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## **THE ROME CONSENSUS ON WORLD FISHERIES adopted by the FAO Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Rome, 14-15 March 1995**

1. On 14 and 15 March 1995 a Ministerial Meeting on fisheries was held in Rome at the invitation of the Director-General of FAO to review the state of world fisheries and the FAO follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).
2. After reviewing the recent developments, the meeting made recommendations relevant to aquaculture and provided guidance on the role of the sector in respect of food security in developing countries.
3. The meeting adopted the Consensus on World Fisheries.
4. The Ministerial Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Director-General for his timely initiative and for the information FAO has provided on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture. Recognizing that ministerial level meetings are appropriate for exchanging views and making recommendations on policy and strategy issues at the international level, and in view of the critical situation facing world fisheries over the next few years, it invited the Director-General to consult with members from all regions about convening other ministerial meetings as required.
5. In the discussion, the Ministerial Meeting noted the FAO analysis which indicates that the problems of overfishing in general, and overcapacity of industrial fishing fleets in particular, threaten the sustainability of the world's fisheries resources for present and future generations. It recognized the need for continuing international cooperation and coordination toward reestablishing sustainability of world fisheries. It stated that improved fisheries conservation and management, along with better protection of fisheries from harmful sea- and land-based activities, are crucial to maintaining world fish resources and aquatic ecosystems. The particular importance of the fisheries sector for small island developing states was noted.
6. Recognizing the socio-economic, environmental, and nutritional importance of fisheries, and the growing demand for fish products, the Ministerial Meeting concluded that additional actions are urgently required to:
  - eliminate overfishing,

- rebuild and enhance fish stocks,
- minimize wasteful fisheries practices,
- develop sustainable aquaculture,
- rehabilitate fish habitats, and
- develop fisheries for new and alternate species based on principles of scientific sustainability and responsible management.

7. It was recognized that without such action, further declines will occur in the 70 per cent of the world's fish stocks which are now regarded as fully exploited, over exploited, depleted or recovering. With these changes in fisheries management strategies and in the defence of fisheries habitats, the contribution from capture fisheries to world food supplies can be maintained at current levels. The meeting was pleased that successful aquaculture could contribute to meeting increased demand for fish protein. It encouraged that an ecosystem approach to fisheries conservation and management be pursued. It also welcomed the convening of the International Conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1995.

8. The Ministerial Meeting expressed deep appreciation for FAO's extensive efforts in bringing to the attention of the international community the critical situation in fisheries. It reaffirmed that FAO has a clear mandate for fisheries and is the leading specialized agency within the UN system, having a broad and extensive range of fisheries expertise. It welcomed FAO's technical assistance to Member States to deal with problems in fisheries and aquaculture. It stressed the need to avoid duplication by specialized agencies within the UN system on fisheries issues. It welcomed FAO's continued contribution, according to agreed assignments of responsibilities, to the preparation for the 1996 review of the implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21.

9. The Ministerial meeting also commended FAO's Committee on Fisheries for its continued excellence as the competent forum for intergovernmental examination of technical questions pertaining to world fisheries. This was again evident in the Report of the Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 10-13 March 1995.

10. To respond effectively to the current fisheries situation and the difficulties that can be foreseen in satisfying growing demand for fish and in conserving aquatic ecosystems, the Rome Ministerial Meeting urged that governments and international organizations take prompt action to:

- reduce fishing to sustainable levels in areas and on stocks currently heavily exploited or overfished;
- adopt policies, apply measures, and develop techniques to reduce by-catches, fish discards and post-harvest losses;
- review the capacity of fishing fleets in relation to sustainable yields of fishery resources and where necessary reduce these fleets;
- strengthen and support regional, sub-regional, and national fisheries organizations and arrangements for implementing conservation and management measures;
- keep under review the effectiveness of conservation and management measures for ensuring the long-term sustainability of fisheries and aquatic ecosystems;

- continue and, when possible, increase technical, financial, and other assistance to developing countries, in particular to least developed countries, to support their efforts in fisheries conservation and management, and in aquaculture development;
- encourage States to further develop ecologically sound aquaculture as an important contributor to overall food security;
- strengthen fisheries research and increase cooperation among research institutions;
- increase consultation on fisheries with the private sector and non-governmental organizations;
- effectively implement the relevant rules of international law on fisheries and related matters which are reflected in the provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- bring to a successful conclusion the UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
- complete the International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries with a view to submitting the final text to the October 1995 FAO Conference; and
- consider ratifying the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas.

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This Rome Consensus on World Fisheries was adopted unanimously by the Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries convened in Rome on 14 and 15 March 1995. The meeting was attended by 63 Ministers from Albania, Angola, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Yemen and the Russian Federation.

Senior officials also participated from Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bolivia, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, European Community (Member Organization), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritania, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tonga, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

The following were also represented:

The Holy See

United Nations Development Programme International Labour Organization World Bank

African Development Bank Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas International Council for the Exploration of the Sea International Whaling Commission Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency Organización Latino Americana de Desarrollo Pesquero World Trade Organization Earth Council European Bureau for Conservation and Development Greenpeace International International Coalition of Fisheries Associations International Collective in Support of Fishworkers International Confederation of Free Trade Unions International Cooperative Alliance International Council of Women International Wildlife Management Consortium Women and Fisheries Network World Conservation Union World

Federation of Trade Unions World Wide Fund for Nature

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