be higher and the application of the approaches by the SEAFDEC Member Countries could be very costly.

- ***Regional Approach on Enhancing Fisheries Resources***

22. An overview presentation on the status and trends of fishery resources in the Southeast Asian waters, the challenges faced by fisheries management to ensure sustainability of fish stocks, and the activities implemented by the respective Member Countries for the enhancement of fisheries resources in the region, was made by Ms. Sawitree Chamsai of the SEAFDEC Secretariat. In addition, the issues and considerations for future actions on enhancing fisheries resources were also presented (**Annex 11**).

23. While noting the decline of the main pelagic stocks in the Southeast Asian region, e.g. Sardines and Round Scads, the Meeting suggested that measures/approaches towards addressing the situation could include: 1) Management of fishing capacity, e.g. freezing of fishing efforts, and 2) Enhancement of stocks, e.g. deployment of Artificial Reefs, establishment of fisheries *refugia* (habitat for the critical life cycle of certain species). In addition, the Meeting also suggested that studies could be conducted to monitor the changes in the fishery resources after the implementation of such measures. The Meeting also emphasized on the importance of and necessity to maximize the use of data and information to support fisheries policy planning and management; and that the information from relevant SEAFDEC projects should be integrated to provide some basis for the promotion of sustainable fisheries management.

3.2 Improving Fisheries Management Mechanism

- ***Draft Plan of Action for Reducing the Impact from Fishing***

24. The past initiatives and efforts undertaken by SEAFDEC to promote the development and adoption of responsible fishing gear and practices in order to minimize the impact of fishing to the coastal and marine environments (**Annex 12**) were presented by Mr. Bundit Chokesanguan of SEAFDEC/TD. Such initiatives have been demonstrated through the implementation of various activities including among others, the Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), and Juvenile and Trash Excluder Devices (JTEDs). He also informed the Meeting that in January 2009 SEAFDEC conducted the Regional Workshop on the Reduction of the Impacts of Fishing on Coastal and Marine Environments in the Southeast Asian Waters, where discussions were made on the need to improve the designs and uses of fishing gears to mitigate the impacts of fishing on the coastal and marine environments, and the establishment of the Regional Network for the Reduction of the Impacts of Fishing on Coastal and Marine Environments in Southeast Asian Waters (IFCOME).

25. Moreover, the Meeting was also informed that in consideration of the possible negative impacts from several fishing gears and practices on the coastal and marine environments of the Southeast Asian region, the Draft Plan of Action (POA) for the Reduction of the Impacts of Fishing

on Coastal and Marine Waters in Southeast Asia was also developed with elaborations on the immediate (2009) plan, three-year plan and final goal for different groups of fishing gears/practices, namely: 1) light fishing, 2) stationary gears (e.g. tidal traps, stow-net, fyke net, Japanese set net, muro-ami, choko-ami, etc.), 3) active gears (e.g. trawls, dredge, push net, etc.); semi-passive gear and small-scale fishing gears (e.g. pot, gill net, etc.), 5) longline, and 6) purse seine operations associated with FADs.

26. The Meeting noted that the impacts from fishing gear and practices could be categorized into: 1) impacts to the marine resources, e.g. catch of juveniles and species under international concerns, etc., and 2) impacts to the environment, e.g. deterioration of bottom substrates, etc. The Meeting also noted that the impacts to marine resources are brought about by the use of gears with very small mesh size which could be alleviated by the implementation of regulations such as increasing the mesh size for fishing gears, adoption of closed seasons, and application of JTEDs, among others. However, since the impacts to the ecosystem are caused by the destructive nature of fishing gears, e.g. dredge, push net, bottom trawl, such destructive gears should be prohibited particularly in the waters with vulnerable bottom ecosystems.

27. The Meeting was also informed on the FAO/GEF Project Phase II on Reducing By-Catch and Change of Management in Tropical Shrimp Fisheries, which was started in 2009 with SEAFDEC serving as the Regional Technical Coordinator with the main role of assisting in the planning and implementation of the project.

