

**Report of the  
4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region**

**Bangkok, Thailand  
18-19 December 2013**

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**I. Introduction**

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region was convened in Bangkok, Thailand from 18 to 19 December 2013, and attended by representatives from the Gulf of Thailand countries, namely: Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as from regional organizations such as the Asian Coastal Resources Institute Foundation (CORIN-Asia) Alliance Programme, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO/RAP) and Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC), Institute of Oceanography (Nha Trang, Vietnam), International Union for Conservation of Nature-Asia (IUCN Southeast Asia), the Learning Institute (Cambodia), Secretariat of the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Region (Indonesia), Bangkok-based Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office. Senior officials from SEAFDEC and the SEAFDEC Departments, and members of the Regional Fisheries Policy Network, also attended the Meeting. The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.

2. The Meeting served as a process to move from initiation to commitment on a more concrete action as recommended during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region in 2011. Discussions were organized to allow for parallel meetings among neighboring countries on specific subject matters, such as the status of *Rastrelliger* spp., port monitoring, and national initiatives to eliminate illegal and destructive fishing. Establishment of working groups/task forces on priority areas common to the sub-region's fisheries such as capacity/monitoring of fishing efforts; monitoring and capacity-building at ports and landing sites; and options for joint approaches to conserve the Indo-Pacific mackerel (*pla too*) and related species, was also one of the main objectives of the Meeting. On the whole, the Meeting was aimed at identifying the suitable actions for continued work at the sub-regional level.

**II. Opening of the Meeting**

3. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Chumnarn Pongsri* welcomed the participants of the Meeting and expressed his appreciation for the full representation of the Gulf of Thailand countries. He envisioned the Gulf of Thailand Sub-regional grouping as a stable safeguard to combat illegal and destructive fishing in the Gulf, and as avenue to promote the integration of fisheries and habitat management in order that fishing capacity in Gulf's waters could be checked. He also believed that the Meeting would enable the countries involved to have a common understanding of long-term priorities and adequate resource allocations that could be transformed into action agenda to address the joint interest of the Gulf of Thailand. His Opening Statement appears as **Annex 2**.

**III. Background and Agenda of the Meeting**

4. The SEAFDEC-Sweden Project Manager, *Ms. Pattaratjit Kaewnuratchadasorn* presented the background, objectives and expected outputs of the Meeting (**Annex 3**) especially highlighting on the issues discussed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meetings of the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Such issues include MCS network,

combating IUU fishing, improving vessel registration/licensing and port monitoring, identification and development of larger fisheries resources conservation areas, and sustainable harvesting of the Indo-Pacific mackerel and related species.

5. The Meeting was also informed of the major concerns discussed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region in 2011. The concerns included among others, the (a) Development of Regional and National Management Approach to Fisheries Habitat, (b) Data Collection and Information Sharing on the Management of Fishing Capacity, (c) Research and Development Activities, and (d) Communication with International Community.

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

#### **IV. Integration of Fisheries and Habitat Management, Effective Management of Fishing Capacity, and Reducing Illegal and Destructive (combat IUU) Fishing in the Gulf of Thailand**

7. Based on their experiences, representatives from the various organizations represented during the Meeting and Member Countries concerned provided information on the Integration of Fisheries and Habitat Management and Effective Management of Fishing Capacity, and Reducing Illegal and Destructive (combat IUU) Fishing in the Gulf of Thailand. The summary of the presentations is shown as follows:

