



CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM
REGIONAL UNIT FOR THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

OSPESCA

**FISHERIES AND
AQUACULTURE INTEGRATION
POLICY FOR THE CENTRAL
AMERICAN ISTHMUS**



**GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE CENTRAL
AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM**

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**ORGANIZATION FOR THE FISHING AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR OF
THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ISTHMUS (OSPESCA)**

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PRESENTATION

The fishing and the aquaculture are important sources of social and economic development for the Central American countries, obtaining the hydrobiological resources which sustainable use is more viable in the way they are used in a harmonic way with a regional focus. For it, and as a part of the consolidation efforts of the Central American integration process, the fishing and the aquaculture has become institutionalized within the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA), incorporating in its structure the Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA).

The Committee of Ministers of OSPESCA, has been very interested in the strength of concrete actions to emphasize the responsible use of sea resources, those from inland waters and the hydrobiological culture, implying harmonic decisions, particularly in those resources that because their condition freely moves in the Central American oceans and in international waters.

For this reason, with the determined support of the General Secretary of the Central American Integration System, Lic. Aníbal Quiñonez and from the Regional Plan for the Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Project (PREPAC), a regional planning process “down to up” has been impulse in all Central American countries, making consultations with the participation of regional entities, institutions related directly or indirectly with this sector and with leaders of fisher and aquacultures organizations, exercise that has allows incomes that them were discussed in a regional meeting with the participation of the small scale fishers leaders, the industrial fishers, aquaculture an government institutions.

The product of these consultations was presented in March 31st of 2005 to the Committee of Ministers of OSPESCA, under the framework of the LII Meeting of the Honorable International Regional Committee for Plant and Animal Health (H. CIRSA), which agree to approve and implement from July the 1st on, the present “Fisheries and Aquaculture Integration Policy for the Central American Isthmus”; it also agree that this policy be presented to the Central American Integration System Secretariat, which was all ready done by the signatory the past April the 9th, as President Pro Tempore of OSPESCA, with the request to the General Secretariat of SICA that this policy be presented to the Central American Presidents.

With the presentation of this document we pretend contribute to the strength of the knowledge of the content of the new policy and to urge to all Central American society to join in the creation of a new regional step for the fisheries an aquacultures sector to accomplish its development in favor of our populations. So also express the thanks to the General Secretary of the Central American Integration System and to the Republic of China (Taiwan) because it support, and to all civil society that participated in the process of formulation of the policy and has made possible to concrete this new Central American eagerness.

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FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INTEGRATION POLICY FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ISTHMUS

CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT	4
2.1 THE LAW OF THE SEAS.....	4
2.2 HIGH SEAS FISHING AGREEMENT	4
2.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHING	5
2.4 FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT	5
III. FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INTEGRATION POLICY.....	5
3.1 OBJECTIVES	5
3.2 PRINCIPLES.....	6
3.3 SCOPE AND TIME PERIOD.....	7
3.4 APPLICATION STRATEGIES	7
3.4.1 <i>Institutional and organizational strengthening</i>	7
3.4.2 <i>Central American regulation harmonization</i>	9
3.4.3 <i>Adoption of regional decisions</i>	9
3.4.4 <i>Regional management of fisheries and aquaculture</i>	10
3.4.5 <i>Integrated coastal fisheries and aquaculture</i>	12
3.4.6 <i>Integrated high seas fisheries</i>	13
3.4.7 <i>Shared species</i>	14
3.4.8 <i>Surveillance and control</i>	14
3.4.9 <i>Intra and extra-regional trade</i>	15
3.4.10 <i>Sport fisheries associated with tourism</i>	16
3.4.11 <i>Extra-regional relations</i>	17
3.5 ORGANIZATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION	18

I. INTRODUCTION.

The Central American Isthmus integrated by the Republics of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, possess fisheries resources that according to this regional policy are classified as common, migratory or highly migratory resources. The common resources are those similar in the region that live in at least two countries, but they don't move between them; the migratory ones are those that move in the marine waters at least in two countries of the region, or in shared inland waters; and the highly migratory ones moves during their life cycle in jurisdictional waters of the region and in international waters.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture activities for these resources are developed with similar technological modalities in the whole Isthmus were small scale fisheries, industrial fisheries, aquaculture and processing infrastructure exist, being recognized by their economic, social and nutritional importance. Since Fisheries and Aquaculture are among the first activities for foreign exchange generation, they contribute significantly to employment to the Central American societies and programs of food security.

Around three hundred thousand metric tons are marketed annually locally and outside of the region, with an approximately value of eight hundred fifty million dollars. About ninety thousand small scale fishermen are devoted to these tasks daily, supplying products mainly for the internal market of the region.

Product from Central America normally has been export to similar international markets, but in the last years, the individual consumption of fishing products inside the region has increased, but it is still low compared with the standard for countries with high tradition in this type of consumption, and progressively there is more knowledge of the high nutritional value of these products, which has strengthened the internal trade.

