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IUCN - STATEMENT

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Submitted by IUCN

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Mr. Chairman,

IUCN would like to express our appreciation on being permitted to attend this 6th session of WCPFC as an observer. We are delighted to report that, since the 5th session held in Busan last year, IUCN has two additional state members, Fiji and Nauru. This brings the total number of IUCN state members that are also members of the WCPFC to eight (with Australia, China, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and United States).

The mission of IUCN is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. IUCN has been active in the Oceania region for more than 20 years, working through its members, scientific and technical commissions. The IUCN-Regional Programme Office for Oceania was established in Suva in 2007 to allow IUCN to focus additional efforts on the Pacific Region. This has resulted in the Pacific Ocean 2020 Initiative, building upon the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, working towards a healthy, sustainable, and productive Pacific Ocean by 2020.

For this session of the WCPFC, IUCN is particularly concerned about a number of issues. At the last Commission meeting, it was agreed that a reduction in catch of bigeye tuna of 30% from 2001 to 2004 levels, was required to maintain the spawning biomass at the MSY level. To try and achieve this, specific conservation and management measures (CMMs) were agreed, starting in 2009. However, the Scientific Committee (SC) this year reported that there was actually an increase in bigeye catch of 6% in 2008. This means even greater reductions are now required to achieve the required result. At the SC meeting it was also reported that the CMM that was agreed to at WCPFC5 will **not** achieve the required reduction. Therefore more effective measures need

to be agreed at this meeting. There are also a number of CMMs before the commission which address the impacts of pelagic fisheries in the WCPO on turtles, sharks, and seabirds. IUCN hopes that heads of delegations at this commission meeting agree to apply CMMs that can achieve the required catch reduction in bigeye tuna and minimize mortality of these key bycatch species.

IUCN believes there are two relatively simple measures that can reduce fishing capacity in the region and help achieve the desired results. The first measure is a removal of all fishing subsidies by the governments of the major fishing nations, which allow their fishing fleets to fish “profitably” here in the Pacific. Many of these vessels would not be able to afford to fish in this region if they had to pay the real costs of fishing so far from their home port. The second measure is to close the four high seas pockets, as is being proposed at this meeting, effectively making these High Seas Marine Protected Areas. This will help reduce the fishing effort by illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels which use these areas as a refuge.

IUCN would also like to draw the attention of the meeting to the recently released documentary film, *End of the Line*. This film raises the need for taking concrete and urgent steps forward if we are to save our fisheries. It is hoped that an opportunity will arise for this film to be screened here at this meeting.

Thank you.

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