##### **4.1 Lessons learned from the UNEP/GEF/South China Sea Project**

###### ***Regional Working Group on Fisheries for Thailand***

8. The representative from the Department of Fisheries (DOF) of Thailand and former member of the Regional Working Group on Fisheries under the UNEP/GEF/South China Sea Project, *Mr. Pirochana Saikliang* presented the experiences of the Regional Working Group during the implementation of the UNEP/GEF/South China Sea Project: Development of Fisheries *Refugia* on Closed Season and Areas in the Gulf of Thailand. He recalled that the Chinese purse seine was introduced in the Gulf in 1925 to catch the Indo-Pacific mackerel, during which time the DOF of Thailand also conducted research study on pelagic fishes in parallel with such introduction. The DOF of Thailand thereafter provided scientific justifications for the development of management measures for pelagic species that included the temporary and permanent closures of spawning and nursery areas, and prohibition of the operations of some fishing gears. This is in line with the concept of fisheries *refugia* in the context of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project which defines *refugia* as “spatially and geographically defined, marine or coastal areas in which specific management measures are applied to sustain important species [fisheries resources] during the critical stages of their life cycle, for their sustainable use.” He also informed the Meeting that stakeholders’ consultations have been carried out in order to develop the effective measures and resolutions. He explained that adequate scientific information, stakeholders’ consultations, and monitoring, control and surveillance are significant factors that support the establishment of *refugia* in the Gulf of Thailand. His presentation appears in **Annex 5**.

9. On the migratory route of the mackerel in the eastern Gulf of Thailand as requested by the representative from the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), it was clarified that there are two main fishing grounds in the Gulf of Thailand. However, based on the results of a recent study conducted by SEAFDEC in 2013 in collaboration with relevant institutions, juveniles of mackerel were found in Trat Province, but the DOF of Thailand has no record in

the past of adult mackerel present in the area although there were records of the presence of adult mackerel in neighboring areas.

10. In response to the query of the representative from Malaysia on the period of research surveys needed to get sufficient results to support management measures for pelagic fishes in the Gulf of Thailand, the Meeting was informed that the DOF of Thailand had been monitoring the results of the management measures for possible updating/revision as appropriate, since the implementation of the first closed season in the Gulf of Thailand in 1957. In fact, DOF Thailand has already issued 14 Notifications in relation to the changing of the closed areas, durations and fishing gears based on scientific information gathered from the surveys.

11. The representative from the Institute of Oceanography, Vietnam also suggested that a study of the migratory route of trans-boundary species especially the mackerel should be carried out in order to draw a full picture of the species' migratory route in the Gulf of Thailand. He informed the Meeting that large sizes of the mackerels have been caught off Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam. In this connection, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC concurred with the suggestion on the need to conduct more research on the migratory route of mackerels and related species especially in the eastern Gulf of Thailand in the near future.

#### ***Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs for Vietnam***

12. A former member of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs for Vietnam, *Dr. Nguyen Van Long* reported on the activities implemented by the UNEP/GEF/South China Sea Project, specifically reviewing the lessons learned on the establishment of fisheries *refugia* in Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam. He highlighted on the importance of local fishers' knowledge in compiling scientific evidence, compilation of results of inventories and assessments of aquatic species as well as the involvement of local communities and local government units in developing fisheries *refugia* for their role in identifying specific fisheries issues and appropriate management measures. He informed the meeting of the recommended actions for the project that includes the conduct of inventory and assessment of spawning aggregation and nursery grounds of target species, improvement of the network of stakeholders, updating of the fisheries profile of the areas, improving the system of compiling fisheries statistics and management of scientific data, and training on monitoring the status of target species. He added that under this project, a Memorandum of Agreement between two neighboring provinces (Kampot in Cambodia and Kien Giang in Vietnam) was signed and the implementation of five programs had been stipulated under the MOA. The presentation appears in **Annex 6**.

13. The Meeting was also informed that the protected area of the UNEP/GEF/SCS project comprises large areas of sea grass and numerous coral reefs, which was identified through remote sensing. Lastly, he also highlighted on the need to compile local knowledge and information provided by local fisherfolk in Phu Quoc communities which should be gathered through a series of consultations, as well as proper data collection and efficient program implementation. The combination of these aspects would be essential in attaining the objectives of the project.

## 4.2 Current situation of fisheries in the countries bordering the Gulf of Thailand

### *Cambodia*

14. The representative from Cambodia, *Mr. Ing Try* presented the status and information on coastal habitats in Cambodia including the management framework and actions implemented by the Fisheries Administration (FiA) of Cambodia. He informed the Meeting that with regards to management of the fisheries resources, Cambodia has implemented various activities such as the enforcement of closed fishing season from 15 January to 31 March, installation of artificial reefs, and declaration of protected areas for sea grass beds. In this regard, he also pointed out the challenges and existing issues that were experienced during the implementation of the activities such as occurrence of illegal fishing in Cambodian waters during closed season, inadequate system for data collection, insufficient number of researchers and research activities, which need to be considered. His presentation appears in **Annex 7**.