Similar problems are confronted: over fishing on some resources; the effects of the environmental changes; the inadequate fishing methods and gears; the inadequate practices of fishing, as well as the extraction of species during closed season and/or illegal sizes; inadequate management of the aquatic ecosystems, among others. The effect of the mentioned factors is observed in the drop of the volumes and the value of the production.

Recently an initial work has been implemented, that has allowed to a better knowledge of the regional fisheries situation, and has demonstrated that the management and development of the Central American fishing and aquaculture have better perspectives, specially if the management of this resources are strengthen under the frame of the integration process that is promoted in Central America.

For this reason, the region will promote at the future the management of fishing and aquaculture, according to the objectives, principles and specific regional strategies that the present Fisheries and Aquaculture Integration Policy for the Central American Isthmus conform, which is possible to formulate with the contribution of authorities and technicians of the National Fishing and Aquaculture offices, and with the leaders of the fishing industry, the small scale fishers and aquacultures of the Central American Isthmus.

II. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

World wide, fisheries face up similar situations as the ones in the region, such as the reduction of productivity in traditional fishing grounds due to the over fishing, which has led to the creation of tools to support the management efforts for a sustainable use of the fisheries resources, as the following:

2.1 The Law of the Seas

The text of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas seeks “to solve with spirit of understanding and mutual cooperation all the relative questions to the sea and conscious of the historical significance of the Convention as important contribution to the maintenance of the Peace and the progress for all the people of the world.”

At the same time, it also expresses that the problems of the marine spaces are closely related to each other and they must consider as a whole.

It considers that it should be established - with the due respect to the sovereignties -, a juridical order for the seas and oceans that facilitates the international communication and promote the uses with peaceful purposes, the equitable and efficient use of the resources, the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment and the conservation of the live resources.

At the same time, a fair and equitable international economic order must be established, that keeps in mind the necessities of the whole humanity and in particular the interests and special needs of the development countries. The Convention has a specific section to the Conservation and Administration of the Live Resources in High Sea.

At the moment, the Convention is in force; it has been signed by all the Central American countries and six of them have already ratified it.

2.2 High Seas Fishing Agreement

This Agreement has been proposed for the Application of the regulations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, relative to the Conservation and Management of the Highly Migratory Fish Species Populations.

Its objective is to ensure the long term conservation and the sustainable use of the mentioned resources by the effective application of the pertinent regulations of the Convention of the Law of the Sea.

To achieve the above-mentioned their content embraces topics related with the compatibility of the conservation measures and management, mechanisms of international cooperation, organization and regional and sub regional arrangements, among others.

At the moment, only one country has signed it, but it is taking into account in this Policy for its high relationship with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as if they have been signed for all the countries.

2.3 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing

The member countries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among them all the Central American countries, have welcomed this Code that contains international norms and principles for the application of responsible practices, with the aim of ensuring the conservation, the management and the development of the aquatic resources, showing consideration for the ecosystem and biodiversity.

The objective is to establish principles consistent with relevant international laws, so that the activities related with the fishing are carried out in a responsible manner, keeping in mind all the biological, technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects.

Although the application of the Code is voluntary, all the Central American countries have adopted it, including some countries that recognize their principles in their new legislations.

2.4 Regional Framework Treaty on Fisheries and Aquaculture

The objective of the Framework Treaty is to adopt a Declaration of Principles as the foundation of a Regional System of Management and Development of the Fisheries and Aquaculture, by establishing joined policies, strategies, regulations and programs.

In the application of this Agreement, the Central American States takes into account the principles established in the Protocol of the General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration and the Protocols of Guatemala and Tegucigalpa.

Among the purposes of the Framework Treaty it is mentioned the establishment and harmonization of strategies, political and combined norms that gradually must institute the Regional System before mentioned.

The Framework Treaty was approved directly in 1999 by the related sectors with the fishing and the aquaculture; it had the Central American Parliament's (PARLACEN) favourable opinion; it was presented by the PARLACEN to the General Secretary of the System of the Central American Integration who in turn remitted it to the Chancelleries of the respective countries.

The logical step would be to have an up to date revision of the Treaty and then for the Chancelleries to present it for the approval of the Central American Presidents, so that successively it is remitted to ratification of the Legislatives Congresses.

III. FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INTEGRATION POLICY

3.1 Objectives

- **General.**

To establish a common regional system to increase the integrated participation of the countries of the Central American Isthmus and in this manner to contribute to the appropriate and sustainable use of the fisheries resources and the aquaculture products.

