

ANNEX 1

THE OPENING REMARK BY FISHERIES REFUGIA PROJECT DIRECTOR

The Project Steering Committee and the Representatives from 5 participating Countries of the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, UN Environment Project Task Manager, consultants, ladies and gentlemen,.. Good morning.

It is my privilege and pleasure on behalf of SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Dr. KOM Silapajarn to welcome you here today to the **1st Meeting of the Project Steering Committee. We are delighted to have you with is to participate and provide policy guidance to the meeting. Thank you for coming. That many of you have traveled long distances to be here serves as a reminder to us all just how important our work is.**

I may recall to the year 2008, after the Proposal on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand was developed through the cooperation among 6 countries and the Project co-ordinating unit where Mr. Christopher John Patterson was a part of key person who develop the full Project Document. As well as a full support from the UNEP in Washinton D.C, Dr. Isabelle Vanderbeck.. Without them, it would be difficult to meet you here today. So, we would like to thank them for all the best they have done and thanks all participating Countries for cooperation and endorsement of the full project document.

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, During the past decades, our regional's fisheries sector has encountered lots of challenges. While the countries had been exerting effort to enhance the contribution of fisheries to food security and improved livelihoods of our people, and ensure the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources. Many countries are encountered against IUU Fishing, protection of marine habitat, development of new fishing gear technology but we should not forget that one of the most effective tools for managing of fish stock is the establishment of fisheries refugia.

With that note, I hope for fruitful results of this 1st Project Steering Committee, and wish you have a pleasant stay in Bangkok and enjoy at the same time the exploring to Samut-prakan where SEAFDEC/TD is located.

Thank you very much and have a good day!.