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JOINT MEETING OF TUNA RFMOs, KOBE, JAPAN, 22-26 JANUARY 2007: OUTCOMES

WCPFC4-2007/19

5th November 2007

Paper prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Government of Japan, with technical assistance provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), organized and hosted the first Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs at Kobe, Japan, 22-26 January 2007. Representatives from 54 Members and Cooperating Non-Members of five tuna RFMOs, their secretariats, one non-Member, seven inter-governmental organizations and seven non-government organizations participated in the meeting. An abbreviated version of the summary report of the Joint Meeting (the majority of appendices have not been included in this version prepared for WCPFC4) is presented at Appendix A. The full report of the Joint Meeting is available at www.tuna-org.org

2. The Joint Meeting focused on three broad themes:
- Coordination of Measures of RFMOs (facilitated by Mr John Spencer, EC);
 - Addressing Fishing Capacity, Fishing Effort and Compliance (facilitated by Mr Glenn Hurry, Australia); and
 - Responsible Actions to Address the Concerns Raised by the International Community (facilitated by Ambassador David A. Balton, United States).

The principle outcome of the Joint Meeting was a Course of Actions for RFMOs which describes (I) key areas and challenges, (II) technical work to cooperate across RFMOs to address the challenges, and (III) follow-up actions (Attachment B).

3. Several tasks identified in the Course of Actions, including the report to the 27th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries and the Joint RFMO Technical Working Group on Trade and Catch Documentation Schemes (held at Raleigh, North Carolina, 22-23 July 2007 – see Attachment C) have been completed. Others, such as the proposal for a performance review, are tabled for discussion separately at WCPFC4 (WCPFC4-2007/20).

Recommendation

4. Noting the Joint Meeting at Kobe in January 2007 called on members of all t-RFMOs to commence implementing the measures described in the Course of Actions at the 2007 annual meeting of each tuna RFMO as a matter of priority, consistent with their respective conventions, WCPFC4 is invited to:

- share views and report on Actions undertaken since the Joint Meeting at Kobe in January 2007;
- further consider the outcomes of the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs, and possible responses and engagement strategies, with respect to the tasks and activities identified in the Course of Actions as they relate to WCPFC; and
- share information and advice in relation to the ad-hoc tuna RFMO Chairs' meeting that is proposed for January or February 2008 in the United States to discuss follow-up actions by each tuna RFMO.

Report of the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs
January 22 – 26, 2007
Kobe, Japan

The Government of Japan, with technical assistance provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), organized and hosted the first Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs from January 22nd to 26th 2007 in Kobe, Japan. The meeting included participants from 54 Members and cooperating non-Members of 5 tuna RFMOs (IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, ICCAT: International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, WCPFC: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, and CCSBT: Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna), as well as representatives of the Secretariats of the 5 tuna RFMOs, one non-Member, 7 inter-governmental organizations and 7 non-governmental organizations. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 1 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*].

The list of documents discussed in the Joint Meeting and the adopted agenda are attached as Appendix 2 and 3, respectively [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*].

Mr. Toshiro Shirasu, Director-General of Fisheries Agency of Japan, opened the Joint Meeting. The opening statement of Mr. Shirasu is attached as Appendix 4 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*]. Mr. Masanori Miyahara (Japan) was elected as the Chairperson.

An open-ended drafting committee to develop the Course of Actions for RFMOs from the Kobe meeting of joint tuna RFMOs was created.

Dr. Sachiko Tsuji (FAO) made presentations on the status of tuna stocks and data availability of tuna resources. A summary of stock status of tuna resources and the explanatory document for data availability are attached as Appendix 5 and 6 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*]. It was noted with concern that most commercially important tuna stocks in the world are fully or over-exploited.

Mr. Yuichiro Harada (OPRT) and Mr. Lahsen Ababouch (FAO) made presentations on the status of the sashimi and canned tuna product markets, respectively. The presentations are attached as Appendix 7 and 8 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*]. It was noted that the demand for both sashimi and canned tuna is continuously increasing in the world.

Dr. Robin Allen (IATTC), Dr. Bill Hogarth, Mr. Driss Meski, Dr. Jerry Scott and Dr. Victor Restrepo (ICCAT), Mr. John Spencer and Mr. Alejandro Anganuzzi (IOTC), Mr. Andrew Wright (WCPFC), and Mr. Neil Hermes (CCSBT) made presentations on the organization of, conservation and management measures taken by, and challenges of their

respective tuna RFMOs. The challenges commonly faced by those RFMOs include establishment of effective and comprehensive stock rebuilding programs, collection of reliable data for stock assessment, restriction of fishing capacity/fishing effort, implementation of effective MCS (monitoring, control and surveillance) measures, striking a balance between the needs of developed and developing states, and effective cooperation among the tuna RFMOs. Their presentations are attached as Appendix 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*].

