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## Arabian Sea Fisheries Management Coordination Committee (Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>)

### The Quarterly News Letter

#### Message from the Director General

We are delighted to share a significant development with the global fisheries community. The fisheries professionals and stakeholders from India proudly announce the establishment of the Arabian Sea Fisheries Management Coordination Committee, popularly known as "Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>". This society has been instituted with a focused vision to ensure the holistic welfare of fishermen and all other stakeholders who are directly or indirectly dependent on the Arabian Sea for their livelihood and sustenance.

#### Legal Status and Office

"Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>" is a registered society under the *Karnataka Societies Registration Act of 1960*, bearing the registration number DRDK/SOR/118/2024-25. The society operates from its official office located within the College of Fisheries Campus, Mangalore, India—a hub of fisheries education and research excellence.

#### Vision and Mission

The core aim of "Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>" is to bring together all relevant stakeholders involved in fisheries and coastal livelihoods across the western coastline of India, and to facilitate cooperative efforts for sustainable fisheries development, policy advocacy, and social welfare. The society seeks to address the diverse challenges faced by coastal communities by fostering collaboration, scientific management, and responsible governance.

#### First Phase Initiatives

In its initial phase of implementation, "Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>" is undertaking an ambitious program to establish strong grassroots connections with stakeholders from all five

maritime states along India's west coast: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala.

Key activities planned during this phase include:

- **Health Camps:** Organizing community health check-ups and wellness programs in coastal villages to address the immediate health needs of fisherfolk.
- **Press Meets:** Conducting media interactions and awareness campaigns in each state to highlight the objectives of the society and to initiate dialogues with local fisheries departments, NGOs, and community leaders.
- **Membership Enrolments:** Actively enrolling stakeholders into the society, thus fostering a unified platform for collective action and representation.

We believe that the success of this initiative lies in inclusive participation, transparent communication, and unwavering commitment to the upliftment of coastal communities. As we embark on this journey, we extend a warm invitation to fisheries professionals, researchers, policy makers, and development agencies across the globe to collaborate with us and strengthen this pioneering movement.

Together, through "Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>", let us ensure the sustainability of the Arabian Sea ecosystem and the prosperity of the communities that depend on it.



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*Photo by Magada at Hoige Bazar, Mangalore, India where they were educated on clean handling of fish and invited them for health camps*

## Fish Stories from the fields

Despite significant advancements in science and technology, and the close proximity of key institutions such as the Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation (KFDC) and the Technology Wing of the College of Fisheries, Mangalore, the condition of the nearby peeling sheds and dry fish yards remains alarmingly unhygienic. The handling and processing practices observed in these areas fall far short of the standards recommended by the scientific community and the regulatory protocols laid down by competent authorities.

This disconnect between available scientific knowledge and actual ground-level practices highlights a critical gap—one that undermines the quality, safety, and marketability of fishery products. The reasons for this disparity are manifold, ranging from lack of awareness and training, insufficient monitoring, inadequate infrastructure, to socio-economic constraints faced by small-scale stakeholders.

It is precisely in addressing this systemic gap that Sea=MC<sup>2</sup> (Arabian Sea Fisheries Management Coordination Committee) aims to play a transformative role. The society envisions itself as a catalyst that can bridge the divide between science and practice, by promoting evidence-based approaches, capacity building, and better coordination among stakeholders.

Sea=MC<sup>2</sup> is committed to fostering awareness, upgrading local facilities, advocating

for hygienic handling protocols, and empowering fisher communities to adopt practices that are both sustainable and compliant with quality standards.

Through sustained engagement and collaborative efforts, Sea=MC<sup>2</sup> strives to ensure that the benefits of scientific advancements truly reach the grassroots—resulting in improved product quality, healthier working conditions, and enhanced livelihoods for those who depend on the fisheries sector.

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## The Chairman's wish

Despite having a wealth of knowledge and scientific expertise in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, India continues to face challenges in effectively translating this knowledge into practical, large-scale implementation. The gap between theory and practice remains considerable. In contrast, several smaller nations such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia have successfully adopted technological innovations in food science, particularly in fisheries and aquaculture, and have leveraged these advancements to significantly enhance their export revenues and strengthen their economies.