28. The Meeting also noted that SEAFDEC in collaboration with Kasetsart University and Department of Fisheries, Thailand conducted scientific research on optimum light intensity/frequency for fishing operations in the Gulf of Thailand. The preliminary outcomes have been analyzed and the results are expected to be available by the end of 2009. In addition, SEAFDEC in collaboration with WWF is planning to organize a Smart Gear Competition in Thailand to support the draft POA.

29. After the discussion, the Meeting supported in principle the draft POA for the Reduction of the Impacts of Fishing on Coastal and Marine Waters in Southeast Asia, which needs further improvement and finalization before submission to the SEAFDEC Council for consideration and endorsement.

- ***Vessel Registration and Fisheries Licensing***

30. The initiatives on vessel registration and licensing undertaken by SEAFDEC in collaboration with the Member Countries (**Annex 13**), were presented by Ms. Pattaratjit Kaewnuratchadasorn of the SEAFDEC Secretariat. These were developed based on the outcomes from the Expert Meeting on Fishing Vessel Registration in Phuket, Thailand in July 2008, and the Workshop on Fishing Vessel Record and Inventory organized in Satun Province, Thailand in July 2009. Considering that the national structure of vessel registration and licensing systems differ between countries, harmonization of vessel registration records among the Member Countries has become necessary. In this regard, SEAFDEC has developed a regional framework and the draft Vessel Record and Inventory Survey Forms for large-scale and coastal fishing vessels, which could be adopted by the countries in the region.

31. The Meeting supported the initiatives and activities on regionally harmonizing vessel registration which should be continued as these are envisaged to help the Member Countries and the region in understanding the current level of fishing capacity, supporting the implementation of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) measures and combating Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, and in enhancing the safety at sea measures for small-scale fishing vessels. In addition, this would also enhance the capacity of the Member Countries in coming up with catch document system required for the export of fish and fishery products as well as basis for discussion and negotiation at the World Trade Organization (WTO) fora relevant to fisheries subsidies (fisheries

subsidies that lead to overfishing or over capacity are prohibited). Moreover, vessel registration would also help the Southeast Asian region as well as SEAFDEC in obtaining more reliable and comparable statistics and information on fishing vessels, which are useful information for policy planning and management of fisheries.

32. On the other hand, the Meeting also suggested that for inland fisheries, gear registration system should be developed as it could be more applicable and appropriate in visualizing the actual picture of the inland fishing capacity level.

- ***Improvement of Catch Documentation including Logbook System***

33. The rationale for the need to improve catch documentation including implementation of the logbook system (**Annex 14**) was presented by Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon of the SEAFDEC Secretariat. He informed the Meeting that the fishing logbook system is one of the primary data sources for catch documentation which is required for proper fisheries management to ensure the sustainable development of fisheries. Although the fishing logbook system has already been used by several countries in the region, the existing logbook system is mainly for statistical purposes, and may not specify the areas where fish are caught which is an important element for catch documentation.

34. In this regard, the Meeting took note and supported the proposal for the following activities to be taken into consideration in the implementation of catch documentation and fishing logbook system by the Member Countries: (1) establishment of guidelines for implementation of the catch documentation in the region; (2) making the catch documentation scheme applicable to commercial and small-scale fisheries; (3) sharing experiences on the best practices on the development of fishing logbook system; (4) exploring new devices for better tracking such as electronic tagging; (5) linking the fishing logbook system with vessel registration and/or licensing system as appropriate; and (6) enhancing capacity building.

35. While agreeing that improvement of the catch documentation scheme covering the logbook system is necessary, the Meeting suggested that the use of the logbook system could start with commercial large-scale fishing vessels and could be expanded later to also cover small-scale vessels.

36. Moreover, the Meeting also suggested that in order to improve the reliability of information in the logbook recorded by master fishermen, concerned government offices should also be involved in periodically validating the data. In addition, information on the areas where the fish had been caught should also be recorded in order to depict the data and information on fish production by fishing areas, and to support management for sustainable fisheries in the region.