### *Malaysia*

15. The representative from Malaysia, *Mr Abdullah Bin Jaafar* presented Malaysia's Experience in the Implementation of Port State Measures in Combating IUU Fishing: A Brief Case Study (**Annex 8**). His presentation focused on a case study regarding the detention of the M.V. Tiantai, which was achieved through a collaborative mechanism of several related agencies in the country that include the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency and Marine Department of Malaysia, working in line with the Department of Fisheries Malaysia that aims to combat IUU fishing. The vessel was apprehended upon the notification from the Australian Fisheries Management Authorities (AFMA). He also informed the Meeting of the several legislative frameworks used by Malaysia in combating IUU Fishing such as the: i) Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1984; ii) Fisheries Act 1985; iii) Merchant Shipping Ordinance 1952; iv) Fisheries Development Authority 1971; v) Malaysian Quarantine & Inspection Services Act 2011; and vi) Customs Act 1967. Other actions taken by Malaysia to combat IUU fishing in the country include the creation of appropriate policy and legislation, and development of operational measures. Currently, several enforcement agencies in Malaysia have teamed up to handle the cases of IUU fishing vessels including foreign vessels upon receiving notification from RPOA-IUU Secretariat or AFMA. In conclusion, Malaysia has made several actions and will continue to take actions to combat IUU fishing at the domestic, regional and international levels as part of sustainable fisheries management and good governance, all aiming towards securing the supply of fish as food source for the country.

### *Thailand*

16. The representative from the DOF of Thailand, *Mr. Pirochana Saikliang* reported on the status of fisheries in Thailand (**Annex 9**), by briefly providing information on the results of research studies on Indo-Pacific mackerel in Thailand, fishery status such as fishing effort, catch, fishing ground, fishing season by using surrounding net, gill net, encircling gill net, and bamboo stake trap. The Meeting was informed that many countries have already agreed in principle on the need to take measures to eliminate IUU fishing and the Government of Thailand has been implementing several measures to manage its fishing grounds, gears, boats, processing plants, and fish landings to ensure that no IUU fishing would take place in its waters in the future.

17. He added that the DOF has established a Catch Certification Coordination Centre to issue certifications for non-IUU fishing products in compliance with the EU regulations. Two main activities have been conducted including the monitoring of catch at ports and

certification of the catch. Furthermore, the Meeting was informed that Thailand, in collaboration with FAO, had developed a pilot project for monitoring of fish catches landed at the Phuket Fish Landing Port.

### ***Vietnam***

18. The representative from Vietnam, *Mr. Le Hoang Khai* presented the status of fisheries in Vietnam (**Annex 10**) focusing on the southwestern part of Vietnam. He illustrated the marine fisheries resources, fishing grounds and fishing capacity in Kien Giang and Ca Mau Provinces where most of fishing efforts are conducted on the waters of the Gulf of Thailand. The Meeting was also informed on the legal and policy frameworks related to fisheries that are implemented including the results of fishing ground zoning, logbook monitoring and inspection system in Vietnam. He also shared some information on the implementation of VMS and catch documentation as well as market state controls. He concluded that the need for (a) scientific stock assessment and fishing grounds prediction, (b) re-organization of fishing activities at sea by restructuring fishing fleets, and (c) having additional investment for environmental protection, resource renewable and protection, and development of MPA and Fish *Refugia* systems, should be taken into consideration.

