

BOBP-IGO to Organise National Workshop on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in Sri Lanka

A two-day National Workshop on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) is being organised jointly by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Sri Lanka and the BOBP-IGO in Colombo on December 9 and 10, 2005.

More than 60 fisheries and aquaculture officials and NGO representatives will take part, representing organisations such as the Ceylon Fisheries Harbour Corporation, the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation, the Marine Pollution and Prevention Agency, the National Institute of Fisheries Nautical Engineering, the National Aquatic Resources Research & Development Agency and the National Aquaculture Development Authority.

Simply put, the CCRF is meant to ensure that everyone concerned with fisheries helps to develop and manage fisheries in a responsible way. In the long run, such responsible behaviour will mean more fish stocks, stronger food security, and better income-generating opportunities for all.

The Workshop will familiarise participants with the Code, its guidelines and instruments such as the International Plans of Action (see pages 33-34). It will discuss implementation of the Code in several areas: marine fisheries (coastal and deep sea), inland fisheries, aquaculture, post-harvest practices (infrastructure and quality control), trade and related matters (labelling/certification), information networking and dissemination, gender issues, safety-related programmes.

Similar National Workshops were held in India (29-30 September 2000), Bangladesh (23-24 April 2002) and Maldives (18-19 January 2004). They have been documented in BOBP/REP/90, BOBP/REP/93 and BOBP/REP/96. They enabled the preparation of action plans and road maps for implementing the Code in the three countries. A similar outcome is expected from the Colombo Workshop.

The BOBP has functioned as a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator for promoting and popularising the Code. Apart from organising national workshops, it has translated simplified versions of the Code into Bengali, Sinhala and Dhivehi, also into several Indian languages.

The Colombo Workshop has two distinctive features: it will discuss the impact of the tsunami on Sri Lanka's marine fisheries; and 2005 marks the completion of a decade of the CCRF.

“The fullest and most effective implementation of the Code can only be through a viable partnership between the government, industry and society,” said a former Indian Secretary for Agriculture. This is also true of Sri Lanka.

What is the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries?

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was adopted on 31 October 1995 at the FAO Conference of that year by more than 170 countries. It took more than two years to elaborate. Experts from many countries and many fisheries disciplines worked long and hard to bring it about. It has

been described as “one of the most important international instruments devised for management of our planet's aquatic resources”.

The Code consists of a collection of principles, goals and elements of action. It sets out principles and standards of behaviour for responsible practices in fisheries. The Code is voluntary in nature, global in scope. It is directed at members and non-members of FAO, fishing entities, organisations of all kinds, fishers, people engaged in the processing and marketing of fish and fishery products – in short, everyone concerned with management and development of fisheries.

The Code reflects the spirit, substance and effort of a number of FAO and United Nations initiatives, conventions and conferences. The workshops being held by BOBP-IGO will further awareness and action on all these important global initiatives. The Code will also promote sustainable and responsible fisheries and help achieve the goals of national and global food security.