37. While noting the possible obstacles that the Member Countries would encounter on the use of the logbook system, e.g. fishermen's difficulties in filling-up the logbook forms and other catch documents; the Meeting suggested that further study should be implemented including the conduct of a pilot project to introduce the use of logbook and catch documentation systems to fishermen, and that the logbook form should be simple enough and understandable by the small-scale fishermen. In addition, the Meeting also noted that advanced technologies and tagging system (e.g. Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) and ORBCOMM¹ systems) could also be employed by commercial vessels, and the information on the vessels and fishing location could be included in the individual fish (e.g. tuna) data, which could be retrieved when necessary.

¹ ORBCOMM is a leading global satellite data communications company providing low cost, reliable, two-way data communications services around the world through a global network of low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites and accompanying ground infrastructure. Installed on trucks, trailers, railcars, containers, heavy equipment, fluid tanks, utility meters, pipelines, marine vessels, oil wells and other assets, the ORBCOMM system can send and receive short messages in near real-time, allowing users to access critical information readily, often from areas beyond the geographic reach of terrestrial systems.

3.3 Other Issues

- *EU Catch Certificate*

38. The Meeting also discussed the issue related to the Regulation on the EU Catch Certification which would take effect on 1 January 2010, requiring that fish and fishery products to be exported to the European Union (EU) must be accompanied by a catch certificate. Considering that the Regulation would create impacts and hindrances in exporting fish and fish products by the SEAFDEC Member Countries to the EU, a series of discussions have been made at the national level by the respective countries as well as at the regional level through the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Technical Consultation on International Fisheries Related Issues.

39. While noting that it has become necessary for the region's exporting countries to comply with the EU Catch Certification requirements, the Meeting suggested that SEAFDEC (as RAC Secretariat) should continue to monitor the issue and compile the information on the status of the implementation of SEAFDEC Member Countries in response to the EU requirements, the problems/difficulties faced by the countries as well as appropriate solutions from the regional perspective. The Meeting also agreed that the issues and relevant information should be reported to the SEAFDEC Council for consideration and recommendation particularly on the technical support required from SEAFDEC.

IV. POLICY ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

40. Based on the presentations and discussion/recommendations on the issues and initiatives relevant to fisheries management in the region, the Committee developed and adopted the Regional Policy Recommendations to Improve Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (2009) which appears as **Annex 15**. The Regional Policy Recommendations to Improve Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (2009) would be submitted to the SEAFDEC Council for consideration and endorsement.

V. CONSIDERATION ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKING MECHANISM OF RAC

5.1 Hosting Arrangements of the RAC Meetings

41. The Meeting recalled the directives made by the SEAFDEC Council that the RAC meetings would be partially funded by the SEAFDEC Minimum Regular Contribution (SEAFDEC MRC) including the meeting costs and participation of the RAC Secretariat members, and that the Member Countries would bear the costs of their respective participation in the RAC meetings.

42. As regards to the hosting arrangements for RAC Meetings, the Meeting agreed that RAC meetings should be hosted by SEAFDEC (as RAC Secretariat) in Thailand, instead of conducting the meetings on rotation basis among the SEAFDEC Member Countries.

5.2 Streamlining the Working Mechanisms Between RAC and SEAFDEC Program Committee (Annex 16)

43. The Meeting took note of the suggestion made by the SEAFDEC Council at its 41st Meeting that *“Considering that there appears to be a close linkage between the functions of the SEAFDEC Program Committee and those of RAC and their scopes of coverage, SEAFDEC Secretariat should consider streamlining the working mechanisms of the two Committees as well as the Committees’ meetings to facilitate the discussion of common issues in order to save on resources.”*

44. In this regard, the Meeting discussed the possibility of conducting the RAC meetings back-to-back with the SEAFDEC Program Committee meetings. However, considering the different roles, the Terms of Reference (TOR), and memberships of RAC and the SEAFDEC Program Committee, the

Meeting suggested that the two meetings should be separately organized, and that RAC should focus on providing policy advice and recommendations to the SEAFDEC Council from the technical perspective without trying to create linkages to the SEAFDEC programs.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