Mr. John Spencer (European Community) acted as a facilitator on the agenda of “Coordination of Measures of RFMOs”. The issues discussed under this agenda included IUU fishing, trade and catch tracking programs, transshipments, data collection and reporting, and trade and catch tracking. Participants underlined the need for a stronger cooperation and coordination among tuna RFMOs on all of those issues. Particularly, unification of lists of authorized as well as IUU vessels, data sharing among tuna RFMOs, and establishment of harmonized regulation for transshipment including a global observer scheme for carrier vessels could be the first area of coordination, following some technical discussions.

Mr. Glenn Hurry (Australia) acted as a facilitator on the agenda of “Addressing Fishing Capacity, Fishing Effort and Compliance”. It was agreed that in general global fishing capacity for tunas is too high and should not increase, and be reduced as appropriate, while recognizing the aspiration of developing states, particularly small island developing states and territories, for the development of their fisheries industries. The need for tuna RFMOs to set sustainable catch and effort limits and address issues of allocation was also discussed in conjunction with overcapacity. It was also recognized that an improved, comprehensive and integrated MCS package of measures needs to be developed. The conference noted the importance of the outcome of the St John conference and the 2006 FAO workshop on capacity to the Joint Meeting.

Mr. David Balton (USA) acted as a facilitator on the agenda of “Responsible Actions to Address the Concerns raised by the International Community”. It was agreed that the five tuna RFMOs should have their performance reviewed in accordance with a common methodology, based on common criteria to the extent possible. Participants also agreed on the need to implement the ecosystem-based approach and precautionary approach and urgent need to develop and implement measures to minimize the by-catch of other ocean species in tuna fisheries (particularly sea turtles, seabirds and sharks) as well as devising ways to increase assistance to developing countries.

Based on the discussions above, the Drafting Committee developed a draft Course of Actions for RFMOs from the Kobe meeting of joint tuna RFMOs, which describes (I) key areas and challenges, (II) technical work to cooperate across RFMOs to address the challenges, and (III) follow-up actions. The Joint Meeting agreed upon the Course of Actions by consensus as attached as Appendix 14. The participants confirmed that their willingness to implement the Course of Actions through their participation in tuna RFMOs.

In relation to paragraphs 3 and 13 in Section I of the Course of Actions, the meeting noted the special requirements of developing coastal states, particularly small island developing states and territories, as shown in Appendix 15 [*see official report of the Meeting at www.tuna-org.org*].

The United States of America offered to host the technical working group (July 2007 in conjunction with the ICCAT intersessional meetings) and an ad-hoc Tuna RFMO Chairs' meeting (probably January or February 2008) mentioned in Section II and III respectively of the Course of Actions. The European Community offered to host the second Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs in 2009. The Joint Meeting welcomed the both offers.

Mr. Miyahara declared the close of the first Joint Meeting of tuna RFMOs.

**Appendix 14: Course of Actions for RFMOs from the Kobe meeting of joint tuna
RFMOs
January 26, 2007
Kobe, JAPAN**

The assembled members and cooperating non members of the five tuna RFMOs present at the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs, recognizing the critical need to arrest further stock decline in the case of depleted stocks, maintain and rebuild tuna stocks to sustainable levels and deal effectively with overfishing, overcapacity and IUU fishing activities, jointly commit to take urgent actions to co-operate through tuna RFMOs in accordance with their obligations under international law.

While noting that tuna RFMOs have different characteristics, pressures on their individual stocks, and management arrangements, it was agreed that enhanced cooperation among tuna RFMOs on a broad range of issues can increase their effectiveness and efficiency and provide improved management of all tuna stocks.

