



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

20 YEARS

of the **CODE OF CONDUCT**
for **RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES**

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) is a groundbreaking, negotiated document laying forth principles and standards for national and international efforts to ensure sustainable exploitation of aquatic living resources in harmony with the environment. In 1995, it served as an important milestone for incorporating conservation and environmental considerations into fisheries management, and led to the development of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Drafted by 170 nations, negotiated at Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and adopted unanimously by member states at the FAO Conference on 31 October 1995, the Code remains a remarkably robust and forward-looking document.

Much has changed over the past twenty years, and additional agreements and measures have been adopted to support the Code, including instruments in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, ecolabelling for certification, and guidelines on small-scale fisheries.

Most countries have fisheries policies and legislation compatible with the Code, and FAO is assisting others to more closely align their policies and legislation with these principles and standards. Under the Code and its related strategies, FAO also works closely with member countries to strengthen their statistics and information systems, in order to facilitate more informed policy making decisions at the national and regional levels.

In order to strengthen the fisheries sector and position it to play a crucial role in ensuring food security for a world population expected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, the Code and its related instruments will be key for ensuring the sustainability of the world's fisheries and aquaculture.

1995-2015

The Code of Conduct is a living document, and has served as the basis for various instruments and measures in its key areas of work that have been developed over its first two decades.

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture has changed significantly since the adoption of the Code. Aquaculture's growth over the past two decades has been spectacular, and aquaculture today makes up more than 50% of the fish destined for human consumption. With a growing population and an increased demand for fish and fish products, aquaculture will continue to play a key role. Although there have been many improvements in the sustainable production and management of aquaculture, increased efforts will be necessary to ensure that aquaculture intensification take place in a sustainable way, and that planning and policies adequately integrate economic, environmental, social and governance factors.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERS

Twenty years ago, the Code recognized that those engaged in subsistence, small-scale, and artisanal fisheries should have access to a secure and just livelihood. In June 2014, the Committee on Fisheries endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Based on a human rights approach, the Guidelines not only address the key issues of fisheries tenure governance and management, but also social issues, decent work and employment, gender equality, climate change and disaster risk management.

COMBATING IUU

The Code made clear the role port states play in supporting its objectives. A key measure adopted in 2009, is the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, designed to prevent illegally caught fish from entering international markets through ports. Under the terms of the treaty, vessels must request permission for port entry; port and port services use must be denied to offending vessels after regular inspections. Thirteen countries have currently ratified the Agreement, but that number must reach twenty-five for the treaty to enter into force, an important first step to combating IUU.

SUPPORTING MARKET ACCESS

Seafood products are already among the most widely traded food commodities in the world – totaling around USD 145 billion per year. Looking ahead, the market for fish and fish products is growing rapidly, and there are opportunities for developing nations to compete on the international stage in fish trade. Networks such as FAO Globefish will be important for gathering, assessing, analyzing and disseminating up-to-date fish marketing and trade information worldwide, with an emphasis on supporting developing country producers to become more competitive in international markets.



Celebrating 20 YEARS

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Further information:

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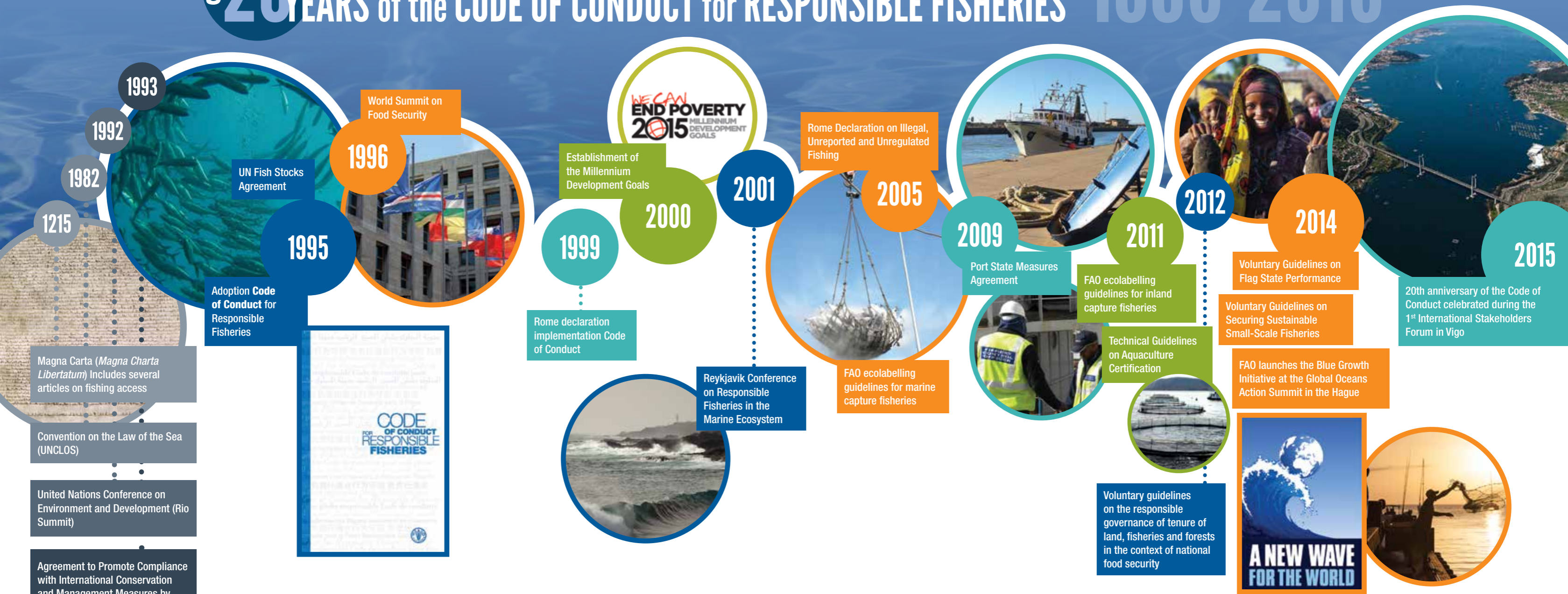
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To facilitate implementation, the Code is supported by numerous FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, International Plans of Actions and the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture.