

Report of the National Conference on Responsible Fisheries in Viet Nam



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FOREWORD

This document contains the report of the National Conference on Responsible Fisheries in Viet Nam, which was held in Hanoi on 29-30 September 2003. The Conference was co-organized by the Ministry of Fisheries of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF) and the FAO FishCode Programme. Principal funding was provided through FishCode component project GCP/INT/648/NOR, "Management for Responsible Fisheries." Technical guidance was provided by the FAO Fisheries Department. Conference planning and preparations were undertaken by Messrs Raymon Van Anrooy, Rolf Willmann and Purwito Martosubroto of FAO and also involved the DANIDA-funded Fisheries Sector Programme Support (FSPS), the Network for Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) initiative on "Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management" (STREAM) and the AUSAID-supported Quang Ngai Rural Development Programme.

The collaboration of Dr Vu Van Trieu (Director) and his colleagues of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Fisheries in arranging for the Conference venue and logistics is gratefully acknowledged. The preparatory work of Dr. Nguyen Long (Vice-Director) of the Research Institute Marine Fisheries and support from Mr Lars Jøker (Coordinator) and his colleagues of the DANIDA Fisheries Sector Programme Support is also acknowledged with thanks. General thanks are due to all who attended the Conference for their important contributions to its outcomes and these proceedings, and for their active participation in the working groups.

The FishCode Review series publishes results of studies, missions, consultations, workshops, meetings and other project activities undertaken through the Programme, in furtherance of its objective of facilitating implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and related international fisheries instruments and plans of action. Individual numbers in the series are distributed to appropriate governments, regional bodies, meeting participants and Programme partners. Further information on Programme background, publications and activities is available through www.fao.org/fi/fishcode.

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Report of the National Conference on Responsible Fisheries in Viet Nam, Hanoi, Viet Nam, 29-30 September 2003

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ABSTRACT

The National Conference on Responsible Fisheries in Viet Nam (Hanoi, 29-30 September 2003) was organized by the Ministry of Fisheries of Viet Nam in close collaboration with the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries and the FAO FishCode Programme. The Conference was held in the context of increasing problems faced by fisherfolk in maintaining and improving their livelihoods through coastal and offshore fisheries. Some coastal fish resources in particular are heavily over-exploited.

The Conference aimed to build awareness among national policy-makers and resource users regarding overexploitation and its consequences, facilitate discussion on ways and means to promote a national transition to responsible fisheries, and identify and develop consensus on elements of a national strategy to achieve responsible fisheries management in Viet Nam. It was attended by 108 stakeholders, representing local and commercial fisheries interests, national and provincial government bodies, bilateral development assistance agencies and international organizations.

Participants obtained an overview of the status of the Vietnamese fisheries resources from national and international experts and discussed coastal and offshore fisheries management and the integration of fisheries into coastal area management based on the principles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Sound management of the offshore fleet and the strengthening of community-based management of the coastal fisheries were considered the most suitable solutions to current problems by all participants. Fisheries management should be based on an appropriate legal framework, include participation of all stakeholders (also stakeholders from other coastal sectors), and foster better coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders. In the transition to community-based fishery management it was seen as important that pilot demonstration projects be established and that the process be supported by a national strategy for responsible fisheries management. Issues such as the management of fishing capacity, closing of certain areas for fishing, establishment of marine protected areas, enforcement of regulations with regard to destructive fishing methods, search for alternative employment and re-training for fisherfolk were seen as necessary elements for inclusion in the national strategy.

Keywords: Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; coastal fisheries; offshore fisheries; integration of fisheries in coastal area management.; Viet Nam; Southeast Asia.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADG	Assistant-Director General
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
ALMRV	Assessment of the Living Marine Resources in Viet Nam (FSPS)
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AUSAID	Australian Government's Overseas Aid Programme
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance & Relief Everywhere
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CPUE	Catch Per Unit of Effort
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (at provincial level)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DOFI	Department of Fisheries (at provincial level)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMIS	Fisheries Management Information System (component of FSPS)
FSPS	Fisheries Sector Programme Support
HACCP	Hazard Analyses Critical Control Points
HP	Horsepower
IFEP	Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IT	Information Technology
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFI	Ministry of Fisheries
MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MFST	Marine Fisheries Specialist Teams
NACA	Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific
NAFIQACEN	National Fisheries Inspection and Quality Assurance Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OXFAM	Oxford Committee (International Development Organization)
QNRDP	Quang Ngai Rural Development Programme (AUSAID funded)
RIA No.1	Research Institute for Aquaculture No.1
RIMF	Research Institute Marine Fisheries
SAPA	Sustainable Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TURF	Territorial Use Rights in Fishing
STREAM	Support to Regional Aquatic Resource Management (NACA)
STOFA	Strengthening the Fisheries Administration (component of FSPS)
SUFA	Support to Freshwater Aquaculture (component of FSPS)
SUMA	Support to Brackish Water and Marine Aquaculture (FSPS)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VASEP	Viet Nam Association of Seafood Exporters and Processors
VND	Vietnamese dong
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Conference background

1. The Government of Viet Nam considers fisheries a key economic sector and has promoted its development in various ways. Between 1996 and 2000, 9 185 billion dong (approximately US\$656 million) was invested in the sector, 2.5 times the investment over the period 1991–1995. Three major sectoral programmes are being implemented for the current (2001–2005) five year period, namely: offshore-fishing; processing and export; and aquaculture development.
2. The national strategy for economic and social development for the ten year period 2001–2010 calls on Government to strengthen capacity and enhance offshore fishing efficiency, restructure fisheries occupations and stabilize near-shore fishing, and protect marine, brackish- and freshwater environments in order to ensure the rehabilitation and development of fisheries resources.
3. However, there are indications that efforts to develop offshore fisheries entail the risk of fuelling overcapitalization and overfishing in large parts of Viet Nam, unless accompanied by measures to greatly strengthen fisheries management capacities and capabilities at all levels. The formulation of new fisheries legislation, currently underway with assistance from the Norwegian Government and FAO, is of utmost importance in this respect.
4. Investigations conducted by the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF) in close collaboration with the DANIDA-funded project on Assessment of Living Marine Resources in Viet Nam (ALMRV) indicate that exploitation pressure is leading to depletion of once abundant species groups in some areas along the Vietnamese coast, and that economic hardship within fisheries-dependent coastal communities increases rapidly as catch-per-unit-effort (and thus incomes) decrease.
5. In recent years, various FAO technical and expert consultations on fisheries management issues have shown that the transition to responsible fisheries in Southeast Asia faces many obstacles, and that countries urgently need to take remedial actions to avoid the further deterioration of fisheries resources and social and economic conditions within fishing communities. In the case of Viet Nam, as fisheries continue to attract large numbers of job-seekers, and as provincial authorities continue to subsidize local fleet construction and operations, overexploitation pressure on coastal and marine fisheries resources is expected to worsen very rapidly in the absence of effective management regimes.
6. In view of the importance of Viet Nam's fisheries sector and the mounting risks to its development on a sustainable basis the Minister for Fisheries, Dr Ta Quang Ngoc, requested that a National Conference on Responsible Fisheries be convened to address management problems and prospects and to deliberate a responsible fisheries agenda for the country.
7. The Conference was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI) and the FAO FishCode Programme, with technical guidance from the FAO Fisheries Department. Assistance was also provided through the DANIDA Fisheries Sector Programme Support, the Network for Aquaculture Centres in Asia Pacific (NACA) initiative on "Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management" (STREAM), the AUSAID Quang Ngai Rural Development Programme and the participation of principal policy-makers and stakeholder groups within the national fisheries sector.
8. In preparation for the Conference, and to ensure that local fisheries stakeholders' views on sector management problems and prospects were fully taken into account, a series of community "benchmarking" workshops were organized in the three key coastal provinces of Nghe An, Khanh Hoa, and Baria Vun Tau, representing the northern, central and southern regions respectively. The workshops took place in February – March 2003.

Conference objectives

9. The three interlinked objectives of the national conference were as follows.
 - Build awareness among national policy-makers and resource users regarding overexploitation and its consequences, including the risks entailed for bio-diversity and environmental and socio-economic sustainability.
 - Facilitate discussion on ways and means to promote a national transition to responsible fisheries including, for example, increased investments in fisheries management institutions and infrastructure, the strengthening of participatory and co-management arrangements, the limitation of fishing effort and resource access, and the general fostering of a responsible fisheries consciousness across all groups of sector stakeholders.
 - Identify and develop consensus on elements of a national strategy to achieve responsible fisheries management in Viet Nam.

ATTENDANCE

10. The conference was attended by 108 participants drawn from the Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Provincial Departments of Fisheries (DOFIs), fisheries companies, fish processors, fish exporters, fishing port management authorities, Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDs), Viet Nam Fisheries Association, the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF), the Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning (IFEP), the Research Institute for Aquaculture No 1, mass media (newspapers and radio) and the Viet Nam Association of Seafood Exporters and Processors (VASEP).

11. The following regional and international organizations and institutions also participated: the Danish funded Fisheries Sector Programme Support (FSPS) components “Fisheries Management Information System” (FMIS) and “Assessment of Living Marine Resources in Viet Nam” (ALMRV); the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA) initiative on “Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management” (STREAM); the AUSAID supported Quang Ngai Rural Development Programme; the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN); the Embassy of Italy; the Embassy of the Netherlands; the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT); the Fisheries Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and the FAO Representative Office in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

12. The list of participants appears as Appendix A to this report.

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

13. The Conference started with an opening ceremony in which Dr Vu van Trieu, Director a.i. of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Fisheries, welcomed the participants. He stated that sustainable development of the fisheries sector was not only the goal of Viet Nam but also of the international community as a whole. Moreover, he pointed out that this issue had been an agenda item of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg 2002. In this regard, the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was, therefore, a priority of government policy.

14. Dr Trieu stated that Dr Ta Quang Ngoc, Minister of Fisheries of Viet Nam and Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant-Director General (ADG) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), both being active supporters of worldwide responsible fisheries development, had agreed to organize a conference to address this important issue in Viet Nam.

15. Following this introduction, the Vice-Minister of Fisheries, Mr Nguyen Ngoc Hong, officially opened the first ever national conference on responsible fisheries in Viet Nam. He welcomed the participants on behalf of the Ministry and emphasized in his statement that the Vietnamese fisheries sector needs reasonable, practical and sustainable development and management policies in order to meet consumption demand from a rapidly growing population, ensure fisheries export earnings and contribute at the same time to the socio-economic development of the country. He proceeded by listing the objectives of the Conference and expressing his hope that its outputs would provide the basis for policy-makers to formulate a national strategy for responsible development of the fisheries sector.

16. The Vice-Minister's Opening Statement appears as Appendix B to this report.

17. Mr Purwito Martosubroto made an opening statement on behalf of Mr Ichiro Nomura, ADG, FAO Fisheries Department, and Dr Anton Rychener, FAO Representative in Viet Nam. He congratulated the Government of Viet Nam for organizing the conference in collaboration with the FAO FishCode Programme. This multi-donor Trust Fund Programme has been in operation since 1998, with the aim of facilitating implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related International Plans of Action.

18. Mr Martosubroto noted that the difficulties faced by the Vietnamese fisheries sector in moving towards responsible fisheries are the same as those experienced by most fishing nations of the world. He stated that these difficulties were probably even more severe in Viet Nam because of the continuing widespread poverty of fishing communities and their limited opportunities to gain employment and income in other sectors of the economy. He concluded his statement by wishing the participants a successful conference.

Adoption of the Agenda

Dr Trieu presented the programme, which is attached as Appendix C, and officially introduced all participants. He then called the attention of participants to the expected outputs of the conference, as follows:

- Increased awareness among policy-makers and industry stakeholders at all levels on the extent of coastal and marine resources exploitation and its risks.
- Increased appreciation among policy-makers and industry stakeholders at all levels of the genuine prospects for and limitations on offshore fisheries development, and the requirements for its management.
- Increased awareness among conference participants of experiences with resource depletion, and the transition to responsible fisheries from elsewhere in the region.
- Identification and consensus on elements of a national strategy to achieve responsible fisheries management in Viet Nam.

PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

Rights-based fisheries management: experiences from other countries and relevance to Viet Nam

Dr Gary Morgan presented a key note address on "Rights-based fisheries management: Experiences from Other Countries and Relevance to Viet Nam". He emphasized that the benefits of active management of fisheries had been well-demonstrated over the years in many countries, with the principal benefits being:

- fisheries operate on a sustainable basis;
- national goals (production, employment, etc.) can be achieved within sustainability criteria;
- fisheries are profitable at the individual enterprise level resulting in positive community impacts; and

- the fishing industry produces significant 'economic rent' for re-investment.

19. Without active management, these goals are seldom attainable and a fishery will tend to stabilize around a point of zero economic rent, where profitability at the individual enterprise level is negligible and where, often, long-term sustainability of the resource is threatened. Dr Morgan stressed that this appears to be the current situation in many of Viet Nam's fisheries.

20. He further noted that, in order to achieve successful fisheries management, investment is required from the Government in research, enforcement and management services and administration. In the OECD countries, 40 percent of management costs go to research, 34 percent to management services and 26 percent to enforcement. In total, the OECD countries spend 9.3 percent of the gross value of their fisheries production on these management functions to achieve sustainable and profitable fisheries. If these figures are used as a guide to the level of investment required for effective fisheries management in Viet Nam, then annual funding of approximately VND 2 020 billion may be needed to achieve good management. This may be compared with current expenditure of around VND36.9 billion.

21. Dr Morgan continued by outlining that urgent action is required in Viet Nam to manage its rapidly expanding fisheries, particularly the coastal fisheries. There appears to be two options open for the implementation of effective management.

22. The first option is one of centralized control where the national Government assumes responsibility for all fisheries management activities. Assuming appropriate policies, supported by sound research and backed by effective enforcement of regulations, this option may produce the desired outcome of profitable and sustainable fisheries. However, it is an expensive option.

23. The second, less expensive but perhaps more effective option, is de-centralized management where provinces, local districts or communes are empowered to implement management measures but within well-defined goals, rules and standards that are set nationally by the central Government. Decentralization of decision-making without such nationally determined goals (such as quotas, number of vessels, etc.) will not result in effective management.

24. Within a decentralized management system, the national Government's role becomes one of setting these overall goals, rules and standards, while their implementation and enforcement is left to local responsibility. Within a decentralized management system, a rights-based management approach often proves to be an extremely effective way of providing the required incentives for local custodianship of fisheries within national goals. Such rights-based management systems, which are often based on traditional, community-based management systems, are characterized by assigning specific rights to fishers (or groups of fishers) that are:

- precisely defined;
- recognized in law; and
- transferable and possibly tradable under certain conditions.

25. These "rights" can be a fishing licence, a share of a quota, a gear entitlement, a fishing area, etc.; but it is important that, once established, the national Government protects such "rights." Failures in rights-based management often occur when Governments do not protect the fishing right or issue additional rights. The main impact of rights-based management systems is to alter the incentives under which fishers operate. Under current arrangements in Viet Nam (essentially an open-access system) fishers have no incentives to fish sustainably. Under a rights-based management system, fishers' primary interests lie in protecting and

maximizing the long-term value of the “right” they have. This therefore leads to greater incentives to fish for long-term sustainability and to maximize long-term profitability.

26. In concluding his presentation, Dr Morgan noted that the challenge for Viet Nam would be to move from the current open-access arrangements to sustainable management of fisheries resources and to do this at a reasonable cost. It appears, based on data from other countries, that a centralized limited access management approach is likely to be too expensive in the Vietnamese context. Decentralized, rights-based management approaches may be more suitable and more effective.

Sustainable management of coastal fisheries resources: existing problems and suggestions on community-based fisheries management measures

27. Dr Nguyen Long, Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Marine Fisheries (RIMF), provided a detailed presentation on coastal fisheries management needs and opportunities in Viet Nam. This is shown as Appendix D.1.

28. He first traced the trends in fishing capacity and fishery output over the last two decades. These indicated a nearly five-fold increase in aggregate horsepower of the fishing fleet as against a catch increase of only half this amount. He also noted the recent decline of catch per unit of fishing effort.

29. Dr Long observed increasing levels of conflict between small and large fishing vessels, use of destructive fishing methods (e.g. explosives; small mesh-sized gear, etc.) and harmful pollution and physical damage to coral reefs and other critical fish habitats. In order to address these issues, he proposed the introduction of a zoning regime, a programme of reducing excess fishing capacity from each zone, and the establishment of decentralized province- and community-based fisheries management.

30. Dr Long went on to remark that the commune-level fisheries cooperatives of the old governance regime of Viet Nam were defunct and that a new set of local fishers organizations needed to be established for management purposes. He also suggested a range of complementary management measures such as closed areas and seasons, and marine protected areas as well as a programme to create alternative employment opportunities.

31. He pointed out that a potential measure to deal with the problems in coastal fisheries was through the application of community-based management. In this context, concerted efforts needed to be directed to strengthening fisherfolk’s organizations to enable them to play an important role in self management.

Offshore fisheries situation and management in Viet Nam

32. This presentation was made by Dr Dao Manh Son, Vice-Director of the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries, and is shown as Appendix D.2. Dr Son first referred to the findings of past marine resources research that indicated a total standing stock of marine fishes in Viet Nam’s waters of about 3.1 million metric tonnes and a sustainable potential yield of 1.4 million metric tonnes. He then noted that during the past ten years of fleet renovation, the capacity of the fishing fleet had increased dramatically.

33. In 1985, the Vietnamese fisheries sector consisted of 29 000 motorized fishing vessels with a total of 4 56 796 HP, while by the end of 2001 the total number of motorized fishing vessels was around 79 000 with a total capacity of 3 722 577 HP. More than 75 percent of the motorized vessels have an engine of less than 45 HP. The current structure of the offshore fishing fleets by fishing gear is as follows: trawl fishery (55 percent); purse seine fishery (20 percent); gillnet fishery (9 percent); long-line fishery (9 percent); and other fisheries (7 percent).

34. Dr Dao Manh Son then continued with an overview of the various fisheries surveys with maps of fishing grounds used by the offshore fleet and with specific reference to seasons

and gear types. He also discussed the fisheries infrastructure and mentioned that there were some 700 shipbuilding yards, which can build 4 000 new boats/vessels and repair 10 000 units annually. In addition, up to the end of 2002, the fisheries sector had 63 fishing ports, including 47 landing areas in coastal provinces and 16 landing ports on islands. He added that MOFI estimated around 640 000 labourers engaged in fishing activities, of which 60 000 take part in offshore fishing. According to the MOFI (2001), there are 452 fishing cooperatives with 15 650 labourers and 4 300 cooperative groups that take part in marine fishing, employing some 21 000 fisherfolk.

35. In following remarks, he listed a number of governmental and ministerial decrees, circulars and decisions related to offshore fisheries and its management, and detailed some problems related to fisheries management.

36. Dr Dao Manh Son concluded his presentation with some suggestions for improvement of fisheries management, such as:

- a) rapid reduction of the number of small fishing boats operating in the near-shore areas;
- b) adjustment of the types of fishing gear that suit the state of the fisheries resources;
- c) limitations on and gradual prohibition of push net and stake net fishery;
- d) clear prohibition of the use of explosives, chemicals, electric pulses;
- e) use of closed and temporary closed areas;
- f) application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to Viet Nam's current situation;
- g) strengthening of survey capacity for offshore fisheries resources;
- h) formulation and submission for approval of a specific "Strategy for offshore fishing";
- i) consolidation and improvement of the fisheries statistics system through mandatory use of logbooks; and
- j) strengthening of cooperation with other countries and international organizations to promote integration of activities and to take advantage of other experiences with technology, management and financial support to the offshore fisheries sector.

Fisheries law, status and perspectives to improve fisheries management

37. Dr Dinh Xuan Thao (MOFI) made a presentation on the revision of the Vietnamese fisheries legislation, which is shown as Appendix D.3. A comprehensive new Fisheries Bill had been drafted over the last few years with assistance from Norway and the FAO. The Bill will be considered by the forthcoming Assembly session and would likely be adopted before the end of 2003.¹

38. The new fisheries law will remove the shortcomings of current legislation with respect to, for example, the provisions of the United Nations Consultation on the Law of the Sea and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the legal basis for decentralized management and zoning, the assignment of fishing and aquaculture licences, the requirements for inter-sectoral cooperation in coastal areas, and other aspects.

¹ The new Fisheries Law of Viet Nam was approved by the 11th National Assembly of Viet Nam on 11 November 2003. The Law will come into effect by 1 July 2004. (Ed.)

39. Dr Thao emphasized that the new law takes into account sustainability principles as advocated by the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. In particular, the new law would strengthen fisheries management by the inclusion of various provisions relevant to the elements of management, such as law enforcement including monitoring, control and surveillance measures.

Summary of the outcomes of three district level pre-conference workshops on responsible fisheries management

40. Dr Nguyen Long of RIMF provided an overview of the outcomes of three district level pre-conference workshops on responsible fisheries management, which were held in the provinces of Nghe An, Khanh Hoa and Baria-Vung Tau during February – March 2003. He noted that the outcomes of the three workshops confirmed the findings of his report on “Sustainable management of coastal marine resources: existing problems and suggestions on community-based fisheries management measures.” In particular, they confirmed:

- (a) a declining trend in marine fisheries resources, especially of coastal resources;
- (b) a sharp increase in the number of fishing vessels;
- (c) the reduction of catch and turnover of each fishing trip;
- (d) a disappearance of some species in local waters;
- (e) a reduction in income of fisherfolk;
- (f) an increase in conflicts and competition;
- (g) the continuing use of destructive fishing gears and methods; and
- (h) the opportunities that community-based fisheries management offers and the need to mobilize fisherfolk to co-manage and co-protect their fisheries resources.

41. Dr Long also informed the Conference that local participants highly appreciated the workshops, as they helped to:

- enhance awareness of the current state of fisheries resources;
- build recognition of causes of overfishing and marine resources destruction; and
- make people realize the necessity to have sound management measures for sustainable fisheries development in place as soon as possible.

42. Dr Long’s presentation appears as Appendix D.4.

Facilitating the transition to responsible fisheries

43. Mr Rolf Willmann of the FAO Fisheries Department began his presentation with reference to points raised in the earlier presentations. The marine fisheries sector of Viet Nam needed to undergo significant changes to achieve the objectives of sustainable use of fishery resources, conservation of habitats and ecosystems, economic efficiency and social acceptability. A special concern of the Government of Viet Nam was to enhance the contribution of the fisheries sector to poverty alleviation and hunger eradication.

44. Mr Willmann noted that the nature of changes required to attain responsible fisheries are spelled out in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. For example, long-term management objectives should be translated into management actions, formulated either as a fishery management plan, several fishery management plans, or other suitable management framework. Important specific requirements in support of the transition to responsible fisheries included, for example, the effective participation of industry, fish workers, and other interested organizations in decision-making.

45. He stressed that the transition to responsible fisheries often required a fundamental change in fisheries policy-making. All too often, policy-makers were strongly production-oriented and measured the success or failure of their policies in terms of, for example, larger volumes of fish catches and larger fishing fleets. For mature and fully-exploited fisheries, these indicators were often signs of imminent crisis.

46. Mr Willmann observed that the production-orientation in fisheries policy-making had the grave consequence that scarce administrative and regulatory government capacities and technical, financial and human resources are not available to address the key requirements of sustainable fisheries development – namely, to put in place an effective and efficient regulatory framework for fisheries management. In this connection, he noted the urgency of phasing out of government subsidies for investments in new or upgraded fishing vessels and gear that led to further overcapitalization and overfishing.

47. Mr Willmann's presentation is given in Appendix D.5.

Knowledge management in MOFI: vision, training and implementation

48. Mr Erland Jensen, Advisor of the Fisheries Management Information System (FMIS), a component of the DANIDA-funded Fisheries Sector Programme Support (FSPS), gave a presentation on knowledge management within the Ministry of Fisheries. He noted the current challenges of MOFI need to be met through a rapid development of knowledge management. Such challenges include, for example:

- (a) increasing the effectiveness of the administrative work processes;
- (b) solving more tasks of increasing complexity;
- (c) utilization of information technology (IT) and information systems;
- (d) developing the workforce without additional staff; and
- (e) keeping up with the growing demands of the whole fishery sector for information management.

49. He referred to Decision 169 on the Government IT plan for MOFI and detailed its contents, and concluded his presentation by explaining what training approach and tools were proposed by FMIS to MOFI for improving its knowledge management.

50. An executive summary of Mr Jensen's presentation appears as Appendix D.6.

Income-generating activities with fishing communities in Quang Ngai Province (Central Viet Nam)

This presentation was delivered by Mr Bede Evans and Mr Trinh Cong Vu of the AUSAID funded Quang Ngai Rural Development Programme (QNRDP). Following an explanation of the objectives of the programme and the areas in which it was active, they reported on the outcome of a survey supported by QNRDP based on the example of the coastal Pho Chau commune. The survey showed that the main problems related to fisheries in that commune were the following:

- (a) lack of access to credit to increase boat/ship capacity;
- (b) high instability of annual income (from fisheries);
- (c) lack of information on production technologies to diversify income into livestock crops or off-farm activities;
- (d) high levels of (seasonal and women's) unemployment;

- (e) no value adding or processing capacity at local level; and
- (f) lack of market information or ability to access markets.

51. Mr Evans continued by detailing the main fisheries activities of the fisherfolk of Pho Chau commune and some opportunities to support income generation. Participatory planning by QNRDP showed that all identified activities in support of income generation of fisherfolk will require training and demonstrations, which should be followed up by increased access to credit in order to improve adoption levels of what was learned.

Aquatic resources management and poverty alleviation in Viet Nam

52. Mr Nguyen Song Ha, of STREAM (Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management) made a presentation on aquatic resources management and poverty alleviation. He first introduced STREAM, which is a programme attached to NACA that facilitates a regional learning and communications initiative to support poverty alleviation among people whose livelihoods include the management of aquatic resources. Current agencies supporting STREAM include DFID, AUSAID, FAO, VSO and APEC.

53. Mr Ha highlighted STREAM's mode of operation and noted that activities fall under four main themes: livelihoods, institutional development, policies and communications. The main target groups were poor fisherfolk and poor farmers living in coastal and mountainous areas who had access to aquatic resources.

54. STREAM in Viet Nam worked closely with the Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI) and is represented by a National coordinator and communications hub. Current activities include: development of a stakeholder network, acting as a communication channel reaching remote and isolated areas; capacity building and facilitating internal interactions within SAPA; livelihoods analyses; national poverty and aquatic resources review; and country strategy papers. The activities of STREAM in Viet Nam are concentrated in three provinces: Thai, Nguyen and Long An. Mr Ha emphasized that STREAM recognized that coastal fishers were generally not sufficiently included in the current national poverty alleviation campaign.

55. Mr Ha listed the partners of STREAM in the country, which included not only government institutions but also NGOs (e.g. CARE, WWF, IUCN, OXFAM), donor and development agencies (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, FAO). He concluded his presentation with further emphasis on STREAM's interests in gender initiatives, policy development, livelihoods projects, institutional improvement for enhanced provision of extension services to the poor, and serving as a forum for exchange/learning experience among those having a stake in aquatic resources management and interested in poverty reduction.

The status of stocks in Vietnamese waters based on resource surveys

56. Mr Dang Van Thi of the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries gave, on behalf of the ALMRV component of the FSPS, an overview of the current situation with regard to fisheries resources in Viet Nam. In introducing this subject, he explained that fisheries resources in Viet Nam were generally divided into 5 large main groups:

- small pelagic;
- large pelagic;
- demersal;
- crustaceans; and
- cephalopods.

57. Few survey efforts had been carried out on small pelagic, large pelagic and shrimp resources over the last decade due to limited budgets.

58. Information obtained from the trawl and gillnet surveys conducted by ALMRV over the period 2000–2002 included catch composition, catch rates, catch rates distribution and

standing trawlable biomass. Findings per region were presented to the audience as well as CPUEs at different depths.

59. Mr Dang Van Thi concluded his presentation by stressing the need for more fisheries research and particularly emphasized that small pelagics, shrimp and cephalopod resources should be surveyed in the near future. The continuation of the present surveys as routine data collection was important, and further analysis of the data collected to establish fisheries indicators and information for ecosystem and resources profiles was considered essential.

ALMRV work on fishery profiles by provinces and marine fisheries ecosystem and resource profiles by areas

60. Mr Karl Johan Staer, Advisor of the DANIDA Fisheries Sector Programme Support (FSPS) component entitled "Assessment of the Living Marine Resources in Viet Nam (ALMRV)," provided an overview of the objectives of ALMRV and outlined the structure of the research being undertaken.

61. He informed the conference that 34 enumerators sample catch data on a monthly basis from 42 different fleets at 62 landing places distributed over 28 coastal provinces in Viet Nam. He explained that ALMRV was preparing Fisheries Profiles by province and ecosystem and Resource Profiles by area. This information should become a basis for decisions on fisheries policy and management.

62. Mr Staer concluded his presentation by detailing the tasks of the Marine Fisheries Specialist Teams (MFST) that ALMRV was establishing to collect and analyze information, and the need for a structured approach on demand and supply of fisheries knowledge in Viet Nam.

Strengthening of Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia: lessons learned and challenges for Viet Nam

63. Mr Martosubroto introduced his presentation with a short review of the status of fisheries development in Viet Nam, which has shown impressive results. Production from marine capture fisheries has shown an average annual increase of 7.5 percent in the last decade, compared to only 5.4 percent in the preceding decade. In the aquaculture sector the trend of production increase has been even higher, 14.1 percent per year during the last decade. Total export earnings generated from the fisheries sector amounted to US\$1.8 billion in 2001.

64. However, these impressive trends have been accompanied by problems in the sector, including overfishing in some coastal areas, decline of catch per unit of fishing effort, increasing conflicts among fishers using different gear, and fishing with prohibited means such as cyanide and dynamite. These problems were not specific to Viet Nam; they have also been observed in other countries in Southeast Asia. Mr Martosubroto noted that open access policy had caused the uncontrolled increase of the number of fishing boats, while a fisheries management system was not well in place.

65. Mr Martosubroto then highlighted ways and means towards strengthening fisheries management in Viet Nam. He also described the lessons learned from introducing the concept of a fisheries management plan in selected fisheries of some countries in Southeast Asia. Important elements for strengthening fisheries management included provision for:

- (a) a clear legal and institutional framework that accommodates the delegation of authority to lower level government in fisheries management;
- (b) enhancing the role of organizations representing fishers and other stakeholders in the process of management;
- (c) the role of geographical boundaries for the management unit; and
- (d) the need to develop of fisheries management plans for specific fisheries.

66. Mr Martosubroto reminded the audience on the key commitments made by countries during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002, which represented a special challenge for countries in Southeast Asia, including Viet Nam. This challenge should encourage countries to accommodate the sustainability concept more actively in fisheries development through the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, with fisheries management being its most essential part.

67. Current international initiatives on eco-labelling of fish and fisheries products would have special impact on developing countries, and should therefore receive more attention by Southeast Asian countries.

68. Mr Martosubroto's presentation is given in Appendix D.7.

WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

69. On its second day, the Conference broke into three working groups, which respectively discussed coastal fisheries management, offshore fisheries management and the integration of fisheries into coastal area management. Working group participants were provided with a discussion guide on each theme to assist in deliberations and the framing of outcomes. The respective discussion guides are shown in Appendices E.1, E.2 and E.3.

Coastal fisheries management

70. The results of Working Group I on coastal fisheries management can be summarized as follows. The number of small fishing vessels is very high in Viet Nam. Poverty among fisherfolk is widespread. As Government management measures have met with many difficulties, the decline of fisheries resources continues. This results in a reduction of productivity. At present, many fishing vessels are not operating in a profitable way.

71. Capture fisheries in Viet Nam has grown quite rapidly in the last decade, with an average annual rate of 7.4 percent. The production from the marine sector amounted to about 1.5 million tonnes in 2001. Eighty eight percent of the marine capture production comes from the coastal fisheries and 82 percent of the fishers in the country are fishing in this area.

72. Viet Nam has received assistance from various donor countries, such as Denmark, Australia and others, aimed at enhancing data and information collection with regard both to resources and socio-economic aspects in order to strengthen management of the fisheries. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently provided a soft loan to assist Viet Nam in the development of ten fishing ports throughout the country, in an effort to boost capture fisheries development.

73. The working group noted that fisheries management and exploitation had not received sufficient attention in recent years. Some provinces decided to prohibit the construction of fishing vessels under 20 HP. However, such decisions do not properly take into consideration poverty and livelihood issues. The working group recognized that community-based fisheries management would be a potential opportunity, but that it was necessary first to carry out research in order to identify which models were most effective. The right of fisherfolk to use coastal areas should be taken into consideration and this issue triggered much discussion in the group.

74. The working group proposed that MOFI provide a quota for fishing vessels in each province. Moreover, the group suggested establishing some pilot demonstrations of new fisheries cooperatives. These "new style" cooperatives should provide inputs and ensure joint outputs, so that prices can be set at such levels that they bring good profits to fisherfolk. The working group also proposed that the Government support fisherfolk in any initiatives towards resettlement, change of employment, credit provision for setting up alternative businesses, and reduction of destructive fishing gear.

75. In addition to the above points, the working group stressed that it was necessary to establish suitable mechanisms to preserve protected marine areas and delegate management power to fisherfolk. The current absence of well founded registration systems for fishing vessels makes it difficult to monitor the status and movement of the fishing fleet. The working group noted that some of the current management mechanisms were inconsistent and lacked concrete background information.

76. Further discussion dwelt on the question of how to solve current problems facing the capture fisheries sector. The complex issues now faced by the government very much fall in the area of fisheries management. In summary, the actions required could be grouped into two major groups – namely, those belonging to the category needing action in a short-term perspective and those of a long-term nature.

77. The potential short term actions include:

- (a) freezing of fishing licenses for new entries;
- (b) examining and reaching consensus on rules and regulation of fishing on a rotation basis for a particular area and on reducing fishing pressure in particular fishing communities;
- (c) enhancing creation and promotion of potential employment opportunities in coastal communities through activities that could be absorbed into cooperative-type organizations, e.g. handicraft, quick yielding and low cost types of aquaculture (e.g. seaweed culture), etc.

78. Possible longer term actions include the following:

- (a) development of a strategy for the transition towards responsible fisheries;
- (b) training in fisheries management for fisheries officers both at central and local government, including enhanced knowledge on fisheries management plan development;
- (c) creating and enhancing fishers' organizations e.g. cooperatives at the local level;
- (d) pilot demonstration sites for the development of community-based management;
- (e) development of management plans in certain potential locations;
- (f) strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance in the context of law enforcement; and
- (g) improving the vessel registration system.

Offshore fisheries management

79. Working Group II first discussed the measures needed to address the obstacles and limitations of offshore fisheries management. It noted that monitoring and assessment of marine fisheries resources and fishing ground forecasts had not yet received sufficient attention, and suggested to strengthen these areas.

80. The Working Group noted that the number of fishing vessels was not controlled, and that the allocation of fishing gear was not appropriate. For example, an excessively large percentage of offshore vessels were using trawl gear. The Working Group deplored this situation, as it was difficult to monitor fishing operations offshore. A significant number of large vessels operated also in near-shore waters, thereby provoking competition and conflict with coastal small-scale fishers.