- **Specific**

- a) To promote the regional and national organization of the sectors related directly with the administration and sustainable use of the fisheries and the aquaculture.
- b) The regional and national institutional strengthening with the participation of the several organized agents of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- c) To integrate regional actions strengthening the regional cooperation and encouraging entailment, to ensure the biological, economic, social and environmental sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture.
- d) To encourage joined research and strengthen the knowledge for a better development of the fisheries and aquaculture activities taking into consideration sanitation and traceability actions.

3.2 Principles.

- ***Sustainability***

The marine and inland waters ecosystems should be used with responsible practices in order to take advantage of the fisheries and aquaculture resources, ensuring that they are not degraded and the fish species keep their natural capacity of reproduction, ensuring the benefits for current and future generations.

- ***Precaution.***

It is the option of taking temporary joined decisions of fisheries and aquaculture management, in view of signs that demonstrate their convenience, although there were no scientific or technical evidence, making the effort to obtain this evidence as soon as possible.

- ***Central American integration***

The management and development measures for the fisheries and aquaculture will be coherent with the principles of the Central American Integration System, looking after the regional or sub-regional interest.

- ***Regional responsibility***

The management of aquatic ecosystems and the use of migratory or common fishing species, as well as of the continental bodies of water, it is joined responsibility of the States of the Central American Isthmus.

- ***Citizenship participation.***

The community organizations related directly with the fisheries and the aquaculture activities will have forum to express their opinion and participate in the definition of the decisions related with the objectives of the present policy.

- ***Intraregional solidarity***

In recognition to the Central American solidarity principle, the member countries of OSPESCA will cooperate and contribute with the necessary resources to take into practice the Integration Policy of Fisheries and Aquaculture, acknowledging the regional interest as the main purpose, although, because circumstances, in some occasions the added values achieved from the integration don't have the same level among the countries.

- ***Good Neighbors.***

It considers that the regional solidarity is set up available to other neighbouring countries of the Central American region that share this policy's, objectives and principles, particularly the responsibility of cultivating, extracting, processing and marketing the regional fisheries and aquaculture products by the implementation of good practices.

3.3 Scope and Time Period

The present policy is applicable in the Jurisdictional Oceans, the inland waters, and international waters to fishing fleets flying a flag from a Central American country.

It recognizes the regional and international valid Agreements and ratified by the Central American countries.

Because its focus on medium and long terms, the time period of this policy is ten years, starting the 1st July, 2005. At the end of this period, a wider evaluation that the one carried out for smaller periods will be done, to achieve and to capitalize lessons of the generated experience.

3.4 Application strategies

It is recognized as fundamental premise that for the achievement of the present Policy objectives, it is decisive the will and participation of the political level of the region, complementing it with the normative that make it possible, research programs, training, technical assistance and spreading. It is particularly important the setting in march of the following strategies:

3.4.1 Institutional and organizational strengthening

Due to the common right property of the fishing resources, it is of particular importance the strengthen of the regional and national organization, from the institutional point of view as from the users of the resources of fishing and the aquaculture, for taking and setting in march the regional decisions for the administration of this resources, coherent with the objectives of the this Policy.

To achieve this, the fishing and the aquaculture administration must be adequate, preferably with harmonic institutional outlines, considering the systematic participation of organizations related with the activities of the fishing and the aquaculture of the organized civil society. In a special way the related to the Institutionality of the investigation, education, information, administration, animal health, technology transfer, fishing economy, control and surveillance and the execution of projects, considering the institutional decentralization.

At regional level it, is the Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the responsible instance to coordinate the definition, execution and pursuit of the strategies, policies and projects, related with the normative framework of regional application that leads to the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture activities. According to its Act of Constitution, it is integrated for:

- a) The Ministers Responsible of Fishing and Aquaculture activities, as the instance of the highest level of decision;
- b) The Committee of Vice ministers in charge of the fishing and aquaculture activities that are responsible for the formulation and pursuit of the decisions of OSPESCA;
- c) The Commission of Directors of Fishing and Aquaculture that form the scientific and technical instance of the Organization.

OSPESCA has been incorporated to the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System, to strengthen the process of joint work of the fishing and aquaculture sector, as the working unit of the Fishing and the Aquaculture Sector inside this Secretary, but it requires reinforcement so it can carry out its means under this new policy.

For it would be revised between the General Secretary of the SICA and the National Fishing and Aquaculture Authorities of the Central American Countries, the Framework Treaty of Functional Cooperation signed by both parts, with the purpose of assure and to strengthen the technical and financial institutionality of OSPESCA. Likewise, it would be considered the modality of execution for fishing and aquaculture regional projects, analyzing the viability of a Specialized Agency and the actual experience for transferring the administrative service to other regional entities with experience in projects execution.

In this analysis it will be take into account the strength of the regional fishing and the aquaculture associations, such as the Aquaculture and Fishing Entrepreneurs Organization (OECAP) and the Central American Small Scale Fishers Confederation (CONFEPESCA), offering they can opt to be part of the Advisory Committee of SICA.

