

Opening Address

by

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Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

at the Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries

14 October 2008 at 9.00 hrs.

Sofitel Centara Grand, Bangkok

Director-General of the Department of Fisheries,

**Assistant Director General of FAO Regional Office for Asia and
the Pacific,**

SEAFDEC Secretary General,

Director of WorldFish Center,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the opening of the Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries which is jointly organized by FAO, WorldFish Center, the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center and the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand. It is also my privilege to be here in the presence of the audience, in which most of the parties concerned are represented. Your presence is especially important on an occasion such as this conference when we are discussing ways and means of achieving sustainable small-scale fisheries.

/Small-scale fisheries,...

Small-scale fisheries, which constitute an essential part of the social fabric for several coastal communities are being marginalized. In some areas, they have problems in competing with semi-industrial fishing vessels using bottom-towed gears and increasing fuel prices. In other areas, it is facing the adverse impact of global warming and climate change such as the rise of sea levels, the increase of extreme events such as floods, draughts, cyclones and storm surges. I do believe that we all recognize those urgent and concrete steps must be taken to deliver sustainable fisheries in every part of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all aware that fisheries resources are not infinite and that healthy stocks need well preserved habitats and nursery areas. At the same time, optimum utilization of fisheries resources together with international regulations has to be taken into consideration. It, indeed, requires a greater cooperation between the fishing sector, scientists and administrations. Today, we are gathered in Bangkok in order to discuss and share our experiences in small-scale fisheries management aiming for sustainability and profitability for our small-scale fishers while simultaneously protecting biodiversity and fisheries habitats.

I am very pleased to learn that this Conference will focus on the participation of people in small-scale fisheries management. In our development scheme, people are the most important factor for the success of natural resource management including fisheries.

/The recent 10th National Economic...

The recent 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand has regarded people as the center of development and that the participatory approach has also been used for fisheries management. During the past decade, the Ministry has launched a significant 5-year program on the Coastal Habitats and Resources Management Project called CHARM project involved much on the participation of people in coastal fisheries management.

In fact, the concrete effort made during this conference, together with close co-ordination and co-operation among us is fundamental to deliver sustainable fisheries in our respective regions. I am confident that sustainability is a notion that will only work if we pool our efforts together and co-operate in a mutually beneficial manner. We need to join forces; we need to work hand in hand in seeking our common goal of achieving sustainability; and with the support from all International Organizations involved, we will surely reach our goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the presence of all distinguished participants to this conference. My special thanks go to FAO, SEAFDEC, WorldFish Center and the Department of Fisheries for co-hosting this Conference. I wish you all a fruitful and successful deliberation. Now let me declare this “Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries” open.

Thank you.