



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

**Adopted by the
FAO Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries
Rome, 10-11 March 1999**

1. At the invitation of the Director-General of FAO, the Ministers responsible for fisheries met in Rome on 10 and 11 March 1999 as a sign of their attachment to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted by the FAO Conference at its Twenty-eighth Session in October 1995. In this regard, the Ministerial Meeting was especially appreciative of FAO's role in promoting the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the increasingly wide adoption of the Code by States and concerned organizations.

2. The Ministerial Meeting emphasized that the achievement of the sustainable management of both capture fisheries and aquaculture was of great importance for world food security, for the attainment of national economic and social goals and for the well-being and livelihoods of individuals and families involved in fisheries. It was thus concerned that many of the world's major marine fishery resources were subject to overfishing, destructive and wasteful fishing practices and excess capacity, resulting in reduced yields and economic returns. It was similarly concerned at the growing amount of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing activities being carried out, 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. In this regard, while pleased at the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Meeting noted that only a small number of countries had so far ratified 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.

3. The Ministerial Meeting recognized the growing importance of environmentally sound aquaculture as a source of fish supplies for human consumption and attached high priority to ensuring the contribution of sustainable aquaculture to food security, income and rural development.

4. The Ministerial Meeting welcomed the adoption by the FAO Committee on Fisheries at its Twenty-third Session in February 1999 of International Plans of Action, within the framework of the Code of Conduct, for the Management of Fishing Capacity, for the Conservation and Management of Sharks and for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Long-line Fisheries.

5. It was recognized that the full implementation of the Code of Conduct and the Plans of Action required considerable resources and would not be achieved quickly nor easily if measures

already adopted are not pursued. Many countries require substantial further technical assistance and financial support, through multilateral and/or bilateral arrangements and through FAO, to assist them in applying the Code of Conduct and Plans of Action.

6. The Ministerial Meeting noted that greater consideration should be given to the development of more appropriate eco-system approaches to fisheries development and management.

7. The Ministerial Meeting noted that aspects of trade and environment related to fisheries and aquaculture need to be addressed within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

8. The Ministerial Meeting underlined the important role that regional fishery management organizations can play in respect of the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

9. The Ministerial Meeting noted the growing importance of recreational fishing and stressed the need for it to be conducted in a sustainable manner and consistent with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

10. The Ministerial Meeting noted that there were still articles of the Code of Conduct to be further developed such as post-harvest practices, the improvement of fishing operations, responsible trade and the promotion of research.

11. It recalled the importance of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, especially paragraph 33(d), which refers to the Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action, which were adopted in November 1996, which the Ministerial Meeting believed should be fundamental points of reference for the elaboration of the FAO Strategic Framework 2000-2015.

12. In conclusion, the Ministerial Meeting made the following Declaration on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

We, the Ministers¹ 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.

The keynote address was delivered by His Excellency Olafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland.

This Rome Declaration on Responsible Fisheries was adopted unanimously by the Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, convened in Rome on 10 and 11 March 1999. The Meeting was attended by 126 Members of FAO: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, European Community, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

The following were also represented:

Marshall Islands
Russian Federation
Holy See
Council of Europe
Latin America Organization for Fisheries Development
Greenpeace International
International Cooperative Alliance
International Council of Women

¹ When "Ministers" is used, it means as well the senior representative of the European Community within its areas of competence.