To assure the technical and scientific assistance, regional working groups will be promoted, integrated by suitable people of the OSPESCA countries and with checked experience in the fishing and aquaculture media, to effect of strengthening the interdisciplinary topics as fisheries management, legislations, trade, certifications, financing, investigations, among others.

Coordination mechanisms will be motivated with other regional and international entities that, because of their competition nature, they could or should assist to the fishing and aquaculture, such in the case of the sanitary, quality, traceability, information, environmental, economic and social measures around the products of fishing and aquaculture. With them it would pretend to strengthen the investigation programs, training, transfers of technologies and regional technical assistance.

Likewise, with the cooperation of the General Secretary of the SICA, economic resources would be negotiated to propitiate a systematic communication and to assure the active participation of the fishing and aquaculture authorities, in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences and obtain a consensus in the decisions taken.

3.4.2 Harmonization of Central American legislations

In 1999 the Fishing and Aquaculture productive sectors and the Central American Parliament impelled The Regional Framework Treaty for the Fishing and the Aquaculture, described in the point 2.4 of this document, that has served fundamentally like referential framework and orientation in the process of bring up to date of the national legislations. From 2001 to date, five of seven national laws have been modernized. There is a Code of Ethics for Fishing and Aquaculture for one of the Central American countries, elaborated with the participation of the Ministry in charge of the fishing and the aquaculture and the productive sectors

This harmonization exercise is new and there will be dispositions that can be improved during the phase of Regulations approving of the respective national laws.

Within this new Policy, a revision of the Framework Treaty will be made, with the participation of the different representative sectors of the regional fishing, with the purpose of modernize it and to assure its coherence with the content of this regional policy, particularly for the regional purposes of promoting linking decisions and procuring that the processes of regional harmony have a specific legal handle.

The process of bring up to date of the national laws would be completed trying to strengthen the regional harmony by means of the regulations of the current laws; the effective normative would be evaluated and future special normative would be identified as resultants of policies defined by the regional organization, such the standardization of fishing gears for objective species. The region will encourage the Code of Ethics for Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America.

In all this harmonization effort they should be considered the international existent normative that can affect the regional fishing and aquaculture; to propitiate the fishing and the responsible trade and the consumption of fishing and aquaculture products in the Central American region that can impact in the quality and level of the Central American population's life.

3.4.3 Adoption of regional decisions.

The new policy seeks to go from the integration by cooperation actions among nations to the integration by the means of linking measured or obligatory decisions. To the moment, it has been some advance as regards coordination, but the integration outline always prevails for will of each State, which is a step in the integration process; now gradually is sought to traffic toward more regional linking mechanisms.

Start point is that implementing the new policy, linking measured will be developed in favour of the countries as a whole and others to a part of them. The process of adoption of integration decisions would consider the following phases:

- a) The initial proposals of measures for fishing integration can be presented by all the natural or juridical persons of the region, such as fishing entities or formally inscribed fishing or aquaculture union. These proposals have to be endorsed at national level before their presentation at regional level.

- b) The proposal endorsed at national level would be introduced to consideration of the Committee of Vice ministers', with the Directors of Fishing and Aquaculture acting as technical assistants; the Committee will guarantee that the proposals have the regional opinion of the fishing and aquaculture union.
- c) If to concerns of the Committee, the proposal requires of a technical reinforcement, it would be send to the Regional Unit of Fishing and Aquaculture (SICA/OSPESCA), be sustained together with the promoters of the idea.
- d) The new version would be presented to consideration of the Committee of Vice ministers. If it is approved, it passes to consideration and approval application of the council of Ministers of OSPESCA.
- e) When achieving the approval of the council of Ministers of OSPESCA, some proposals would be impelled immediately in the region, always keeping the voluntary accomplishment, supported generally in the national juridical instruments.
- f) The proposals that the council of Ministers decides to elevate to a linking level would be presented through the General Secretary of the Central American Integration System to the Consideration of the Chancelleries council of Ministers.
- g) Subsequently, to consideration and approval of the Central American Presidents.
- h) When being approved by the Presidents of the Republic, it would undergo the ratification of the respective Assemblies or Legislative Congress.
- i) Consecutively it would pass to the Sanction of the Presidents.
- j) Then it would be published in the Gazettes or Official Newspapers of each country.
- k) Then the Deposit is made in the General Secretary of the SICA
- l) It is valid when having the deposit of at least four countries, except for exceptions.

The General Secretary of the Central American Integration System would support the process of publication.

If the original proposals were of operative character and very related with a politics already approved, the council of Ministers will value if when achieving the approval of them, the procedure is continued to make them linking.

3.4.4 Regional management of fisheries and aquaculture

In general the present policy's different strategies are for fishing management with regional and integrated focus, since at national level the measures promoted have also demonstrated the convenience of enlarging their application, at least at Central American level.

