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ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Thirty-fifth Session

Cebu, the Philippines, 11–13 May 2018

Summary report on the Seventh APFIC RCFM

1. The Seventh APFIC Regional Consultative Forum Meeting (7th RCFM), from 7-9 May 2018, was convened in Cebu, Philippines to provide a platform for member countries and APFIC regional partners to share knowledge on the theme “*Sustainable Development for Resilient Blue Growth of Fisheries and Aquaculture*” and discuss major issues and required strategy and actions at country and regional levels. The Forum was attended by 80 participants from 16 countries, together with representatives from ten regional and international partner organizations and projects.

2. The 7th RCFM commenced with the welcome remarks by the Undersecretary and Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Philippines’ Department of Agriculture and the opening remarks by the FAO Representative in the Philippines. The Deputy Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of the FAO delivered a keynote address on “Sustainable development for resilient blue growth of fisheries and aquaculture” in the Plenary Session, providing a global perspective of the contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to sustainable blue growth and examples of blue growth implementation around the world. The second part of the plenary session reviewed the status and trends and major issues in aquaculture and fisheries and the importance of Blue Growth in this respect.

3. Following the plenary session, the 7th RCFM convened two parallel fisheries and aquaculture sessions on four thematic areas for member countries and regional organization partners to share their recent efforts and experiences on major issues faced by the sector in their countries and regions and to discuss the required strategy and actions to effectively address the issues. The four thematic areas included following 14 sub-themes:

Theme 1. Improvements in fisheries and aquaculture governance

- Strengthen aquaculture planning and Management through adoption of relevant tools
- Strengthen aquaculture regulation, EAA and zonal development
- Experiences and lessons on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

- Promoting and implementing ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), co-management approaches

Theme 2. Innovative fisheries and aquaculture production and management systems and practices for more efficient and sustainable production

- Promote climate resilient/smart aquaculture
- Promote scaling up of innovative aquaculture systems/practices for more sustainable and efficient production
- Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)
- Innovations in technologies and practices for sustainable fisheries/Use of information and communication technology (ICT)

Theme 3. Building resilience of fisheries and aquaculture systems in the Asia-Pacific region

- Aquaculture insurance for resilience of small farm holders
- Risk of Antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture and required coping strategy and actions
- Lessons and experiences on risk management, disaster risk management (DRM), and climate change adaptation (CCA) for resilient fisheries

Theme 4. Gender-sensitive and inclusive fisheries and aquaculture value chains

- Promote responsible production and use of feed and ingredients for sustainable aquaculture growth
- Enhance woman's role and benefit sharing along the aquaculture value chain
- Actions, experiences, and lessons on value addition, reducing food loss, improving access to markets and trade, and promoting gender equality in capture fisheries value chains

4. Working group sessions were conducted to allow the participants to consolidate the experiences and to discuss remaining challenges and recommendations for country governments and regional partners to address effectively the challenges.

5. The findings from the four thematic sessions were presented to the plenary for comment, modification and endorsement on the third day of the 7th RCFM. The key conclusions and recommendations endorsed by the 7th RCFM are presented in APFIC/18 INF 05.

6. In summary, the participants recognized the great advances in the four thematic areas pertaining to sustainable and resilient fisheries and aquaculture for blue growth in the region, through national and regional efforts in addressing priority issues, such as combatting IUU fishing, strengthening regulation on aquaculture, implementing good fisheries and aquaculture development approach and practices such as EAF, EAA, aquaculture zonal development, innovative aquaculture systems and practices and developing inclusive and gender sensitive fisheries and aquaculture value chain.

7. There are a number of remaining and emerging challenges to the sustainability and resilience of fisheries and aquaculture sector. To effectively address these challenges requires concerted efforts within and across governments, NGO, CSO and development and research partners. These include: i) improved knowledge on the contributions of the sector to food and nutrition security, livelihoods and economic growth, the impacts of changes in the environment on the sector and dependent communities, the environmental footprints of the sector; ii) strengthened enabling environments, knowledge bases and human capacity for adopting appropriate planning and management tools, including ICTs; iii) increased awareness and collaborative efforts to address issues relating to aquaculture feed, risk of

AMR associated with aquaculture and reduced fish loss in post-harvesting; and iv) clearer understanding of the gender-differentiate roles of women and men along the value chain.

8. In addition, there remains a great need in many countries for reinforced legal frameworks and guiding policies to ensure a human rights-based and environmentally friendly development of the region's fisheries and aquaculture sectors in line with the Small-scale Fisheries Voluntary Guidelines and the CCRF.

9. More targeted DRM and climate change strategies and technologies for the sector are needed in several countries. There is also a need for increased efforts to combat IUU fishing in the region. Continued and strengthened sharing of experiences and knowledge and collaborative efforts across the countries in the region are required to attain the full potential of blue growth in the Asia-Pacific.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

10. The Commission is invited to comment on the summary recommendations of the 7th RCFM and endorsed the recommendations with suggested revisions and amendments.