

# CHOLUTECA DECLARATION ON UNSUSTAINABLE SHRIMP AQUACULTURE

## DECLARATIONS:

1. Our concern over the increasing environmental destruction evident world wide, and in particular the destruction of mangrove forests, estuaries, and lagoons; and, in general, we declare our deep concern over the conversion of coastal wetlands and areas to shrimp farms, an unsustainable activity that is growing in an uncontrolled manner throughout the tropical and subtropical regions of the world.
2. Our concern over the deprivation, displacement and marginalization of native communities that depend on coastal wetlands, due to the establishment of shrimp farms in these areas.
3. That the lack of planning for an integrated marine and coastal area development is an assault against biological diversity, by allowing for the destruction or contamination of habitats and, amongst other acts, allowing for the wholesale elimination of marine life that is captured incidentally in the harvest of wild shrimp post-larvae used to supply the majority of shrimp farms in the world.
4. Our desire for the imposition of a global moratorium to halt the further establishment or expansion of shrimp farming and that responsible parties undertake a study to determine the best means to transform shrimp aquaculture into an activity which is equitable and ecologically compatible with the principles of sustainable development. During the moratorium, a period of transition or conversion from the use of destructive technologies or practices to more responsible practices should be initiated to ensure the long term survival and health of ecosystems and the viability of a variety of sustainable human activities dependent on those systems.
5. Our support for the criteria set forth in the NGO Declaration on Unsustainable Aquaculture to the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development in May 1996. Therefore:

## **DEMANDS : The implementation of the aforementioned criteria and those which are detailed as follows:**

1. Guarantee that the development and operation of various types of aquaculture, in particular shrimp aquaculture, does not, in the short, medium or long term, adversely affect biotic and abiotic environments and artisanal fisheries and the communities which depend on them.
2. Ensure that shrimp aquaculture and other forms of coastal development are conducted within an integrated plan of management that includes the real and effective participation of all groups that benefit from coastal resources, in particular local communities.

3. Ensure that the development of shrimp aquaculture is compatible with the structure and function of natural ecosystems and with the socio-cultural and economic interests of coastal communities and their areas of concern.

4. Ensure that multilateral development banks, bilateral aid agencies, agencies of international cooperation, the FAO and other relevant national and international organizations and institutions do not finance or promote in any way the development of shrimp aquaculture practices which are not consistent with these demands.

5. Prior to the development of any shrimp aquaculture activities, require an evaluation of the environmental, social and cultural impacts involving the participation, in a decision-making capacity, of NGOs and peoples potentially impacted; in addition, require environmental audits of existing operations on an ongoing basis with the same mechanisms for participation.

6. Guarantee respect for the Human Rights of all people affected by shrimp aquaculture. Where human rights violations occur, they must be investigated by the competent authorities and processed in accordance with the civil, administrative and judicial responsibilities of the country concerned in compliance with the laws, treaties and international agreements to which such countries are parties.

7. Regulate the use of fresh water in shrimp aquaculture operations with due regard to the ecological costs or impacts on the watersheds and basins where they are located, the need for freshwater supplies for human consumption, and the supply of water for other activities (e.g. agriculture, industry, tourism, urban development); and prohibit the salinization of fresh waters supplies including groundwater and reservoirs.

8. Ensure the protection of wetland areas, in particular mangrove forests, rivers, lagoons, inlets, bays, estuaries, swamps, marshes and tidelands.

9. Prohibit the use of substances harmful to the biodiversity of the area impacted by shrimp aquaculture operations.

10. Apply the precautionary principle to every step in the development of shrimp aquaculture.

11. Prohibit the contamination of surrounding areas as a result of the excessive discharge of organic and inorganic wastes.

12. Prohibit the introduction and the use of organisms modified by genetic engineering and support the establishment of strict international measures relating to biosafety.

13. Prohibit the use of exotic (non-native) species and stimulate research into methods for the in-vitro reproduction of native species.

14. Prohibit the conversion of land used for agriculture or livestock production to use for shrimp aquaculture production, with particular attention placed on land-use management planning and national food security.

15. Prohibit the use of feeds for farmed shrimp consisting of fish that could be used for human consumption.

16. Ensure that the capture of shrimp larvae and any other type of activity does not adversely affect the survival and diversity of other species.

17. Ensure that the shrimp aquaculture industry assumes all civil, legal (and corporate) responsibilities for the socio-environmental damages caused by the industry's installations, operations and production.

18. Finally, we demand a global moratorium on any further expansion of shrimp aquaculture in coastal areas until the criteria for sustainable shrimp aquaculture are put into practice. We also demand the formation of an independent body of national, regional and international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to monitor the implementation of this process at the global level.

Based on these demands, the organizations that endorse this declaration agree to unite their efforts and to work together to pressure governments, producers, and financial institutions as well as consumers to put these demands into practice as soon as possible.