The single fact that a country establishes management measures without a coordinated action with the neighbouring country is not guarantee of enough results for the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture.

For this reason, during the last years, conditions have been generating to encourage measures as regional research, combined closed seasons, use of similar fishing gears and management of shared areas, among others, that have demonstrated progressively positive results. Nevertheless, there is the need to strengthen the harmony of technical and administrative mechanisms in most of the management actions. For it, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Integration Policy assists this topic with particular importance seeking to arrive to linking measured.

In February of 2005 the Regional Committee of Fisheries (COREPESCA) was created, integrated by scientist of the fishing and the aquaculture institutions of the Central American countries, as a result of an agreement taken by the Committee of Vice ministers of OSPESCA.

The Committee's objective is to determine, to coordinate and to monitor the fishing management measures based on harmonic approaches and its functions are the following:

- a) To analyze the proposals of convenient harmonic measures for the sustainable use of the Central American fisheries.
- b) To propose and to sustain in the face of the competent authorities of OSPESCA the management measures that are viable of encourage with regional approach.
- c) To promote and support investigation actions like the regional databases that sustains proposals of management measures.
- d) Maintain a technical monitoring to the effect generated by the application of the measures.
- e) To promote measures for monitoring the harmonic measures in application.

According to the thematic of the approach, in their operation it will take into account the representatives of the different regional sectors, that in one form or another keeps relationship with the fisheries.

It will be promoted and it will put into operation the Regional Fishing and Aquaculture Registration, with the purpose of having a tool that allows visualizing, among other, the regional fishing effort.

In similar form, it would impel a database that allows the monitoring the behaviour of the species at a regional level trough a combined monitoring.

For the above-mentioned it will be necessary to standardize and to keep up dated the fishing and aquaculture statistics, impelling models that assure the confidence of it.

A Plan of Investigations will be promoted to assure the scientific evidences that require the different management measures, in particular the harmonic closed seasons, the similar fishing gears, the management of shared areas, the consideration of global annual quotas, the number of vessels recommended for the appropriate use of the fishing resources, as well as other decisions related with the objectives and strategies of the present policy.

The investigation projects should try to incorporate the users of the fishing resource and to promote that accessible information will be generated to the populations of fishermen and aquacultures, socializing their results. Each investigation should consider a project that promoted the application of the obtained results.

For it, the investigations will be prepared and executed, preferably with ecosystem approach, interdisciplinary, intersectorial and interinstitutional focus, trying at the same time to capitalize the infrastructures and existent means. It will be necessary to make an inventory and look for the mechanisms to allow a regional use of these goods.

In the systems of regional monitoring the interaction between environmental, economic and financial indicators and the determination of permissible cultivation parameters will be included, as the integration of aquaculture practices in the framework of diversification of the regional agricultural sector.

In relation to the sanitation of aquaculture and residuals (physical, chemical and biological), a regional plan will be promoted focused on the genetics, nutrition, cultivation systems, fry production, pathologies, zonificación and control of transshipment of species among others.

The sanity, the risk analysis, the quality control, harmlessness, traceability, fish excluder devices and eco-label, will be approached with an integral and regional focus to effects of assuring the regional production and the supply to the consumers, avoiding at the same time that these measures do not be used as non tariff barriers.

In particular, special efforts would be made to formulate and drive the action plans in the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in specific: a) the international plan of action to reduce the incidental captures of marine birds in the long line fishing, b) international plan of action for the management of fishing capacity c) international plan of action to prevent, discourage and eliminate the illegal no declared and not regulated fishing, and d) the international plan of action for the conservation and management of the sharks. In the case of the shark it is sought to manage it integrally avoiding the cut of the fins at the sea.

Regional meetings of OSPESCA will procure that the actions of regional management of fishing and aquaculture always be considered as agenda topic.

3.4.5 Integrated coastal fisheries and aquaculture

The fishing in the coastal area of the Region has been the heaviest exploited environment, concentrating in this place the small scale fishing and most of the industrial or semi industrial fishery as well as the shrimp culture. It is decisive in the economic impact taken place in the national economies, but in the last years a significant reduction in the volume and value largely promoted by the environmental effects, disease and overfishing has been reported.

Because their renown importance, Interdisciplinary Fishing and Aquaculture Research will strengthen, with the objective of improve the abilities of the fishing administrations related with the evaluation and monitoring of traditional objective species, so they can have the best scientific information and permanent advice as regards policies and strategies for the management of the fisheries and the aquaculture.

In these sense, actions would also be promoted for the recovery of fish populations, the development of a responsible aquaculture, the good management of the coastal ecosystems, the use of adequate fishing gears and methods, and to obtain an added value from the target species.

Mechanisms of analysis for the rational use of the resource will be promoted, as well as modern and harmonized of fishing gears and methods, trying that the efficiency of the modern thing keeps coherence with the real situation of the resource.

