

ANNEX 4

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY PSC FOR CAMBODIA ON BEHALF OF THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT

First of all may I respect to

- ☐ Member country representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippine, Vietnam and Thailand
- ☐ Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck Task Manager of GEF International Waters
- ☐ Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon, Project Director of Fisheries Refugia project
- ☐ Dr. Christopher Paterson, Project Consultant
- ☐ Distinguish, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Fisheries Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Royal Government of Cambodia, it is a great pleasure for me to attend the First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for 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 and to officially release the statement on the supports for implementation of the Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the SCS and Gulf of Thailand.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cambodia is a country blessed with rich natural resources, and some of the most important of these are coral reefs, seagrass, mangrove and other wetlands. These ecosystems are fundamental to the livelihoods of millions of Cambodians and to the nation itself. Not only do they perform an essential role in supplying people with fish, a staple food for Cambodians, but are also vital to coastal protection, tourism and biodiversity.

However, our ecosystems are facing destruction; at risk from an increasing array of impacts from unsustainable and destructive fishing practices, sedimentation and waste dumping, and increasing population and development in coastal areas, which threaten to destroy these ecosystems. It is now time to increase attention in protecting these essential habitats to sustain the marine fisheries of Cambodia and ensure future livelihood of the people of Cambodia.

Recognising the urgent need, the Fishery Administration, is a Government authority, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries pay more effort in managing and conserving our marine habitats for the next generation, as well as maintaining environmental sustainability and fisheries within the coastal and marine ecosystem based on the National Fisheries Policy and the law

So far, two Marine Fisheries Management Areas with more than 500 km² and 40 Community Fisheries Areas have been established with concept of sustainable resource utilization and biodiversity conservation.

The Fisheries Refugia is a new form of fisheries management area in the concept in addressing a significant barrier to the integration of fisheries and habitat management. The Definition of Fisheries Refugia as “Spatially and geographically defined, marine or coastal areas in which specific management measures are applied to sustain important species during critical stages, other life cycle, for their sustainable use” is meaningful and incredible. Through the countries, we identified 14 potential marine fisheries Refugia sites and 3 Refugia site are under the establishment and operation with the GEF support through SEAFDEC. This Refugia can be established within the Marine Fisheries Management Area as one type of the management zone or individually.

Distinguishes, ladies and gentlemen

Currently, Fisheries Administration of Cambodia has been amending its fisheries law which considered including marine fisheries refugia context. At least 5 articles related to fisheries Refugia establishment and

management including zoning type, certain period of closed season for particular species, as well as sanction to the fishing offender. The activities of establishment and operation of the fisheries Refugia are also included in the 10-Year Strategic Plan, 5 year fisheries conservation plan and as well as Action Plan on Combating IUU.

Recognizing the vital importance of the implementation of fisheries refugia project, I wish to assure you that Cambodia would strongly support the activities of SEAFDEC-UNEP/GEF Fisheries Refugia for the sustainable marine fisheries resources management and conservation leading to have healthy habitat and peace marine species.

Thank you