

THE ROME DECLARATION
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

We, the Ministers and Ministers' representatives meeting in Rome on 10 and 11 March 1999, declare that, without prejudice to the rights and obligations of States under international law:

- a) Affirm that FAO and its governing bodies make an essential contribution to international fisheries governance and that, together with regional fishery management bodies, FAO is the most appropriate forum for addressing vital global fisheries issues and accordingly call on the Organization to assign higher priority and increased share of FAO's regular programme resources to its fisheries programme activities;
- b) Stress the continued high priority placed upon implementing the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action;
- c) Accord highest priority to achieving sustainability of both capture fisheries and aquaculture within the framework of the ecosystem approach, bearing in mind the special circumstances and needs of developing countries, in particular the small island developing States;
- d) Will collaborate with other States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and financial institutions to promote the effective implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- e) Encourage FAO to develop further technical guidelines on various aspects of the Code of Conduct in order to support its national implementation;
- f) Attach high priority to the implementation of the International Plans of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity, for the Conservation and Management of Sharks and for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries and to the putting into place within the framework of national plans, measures to achieve a balance between harvesting capacity and available fisheries resources;
- g) Ask FAO to continue its efforts to strengthen the functions and responsibilities of FAO regional fishery bodies and their cooperation with other regional fishery management bodies in order to effectively implement the Code of Conduct;
- h) Will take necessary actions on a priority basis to become parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas and the United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks so that their entry into force will be possible;
- i) Urge FAO to aid developing countries as they seek to implement the Code of Conduct and invite donor agencies and funding institutions to increase their technical assistance and financial support to this end;
- j) Will develop a global plan of action to deal effectively with all forms of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing including fishing vessels flying "flags of convenience", as discussed in

paragraph 33 of Annex G of the Report of the Consultation on the Management of Fishing Capacity, Shark Fisheries and Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries, which met in Rome in October 1998, through coordinated efforts by States, FAO, regional fishery management bodies and other relevant international agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as provided in Article IV of the Code of Conduct;

- k) Will address aspects of trade and environment related to fisheries and aquaculture within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- l) Call upon all users of fisheries resources to apply the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- m) Encourage FAO to continue to place emphasis in its Strategic Framework 2000-2015 on partnerships and interdisciplinarity as part of FAO's efforts to build upon its comparative advantage;
- n) Will work together, through FAO and in collaboration with all other organizations concerned with fisheries, to seek the optimum and sustainable use of the world's fishery resources, to reduce wastage and destructive fishing practices by promoting responsible fisheries practices, effective and integrated fisheries monitoring, an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and encouraging the further growth in sustainable aquaculture, thus securing the contribution of fisheries to national economic and social goals and to the attainment of world food security.

