

**International Coalition of Fisheries Associations
Annual Meeting
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**Address by M. Hayashi
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on the Role of FAO in the Implementation of the
Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**

I should like to start by thanking the organizers of this Meeting for kindly inviting me to speak to you on FAO's efforts to implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The invitation also gives me a valuable occasion to meet with representatives from fisheries associations of all major fishing countries and exchange views on some of the most pressing issues facing the fisheries industry today.

Before going into the activities of FAO, let me say a few words about the Code itself.

As you know, the Code of Conduct was adopted by the FAO Conference in 1995 as a comprehensive set of standards of conduct for all those involved in fisheries and aquaculture.

The Code applies to all types of fisheries, both within the exclusive economic zones and on the high seas and in inland waters, as well as aquaculture. It recognizes the nutritional, economic, social, environmental and cultural importance of fisheries, and the interests of all those concerned with the fishery sector. It also takes into account the biological characteristics of the resources and their environments as well as the interests of consumers and other users. The Code is thus addressed not only to States, the European Community and global and regional or sub-regional organizations; it is also addressed to NGOs, fishing entities, as well as all persons concerned with the conservation of aquatic resources and management and development of fisheries and aquaculture.

The Code of Conduct enumerates ten objectives in Article 2. These can be grouped into the following five major objectives:

First and foremost, the Code *establishes the principles and standards of conduct*. It establishes a set of principles for responsible fishery and aquaculture activities, as well as standards of conduct for all persons involved in the sector. They are also to serve as principles and criteria for the

elaboration and implementation of national policies for responsible conservation of aquatic resources, and fisheries management and development.

Secondly, the Code *serves as an instrument of reference for national institution-building and further international agreements*. The provisions of the Code are aimed at assisting States to establish or to improve the legal and institutional framework required for the exercise of responsible fisheries; and they provide guidance for the formulation and implementation of international agreements and other legal instruments.

Thirdly, the Code *promotes the contribution of fisheries to food security, and cooperation in resource conservation, management and development*. The Code facilitates such cooperation in technical, financial and other areas.

Fourthly, the Code *promotes protection of aquatic resources and their environments, as well as research on fisheries, associated ecosystems and relevant environmental factors*; and

Fifthly, the Code *promotes trade in fish and fishery products in conformity with relevant international rules*.

The Code of Conduct is a comprehensive document consisting of 12 lengthy articles. The last seven articles lay down the general principles and address six substantive technical areas. These technical areas are: fisheries management, fishing operations, aquaculture development, integration of fisheries into coastal area management, post-harvest practices and trade, and fisheries research. Most of these articles are divided into several sections with detailed provisions.

Article 4 of the Code states that members and non-members of FAO, fishing entities and relevant sub-regional, regional and global organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental, and all persons concerned with the conservation, management and utilization of fisheries resources and trade in fish and fishery products should collaborate in the fulfilment and implementation of the objectives and principles contained in the Code.

Pursuant to this call, FAO, alone and in concert with its members and other organizations, has taken a number of steps to promote the implementation of the Code. The issue of promotion is being addressed comprehensively at government level, through industry channels and with inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, some States at their own initiative have initiated national measures, including workshops and consultations with stakeholders, to promote the Code widely and to ensure that the fishing industry, for example, is well briefed on technical and related aspects.

The activities of FAO in support of the implementation of the Code may be grouped into four categories: wider dissemination of the Code; promotion and facilitation of the implementation of the Code; assistance to developing countries; and monitoring the progress achieved in the implementation of the Code. In addition, the Fisheries Department of FAO has developed a comprehensive Medium-Term Strategy in Support of the Implementation of the Code.

Now, let me give you some examples of each of these categories of activities.

First, the dissemination of the Code.

FAO has widely promoted, and is continuing to promote, the dissemination of the text of the Code through governments, industry and NGOs. It has been distributed in the five official languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, English, French and Spanish). FAO has also cooperated with industry and NGOs to facilitate wide dissemination of the Code, particularly through its translation into various other languages. The translations of the Code by governments and non-governmental bodies now include Estonian, Farsi, German, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian, Sinhalese, Tamil and Tigrina. Some NGOs and local organizations have disseminated the text in more popular formats, e.g. comic strips. FAO is also now considering the publication of a similar popular version addressed to the grass-root level.

We have also established a Code of Conduct page on the FAO Fisheries Department Web Site. Moreover, a video is being completed, highlighting some of the Code's important aspects.

As part of our activities to promote and facilitate the implementation of the code, FAO has been developing and publishing a series of technical guidelines on various sections of the Code.