81. The offshore fishing fleet is largely inefficient and uneconomical due to:

- lack of skilled skippers;

- high costs of inputs (recent petrol and oil price increases) and low price of output (unstable fish prices);
- asynchronous infrastructure; and
- limited logistical services.

82. The Working Group saw the role of the Government in the management of offshore fishing as limited/poor, and noted the lack of plans for offshore fisheries development. It considered that there was a need to identify the structure of fishing fleets on the basis of the estimated resources potential.

83. Other recommendations of Working Group II were the following:

- capacity and skills of offshore fishers and operators should be increased through appropriate training (captains, crew, managers and producer organizations);
- fisheries logistical services and infrastructure (ports and bridges) should be improved (e.g. at-sea supply and fish carrier services to allow fishing vessels to stay offshore for longer periods of time, thereby reducing fishing costs);
- marine products, marketing and consumption should be promoted;
- marine fisheries statistics should be improved in support of the development of policies and management decisions concerning offshore fisheries; and
- post-harvest losses should be reduced through the modernization of onboard handling and storage facilities and improvement of shore-based post-harvest and marketing facilities.

Integration of fisheries into coastal area management

84. Working Group III comprised 18 participants, which represented the Thuan An fishing port, provincial fisheries departments (Tra Vinh, Quang Ngai, Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, Nghe An, Phu Quy, Binh Thuan, Thuy Nguyen, Hai phong), Hai Yen Company, Nhat Le Fishing Port, Research Institute for Aquaculture No 1, the Fisheries Economics and Planning Institute, FAO and DANIDA.

85. In introducing the discussion in Working Group III, Dr Nguyen Chu Hai (Vice-Director of the Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning) explained why integration of fisheries into coastal area management was necessary. He defined the coastal area and detailed through examples how many fisheries and aquaculture activities were concentrated in this area, which is affected by a number of external factors.

86. Development of the coastal areas should therefore make use of multi-sectoral approaches and should be well coordinated. Integration of fisheries into coastal area management is one of the macro-level tools that is required for responsible fisheries management and will help to reduce conflicts with other sectors.

87. The discussion in Working Group III focused on two main questions:

- What are the problems and main opportunities related to the integration of fisheries into comprehensive coastal area management?
- Which key factors should be included in a national strategy of responsible fisheries management, with respect to the integration of fisheries into coastal area management?

88. The first question was answered as follows. Main opportunities were seen in the fact that many people at national and local level had become aware of the problems, but so far lacked solutions. Useful strategies and systems of environmental monitoring were now being developed within Viet Nam and in the region. Moreover, models and lessons were available from various projects that had established marine protected areas and community-based

management approaches, and from fisheries sector strategies and policies under Decree 43. Furthermore, Government was considering more active adoption of Agenda 21, which would open a great opportunity for integration of fisheries into comprehensive coastal area management.

89. Challenges were also discussed. One of the main challenges was the lack of an institutional framework to develop national policies for comprehensive coastal area management in a multi-disciplinary and participatory process. At present, the vertical management under each line/sectoral ministry was harming the development of clear national policies on this subject. Other challenges were: the overlapping management at national and lower administrative levels; lack of participative processes on coastal planning issues; the high rates of illiteracy among coastal people; high poverty rates and lack of alternative livelihoods for coastal fisherfolk; and an under-developed coastal area infrastructure.

90. In many coastal areas, job opportunities are scarce outside the fisheries sector, and such jobs were generally unstable and seasonal (e.g. tourism). It was noted that, while a number of activities were being implemented in coastal areas (e.g. coastal fishing, tidal aquaculture, forestry, agriculture, transportation, and tourism), there were no plans to distribute natural resources for sustainable coastal development. As communities had not been given the right of coastal resources management and utilization, there was a lack of decision-making power and even sometimes lack of active involvement in the processes related to the integration of fisheries management into comprehensive coastal management.

91. Another challenge identified by the Group as being important was the lack of coordination and communication within sectors from the provincial level to commune/village level. Sectoral agencies needed, when formulating a strategy or plan, to take into account the communication and coordination needs and endeavour to identify solutions for improvement of the current situation. Communication on the potential costs and benefits of plans should be widespread and reach all stakeholders.

92. Having addressed the first question, the Working Group continued with listing the main issues that should be included in a strategy for responsible fisheries development in Viet Nam, in order to ensure integration of fisheries into coastal area management. The future strategy should include:

- (a) the establishment of an institutional framework for comprehensive coastal management;
- (b) clear guidelines; the establishment of a competent, suitable management organization; and
- (c) the formation of a multi-sectoral coordination framework.

93. Moreover, the Working Group considered that the strategy should address awareness-raising among stakeholders (from leaders to implementers), completion of a policy development framework, improving the legislative system, and formulation of short-term, mid-term and long-term plans.

94. Other components of the future strategy might be:

- (a) a master plan of fishing vessel development;
- (b) mechanisms for access to credit and investment to improve planning and management;
- (c) multi-disciplinary research on application of cleaner technologies;
- (d) exchange of data with provinces to improve decision-making at the local level;
- (e) comprehensive projects; and

- (f) the development and implementation of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) systems.

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS ON THE WORKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS

95. With reference to the presentations of the three working groups the following observations were made by the Plenary.

Coastal fisheries

96. Community-based fisheries management seemed an obvious way to go with regard to coastal fisheries. Capacity building of the fisherfolk was a prerequisite, but the capacity of national and local level staff to train the fisherfolk was also limited and the number of staff was inadequate to cover large areas.

97. Community-based management might be easier to be initiated first in aquaculture. The experience gained in coastal aquaculture management from the DANIDA funded Support to Marine and Brackish Water Aquaculture (SUMA) component of the Fisheries Sector Programme Support (FSPS) and the UNDP/MOFI project VIE/97/030/NEX "Environmental Management of Coastal Aquaculture" provided positive examples.

98. Socio-economic impact measurement would be required during the transition to community-based management mechanisms, and an appropriate legal framework should be in place before starting any pilot activities in this field.

99. It was also mentioned that the poor economic situation among fisherfolk was a result of the present fleet overcapacity. The problem of overcapacity and how to reduce it should, however, not be passed on to the community level; it should rather be dealt with by the Government. A reduction of vessels can only be realized with serious support from the national level.

100. The last point of discussion was on by-catch and "trash fish." MOFI has legislation that prohibits the export of trash fish/by-catch, which is extremely important as trash fish may be up to 50-60 percent of the total catch. The demand for trash fish, especially from the fish and animal feed industry and aquaculturists is increasing rapidly.

Offshore fisheries management

101. Discussion with regard to offshore fisheries centred on the quality of fisheries products, which could be better maintained by a modern fleet of offshore vessels. HACCP should be implemented everywhere in support of export promotion and to fulfil the expectations of ever more demanding consumers.

102. It was mentioned that investment might be needed in a satellite system to monitor the operation of vessels and enable proper enforcement of regulations. In addition, investments should be made in at-sea logistics (catering, oil, ice, freshwater) to allow an increase in working hours.

103. The last issue raised was that of subsidies, which were generally seen as tools that decreased competitiveness within the sector.

Integration of fisheries into coastal area management

104. The discussion on the presentation of Working Group III on the integration of fisheries into coastal area management was short. It focused on the lack of legislation to deal with this matter and the lack of cooperation between institutions and governments involved in coastal area planning. Multi-dimensional/multi-sectoral natural resource allocation plans were considered necessary.

105. Another point of attention was the issue of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). It was stressed that these were currently only mandatory for large projects, such as ports and large commercial aquaculture (particularly shrimp) businesses.

CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

106. Dr Nguyen Long summarized the results of the Conference. He thanked the participants, national and international, for their active participation and highlighted that the Conference provided an excellent opportunity to learn from different experiences and obtain an overview of the current status of fisheries management in Viet Nam. Dr Long noted that the solutions and recommendations given at the Conference would be of great support in the process of drafting a national strategy for responsible fisheries. He stated that the Conference was just a beginning, and that much work remained to be done. Considering the need for and the success of the Conference, also in terms of media attention (see Appendix F), Dr Long was certain that a follow-up would be planned in the near future.

107. Dr Vu Van Trieu officially closed the National Conference by stressing that it had enabled participants to be fully aware of the status of Vietnamese fisheries, the obstacles and difficulties in fisheries management, their causes, and the solutions required. It further allowed the participants to discuss the forthcoming fisheries restructuring, including the reduction of fishing boats operating in coastal areas, introduction of community based management, and the protection of fisheries resources.

108. Dr Trieu declared that the Conference was very fruitful, as it contributed ideas as well as recommendations from a cross-section representation of the fisheries sector. These constituted a valuable source of information for policy-makers in their efforts to promote sustainable development of the fisheries sector. On behalf of the MOFI leadership, Dr Trieu expressed thanks for the valuable and effective assistance from FAO and DANIDA, as well as for the enthusiastic participation from other relevant agencies, research institutes and those coming from the provincial level. In conclusion, he wished all participants good health and looked forward to their further contributions to the sustainable development of the Vietnamese fisheries sector.

109. Dr Trieu's closing statement is provided in Appendix G of this report.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Part 1: National Participants

No	Name	Organization	Official title
(Province/Agency)			
Thanh Hoa			
1	Le Anh Dung	Fisheries Department	Deputy Director
2	Pham Thanh Ha	Thanh Hoa Equitization Company	Director
Khanh Hoa			
3	Dao Cong Thien	Fisheries Department	Deputy Director
4	Nguyen Huu thao	Fisheries Agent	
5	Pham Binh Hoan	Fishing vessel owner	
Ba Ria Vung tau			
6	Dang Van Hoang	Fisheries Department	Head of Planning and Investment Division
7	Pham Kim Dien	BR-VT Export and Processing Company	Director
8	Bui Quoc Bao	Fisheries Services Company	Deputy Director
Binh Thuan			
9	Do Thanh Do	Fisheries Department	Director
10	Nguyen Duc Tien	Thaimex Company	Director
11	Tran Van Hien	Hai Hien Limited Company	Director
Phu Yen			
12	Bien Minh Tam	Fisheries Department	Deputy Director
Quang Tri			
13	Nguyen Hoai Nam	Fisheries Department	Head of Planning Division
Ben Tre			
14	Luong Le Phuong	Fisheries Department	Director
Ninh Thuan			
15	Nguyen Dinh Tuan	Fisheries Department	Head of Technical Division
16	Phan Trong Huyen	Nha Trang Fisheries University	Head of Exploitation Department
Thai Binh			
17	Ta Quang Trieu	Fisheries Department	Head of Fisheries Management Division
Kien Giang			
18	Nguyen Ngoc Phuong	Fisheries Department	Deputy Director
19	Nguyen Thi minh Tho	Processing Plant	Director
20	Le Thi Thuan	Consumption Enterprise	Director
21	Ly Thi Bach Mai	Consumption Enterprise	Consumption Division
Hai Phong			
22	Ta Ngoc Dien	Fisheries Department	Head of Fisheries Management Division
23	Pham Huy Khuong	Fisheries Service and Trade Company	Deputy Director
24	Dinh Tien Luc	People's Committee of Lap Le Commune	Chair