45. The RAC Standing Member for Indonesia informed the Meeting on the outcomes from the World Ocean Conference (WOC) held in Manado, Indonesia in May 2009, which included the adoption of the Manado Declaration and the Coral Triangle Initiatives (CTI) Declaration. The Meeting in particular noted that during the WOC, climate change and its impact on the marine ecosystem as well as the requirements for actions in response to climate change impacts were among the highlighted issues, and that in 2009, meetings would be organized such as the Preparatory Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand (October 2009), and the Wrap-Up Meeting in Barcelona, Spain (November 2009) before the Conference of the Parties (COP) 15 of the United Nations Framework on Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark (2-18 December 2009). Since efforts would be made in order that the recommendations during the WOC would be adopted during the COP15-UNFCCC, Member Countries taking part in the Conference are requested to support this endeavor. Moreover, the Meeting also took note of the important recommendations in the Coral Triangle Initiatives Declaration, such as the establishment of the CTI secretariat, and finalization of the CTI regional and national action plan. As envisaged, the CTI activities could further contribute to the region's efforts in achieving the sustainability of the resources in its waters.

46. Furthermore, while noting that the COP15-CITES would be organized in mid-March 2010 in Qatar and that the deadline for submission of the listing proposals into the CITES Appendices has been set for October 2009, the Meeting suggested that SEAFDEC should communicate with the Member Countries as soon as possible on the relevant issues and concerns of the region in order to prepare the readiness of the Member Countries on CITES-related issues. The Meeting was also informed that the issues and concerns would be further discussed at the Regional Technical Consultation on International Fisheries Related Issues to be organized by SEAFDEC tentatively in January or early February 2010.

47. The Meeting reaffirmed the recommendations made during the first RAC Meeting that the RAC Secretariat should communicate with the RAC Standing Members to seek proposals on issues of importance for fisheries management in the region, to be incorporated in the Agenda of future RAC meetings.

48. **For the Third RAC Meeting;** the Meeting identified important fisheries management issues that could be considered and discussed at the Meeting. These could include issues related to: the ecosystem based approach to fisheries; small-scale fisheries and inland fisheries management; the US Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act concerning the eco-system; the use of appropriate fishing gear and circle hook in longline operations; assessment of the optimal size for fisheries *refugia* and marine protected areas; global warming and climate change, among others. In this regard, resource persons from relevant regional/international organizations, e.g. representative from FAO and Dr. John Pernetta would be invited to provide views and assist in facilitating the development of the policy recommendations of RAC.

49. While noting that the Third RAC Meeting would be organized in Thailand in September 2010, the Meeting requested the RAC Secretariat to communicate with the Member Countries ahead of time, on the date, venue, and agenda for the Meeting.

50. Considering that the current RAC Standing Members would complete their terms before September 2010, the Meeting also requested the RAC Secretariat to communicate with the Member Countries for the nomination of their respective RAC Standing Members prior to the Third RAC Meeting. The Meeting also suggested that the new RAC Standing Members should be well-informed

in advance, of the issues that had been previously discussed and those that would be discussed at the Third RAC Meeting.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

51. The Meeting adopted the Report of the Second Meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia on 4 September 2009, and agreed that the Meeting Report as well as the Regional Policy Recommendations to Improve Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia (2009), should be submitted to the 42nd Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council for consideration and policy guidance/support.

52. In addition, the Meeting also suggested that the outcomes from the RAC Meetings should be provided to the SEAFDEC Program Committee during its annual meetings for reference, and in order to enhance the linkage between RAC and SEAFDEC Program Committee.

53. On behalf of RAC, Mr. Pham Trong Yen as RAC Chairman expressed his appreciation to the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC Dr. Siri Ekmaharaj, for his contribution to fisheries development in the Southeast Asian region. As Dr. Siri would finish his tour of duty with SEAFDEC, the RAC Chairman then wished Dr. Siri to have successful achievements in his future endeavors that could contribute further to the enhancement of fisheries development of the region. He also thanked the outgoing RAC Chairman Mr. Pirochana Saikliang for his chairmanship during the past year, and the Secretariat of the Meeting for the arrangements that allow smooth operation of this Meeting.

VIII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

54. The SEAFDEC Deputy Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to all participants for their active participation and contribution which enabled the Meeting to develop policy recommendations on the important fisheries management issues of the Southeast Asian region. He then declared the Meeting closed. His Statement appears as **Annex 17**.