These guidelines are intended to provide practical guidance and advice for policy-makers and fisheries managers. Currently, six guidelines have been produced. They deal with: fishing operations, the precautionary approach to capture fisheries and species introductions, integration of fisheries into coastal area management, fisheries management, aquaculture development, and inland fisheries. More guidelines are scheduled in line with the priorities of the Fisheries Department.

Another activity that FAO is actively pursuing in order to promote or facilitate the implementation of the Code of Conduct is the regional adaptation of the Code, taking into account the specific conditions and requirements of a region or sub-region. The regional adaptation requires a review of the state of the fisheries in the region, the identification of the provisions of the Code particularly relevant to the region, the extraction from these provisions of the pertinent issues and constraints, and the elaboration of strategies to address these issues and constraints. The process should

be a collective effort. It should be an action-oriented, proactive and broadly participatory approach involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the sector. Adaptation contributes to ensuring the wide acceptance and sponsorship of the Code, as well as legitimacy for the Code. Such broadly-based support and legitimacy is of crucial importance, particularly since the Code is a non-binding document, and the implementation of its provisions is voluntary.

FAO has been advocating this approach at all recent meetings of FAO regional fishery bodies and other regional fora. We are also planning a series of regional workshops devoted to the process of regional adaptation of the Code. One such workshop was recently held in Benin, with participants from all West African States.

With regard to assistance to developing countries for the implementation of the Code, the Code itself recognizes such a need, especially in the areas of financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation and in enhancing the ability to develop their own fisheries.

Pursuant to the request by the FAO Conference at the time of the adoption of the Code, FAO has prepared an assistance programme, consisting of ten project areas, for helping developing countries to implement the Code, and submitted them to the international donor community.

The projects deal with the following areas: implementation of the Compliance Agreement; upgrading of capabilities for reporting on fishery statistics; upgrading of capabilities in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS); promotion of responsible fishing operations; upgrading marine resource survey capabilities; improving the provision of scientific advice for fisheries management; fisheries policy, planning and management; developing and implementing fleet restructuring policies; implementation of post-harvest practices and trade; and umbrella support to non-government organizations. In addition, another component has been added to handle the coordination and facilitation of the programme. To date, the Government of the Netherlands has contributed to support the formulation of three of the components of the programme, while the Government of Norway has committed US\$ 2.1 million over a three-year period to support the upgrading of capabilities in MCS and the provision of scientific advice for fisheries management.

Another initiative for assisting developing States is the formulation of a Joint Strategy for FAO and the World Bank for this purpose, prepared last year. The Strategy, which builds on past and on-going cooperation between FAO and the World Bank, seeks to create the maximum synergy from the utilization of technical and human resources of FAO and the financial resources of the World Bank and other multi-lateral and bilateral donors. FAO and the World Bank jointly prepared the Strategy principally for two reasons:

- (i) to inform FAO and World Bank stakeholders of the alliance between the

two organizations on fisheries matters, and the commonality of view and need for rational and sustainable resource use, and

(ii) to set forth a framework on how cooperation between the two organizations might proceed. The Strategy outlines, for purposes of comparison and eventual harmonization between the two organizations, their respective priority issues in fisheries, their selected objectives, and their main activities. While the Strategy provides a sound platform and understanding for possible follow-up between FAO and the World Bank, specific activities/projects would need to be jointly developed before the Strategy could be given practical effect.

With regard to the monitoring of the Code implementation, the 1995 FAO Conference called upon FAO to monitor and report on the implementation and its effects on fisheries. The Committee on Fisheries further requested FAO to report on the progress at its biennial regular sessions. Currently, we are preparing such a report for submission to the next COFI meeting in February next year.

Lastly, we have elaborated a draft FAO Fisheries Department Medium-Term Strategy in Support of the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries 1998-2002. The draft Strategy addresses general considerations on implementation of the Code, priority issues; the question of regional adaptation of the Code; constraints and possible solutions; FAO's strategy for implementation; the type of activities to be pursued; priority actions and major thrusts; FAO's structural requirements; expected impacts and results; monitoring, national reporting, evaluation and follow-up; and the time-frame for implementation, resource mobilization and operational arrangements. The draft Strategy will be placed before the next Session of COFI in 1999 for comment and possible endorsement.

As it should be clear from the above, practically all activities of FAO in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture are related, either directly or indirectly, to some provisions of the Code of Conduct. The Fisheries Department is indeed very lucky to have such a comprehensive guiding framework embodying the consensus of the international community.

This is why the implementation of the Code is the over-arching priority of the Department now and in the foreseeable future.

I would like to conclude my remarks by renewing our appeal to all of you, who represent fishing industry groups in major fishing countries, to continue to strengthen your efforts toward better implementation of the Code. I firmly believe that this is the surest way that leads to the development of fish and fishery products in a sustainable manner so that our future generations will continue to benefit from those valuable resources.