No	Name	Organization
(Province/Agency)		
Ha Tinh		
25	Tran Van lieu	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
Ha Long Fisheries Corporation		
26	Pham Cong Tinh	Planning and Investment Division Head
27	Tran Van Vu	Exploitation Division Head
Thua Thien Hue		
28	Nguyen Quang Van Binh	Fisheries Department Deputy Head of Economics Division
29	Nguyen Quyet Tien	Thuan An Fishing Port Deputy Director
Soc Trang		
30	Tran Van Chieu	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
31	Tran Van Huy	Agriculture and Forestry Department Director
32	Nguyen Diem	Processing Company of Fisheries Export Products. Director
Nghe An		
33	Tran Quoc Thanh	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
34	Ngo Manh Hung	Nghe An Import and Export Company Deputy Director
35	Nguyen Thi Mai	Phuong Mai Ltd. Company Director
Quang Binh		
36	Phan Xuan Vinh	Fisheries Department Expert
37	Lai Tan An	Nhat Le Fishing Port Director
Tien Giang		
38	Nguyen Huu Duc	Fisheries Department Expert
39	Bui Minh Xuyen	Management of Mi Tho Fishing Port Head of Administrative Division
Ca Mau		
40	Huynh Viet Khai	Fisheries Department Expert
41	Nguyen Hoang An	Fisheries Management Association Member
Bac Lieu		
42	Le Minh Chien	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
43	Le Dong Duong	-- Fishing Vessel Owner
Quang Ngai		
44	Do Tan Tu	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
Nam Dinh		
45	Dinh Cong Trang	Fisheries Department Head of Technical Division
46	Nguyen Van Muoi	Processing Plant Owner
47	Ho Ba Dinh	Resources Division Nha Trang Oceanography Institute Head
48	Nguyen Quang Diep	Fisheries Department Director
49	Nguyen Huu Tuyen	Thong Nhat Fisheries Company Director
Tra Vinh		
50	Nguyen Trung Dung	Fisheries Department Deputy Director
Quang Nam		
51	Quang Ba Hai	Fisheries Department International Economics Division
52	Nguyen Long	Research Institute for Marine Fisheries Deputy Director

No	Name	Organization	
(Province/Agency)			
53	Dao Manh Son	Research Institute for Marine Fisheries	Deputy Director
54	Pham Ngoc Hoe	Bien Dong Fisheries Corporation	Director
Ho Chi Minh			
55	Tran Dinh Vinh	Agriculture and Forestry Department	Deputy Head of Fisheries Resources Division
56	Vu Dinh Dap	Fisheries Research Centre No 3	Head of Division
57	Truong Kinh	Hon Mun Protected Area	Director
Ninh Binh			
58	Pham Khac Suu	Fisheries Department	Head of Fisheries Resources Division
59	Le Thanh Iuu	Research Institute for Aquaculture No 1	Director
60	Tran Dinh	Research Institute for Marine Fisheries	Scientist
61	Dang Van Thi	Research Institute for Marine Fisheries	Head of Fisheries Resources
62	Nhuong	Research Institute for Aquaculture No 1	Scientist
63	Dr Nguyen Chu Hai	Fisheries Economics and Planning Institute	Director
64	Pham Thi Hong Van	Fisheries Economics and Planning Institute	Scientist
65	Nguyen Huu Nghia	Research Institute for Aquaculture No 1	Scientist
66	Nguyen Viet Thanh	Science and Technology Department, Ministry of Fisheries	Expert
67	Le Tran Nguyen Hung	Fisheries Department, MOFI	Expert
68	Le Minh Sat	Science and Technology Department, Ministry of Science and Technology	Director
69	Luong Quang Phiet	Science and Technology Department, Ministry of Science and Technology	Expert
70	Nguyen Van Chau	Fisheries Resources Protection Department	Director
71	Bui Viet Dung	Fisheries Resources Protection Department	Head
72	Vu Van Dai	Vô Fisheries Department, MOFI	Director
73	Nguyen Duy Son	Ministry of Finance	Expert
74	Mr Ngan	Ministry of Planning and Investment	Expert
75	Duong Long Tri	Information Center	Expert
76	Vu Huong	Laborer Newspapers	Journalist
77	Anh Nguyet	Weekly International News	Journalist
78	Hue Huong	Doan Ket Newspaper	Journalist
79	Duc Truong	Legislation Newspapers	Journalist
80	Minh Hue	Viet Nam News Agency	Journalist
81	Thanh Chi	Viet Nam Voice	Journalist
82	Mai Hanh	Viet Nam Voice	Journalist
83	Thanh Thuy	VN Express	Journalist
84	Ha Yen	Vn Net	Journalist

85	Nguyen Thanh Phuc	Labor and Social Newspapers	Journalist
86	Dinh Xuan Thao	Legislation Department, MOFI	Director
87	Tran Ngoc Mai	Fisheries laws projects	Expert
88	Vu Van Trieu	International Cooperation Department	Director a.i
90	Nguyen Thi Trang Nhung	ICD	Expert
91	Do Duy Con	Ministry Cabinet	Deputy Chief
92	Son	Ministry Cabinet	Expert
93	Nguyen Van Hung	International Cooperation Department	Expert

Part 2: Participants from international organizations, institutions and donor countries

	Name	Organization	Official Title
94	Davide Fezzardi	Asian Institute of Technology	Aquaculture expert
95	Raymon Van Anrooy	FAO Rome	Fishery Policy and Planning Officer
96	Rolf Willmann	FAO Rome	Senior Fishery Planning Officer
97	Purwito Martosubroto	FAO Rome	Fishery Resources Officer
98	Karl-Johan Staehr,	FSPS - ALMRV	Advisor
99	Erland Jensen,	FSPS - FMIS	Advisor
100	Nguyen Song Ha	STREAM – DFID/VSO/NACA/FAO	Communications Hub manager
101	Luigi Solari	Italian Embassy	Ambassador in Viet Nam
102	Truong Thi Dung	Netherlands Embassy	Embassy staff
103	Pham Gia Truc	FAO Hanoi	Assistant Programme Officer
104	Lien	Danish Embassy/DANIDA	Staff
105	Gary Morgan	FAO	Consultant
106	Lars Joker	FSPS - STOF A	FSPS Coordinator
107	Nguyen Minh Thong	IUCN Hanoi	Country Representative
108	Bede Evans	AUSAID	Advisor

OPENING STATEMENT¹
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN
VIET NAM
(29-30 September 2003)

Statement by H.E. Mr Nguyen Ngoc Hong, Vice Minister of Fisheries

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Leaders of the Ministry of Fisheries, I would like to express our warmest welcome to the participants in this national conference on promotion of responsible fisheries in Viet Nam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past few decades, the fisheries sector has made an important contribution to the economic growth rate of Viet Nam. For the time being, however, and in the long run the Vietnamese fisheries sector should have reasonable, practicable and sustainable development and management policies in order to meet the rather quick population growth rate and the increase in the average fisheries consumption and, at the same time, to ensure fisheries export promotion and to play an important part in the socio-economic development.

In this context, it is necessary to identify the current situation of fisheries and exploitation, aquaculture and processing methods in order to set up suitable strategies and policies to adjust the practical activities and to enhance the sustainable development of the fisheries sector. In this light, the Minister of Fisheries requested the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to assist the Ministry of Fisheries in organizing a National Conference on Promotion of Responsible Fisheries in Viet Nam, with the following objectives:

- (a) To build awareness among national policy-makers, industry stakeholders at all levels and resource users regarding over-exploitation and its consequences, including the risks involved for bio-diversity and environmental and socio-economic sustainability.

- (b) To discuss ways and means to promote a national transition to responsible fisheries, including for example increased investments in fisheries management institutions and infrastructure, the strengthening of participatory and co-management arrangements, the limitation of fishing effort and resource access, and the general fostering of a responsible fisheries consciousness across all groups of sector stakeholders.

¹ Translation by the International Cooperation Department of MOFI.

(c) To identify and develop consensus on elements of a national strategy to achieve responsible fisheries management in Viet Nam.

The results and outputs of the National Conference will be the basis for policy-makers in the formulation of policies and strategies required for the sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

I strongly hope that during our national Conference many valuable ideas will emerge which will contribute to the policies, strategies and solutions to be formulated with a view to moving towards the sustainable development of fisheries.

My wishes for your good health and for your useful contributions to the success of the National Conference.

Thank you.

**PROGRAMME FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROMOTION OF
RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN VIET NAM**

Day 1

9.00 – 9.30	Opening Speeches of Dr Nguyen Ngoc Hong (Vice-Minister of Fisheries) Dr Purwito Martosubroto (FAO Fisheries Department) Dr Vu Van Trieu (Director a.i. of the International Cooperation Department)
9.30 – 10.00	Key Note Address by Dr Gary Morgan on “Experiences with Rights-Based Fisheries Management”
10.00 – 10.15	Tea break
10.15 – 10.45	Presentation by Dr Nguyen Long, Vice-Director of RIMF on coastal fisheries status and management in Viet Nam
10.45 – 11.15	Presentation by Dr Dao Manh Son (RIMF) on offshore fisheries status and management in Viet Nam
11.15 – 11.45	Presentation by Dr Dinh Xuan Thao (MOFI) on the Fisheries Law Project, its status and prospects for improved fisheries management
11.45 – 13.45	Lunch break
13.45 – 16.00	Presentations in Plenary <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The findings of the three pre-conference district level workshops organized by FAO- MOFI- RIMF (Nguyen Long, RIMF) 2. Facilitating the Transition to Responsible Fisheries Management (Rolf Willmann, FAO) 3. Knowledge Management in MOFI - vision, training and implementation (Erland Jensen, FMIS FSPS) 4. Linkages between fisheries and other coastal activities (Bede Evans, AUSAID project) 5. Aquatic Resources Management and Poverty Alleviation in Viet Nam (Nguyen Song Ha, STREAM) 6. The status of stocks in Vietnamese waters based on resource surveys (Dang Van Thi, Head of Marine Resource Study Department, RIMF). 7. The ALMRV work on setting up Fishery Profiles by Provinces and Marine Fisheries Ecosystem and Resource Profiles by Areas including plans for the use of the profiles by a Marine Fisheries Specialist Team for provision of Multidisciplinary advice for decision makers (Karl-Johan Staehr, CTA ALMRV) 8. A short Note on Strengthening of Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia: The lessons learned and challenges for Viet Nam (Purwito Martosubroto, FAO)

- 16.00 – 16.15 Tea break
- 16.15 – 17.30 First Session of Working Groups
- For the afternoon, the Plenary will split in three working groups to develop elements of a national strategy for responsible fisheries management.
- Brief discussion guides will be prepared to facilitate the debate in the three working groups. Each group will consider, inter alia, the main functional requirements for responsible fisheries management, namely, the acquisition of relevant information, decision-making on management objectives and approaches, and implementation of management measures including monitoring, control and surveillance. Each group will also give special attention to policies and measures to increase the contribution of fisheries to the national priority objectives of poverty reduction and food security.
- Working Group I: Coastal Fisheries Management
- Working group II: Offshore Fisheries Management
- Working Group III: Integration of Fisheries into Coastal Area Management
- 17.30 Dinner hosted by MOFI/FAO

Day 2

- 8.30 – 10.00 Second Session of Working Groups
- 10.00 – 10.15 Tea break
- 10.15 – 11.30 Continuation of Second Session of Working Groups
- 11.30 – 14.30 Lunch break
- 14.30 – 16.00 Plenary Session
- Presentation and discussion of Working Group reports
- 16.00 – 16.15 Tea break
- 16.15 – 16.45 Conclusions and Recommendations
- 16.45 – 17.00 Closing Ceremony

Conference Paper No. 1

**SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL FISHERIES RESOURCES:
EXISTING PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS ON COMMUNITY-BASED FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

Dr Nguyen Long¹

Abstract

Viet Nam's fisheries are characterized by small-scale fisheries and equipped with small fishing vessels and boats that are mainly operated in the coastal areas of less than 30 m deep. Most of engines used for fishing vessels are under 45 HP. Therefore, fishing operations are often carried out in the coastal areas, leading to overfishing in these areas.

The use of destructive fishing gear and methods has not been effectively prevented.

It is necessary to conduct research and find solutions for management, such as the use of closed areas and closed seasons, and a limitation of fishing vessels/boats engaged in fishing activities in accordance with the present situation of declined marine resources.

The catch rate in the coastal areas has exceeded the allowable level. If there is further increase in the total engine capacity in these seawaters, this would not only involve high costs, but also reduce the gross profit. For this reason, it is important and essential to solve the technical, economic, management and social problems in order to minimize fishing pressure in the coastal areas so that the sustainable development of the sector can be assured.