### **4.3 Regional Initiatives**

#### ***SEAFDEC Marine Fishery Resources Development and Management Department***

19. The representative from SEAFDEC MFRDMD, *Mr. Mohammad Faisal bin Md Saleh* presented the research projects conducted by MFRDMD with funding from the Japanese Trust Fund II involving *Rastrelliger* spp. and *Decapterus* spp. in this region. The projects include: (a) Tagging of Economically Important Small Pelagic Species in the South China Sea (SCS) and Andaman Sea (AS), and (b) Genetic Study on Population Structure of the Indian Mackerel (*Rastrelliger kanagurta*) and Japanese Scad (*Decapterus maruadsi*) in the SCS and AS. These projects aim to ascertain the migration route and existence of sub-populations of small pelagic fishes in the above-mentioned study areas.

20. The Meeting was informed that results of these studies pointed towards the genetic structure of *Rastrelliger kanagurta* and *Decapterus maruadsi*, and that Indian mackerels in the South China Sea and Andaman Sea, and the Japanese scad in the South China Sea are shared or derived from the same stock with high genetic variation among stocks in the sampling sites. Through the use of mtDNA as molecular marker, detailed results on the variations among haplotypes of the selected samples had been attained. His presentation appears as **Annex 11**.

#### ***SEAFDEC Training Department***

21. Based on the previous studies on migratory route of Indo-Pacific mackerel conducted by the DOF of Thailand, the representative from SEAFDEC/TD, *Ms. Penchan Laongmanee* presented the new acoustic technology, which could provide localization of fish and habitats. She also presented the outputs of the collaborative cruise surveys conducted in April 2013, which indicated high abundance of the Indo-Pacific mackerels in eastern Gulf of Thailand (around Trat Province). In this regard, it was proposed that more areas should be covered during the surveys of the whole of Gulf of Thailand in order to compile sufficient information on the nursery and spawning grounds of the Indo-Pacific mackerels. Her presentation appears as **Annex 12**.

## **V. Selected global and international instruments and their relevance to fisheries and habitat management (and to combat IUU fishing) including references to the ASEAN Community Development**

22. Representatives from regional organizations shared their experiences from their initiatives on fisheries management including activities to combat IUU fishing. The summary of their presentation are as follows:

### ***RPOA-IUU Secretariat***

23. The representative from RPOA-IUU Secretariat, *Mr. Ardiansyah Hasyim* presented the updated activities of RPOA-IUU including the results of the 6<sup>th</sup> RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting in November 2013 in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia; and key issues and activities of its two MCS Sub-Regional Groups in Arafura Timor Sea, and in the southeastern part of South China Sea and Sulu-Sulawesi Seas. He also shared the RPOA-IUU Work Plan for 2013-2014 which includes follow up actions for RPOA-IUU member countries to strengthen their capacity in MCS to combat IUU fishing in preparation for the implementation of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures and FAO Global Records on Fishing Vessels. He also highlighted on some problems and constraints in its two MCS Sub-Regional Group including unreported and misreported catch, unlicensed fishing vessels, unauthorized mothership activity, duplication of licenses, double flagging, non-compliant VMS, bunkering, and limited human and institutional capacity in relevant government agencies to implement MCS effectively. He then updated the Meeting on the future activities of RPOA-IUU for future reference. His presentation appears as **Annex 13**.

### ***FAO/RAP***

24. The representative from FAO/RAP and Secretary of APFIC, *Dr. Simon Funge-Smith* presented the status of “Port inspections of fishing vessels - Port State Measures” (**Annex 14**) and shared his experiences on the implementation of the Port State Measures (PSM) Agreement. He discussed the several ways of combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on both levels (water and port). Specifically, he cited that combating IUU fishing in the waters can be done through: (a) monitoring, control & surveillance, and (b) on-board observers; whereas, combating IUU fishing in ports can be done through: (a) conduct of port inspections, (b) search for evidence of illegal activity, and (c) conduct of clear procedures for taking actions.

25. He also presented some highlights on the PSM pilot project conducted in Thailand, and stressed on some issues related to power, authority and responsibility of concerned agencies in the implementation of PSM in Thailand, of which the agencies involved are the: (a) Marine Department, (b) Immigration Department, (c) Customs Department, and (d) Department of Fisheries. He also stated that the APFIC/FAO Technical Guide to Port Inspection is already available online and can be downloaded for reference.