The aquaculture would be stimulated, due to its potentiality and as a form of reducing the extraction of the coastal fishing, giving new production options to the fishermen.

Merchants of fishing gears would be invited to joint to this regional interest of recovery of the coastal areas, taking into account the regional organizations in the promotions of the use of new methods and fishing gears.

Being the coastal fishing an obligation of national control, an interchange of actions and results would be promoted to capitalize the positive results at regional level; programs of fishing education will be promoted for the fishermen to put them in a better position for the effective management of the regional fisheries.

For the whole production in the Exclusive Economic Zone and in international waters, as well as in the continental fishing and aquaculture, the fishing and the regional trade with evidences of illegality would be discouraged.

3.4.6 Integrated high seas fisheries

Historically high sea fishing carried out in international waters, was considered in most of the Central American countries as an opportunity of little option for regional investors, but in present century it begins a new stage of immersion of foreigner investors with fleets that fly Central American countries flags for the fishing of tunas or other highly migratory species, so much in waters of our exclusive economic areas as in international waters.

It most be point it out that most of countries are participants of Organisms and Regional Agreements as the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (CIAT), the International Convention for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the Agreement of the International Program for the Conservation of the Dolphins (APICD) where a jointly work is developed – specially in the CIAT -, achieving fishing quotas for each of the members countries.

Likewise, there are processing infrastructures that has been installing, allowing added value, exports, employment and the development of the consumption of these products.

Distant fishing is an activity in development process where it is more evident the convenience of the fishing management with a regional and coordinated focuses. To guarantee their sustainability in the current policy, an appropriate regional and national institutional management would be promoted that facilitates to the countries the taking of decisions in the administration of these fisheries. In this effort, private sectors of the tuna fishing will be invited to participate.

Legislations and regulations for the use of the highly migratory species will be homologated or harmonize, promoting a regional management, with an access regime based on this policy's principles, assuring that the participant countries achieve added values for their products.

Likewise, the possibilities of a scheme for exchange of quotas would be analyzed between the countries of the Central American Isthmus as well the establishment of a license for Central American fishing for highly migratory resources.

The region would guarantee the participation in regional and international forums related with the administration of these fisheries, designating personnel to form an interdisciplinary and multisectorial regional group that represents and preserve the regional interest. A communication outline will be promoted for the harmonization of regional positions with a common spokesman in the international forums.

The preparation and strengthen of the interdisciplinary and multisectorial personnel's knowledge and they are actions, will be considered high-priority and permanent.

The processing infrastructure with regional focus would be promoted, in such a way of not create installed capacities that can be sub used.

3.4.7 Shared species

The Central American region is characterized for having transboundary aquatic environments between two or more countries, as the Gulf of Honduras, the Bay of Amatique, cape Gracias a Dios, the Gulf of Fonseca and the delta of the San Juan River, among others.

At the same time, these places are habitats of such species as shrimps, snappers, croackers, lobsters, snook, bass, tarpons, marine turtles, dolphin fish, tuna fish, bill fishes and small pelagic. Most of them have a high commercial value in the domestic and international markets.

In consequence fishing activities are developed with fleets of two or more countries, sharing species which are regulated with fishing normative from the respective countries. However, due to their transboundary nature, these are sensitive places to the control with other approaches different from the fishing ones.

In this order it will intend to manage the administration of the shared resources with harmonized approaches, in such a way that, recognizing the existence of other topics to overcome, a combined and harmonic management can be done for the sustainable use of the fishing and aquaculture resources. To achieve this:

- a) A specific organization with personal of the respective countries will be conformed. In the first place considering the fishing authorities, to know, to analyze and to agree the jointly actions to be promoted in the environment of the fishing and aquaculture.
- b) A Technical Group with personal of the countries would be formed with the responsibility of making the technical positions, research, propose preventive measures, to define the qualified list of shared species, to establish the databases, the fishing gears and methods, the periods of fishing, and to propose the fishing and aquaculture plans of jointly management.
- c) They would take into account other institutions related with the fishing and the aquaculture and the organizations of fishermen and aquacultures for they are active part in the administration to promote.
- d) Also, sub-regional agreements would be promoted to formalize and manage the fishing of shared species, the delimitation and marine signalling and the impulse of jointly projects of aquatic reservation areas.

3.4.8 Surveillance and control.

The surveillance and the control of the fishing activities is generally concentrated in the coastal and continental areas, and it is limited in the exclusive economic zones; the possibility to improve them is uniting efforts among the entities of control of the region and applying coordinated methodologies.

In this order it will be promoted that the Central American Armed Forces Conference (CFAC), which possesses Specialized Activities, strengthen the control and the surveillance in the regional fishing and aquaculture, mainly in the Central American exclusive economic zone and always protects and support to the Central American fishermen that practise their fishing and aquaculture activities in responsible form.