1. SITUATION OF FISHING OPERATIONS AND ISSUES ON MARINE FISHERIES RESOURCES IN VIET NAM

1.1 Introduction

Viet Nam's fisheries are largely small-scale. Seventy-two percent of the fishing vessels have engine capacity of less than 45 HP and the resources caught at a depth of less than 50 m is about 82 percent of the total catch. In order to achieve sustainable fisheries development, there is a great need for assessment of the fishing situation, so that management plans can be made and the balance between fishing operations and resource potential assured.

1.2 Number of Fishing Boats by Horsepower Group

In recent years, the number of fishing boats/vessels has changed considerably owing to replacement of small-sized fishing boats with larger-sized ones equipped with more powerful engines.

Regarding the structure of the fishing fleets, reports of provincial fisheries departments in 2000 showed that 45 HP fishing boats comprise 72 percent of the total mechanized fishing boats of the country. Most of fishing boats are small-sized and able to operate in the coastal areas.

¹ Research Institute for Marine Fisheries, Viet Nam.

1.3 Fishing gear

Because of small-sized boats, fishing operations are mostly carried out in the coastal areas. Small-scale fishing gear are often operated in fishing grounds of less than 30 m in depth. Particularly, motorized boats of 12 HP only operate in the estuaries and coastal areas, and catch small fish.

The three most important fisheries include the trawl fishery, gillnet fishery and longline fishery, which respectively account for 28.7 percent, 19.6 percent and 17.2 percent of the total number of fishing boats.

1.4 Standing Stock and Potential Yield of Marine Fish in Viet Nam

Based on 2002 research results from the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (Assessment of the Living Marine Resources in Coastal Areas and Offshore Sea Waters Project), standing stock and MSY yield were respectively estimated at about 3.1 million tonnes and 1.4 million tonnes.

1.5 Coastal fisheries production

Based on data collected on gear structure, size of boat, fishing grounds, etc. from 1997 to 2000 by scientists of the Research Institute of Marine Fisheries, through interviews with skippers of fishing vessels operating in nearshore waters (50m deep) in Viet Nam, the catch rate from coastal waters (T) was estimated. The quantity T is calculated as the ratio between total catch of coastal waters within 50m deep and total catch of the whole area.

- For Tonkin Gulf: T1 = 95.9%
- For Central region: T2 = 72%
- For Southeast-west region: T3 = 83%
- For the whole country: T = 82.1%

Total catch from coastal waters in Viet Nam thus constitutes some 82 percent of the total national marine catch.

Results of study and the assessment of marine fish resources in Viet Nam show that the MSY yield in the area 50 m deep is about 582 212 tonnes, whereas the catch in practice has exceeded this level since 1986. For instance, in 1998, the catch was 928 272 tonnes or 1.6 times higher than the MSY level.

This indicates a situation of overfishing in sea waters of less than 50m depth. Moreover, fishing pressure is still increasing because of annual increase of small fishing boats. This strongly affects the sustainable development of the sector, and there is a great need for proper policies aimed at reducing fishing pressures in coastal waters.

1.6 Reduction of coastal marine resources

Decrease in fishing productivity per HP

As analyzed above, in recent years, Viet Nam's fisheries have mainly operated in the near-shore areas. The higher the catch, the more exhausted marine fisheries resources become. As a result, fishing effort and production costs increase, and yield per unit of HP decreases (Figure 1). In 1985, production was 1.11 tonne/HP, as compared to 0.6 tonne/HP in 1998 – a difference of some 54 percent. In order to ensure income, fisherfolk increase the intensity of fishing (duration of trips, number of hauls, decrease in mesh size, etc.). Through this vicious circle, fisheries resources become quickly exhausted.

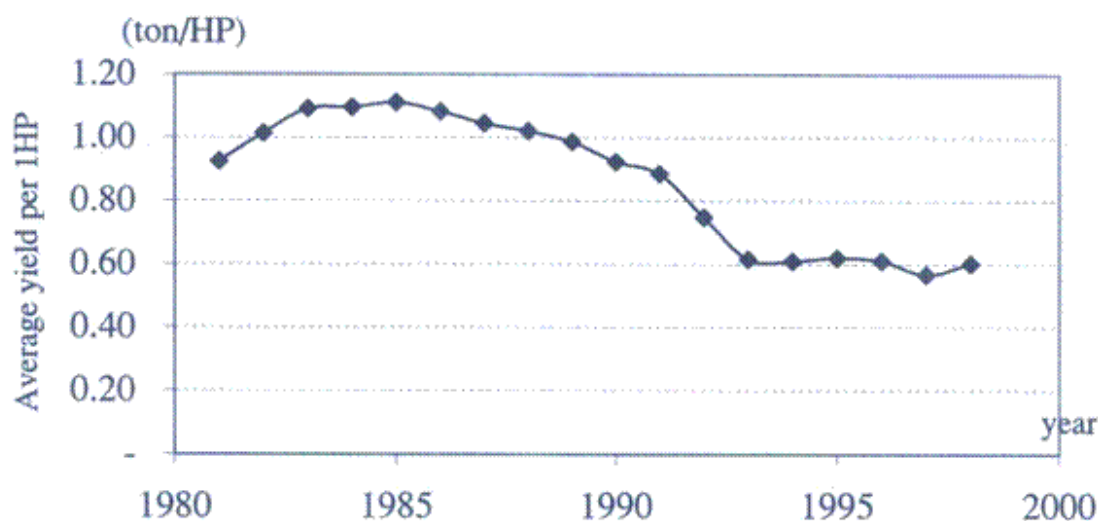


Figure 1. Average yield of 1 HP per year from 1981 - 1998

Relationship between total engine capacity and yield

According to statistical data from 1980 to 1998, the number of fishing boats increased from 28 021 units to 71 800 units, matched by an increase in total engine capacity from 553 915 HP to 2 880 000 HP. In spite of this more than fivefold increase in total engine capacity, yield only increased from 419 740 tonnes to 1 130 660 tonnes, or about 2.7 times. Therefore, when engine capacity increased, production costs also quickly increased; however, yield (turnover) increased less, resulting in lower and lower profits (Figure 2).

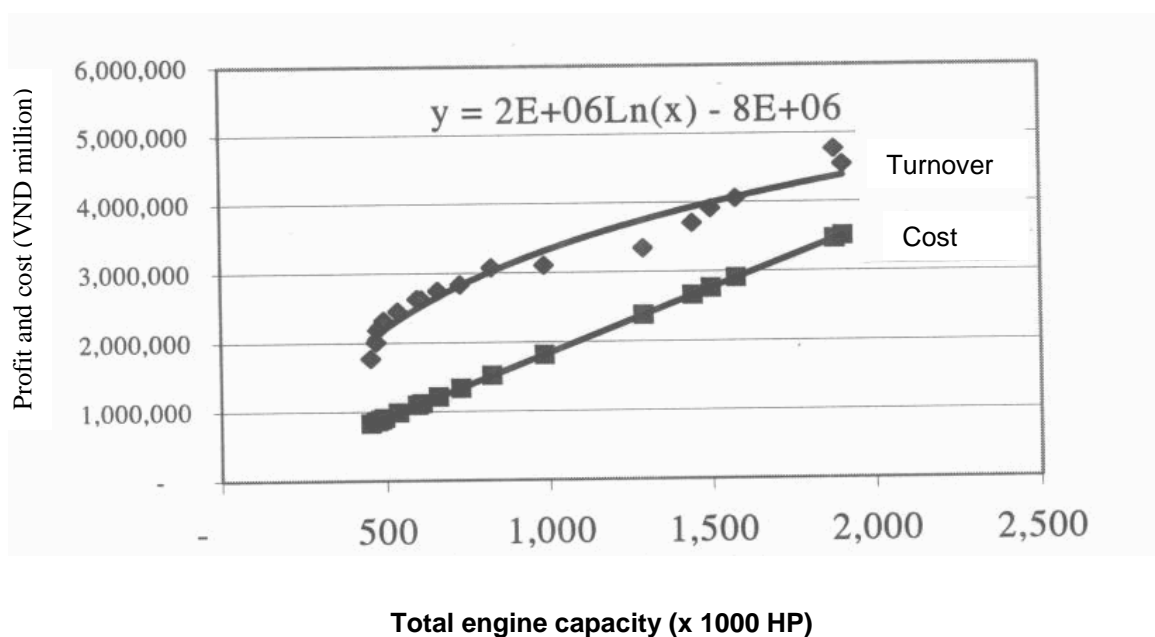


Figure 2. Relationship between turnover and production cost of fisheries in Viet Nam

2. PROBLEMS IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES PROTECTION IN VIET NAM

Although the "Resources Protection Regulations" have been promulgated since April 1989 by the Ministry of Fisheries, they were not adhered to properly by fisherfolk and have not yet been enforced comprehensively, due to a very weak fisheries inspection force and for other reasons. The development of the fishing fleets in Viet Nam over recent years was carried out as a type of "open access fishing." Adjustment of the number of fishing boats suitable to existing marine fisheries resources has not been given sufficient attention. The following are major problem areas within the fisheries sector.

- Most fishing gear currently used in fact violate the mesh size regulations, such as mesh size cod end, bunt of purse seine, and trammel net, etc. According to the survey data, the mesh-size of cod-end, bunt and other parts of nets is as follows:

Fishing gear	Mesh-size 2a (mm)
Shrimp trawl	18 – 25
Fish trawl	25 – 30
Fixed net	18 – 20
Push net	18 – 20
Purse seine	18 – 30
Bottom gillnet	60 – 80
Surrounding net	18 – 20

- As the mesh size of gear is so small, the percentage of "trash" fish often amounts to 60 – 80 percent of the total catch in shrimp trawls or 40 – 80 percent in fish trawls, 90 percent in fixed nets, and 90 – 93 percent in push nets.
- Coral reefs and sediment rocks have been degraded and damaged by improper activities.
- Harmful fishing gear like stow nets (in estuaries) and push nets are still being utilized and are depleting juvenile fish. An analysis of species composition of push nets in the Minh Hai Province showed that 70 – 90 percent of shrimp in the catch are juvenile pink prawns, white prawns and cat prawns. The body weight of a pink prawn juvenile was 7 – 5 g/individual, of white prawns 2.6 – 9.6 kg/individual. Obviously, these types of fisheries have not only caused very bad effects on the resources, but also result in a low income for fisherfolk because the catch composition is mostly small-sized fish and shrimp.
- Harmful fishing techniques have not been phased out. Use of explosives and chemical substances for fishing in many places is still uncontrolled.
- The number of fishing boats grows continuously, especially in the case of small units operating in coastal waters. The reason for this is that an increasing number of people are involved in marine fisheries each year – by about 22.500 fishers per annum. These people are poor; unable to invest in big fishing boats for offshore fishing, and have no other means of livelihood. The Ministry of Fisheries has foreseen a reduction in the number of fishing boats, which mainly limits the building of small boats. This is a complicated socio-economic matter and is still in the planning stage with no immediate socio-economic solutions available as yet.
- The use of temporary closed areas has not yet actually been enforced as a management measure.
- Large fishing boats of 200 – 300 HP or 450 HP that operate in inshore waters of 15–25 m depth is very common, affecting the coastal resources negatively. In fact,

there have been no laws to regulate this matter. In some countries, the fishing area is clearly stipulated for all categories of boats.² Viet Nam should also have clear policies and regulations on the fishing area of every category of fishing boat so that the above situation can be limited.

- Oil sludge and waste dumped into the sea from fishing boats is common in fishing villages in Viet Nam. Many fishing villages do not have hygiene systems; all wastes are dumped on the beaches where fish are often landed, affecting the quality of the food, and increasing concerns relating to export of these products.

2.1 Assignment of the Right to Utilize Water Surface

As the coastal resources are declining rapidly, open access cannot be allowed to continue. If left unchecked, resources will continue to decline and competition will increase between:

- large and small fishing boats;
- use of different fishing gear and techniques, e.g. between the trawl and the purse seine fishery and between the gill net and the purse seine fishery, and between standard techniques and particularly destructive ones (explosives, poisons, etc.) to catch more fish;
- fishing boats of the same fisheries, e.g. fishing boats using light for fish attraction trying to increase light power to attract more fish;
- fishing boats having fishing grounds and fishing boats having no fishing grounds;
- national fishing boats and large foreign fishing boats.

