FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) 31st October, 1995

COFI (Committee on Fisheries) at its Nineteenth Session in March 1991 called for the development of new concepts which would lead to responsible, sustained fisheries.

The Code of Conduct, consists of a collection of principles, goals and elements for action, took more than two years to elaborate. Representatives from members of FAO, inter-governmental organizations, the fishing industry and non-governmental organizations worked long and hard to reach agreement on the Code. It is therefore a result of effort by many different groups involved in fisheries and aquaculture. In this respect the Code represents a global consensus or agreement on a wide range of fisheries and aquaculture issues.

Governments, in cooperation with their industries and fishing communities, have the responsibility to implement the Code. FAO's role is to technically support their activities but it does not have a direct responsibility for implementation because FAO does not have a responsibility for the development and implementation of national fishery policies. This is the sole responsibility of governments.

The Code describes how fisheries should be managed responsibly, and how fishing operations themselves should be conducted. It then addresses the development of aquaculture, the linking of fisheries with other coastal zone activities, and the processing and selling of the catch. The importance of countries cooperating with one another in all aspects of fisheries is highlighted in the Code.

The code sets out the principles and international standards of behavior for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. It is voluntary in nature and defines the general principle that “The right to fish carries with it the obligation to do so in a responsible manner”. The code is voluntary in nature and global in scope.

Responsible fishing implies “the recognition that fishes in the oceans are a renewable resource which must be protected and manage to ensure that catches in the short term never exceed the long term sustainable yield…fishing that is conducted in an ecologically and environmentally

responsible manner to provide for protection of the stocks and the marine habitat and to drive the max socio-economic benefits."

Aim of the Code

1. Sustainability of living aquatic resources
2. Preservation of the environment
3. Safeguarding the biodiversity of ecosystem for present and future generations

Objectives of the code

- Establish principles, in accordance with the relevant rules of international law, for responsible fishing and fisheries activities
- Establish principles and criteria for the elaboration and implementation of national policies
- Serve as an instrument of reference to help States to establish or to improve the legal and institutional framework
- Provide guidance which may be used where appropriate in the formulation and implementation of international agreements
- Facilitate and promote technical, financial and other cooperation in conservation of fisheries resources and fisheries management
- Promote the contribution of fisheries to food security and food quality
- Promote protection of living aquatic resources and their environments and coastal areas
- Promote the trade of fish and fishery products in conformity with relevant international rules
- Promote research on fisheries as well as on associated ecosystems
- Provide standards of conduct for all persons involved in the fisheries sector

Articles of CCRF

- **Art. 1:** Nature and scope
- **Art. 2:** Objectives of the Code
- **Art. 3:** Relationship with other International Instruments
- **Art. 4:** Implementation, Monitoring and Updating

- **Art. 5:** Special Requirements of Developing Countries
- **Art. 6:** General Principles
- **Art. 7:** Fisheries management
- **Art. 8:** Fishing Operations
- **Art. 9:** Aquaculture Development
- **Art. 10:** Integration of Fisheries into Coastal Area Management
- **Art. 11:** Post-Harvest Practices and Trade
- **Art. 12:** Fisheries Research

ARTICLE-7: Fisheries management

- Article 7.1- General
- Article7.2- Management objective
- Article 7.3- Management framework and procedures
- Article 7.4- Data gathering and management advice
- Article 7.5- Precautionary approach
- Article 7.6- Management measures
- Article 7.7- Implementation
- Article 7.8- Financial institution

Article-8: Fishing operations

- Article 8.1 Duties of all States
- Article 8.2 Flag State duties
- Article 8.3 Port State duties
- Article 8.4 Fishing activities
- Article 8.5 Fishing gear selectivity
- Article 8.6 Energy optimization
- Article 8.7 Protection of the aquatic environment
- Article 8.8 Protection of the atmosphere
- Article 8.9 Harbours and landing places for fishing vessels
- Article 8.10 Abandonment of structures and other materials

- Article 8.11 Artificial reefs and fish aggregation devices

Article 8 (Fishing operations)

The article 8 of CCRF deals with aspects related to responsible fishing operations. It seeks to prohibit destructive fishing practices, discourage those practices leading to catch discards, promote fishing gears that increase the survival rates of escaping fish, minimize loss of fishing gear and ghost fishing effects of lost consistent with sustainable fishing practices. Section on fishing gear selectivity emphasizes on the development and adoption of selective fishing gears and methods to reduce waste, discards and non-target species. Emphasis is laid on systematic collection and recording of data on fish landings, species, sizes and observing changes if any. It advocates practicing environmentally sound waste management in all aspects of harvesting operations and optimization of energy consumption in fishing operations. It recognizes the need for providing well designed, tidy and hygienic harbours and landing centres that are safe havens for fishing vessels. Section on artificial reef and fish aggregation devices seeks to promote their deployment on or above the sea bed or on the surface to enhance fish stocks. Protection of habitats such as mangroves, reefs and lagoons is duly stressed upon in this article.

ARTICLE-9 (Aquaculture Development)

- Article 9.1 Responsible development of aquaculture, including culture-based fisheries, in areas under national jurisdiction
- Article 9.2 Responsible development of aquaculture including culture-based fisheries within transboundary aquatic ecosystems
- Article 9.3 Use of aquatic genetic resources for the purposes of aquaculture including culture-based fisheries
- Article 9.4 Responsible aquaculture at the production level

Aquaculture Development

As a primary goal, aquaculture development should conserve genetic diversity and minimize negative effects of farmed fish on wild fish populations, while increasing supplies of fish for human consumption.

Resources, such as water, bays or land space are often used by more than one user or have the potential for different uses. To avoid disputes and conflict between different users of resources, countries should have policies and plans to ensure that resources are used and allocated on a fair basis.

Countries should take steps to ensure that the livelihoods of local communities, including access to, and productivity of, fishing grounds, are not negatively affected by aquaculture developments. Procedures for monitoring and assessing the environmental effects of aquaculture should be established. In addition, care should be taken to monitor the types of feed and fertilizer used in farming fish. The use of disease-control drugs and chemicals should be minimal because these can have important negative impacts on the environment. It is also important to ensure the safety and quality of aquaculture products

Where the effects of fish farming may extend beyond a country's waters, countries should consult with neighbouring countries before introducing non-native species of fish for farming. To minimize disease from new species, countries need to establish mutually agreed codes of practice or behaviour for introducing and transferring aquatic plants and animals from one place to another. In planning aquaculture projects, techniques should be developed by countries and the industry for restoring and increasing the supply of endangered species (those species that may die out if corrective action is not taken).