It will also intend to activate the understanding memorandum among the Naval Forces where regulations settle down in the event of fishermen's captures, without discharging the infractions to the fishermen for illicit fishing, but liberating persons who should accept the national legislations.

The satellite tracking would be one of the support tools that will be promoted to strengthen coordinated mechanisms to take good care and use of our fishing resources.

In the regional application regulations, apart from the national dispositions, sanctions would be considered to the illegal fishing of foreign fleets of the region that carry out illegal fishing in the exclusive economic zone of Central America.

Likewise regional mechanisms will settle down to discourage the illegal fishing, the robbery, sale and illegal trade of the products of the fishing and the aquaculture, strengthen the solidarity links among the organisms in charge of the control.

The revenues generated by the incoming from sanctions or fines, will be recommended that they should be dedicated to reinforce the instances that exercise the activities of control and surveillance and to the Fishing and Aquaculture Administrations.

In turn, inter institutional efforts will be done to identify financing sources that allow to implement surveillance and control programs for the fishing and aquaculture in the seas and continental water bodies of the region, procuring the modernization of Coast Guard service with more autonomous crafts and better performance for the surveillance and control.

3.4.9 *Intra and extra-regional trade*

The products trade for the fishing and the aquaculture in the region have come growing significantly, due the existent facilities that favour the increase of the consumption for these products in the Central American population.

Outside the region the trade has been stimulated by some traditional markets and the Free Trade Treaties negotiated at the moments, which stimulate the producers interested in exporting, reason why these opportunities will be encourage.

This variable has been threatened by the presence in the external markets for similar products coming from countries that take place under advantageous conditions for them, with lowest production costs that in the region and impacting in a drop of the international

prices to levels that discourage the export; to counteract this situation, the identification and use of competitive techniques at international level will strengthen.

In turn a disharmony exists in the region in the prices of the inputs that require the producers, so much farmers, fishers and processors, with differences among the same region, and generating an no-harmonic trade, sometimes with minimal sanitaria controls.

A mechanism to strengthen the regional capacity to gather fishing products, to improve the competitiveness, promoting a Central American trade mark and the system of auctions, will be settling down.

It will be promoted that the regional organizations be participant in the definition and settling down of mechanisms that allow negotiating in block the necessary means for the fishing and aquaculture activities.

The regional certification will be promoted to favour the responsible trade, guaranteeing that the fishing resources have been extracted in a responsible way and that the cultivated products use good handling practices, completing all the national dispositions related with the extraction, processing, commercialization and all the other established national and regional dispositions.

It will be propitiated in the Central American region the consumption of products coming from the fishing and aquaculture that impact in the quality and level of the inhabitants' life, promoting the modern marketing of fishing and of aquaculture products in the region.

Likewise it would be guaranteed the presence of representative delegates' of the fishing and aquaculture in International Forums related with the Trade of products of the fishing and the aquaculture and to assure the Central American interests and to avoid the creation and implementation of non tariff barriers.

The region in its group would settle down normative that impede the internal and external trade of products that have been extracted with methods and gears that degrade the resources or the ecosystems where they inhabit, or with inhuman methods that affect the integrity of the fishermen. And following the solidarity principle, there must be a normative for different countries of OSPESCA would not allow the entrance to their countries of products with evidenced that they have been extracted in another country, with methods and gears that don't have the approval of their respective national offices or in general that contradict the national or regional normative.

3.4.10 Sport fisheries associated with tourism

According to data of from carried out studies, the oceans of Central America are one of the places of the World where niches of well-known species exist for Bill fishes (Marlin, Sail Fish, Sword Fish, among other) that are prime matter for sustainable development of a sport fishery that can give an important added value, by liberating fish alive after catch.

For example the sail fish shows an important abundance between Mexico and Colombia, being considered as the bigger of the world, favoured by the sea surface temperature and the oceanic whirls formed by the winds that allow a better retention of the larvae of bill fish in the region.

But in spite of this, there are problem that impede the sustainable use and the economic and social development, as the fishing methods applied to the commercial pelagic fishing that generate an excessive incidental fishing of bill fishes, producing a strong decrease of the abundance and the sizes of catch of these resources.

Part of the Central American countries, nevertheless their effort to up date their national legislations, they still show lacks of specific regulations for the sport fishing and those that exist don't have harmonic approaches at Central American level. However, Guatemala and Panama current legislations stand out of that and can be a model to be applied at regional level.

In this order the strategy of the industry for the tourism is valued and promoted in Central America, recommending the strengthens in the specific areas of sport fishing, recognizing that the future of this industry depends on the abundance and quality (trophy size) of the species of bill fishes, big actors of the sport fishing and the tourism. In turn, the management measures and development of the sport fishing associated with the tourism have bigger perspectives of success if they are made in jointly basis at regional level.