## **VI. Group Discussion**

26. In order to proceed with the development of action plans for the Gulf of Thailand, the participants were divided into two (2) groups to address the following issues, namely: (a) integration of fisheries and habitat management and the importance of trans-boundary stocks and habitats, and (b) promotion of more effective management of fishing capacity and to reduce illegal and destructive (combat IUU) fishing in the Gulf of Thailand. The two (2) groups were tasked to brainstorm and discuss the gaps, constraints and key requirements/areas

to move towards collaborative approaches and identify the list of priority actions and timelines for the tasks to be carried out by the group members from each country in cooperation with responsible national agencies and NGOs.

## **6.1 Integration of fisheries and habitat management and the importance of trans-boundary stocks and habitats**

27. The representative from the Institute of Oceanography of Vietnam, *Dr. Nguyen Van Long* presented the results of Group 1, which discussed the issues and management measures for integration of fisheries and habitat management, and the importance of trans-boundary stocks and habitats (**Annex 15**). References to important trans-boundary species in the Gulf of Thailand, which include mackerels (e.g. *Rastrelliger brachysoma* and *R. kanagurta*), and neritic tunas (e.g. longtail tuna), were identified. Since species are economically important for the countries in the sub-region, priority should be placed on the formulation of collaborative activities for these species in the future. In addition, it was suggested that close linkage between fishery activities and the ecosystems should be enhanced, and the importance of other species that share the same ecosystems/habitats should be recognized, e.g. endangered aquatic species (dolphins, dugongs), blue swimming crabs. However, considering their non-economic importance, discussion on such endangered species was not given much focus.

28. After the discussion, the Meeting agreed on the goal towards regional cooperation for enhancing small pelagic fisheries (mackerels and neritic tunas) in the Gulf of Thailand through the integration of fisheries and ecosystem management approaches. While noting that there are wide ranges of information on *Rastrelliger* spp. available from researches conducted by Thailand, Malaysia and MFRDMD, e.g. biology and migration, spawning period, gonad maturation, population study using DNA analysis, these could be mobilized to provide a good picture of the status of these resources in the region and serve as basis for the development of appropriate management measures. However, since some of the information could already be outdated, additional and updated information would be necessary to fill the gap especially for the transboundary areas, which could be easily attained through sub-regional collaboration.

29. Furthermore, considering that the project aims to also address ecosystem approach, it was agreed that regional collaboration in the Gulf of Thailand should focus not only on fisheries aspects but also on other habitat and management aspects including those involving wide range of stakeholders involved in the utilization of resources, e.g. small-scale fishers, commercial fishers, tourism activities. In addition, since impacts could also emerge from other crosscutting issues, e.g. on climate change and availability and migration of labor, these issues need to be addressed in order to ensure sustainable small pelagic fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand.

30. While noting the recommendation to establish a Regional Scientific Working Group to discuss the detailed activities to be undertaken, the representative from Vietnam suggested that focus could be placed on the management for biodiversity conservation, since the activities under fisheries and habitat aspects are closely inter-related. For marine spatial planning which is an integrated way of planning, activities should be undertaken to identify important trans-boundary areas, including important habitats, spawning grounds and nursery grounds; and review existing data and information on fisheries resources and ecosystems as immediate activities. In addition, it was also suggested that follow-up activities on the development of joint management plan should be included after the initial data collection process.

31. While supporting this recommendation, the representative from SDF suggested that there should be concrete example/case to demonstrate the application of the concept on habitat

management that relate to trans-boundary fisheries stock for the sub-region, which could also be applied in other areas.

32. The representative from Thailand provided additional information on four (4) important neritic tuna species in Thailand, namely: *Thunnus tonggol* (longtail tuna), *Auxis thazard* (frigate tuna), *Auxis rochei* (bullet tuna), and *Euthynnus affinis* (kawakawa). He also suggested that since longtail tuna is very important for the sub-region, it should be given increased focus under this grouping. The representative from FAO/RAP added that since there is an existing Working Group on Neritic Tuna in Thailand, the work discussed under this Group should be linked with this Working Group.