India, while being one of the major exporters in this sector—with exports exceeding 13.5 lakh tons of fish and fishery products and earning over ₹60,000 crore in foreign exchange—still has untapped potential. The country's fisheries sector has the capacity to grow far beyond its current output and contribution to the economy.

However, India's position in the global market is under increasing pressure due to a combination of factors. The ongoing tariff wars, especially with the United States, have complicated trade dynamics. Additionally, the

decline in marine fish catch caused by overfishing and environmental changes, coupled with stiff competition from other major exporters like Ecuador and Vietnam, has intensified the challenges for India's fisheries sector.

In response to these emerging issues, initiatives such as the SeaMC2 have been established to bridge the gap between stakeholders. SeaMC2 aims to bring together fishers, aquaculture professionals, scientists, policymakers, and industry leaders to foster dialogue, build consensus, and formulate forward-looking strategies. By creating a collaborative platform, SeaMC2 seeks to ensure that informed decisions are made to strengthen India's fisheries and aquaculture industry, make it more resilient, and unlock its full economic potential.



**Ramesh M R**  
Chairman, SeaMC2, India

mismanagement and neglect in how we handle our natural resources—particularly in the fisheries sector.

India, blessed with vast aquatic wealth and a coastline stretching over 8,200 kilo meters, currently has approximately 4,28,350 fishing boats operating in its marine waters. This translates to an astonishing 52.23 boats per kilo meter of coastline—an overwhelming fishing pressure that is equivalent to virtually sweeping clean the marine ecosystem on a daily basis. This intense and often unregulated fishing effort has disrupted the natural balance, leaving many marine species and habitats under severe stress.

The situation inland is no better. Rivers, which once carried life-sustaining nutrients to estuaries and the sea, are now choked. Waterways and tributaries are blocked by infrastructure and pollution, while rampant sand mining in the lower stretches of rivers has destroyed sediment habitats that once supported rich biodiversity. Instead of nutrients, rivers now deliver silt and pollutants to the ocean, weakening the base of the marine food web.

## The Ocean is Becoming Empty



Sir Josiah Stamp once aptly stated, “We can escape responsibility, but we cannot escape the consequences of escaping responsibility.” These words resonate profoundly today, as we begin to witness the very consequences of decades of

The pressure is compounded by destructive fishing practices such as light fishing, bull trawling, and bottom trawling—all of which disturb marine habitats and drastically increase bycatch, often killing juvenile and non-target species. Added to this is the impact of climate change, including erratic monsoons and warming oceans, which further destabilize fish populations and their migration patterns. As a result, more than 80% of fishing vessels in India are reportedly operating at a loss, threatening the livelihoods of millions of coastal families.

These changes did not happen overnight. They were slow, creeping shifts that many choose to ignore—believing nature would endlessly absorb our abuse. But nature has its limits, and we are fast approaching them.

The time to act is now.

We must treat this moment as a wake-up call. All stakeholders—fisherfolk, scientists, policymakers, NGOs, traders, and consumers—must come together to take shared responsibility. We must formulate and implement science-based, community-supported, and ecologically sound management strategies. These must include better enforcement of fishing regulations, adoption of sustainable fishing practices, river restoration, seasonal fishing bans, fleet rationalization, and fair resource allocation.

Only through collective will and coordinated effort can we ensure that our water bodies continue to provide food, livelihoods, and ecological services—not just for today, but for generations to come.

## General Call by the “Secretary General”

It is a well-acknowledged reality that the fisheries sector faces a multitude of complex and interwoven challenges. These issues span across various dimensions—ecological, technological, economic, and social—and attempting to address all of them simultaneously is neither practical nor sustainable. Recognizing this, we have embarked on a structured and strategic approach: to categorize the problems based on their nature into distinct domains such as management, policy, technology, environmental concerns, and non-technical/social issues.