Assigning the right of using coastal waters to local fishing communities for fishery management purposes could possibly be a measure that could solve the above mentioned matters and contribute to conserving the fishery resources. Careful study is required of assigned water surfaces as a mechanism, including the scope of each area (the required number of miles away from shore, etc.) and other socio-economic issues.

2.2 Control of Foreign Fishing Boats

No matter how hard the Vietnamese Sea Police Force has tried to prevent the penetration of foreign fishing boats, in recent years it has proved impossible to do so as the number of patrol boats and funds for this activity are not sufficient. This is a matter to be seriously considered in the future.

3. SOLUTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION OF MARINE FISHERIES RESOURCES

3.1 Adjustment of Fishing Gear System and Fishing Capacity Structure

Scientific research on actual resources, current fishing capacity, and the socio-economic issues involved are required in order to define the structure of proper gear systems in all regions. Moreover, in order to develop the fisheries in a sustainable manner, such definition

² For example, in Indonesia, the regulations are applied as follows:

Area 1: From shore outwards to 3 nautical miles, artisanal and out-board engined fishing boats are permitted to operate.

Area 2: From 3 – 20 nm from shore, trawlers of <350 HP and purse seiners with body length of <20m are permitted to operate.

Area 3: From 20 – 200 nm from shore, trawlers of >350 HP and purse seiners with body length of >20m are permitted to operate.

should include identification of the number of fishing boats by horsepower group and by legal fishing gear.

Furthermore, negotiations between coastal provinces of the same region are required in order properly to allocate an allowable number of fishing boats in each province, to maintain unity in management, and to avoid competition in fishing activities.

Marine waters should be divided to determine the structure of each fishery, as follows:

- The Gulf of Tonkin.
- The Central region.
- Southeast region.
- Southwest region.

3.2 Reduction of Coastal Fishing Boats

Measures to consider for the reduction of the number of coastal fishing boats include the following.

- Identifying the number and category of small-sized fishing boats needed to be reduced in each sea water area and in each coastal province;
- Establishing policies to support fishers to change to alternative employment, such as aquaculture, processing services, or tourism;
- Developing new fisheries and solving employment problems in the coastal provinces; and
- Regulating the temporary closed areas.

3.3 Guidelines for “Responsible Fishing”

The FAO guidelines for responsible fisheries and the regional guidelines that have been developed for Southeast Asia need to be applied in accordance with the fisheries realities of Viet Nam. Steps include:

- resource management and protection measures, such as establishment of artificial reefs and conservation areas, and closed areas;
- banning of harmful fishing gear and techniques; and
- implementation and follow-up through community-based management approaches.

In the past, when the system of cooperatives was developed, all guidelines and policies for fisheries were transferred to fisherfolk in a continuous chain, as described below:

Ministry of Fisheries	Provincial Fisheries Department	District Fisheries Division	Fisheries cooperatives	Fisherfolk
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Fisheries cooperatives were the “bridge” from the fishery managers to the fisherfolk.

Today, most fishery cooperatives of the old model do not exist any more. The “fishery management chain” is broken down. To manage fisheries effectively, it is necessary to rebuild the chain and be aware of its importance in designing a better management model.

A common model applied in many countries is community-based management. The operating mechanism of this model is based on the knowledge of fisherfolk who form part of

“fishery associations” at village level. The task of these associations is to encourage mutual assistance among fisherfolk themselves in fishing activities, resolving accidents at sea, marketing landings, and linking with fisheries authorities. A community-based management system would re-establish the “bridge” between State fisheries management units and fisherfolk.

The “Community-based Management Model” is new to Viet Nam, thus it is necessary to study the operating mechanism of this model, to design a model suitable to Viet Nam and to apply this model in pilot areas and draw experience from this.

The matter of assigning coastal water areas to the management of coastal fishing community needs to be considered right from the start. This is a complex matter but necessary to implement, so that the water next to shore will be managed and better protected, thus avoiding irrational competition in fishing.

3.4 Shared Fishing Areas

In order to help fisherfolk to minimize difficulties and control foreign fishing vessels operating in the shared fishing areas, it is necessary to create favorable conditions for offshore fishing vessels to work well in the shared fishing areas. It is recommended that the Government should consider and support Viet Nam’s fishing vessels and their fishing operations in the shared fishing areas within the following context:

- tax exemption;
- financial assistance (or oil) to fishing vessels;
- well-organized marketing of fishery products;
- strengthening control over foreign fishing vessels in order to make them fully implement the regulations on fishing operations in the shared fishing areas; and
- educating and disseminating information on the regulations of the shared fishing areas to fisherfolk.

3.5 Setting up a National Fisheries Statistical System

In order to establish a base for fisheries research, planning, and management aligned to fishery resources conservation needs and economic development plans, it is necessary to set up a statistical system throughout the whole country. Up to now, the statistical data in Viet Nam are very poor and not reliable enough to meet the requirements.

Good statistical data will establish a scientific base to estimate the limits for the number of fishing boats, to determine the allowable catch in each region and temporary closed areas, to grasp socio-economic problems of the fisheries, and to provide a foundation for proper management policies.

3.6 Division of Fishing Areas by Shore Distance, Horsepower Group and Fishing Gear

As mentioned above, trawlers of > 200 HP in engine capacity still operate in near-shore areas of about 15 m depth. Their operations will destroy coastal habitats of aquatic living species, kill juveniles, damage spawning grounds and affect the living standard of small-scale fisherfolk. Therefore, it is necessary to quickly find solutions and make regulations on identification of the operation areas for each group of vessels corresponding to each fishery.

4. REFERENCES

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Conference Paper No. 2

OFFSHORE FISHERIES STATUS AND MANAGEMENT IN VIET NAM

Dr Dao Manh Son¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Viet Nam has a coastline of 3 260 km and an exclusive economic zone of more than one million km² wide, with a large potential of aquaculture and marine capture fisheries. In recent years fisheries has been considered as a key economic sector that plays an important role in national socio-economic development, hunger elimination and poverty reduction.

The Decree No. 20 CT/TW issued in September 1997 on stepping up the marine economy towards industrialization and modernization decreed as follows: “Restructure and rearrange the fisheries, change the coastal fisheries, limit the number of newly-built small fishing vessels/boats, encourage building offshore vessels, invest pivotally in offshore fisheries in order to set up strong and modern offshore fishing groups...”.

To carry out this directive thoroughly, over the past five years, the fisheries sector strongly developed the fleet of offshore fishing vessels aiming at exploiting the potential of offshore waters, and reducing the fishing pressure in the nearshore areas, thus contributing to protection of security and sovereignty at sea. Since 1997, in addition to supporting private investment initiatives, the Government has invested about VND1 300 million in rebuilding and improving the fleet of offshore fishing vessels and gradually restructuring the types of fisheries in each Province with a view to offshore development. Together with investments in building new vessels and constructing fisheries infrastructure, the Government and the Ministry of Fisheries have paid attention to issues such as survey and assessment of marine resources, research and the application of modern fishing and processing technologies, aquaculture, export and management.

2. OFFSHORE RESOURCES

2.1 Background

There are more than 2 000 fish species in Vietnamese marine waters. In spite of the multitude of species, the quantity of each species is limited, and only about 130 species have commercial value. In general, fish distribution is scattered and rarely concentrates in large schools. Moreover, because of their seasonal distribution, the catch rate is greatly affected. Fish schools are mostly distributed in the areas beyond 20 m depth. The number of small shoals comprise 84.2 percent, medium shoals 15 percent and larger shoals about 0.8 percent of the total number of shoals of fish. Figures 1 through 11 show the distribution of survey stations as well as fishing grounds by season for the major offshore fisheries in Viet Nam's marine waters.

¹ Research Institute for Marine Fisheries, Viet Nam.

2.2 Main Target Species by Area

- Southeast region: some species have a high catch rate including: squid, threadfin bream, red big-eye, yellowtripe trevally, red gostfish, cuttlefish and lizardfish.
- Southwest region: there are some main target species including: pony fish, squid, hairtail, cuttlefish, coastal trevally, Dumeril's amberjack, red gostfish, big-eyes and lizardfish.
- Gulf of Tonkin: Lembus rudderfish, red big-eye, round scad, squid, cuttlefish, hairtail and pony fish are the main target species of the area.
- Central and mid-eastern region: target species of gillnet fishery include skipjack tuna, yellow-fin tuna, sailfish, common dolphinfish, Indian spearfish; whereas the main and important target species of the longline fishery are yellow-fin tuna, shark, big-eye tuna, sailfish and swordfish.

2.3 Standing Stock and Potential Yield

The results of marine resources research over the last decade showed that the total standing stock of marine fish in Viet Nam marine waters was about 3.1 million tonnes and the sustainable potential yield was 1.4 million tonnes.

3. JOB STRUCTURE AND SITUATION OF OFFSHORE FISHING

3.1 Structure of Offshore Fishing Fleets

Number of fishing vessels in the whole country

After ten years of renovation, the capacity of fishing vessels has quickly developed in quantity. In 1985, the whole fisheries sector had more than 29 000 motorized fishing vessels with 456 796 HP, and by the end of 2001 the total number of fishing vessels had reached 79 000 units with a total capacity of 3 722 577 HP.

Structure of fleets

At the end of the year 2000, the fleet structure was as follows:

- 45 HP: 75.8%
- 46-89 HP: 14.3%
- 90 HP: 9.9%

Fishing vessels of 90 HP and upward are unequally distributed, with most concentrated in the southern area.

Fishery structure

The structure of the offshore fishing fleets by fishing gear is as follows:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------|
| • Trawl fishery: | 55.2% | • Longline fishery: | 8.6% |
| • Purse seine fishery: | 19.8% | • Lift net fishery: | 0.7% |
| • Gillnet fishery: | 8.5% | • Others/services units: | 7.2% |

3.2 Marine catches in offshore waters

In the past, the catch mainly came from near-shore areas, and the offshore catch was insignificant. Since offshore fishing development has been promoted by the Government, the catch of offshore fleets has increased, reaching about 38.3 percent of the total catch in 2002.

A survey carried out in some key fisheries provinces showed that the catches of offshore fleets were not entirely from offshore waters. Some of the newly built fishing vessels in the offshore fishing programme are operating in coastal waters.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE, FISHING ORGANIZATION, LOGISTIC SERVICES AND FISH CONSUMPTION

4.1 Fisheries Infrastructure

At present, there are about 700 shipbuilding yards, with a building capacity of 4 000 new boats/vessels and repair capacity of 10 000 units per year. Hulls of newly built boats/vessels are mainly made of wood, though some fisheries enterprises and transportation units have boat/vessel hulls made of steel and with engine capacity of 200 – 400 HP.

Up to the end of 2002, the fisheries sector had 63 fishing ports (constructed by different capital sources) including 47 landing areas in coastal provinces and 16 landing ports on islands. Forty-eight landing ports with a total length of 6 700m have been put in operation and 15 are under construction.

Although the Ministry of Fisheries has made budgetary allocations to improve and build new fishing ports and landing areas, the fisheries logistic system is still underdeveloped and insufficiently integrated. Some ports are not effectively operated. Several ports and canals where vessels are anchored have not yet been dredged, causing difficulties for movement of vessels. There are insufficient shelters and landing facilities to handle the large number of fishing vessels.

4.2 Fishing Organization

Viet Nam's fisheries are small-scale, multi-species and multi-gear. Private ownership of the means of production is common and more than 87 percent of the catch derives from small-scale fisheries. Some 640 000 labourers are engaged in fishing, of whom 60 000 take part in offshore fishing.

State-owned enterprises have not received proper investment. Their key task has not been developed. Management, trading and control activities are still limited, which has not permitted them to meet the demand of playing a leading role in fishing, logistic services and application of advanced technologies to practical production.