33. While supporting the strong and urgent need to review existing information, the representative from Cambodia emphasized on the importance of discussion and consultation in order to formulate the necessary future work plan. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC added that although the existing information, e.g. on mackerels, have been compiled since long time ago and may already be outdated, such information could still be used as baseline data to compare with the updated data to be collected in the future. He also emphasized that in addition to the activities that could be formulated and undertaken under the SEAFDEC-Sweden project, relevant activities undertaken by other agencies/organizations should also be considered and linked.

## **6.2 Promotion of more effective management of fishing capacity and to reduce illegal and destructive (combat IUU) fishing in the Gulf of Thailand**

34. The Meeting took note of the presentation of Group 2, which focused on the promotion of more effective management of fishing capacity and reduction of illegal and destructive fishing in the Gulf of Thailand (**Annex 16**). The identified priority issues included: (a) monitoring of fishing effort, catches and landing (MCS Networks) in the Gulf of Thailand; (b) port monitoring and monitoring of landings by “neighboring” vessels; and (c) catch documentation and certification/validation.

35. The representative from Malaysia, *Mr. Abdul Rahman b. Abdul Wahab* presented the results of the discussion on strengthening institutional capacity and sub-regional cooperation on monitoring, surveys and control of fishing efforts and landings of fisheries products in the Gulf of Thailand. The priority issues identified during the discussion included: 1) illegal (IUU) and destructive fishing in the Gulf of Thailand; 2) double flagging of fishing vessels; 3) deregistration and re-registration of vessels; and 4) landing of catches across boundaries. In order to address such issues, the proposed actions included the conduct of roundtable discussions between sets of two neighboring countries (i.e., Cambodia-Vietnam, Thailand-Malaysia, and Thailand-Cambodia).

36. The representative from RPOA-IUU Secretariat inquired on the system or mechanism adopted by the countries in the Gulf of Thailand to deal with IUU fishing vessels entering into their ports. In response, it was clarified that countries could pursue the RPOA framework as a guidance to tackle this issue since the Gulf of Thailand is one of the identified sub-regions covered in the RPOA framework. Subsequently, notifications of IUU fishing vessels could be shared among the countries in the sub-region.

37. The representative from SDF suggested that multi-stakeholders should be allowed to participate in the discussions and supported the development of regional initiatives. He also inquired whether it is possible to determine the gaps or factors that lead to illegal (IUU) and destructive fishing in the Gulf of Thailand, and that SEAFDEC could play an important role in



the development of a mechanism to address this issue. He made connections of illegal (IUU) to migrant workers in the fisheries sector, as often, most migrant fishers do not have proper documentation to work on fishing vessels. He also cited how various NGOs and agencies are starting to address such growing issues and encourages SEAFDEC to also look/ research into it.

38. The representative from FAO/RAP informed the Meeting that APFIC has conducted numerous studies on IUU fishing in the Asia-Pacific region while the RPOA-IUU also conducted similar study in Arafura Sea. However, since the nature of illegal fishing in each sub-region in Southeast Asia might be different, proactive actions should be taken into consideration in the implementation of the activities. In this regard, he suggested that SEAFDEC could review some forms of IUU fishing activities in the sub-region and provide recommendations to the countries in order to address such aspects.

39. The representative from Cambodia raised the concern on IUU fishing in the sub-region, which could be performed mostly by medium and small-scale vessels doing illegal (IUU) or destructive fishing. However, it was emphasized that any scale of IUU fishing operations by fishing vessels would create the same severe impact on the health of the ecosystem. He pointed out that under the RPOA – IUU framework, member countries has facilitated the establishment of agreement in the subregional Arafura - Timor Seas area while in the Gulf of Thailand the process is still in the first step of development. In this regard, he suggested that the experience gained from the adoption of the Arafura-Timor framework could be used as an example in developing a collaborative arrangement for the Gulf of Thailand sub-region.