In this respect, The Ministers Responsible for the Fishing and the Aquaculture, have agreed:

- a) To harmonize the normative promoting the development of the capture and liberation of species of bill fishes and the use of circular hooks, including in the commercial fishing with long line for highly migratory species. Likewise to establish a program of on board observers in the sport fishing to guaranteed the on going regional agreements promoting the coordinated participation of the authorities responsible for the navigation at the sea and in particular promoting the system of satellite pursuit in the crafts.
- b) To formulate and promote a regional research plan, the participation of the private sector, to have scientific approaches that allow the establishment of management policy and development of the sport and commercial fishing, such as basic studies of the population dynamics of the bill fishes.
- c) To encourage sectorial consultations and regional inter-institutional mechanisms to modernize the Regional Strategy of Management for Fishing and Aquaculture Development, in particular a Regional Agreement to harmonize the Administration of the bill fishes resources, considering a protocol for the Conservation of them and the regional institutionality for their setting in march.
- d) To carry out a regional study about the sport fishing of bill fishes, their relationship with the small scale fisheries and the investment plans that were convenient in Central America for the development of the tourism, having as base line the sport fishing of bill fished. In the efforts of normative harmonization in the Regional Agreement would be considered the contributions that in this respect have given the leaders of the sport fishing in their encounters with the authorities of tourism and fisheries.

3.4.11 Extra-regional relations

The policy's focus relates the Central American fishing and aquaculture directly with the rest of the world, reason for which a combined and harmonic participation in forums and international organisms will be promoted.

To achieve a protagonic participation, the convenience is reiterated of conform working groups that can prepare the regional positions on the topics to approach, emphasizing in the profile of people that can be representatives of the region, the inter-disciplinary and the multi-sectorial focus.

The idea is to participate properly prepared and to be an active part with proposals and interventions on behalf of the region. The country with the presidency pro tempore of OSPESCA will be the leader of the Group, although if the topic were specialized or a particular topic, the Presidency pro tempore can be assisted by a specialist to reinforce the regional participation.

It will be pursued to go generating spaces of regional and world leaderships that allow that the region preserves its fishing and aquaculture interests.

3.5 Organization for the implementation

According to the strategy of strengthen of the Organization and this Policy's institutionality, the General Secretary of the Central American Integration System through the Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (SICA/OSPESCA), will be responsible for the coordination for the execution of this policy's different dispositions, designating specific personnel according to the possibilities.

The National Authorities Responsible for the Fishing and Aquaculture Activities of the region would support the whole execution process and pursuit of the politics, contributing with personnel of the different entities of the fishing and aquaculture, in a special way, personnel related with the ministerial policies and fishing and aquaculture policies in particular.

Regional organizations for fishing and aquaculture will be invited to participate actively, including the appointment of people according to the thematic to approach.

In a same way, other entities of the region, friends' countries and international organisms to that unite to this regional effort, will be invited too.

IV. RESOLUCIÓN No. 14 LII REUNIÓN ORDINARIA H. CIRSA

LII REUNIÓN ORDINARIA DEL H. CIRSA
Ciudad de Panamá, Panamá
31 de marzo de 2005

RESOLUCION No. 14

POLITICA REGIONAL DE INTEGRACION DE LA PESCA
Y LA ACUICULTURA EN EL ITSMO CENTROAMERICANO

EL HONORABLE COMITÉ
INTERNACIONAL REGIONAL DE SANIDAD AGROPECUARIA

CONSIDERANDO:

- Que reconociendo la importancia económica, social y nutricional de los recursos de la pesca y la acuicultura centroamericana y la conveniencia de definir un rumbo regional común para lograr su ordenación y desarrollo.
- Que por la naturaleza misma de los recursos pesqueros hay mas perspectiva de uso sostenible en la medida que los países centroamericanos trabajen coordinadamente, fortaleciendo la cooperación regional y particularmente vinculando las decisiones regionales de la pesca y la acuicultura.

RESUELVE:

- Poner en marcha a partir del primero de julio de la 2005 nueva Política de Integración de Pesca y Acuicultura en el Istmo Centroamericano que tiene por objetivo establecer un sistema regional común para aumentar la participación integrada de los países del istmo centroamericano y así contribuir al uso adecuado y sostenible de los recursos de la pesca y los productos de la acuicultura.
- Elevar la nueva política a la Secretaria General del Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana con la solicitud que sea presentada a los mandatarios centroamericanos.
- Solicitar a OSPESCA que con el apoyo del Proyecto Plan Regional de Pesca y Acuicultura Continental -PREPAC- y otras cooperaciones, pueda divulgar y publicar la presente política.
- Invitar a organismos regionales e internacionales a unirse en apoyo para la operatividad de esta nueva política.

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Handwritten signature
M. Cely
Nicaragua



CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM
REGIONAL UNIT FOR THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

OSPESCA



OSPESCA

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