According to the Ministry of Fisheries, up to 2001, there were 452 fishing co-operatives with 15 650 labourers and 4 300 co-operative groups taking part in marine fishing with about 21 000 fisheries labourers.

The number of fishing boats/vessels owned by the private sector comprise 91 percent of the total fishing boats/vessels in the whole country and the annual catch of this sector makes up 87 percent of the total yield.

In recent years, the development of fisheries has been very rapid. It was considered as one of the spearhead sectors of the national economy. However, the reality shows that fishing

operations are spontaneous and that integrated management of specialized authorities is lacking.

At present, there are two basic models of fishing operation.

- Model 1: one fisher owning some fishing boats/vessels and using these fishing boats themselves to transport fish to landing areas, in combination with logistic services.
- Model 2: newly styled co-operatives, in collaboration with local marine product export processing factory, carrying out fishing operations, services, processing and marketing.

4.3 Logistic Services and Fish Consumption

According to the statistical data of MOFI, approximately 60 to 70 percent of the total fish catch is used for domestic consumption. In this domestic market there is an increasing demand on high value and good quality products. Fresh, frozen and canned marine products are common in towns and cities; and some high value species, such as marine shrimp, crab, blue crab, tiger shrimp, sea bass, etc. are widely consumed.

Marine products are marketed at landing areas in the following forms:

- sold directly to purchasing and processing units in the local area;
- sold to wholesalers who resell to both local and foreign retailers;
- family members of some ship-owners sell their products at markets;

In addition to fishing technology, fisherfolk also pay attention to sorting and preserving the post-harvest materials. Freezing boxes are often used to keep marine products on ice and this practice is very common to both carrier vessels at sea and sales, distribution and marketing units on land. Some offshore fishing vessels use cold sea water or ice with additional coolers to preserve marine products, so that the preservation duration can be up to 20 days, and the quality of products are ensured and can be used for export markets.

5. MARINE FISHERIES RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

5.1 Legal Documents related to Marine Fishery Resources Management and Protection

In order to achieve reasonable management, protection and development of fisheries resources, the Vietnamese Government has issued a series of legal documents, as follows:

- Laws on fishery resources protection and development, issued on 25 April 1989 by the State Council.
- Decree No. 195-H§BT issued by the President of the Ministerial Council on 2 June 1990 on directions of implementation of laws on fishery resources protection and development.
- Decision No. 415 TTg issued on 10 August 1994 on establishment of inspection board of fishery resources.
- Decree No. 48-CP issued on 12 August 1996 by the Government regarding punishment of violation cases in fishery resources protection.
- Declaration made by the Vietnamese Government regarding the territorial waters, adjacent waters, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of Viet Nam on 12 May 1997.
- Decision No. 358/Q§-TTg issued on 29 May 1997 by the Prime Minister regarding policies of exemption or soft taxes to offshore fishing.

- Instruction No. 01/1998/CT-TTg issued by the Prime Minister regarding prohibition against the use of explosives, electric pulses, poisons in fishing.
- Decree No. 36/1999/NŞ-CP issued on 9 June 1999 by the Government regarding punishment of violation cases in the territorial waters, adjacent waters, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
- Decree No. 43/2003/NŞ-CP issued on 2 May 2003 by the Government regarding regulations on functions, tasks, rights and organization structure of the Ministry of Fisheries (Department of Fishery Resources Protection changed into Department of Fishing and Fishery Resources Protection).

Based on these documents, the Ministry of Fisheries issued the following regulations, decisions, circular letters and instructions:

- Circular letter No. 04 TS/TT issued on 30 August 1990 giving directions of implementation of Articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 24 in the Laws, and Article 2 of the Decree No. 195-HŞBT.
- Circular letter No. 01 TS/TT issued on 14 June 1991 regarding registration and licenses related to fishing operations.
- Decision No. 134TS/QŞ issued on 21 April 1992 “Temporary regulations on inspectors of fishery resources protection”.
- Decision No. 211 TS/QŞ issued on 17 June 1992 regarding technical management and safety check for fishing gear/equipment.
- Various circular letters, instructions related to the sectorial standards on marine fishing, and regulations of management of fishing ports, landing areas, fish markets.

Based on the above documents, the Department of Fishery Resources Protection, in cooperation with local authorities, carries out activities related to management, protection and development of fishery resources, such as issuing fishing licenses for national fishing vessels, registration of fishing operations for foreign vessels, checking monitoring and surveillance of fisheries activities at sea, and controlling and preventing pollution of fish habitats, etc.

5.2 Continuing Problems in Management and Protection of Fishery Resources

In spite of the fact that many legal documents, instructions, decrees and activities serving the purpose of management and protection of fishery resources have been produced, it can be said that such legal instruments in the past were limited and not very effective.

Regulations, policies

The Ministry of Fisheries had given guidance that it was necessary to change the fishery structure, i.e. change coastal fishing to offshore fishing, and increase efficiency. At present, the number of small fishing boats operating in the nearshore areas is too high – beyond the absorption capacity of available resources. However, development of these fleets is continuing and no specific policies for reduction of small coastal fishing boats have been put into effect that would lead to creating employment, restructuring activities and increasing income for fisherfolk.

The Government, and particularly the Ministry of Fisheries, have paid attention to investment in the offshore fishing programme, but it is not well coordinated. For example, much attention is given to building boats/vessels and ports, whereas fishery resources forecasts, logistic services, processing and marketing, manpower training, etc, have not been given proper attention.

Protection of fishery resources and their habitats

Although the law of fishery resources protection was issued in 1989, it is practically impossible to check and control all fishing operations; there are still many illegal activities that badly affect the fishery resources and their habitats, including:

- use of small mesh size (at codend of trawl, bunt of purse seine, gillnet, etc.);
- indiscriminate fishing in closed areas or closed season (spawning grounds, feeding grounds of fish, shrimp in the spawning seasons);
- use of destructive fishing gear and methods (explosives, electric pulse, poison, estuarine bottom net); and
- dumping of oil sludge, daily wastes from boats/vessels and rubbish at landing areas which have not yet been solved, resulting in partial environmental pollution in some areas.

Fishing organization and logistic services

Sector organization is still deficient in many respects. In offshore fishing operations, there is no clear guidance provided from the central to local level authorities, and cooperation in fishing ground forecasts, fishing technology transfer, preservation, logistic services and marketing promotion is limited. The system of fishing ports and landing areas has not yet met the increasing demands for fishery products, and specific fish markets have not yet been set up.

5.3 Suggestions for Management and Sustainable Use of Fishery Resources

A list of suggestions to promote improved management and sustainable use of fishery resources includes the following.

- Support offshore fishing operations in combination with management, and effective protection of coastal fishery resources, as follows:
 - Reduce quickly the number of small fishing boats operating in the near-shore areas.
 - Adjust types of fishing gear, and fishing efforts in all marine areas; limit the number of fishing boats/vessels suitable to the status of fishery resources.
 - Limit and gradually phase out the push net and stake net fishery. Totally prohibit the use of explosives, chemicals, electric pulses in fishing activities, and also prohibit fishing in closed and temporary closed areas.
 - Apply the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to Viet Nam's real situation.
- Strengthen surveys on offshore fisheries resources and forecast of fishing grounds; submit and suggest to the Prime Minister to approve a "Strategy for offshore fishing".
- In order to increase economic efficiency of offshore fishing vessels, it is necessary to develop fleets of carrier vessels to work as "mother" boats supplying oil, food, engine repair services, marketing support etc., to fishing boats/vessels for long fishing trips; moreover, build a suitable system of fishing ports/landing areas serving the commercial fisheries with sufficient freezing storage facilities, sorting facilities, and hygiene systems, supplying materials such as fuel, fresh water, foodstuffs, etc., to ensure a rapid clearance for vessels.

- Urgently establish fish markets to sell fish by auction at landing areas; stabilize market prices; quickly sell fishery products immediately upon landing of vessels.
- Consolidate and perfect the fisheries statistical system from the central to local level; arrange for the fleets of offshore fishing vessels to be obliged to use logbooks.
- Strengthen cooperation with other countries and international organizations; promote integration of activities to take advantage of assistance in technology, management experiences, and financial support.

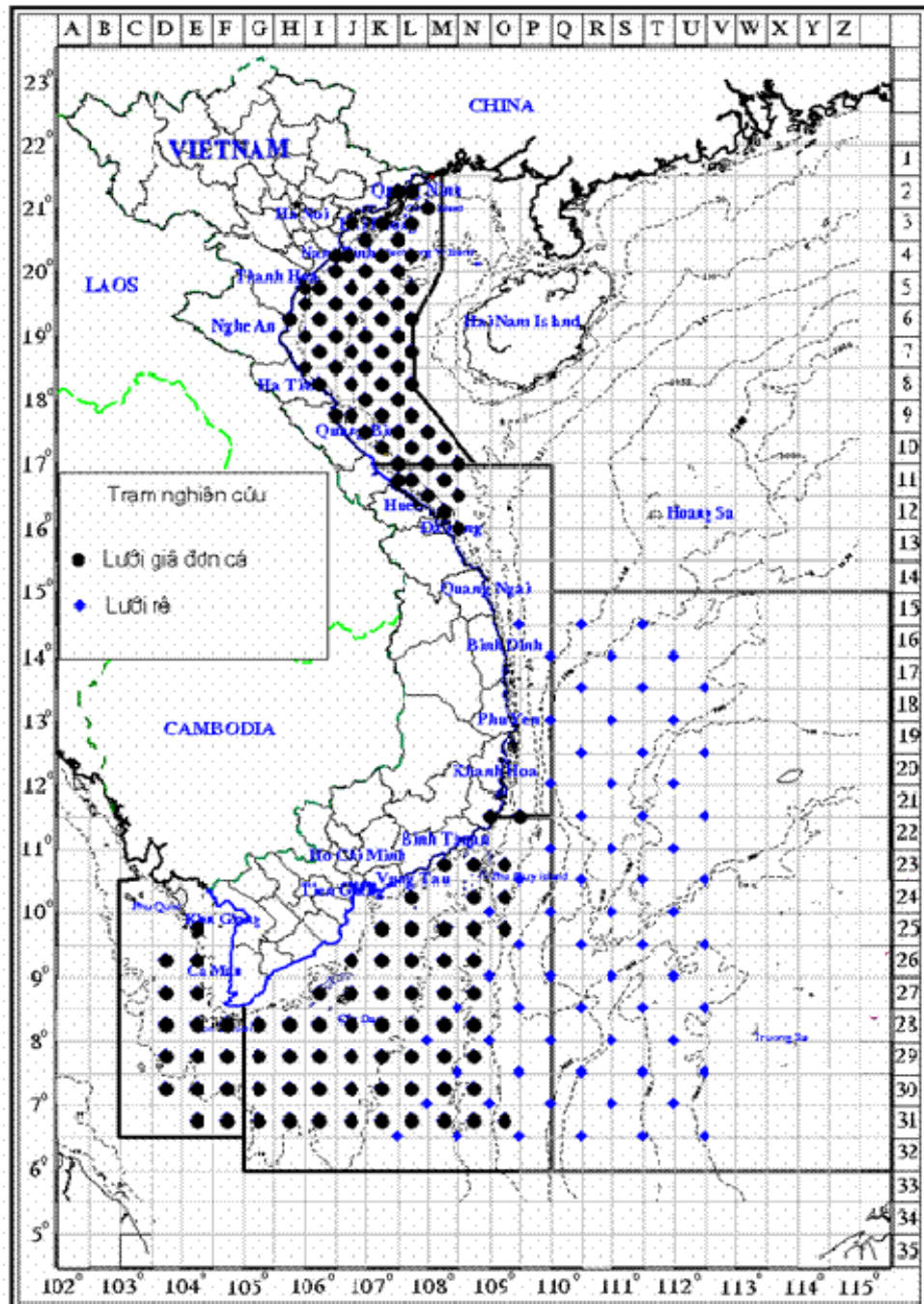


Figure 1. Map of survey areas and research stations