40. Following up with the recommendations of the representative from FAO/RAP, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General added that once the status of IUU fishing in this region is known and a set of recommendations is available, SEAFDEC would initiate the process of scoping the activities to be undertaken for the sub-region focusing on activities related to tackling illegal and destructive fishing. In this connection, the representative from SDF pointed out that such activities might include national and regional actions, and that SEAFDEC could play a significant role at the regional level. In addition, the representative from FAO/RAP urged the Member Countries to come up with their respective NPOA-IUU fishing that could be the first step to address IUU fishing at the national context and would allow partners to be involved in the process of combating IUU fishing. In order to obtain policy support in counteracting illegal (IUU) and destructive fishing in the sub-region, the relevant mechanism within the ASEAN should be taken into consideration in developing the necessary measures.

## **VII. Local capacity-building, strengthening of community fisheries and diversified livelihoods to enhance communities' resilience and capacity to adapt to change**

41. The experiences of organizations and local partners were also shared during the Meeting by their representatives especially those working on local level capacity-building with reference to their accomplishments and ongoing activities. The summary of their presentation follows:

### ***CORIN-Asia Cambodia***

42. The representative from CORIN-Asia Cambodia, *Ms. Rebeca Fontanilla Andong*, presented the Integrated and Participatory Approaches: Enhancing Community Resilience to Adapt to Changes (**Annex 17**), emphasizing on the several mechanisms and tools available that can be used for fishery resource and habitat management as well as for the promotion of sustainable livelihood development in the local communities of Cambodia. The several

programs and mechanisms presently implemented are: (a) Coastal Cambodia Local Alliance (CCLA), (b) Livelihood Development Framework (LDF), (c) Locally-Initiated Fund (LIF), (d) Crab Banking, (e) Trans-boundary Collaboration, (f) MCS, (g) Ecotourism, and (h) Skills Bridging and Professional Program.

43. In response to the query of the representative from Malaysia, *Mr. Raja Bidin Raja Hassan* regarding the availability of “success stories” on the implementation of the programs in Cambodia, *Ms. Andong* cited that currently there is still no available publication on their activities since the data are still in their raw form. However, she also suggested that the participants of the Meeting could see and observe the activities under their projects at the local level.

#### ***Learning Institute (Cambodia)***

44. The representative from the Learning Institute (Cambodia), *Mr. Bunthoeun SIM*, presented the Local Capacity Building, Strengthening of Community Fisheries and Diversified Livelihoods to Enhance Communities Resilience and Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change (**Annex 18**). He introduced the overview of the fisheries management programs implemented in Cambodia since 2000 including those that involved the partnership between the Institute, Fisheries Administration and SEAFDEC. The Meeting was also informed that during the period from 2006, most of the programs in Cambodia emphasized on the role of women in fisheries management. He recommended the need to improve the capacity of local facilitators and the Community Fisheries (CFi) committees and stakeholders, conduct of annual forum on CFi management, and to consider the need to provide technical and financial assistance towards CFi management and planning.

#### ***Sustainable Development Foundation (Thailand)***

45. The Director of Bangkok-based Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), *Ms. Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk* provided information on their organization and the projects it has been implementing (**Annex 19**). She explained that SDF has conducted a wide array of activities related to sustainable fisheries and coastal resource management. Currently, SDF operates four field sites located in Trat, Chanthaburi, Phatthauong and Trang Provinces, where SDF has brought together a diverse range of stakeholders in the field sites to work cooperatively towards achieving common objectives with individual ecosystems or common areas of implementation. SDF also conducts the following activities: (a) production and distribution of educational materials, (b) capacity building of local coastal communities focusing on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with active participation from women sector, (c) analysis of policy and legislation related to fishery management, and (d) active participation in ongoing National Reform Process.

46. The Meeting was informed that SDF seeks to form possible collaboration with SEAFDEC in the implementation of an ecosystem based and trans-boundary management in the eastern region of Thailand. Furthermore, the institution would like to seek technical support for sustainable fisheries in their project sites and to partner in micro/macro link to promote multi-stakeholders participation in sustainable fisheries and ecosystem management.