This categorization allows us to bring clarity and focus, helping us prioritize and systematically address the most pressing concerns. By identifying critical factors that significantly impact the sustainability and profitability of the fisheries sector, we aim to develop targeted interventions.

These interventions are not designed in isolation—they are rooted in the principle of **collaborative governance**, where the voices and insights of all stakeholders—fishers, scientists, administrators, technocrats, traders, and community leaders—are brought to the table.

Our efforts have already gained momentum. A dedicated team has been actively traveling along the west coast of India, engaging with local fishing communities, listening to their concerns, and seeding the importance of collaborative action for sustainable fisheries management. These grassroots interactions are laying the foundation for building a network of cooperation, shared understanding, and mutual accountability. The road ahead requires coordinated action plans, driven by data, supported by technology, and grounded in community wisdom. With consistent effort and inclusive participation, we are confident that this approach will pave the way toward resilient, equitable, and sustainable fisheries in India.



**Dr S R Somashekar**  
Secretary General, SeaMC2, India

## Meeting the Stakeholders



The society is meeting all the stakeholders along the west coast to collect the gross root information and planning to initiate issue based strategies to solve such problems. Interested stakeholders may join the society and work with us. Please visit the website at [www.http://seamc2.com](http://seamc2.com) and be a part of the noble cause of serving the community and the environment. Write to us...

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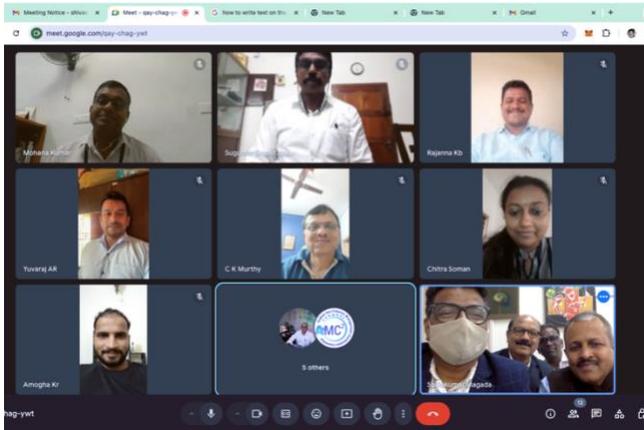
## Photo Gallery



DG and the Chairman met the Director of ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai regarding extension of fishing ban periods from 61 days to 90 days along the west coast of India



DG, SeaMC2 and Scientist from Bangalore Bio-innovation Centre interacted with Mr Mahesh Kumar U., GM, KFDC, GoK



Online session for SeaMC2 members on 2nd January 2025



Interaction with the Yashaswi Fishmeal and Marine Ingredients Company



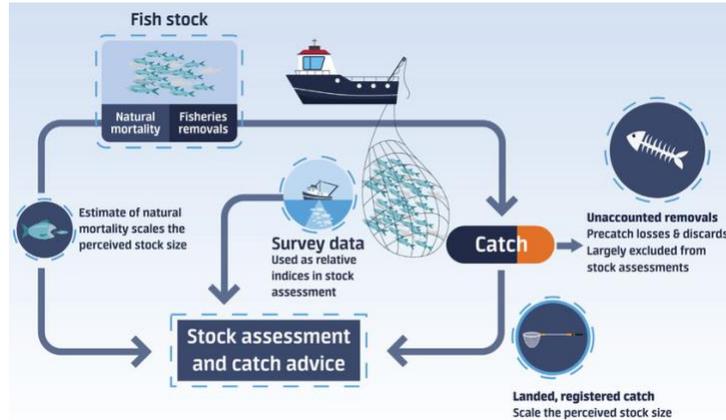
Visited peeling sheds to educate them on cleanliness and invited them for Health Camps



Visited the processing plants to invite them for Health Camps

# The advantages of working with Sea=MC<sup>2</sup> are

## Stock Assessment



## Supply Chain



## Branding



## Institutional Network



## Micro Financing



## ERP Solutions



## Digitization



## Community Service



## Blue Bank: for Inclusive Economic Growth



## Knowledge Support



## Boat Certification