#### **IUCN Southeast Asia Group**

47. The representative from IUCN *Ms. Saisunee Chaksuin* informed the Meeting on the structure and the function of the IUCN Southeast Asia Group and the current programs being

implemented by IUCN, namely: (1) Building Resilience to Climate Change Impacts- Coastal Southeast Asia (BCR); and (2) Mangroves for the Future (MFF).

48. The BCR project aims to increase adaptive capacity of people and the ecosystems on which they depend to cope with the anticipated impacts of climate change and plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), through sound governance and planning. It will be implemented in the coastal zones of Thailand (Trat and Chantaburi provinces), Cambodia (Koh Kong and Kampot) and Vietnam (Can Gio, Ben Tre, Soc Trang and Kien Giang). The partners who are engaged to this project are namely: Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) (Thailand), Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands (VASI), GIZ Associates (Vietnam), Ministry of Environment's General Department for Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection (GDANCP) including Climate Change Department (CCD) and Department of Wetlands and Coastal Resources (DWCR) (Cambodia), Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (Thailand), Institute of Terrestrial Biodiversity (ITB) (Vietnam), Can Tho University (Vietnam) and Department of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change (DMHC) (Vietnam).

49. The representative from IUCN also informed about the MFF project which is a unique partnership for healthy coasts, ecosystems and communities in the Indian Ocean. The member countries under this project are namely: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The outreach countries are Myanmar and Timor-Leste while the Dialogue Countries are Kenya, Malaysia and Tanzania. The Thailand National Coordinating Body (NCB) was approved by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on the 31st August 2007. The Chair of the Thailand NCB is the Director General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

### **VIII. Way forward for Sub-Regional and bilateral cooperation in fisheries and habitat management including efforts to combat illegal and destructive (IUU) fishing in the Gulf of Thailand**

50. Taking into consideration the outputs of the break-up groups (**Annex 14** and **Annex 15**) and the corresponding recommendations of the Meeting, two task forces with specific duties will be established, namely: (1) regional cooperation for enhancing the small pelagic (mackerels and neritic tunas) fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand through the integration of fisheries and ecosystem management approaches; and (2) strengthening of capacity and sub-regional cooperation on monitoring, surveys and control of fishing efforts and landings of catches in the Gulf of Thailand. The responsibilities of the task force(s) could be carried out through the establishment of regional working group(s) to work on identified specific areas and to develop the regional strategic programs. Subsequently, experts groups could also be developed corresponding to the issues identified. The support of Member Countries concerned will be sought for the realization of the regional strategic programs, which will be secured through the SEAFDEC meetings and mechanisms. Moreover, since this endeavor will be implemented at the regional level, the support of the ASEAN bodies involved in fisheries will also be tapped.

51. In response to the recommendations during the discussions of the break-out groups, a set of initial studies and/or surveys will be launched to respond to what the groups described as "immediate" needs. This will include a follow-up on the suggestion made by FAO/RAP to commission a review on illegal and destructive fishing activities in this sub-region and provide recommendations to countries in order to address the issues through the implementation of the

identified activities. In this connection, SEAFDEC was requested to follow-up this matter with FAO.

52. Furthermore, the Regional Strategic Programs shall include two main aspects, namely: Research and Development, and Capacity Building. Research and Development could include: review of existing data and research works, exchange of information, improve data collection, study on genetic aspects, promote ecosystem approach to fisheries, policy development; while Capacity Building could include identification of the needs for capacity building/training programs, development of SOPs, tools and standardized data collection systems, conduct of regional training programs (**Annex 20**). In this regard, the countries have been encouraged to develop their respective internal mechanisms to support the regional strategic programs. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the implementation of the various activities under the Regional Strategic Programs, cooperation with other concerned sub-regional, regional and international organizations, NGOs and private fisheries sector will be established and/or strengthened.

## **IX. Closing of the Meeting**

53. In his closing remarks, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Dr. Chumnarn Pongsri* thanked the participants for their active participation that enabled the Meeting to clarify many issues with regards to the status of fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand. After wishing the participants safe journey for their respective home countries, he declared the Meeting closed.