I. Key areas and challenges

Recognizing that priorities may vary from tuna RFMO to tuna RFMO, the following are identified as key areas and challenges to be urgently addressed through effective cooperation and coordination among the five tuna RFMOs to improve their performance:

1. Improvement, sharing and dissemination of data and stock assessments and all other relevant information in an accurate and timely manner including development of research methodologies
2. Development, where appropriate, and application of equitable and transparent criteria and procedures for allocation of fishing opportunities or level of fishing effort, including provisions to allow for new entrants
3. Controls, including capacity reduction as appropriate, to ensure that actual total catch, fishing effort level and capacity are commensurate with available fishing opportunities in order to ensure resource sustainability of tuna stocks while allowing legitimate fishery development of developing coastal states, particularly small island developing states and territories
4. Ensuring that management measures are based on the best scientific advice available and consistent with the precautionary approach, particularly, with respect to establishment of effective stock rebuilding measures and other measures to maintain stocks at sustainable levels
5. Ensuring compliance through establishment of integrated MCS (monitoring, control and surveillance) measures that could include VMS, observers, boarding and inspection schemes, port state controls, market state measures, stronger controls on transshipment, and monitoring of bluefin tuna farming, and the harmonization of those measures across the five tuna RFMOs where appropriate to avoid duplication and increase cost efficiency
6. Application of penalties and sanctions of adequate severity to deter IUU fishing by both non-members and members

7. Development and implementation of stronger measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing including, mechanisms to identify and quantify IUU activities based on trade and other relevant information, a system to exchange information on IUU fishing among RFMOs and among flag states, port states and market states and coastal states, consolidation of the positive and negative lists as described in section II below, effective control over nationals in accordance with their duties under international law, identification of beneficial ownership and demonstration of “genuine link” and dissemination of relevant information to the public
 8. Establishment and implementation of a system to monitor catches from catching vessels to markets
 9. Reviewing the performance of tuna RFMOs in accordance with ANNEX I
 10. Implementation of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management including improved data collection on incidental by-catch and non-target species and establishment of measures to minimize the adverse effect of fishing for highly migratory fish species on ecologically related species, particularly sea turtles, seabirds and sharks, taking into account the characteristics of each ecosystem and technologies used to minimize adverse effect
 11. Development of data collection, stock assessment and appropriate management of shark fisheries under the competence of tuna RFMOs
 12. Research and development of techniques to reduce incidental take of juvenile tunas during tuna fisheries, in particular FAD operations
 13. Provision of adequate capacity building assistance, including human resource development, for developing coastal states, particularly small island developing states and territories, towards responsible fishery development, including participation in RFMO and scientific meetings, fisheries data collection and stock assessment and implementation of MCS measures
 14. Enhancement of cooperation among scientists, relevant experts and with other relevant fisheries organizations possibly through organization of symposia or working groups on appropriate topics of common interest. Coordination of timing of annual meetings and scientific meetings with a view to avoiding their overlap as well as allowing an adequate interval between scientific and annual meetings and between proposal submission and annual meetings
- II. Technical work to cooperate across RFMOs will commence by addressing the following challenges.
1. Harmonization and improvement of the trade tracking programs and, as appropriate, development of catch documentation including tagging systems as required
 2. Creation of a harmonized list of tuna fishing vessels that is as comprehensive as possible (positive list) including use of a permanent unique identifier for each vessel such as an IMO number. The positive list should include support vessels. Creation of a global list of IUU vessels.
 3. Harmonization of transshipment control measures
 4. Standardization of presentation form of stock assessment results

III. Follow-up actions

1. Report to 2007 FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

Participants request Japan to report the results of this Meeting to the 2007 COFI.

2. Implementation at each RFMO in 2007

Members shall commence implementing the measures foreseen in this Course of Actions at the 2007 annual meeting of each tuna RFMO as a matter of priority, consistent with the respective convention.

3. Establishment of a follow-up mechanism (ANNEX II)

(1) Policy level

An ad-hoc tuna RFMO Chairs' meeting should be held in January or February 2008 in the United States to discuss follow-up actions by each tuna RFMO. The meeting should be held with the participation of the appropriate representation from the tuna RFMOs secretariats, as well as representation from the FAO.

(2) Technical level

A technical working group (WG) consisting of appropriate experts from tuna RFMOs is established to consider technical issue 1 in section II of this Course of Actions. The first WG meeting will be held in July 2007 in the United States in conjunction with the ICCAT intersessional meetings and the tuna RFMOs will consider the results of such work during the 2008 annual meetings. The 5 tuna RFMO secretariats will jointly consider the technical issues 2 and 3 in section II on the occasion of the meeting of FAO COFI in 2007. Technical issue 4 will be considered by the scientific chairs of the 5 tuna RFMOs. The results on the 4 technical issues should be reported to the next joint RFMO meeting.

4. Next joint RFMO meeting

The next joint RFMO meeting is expected to be held in January/February 2009 in the European Community. It is desirable to hold the following joint meetings every two years but such frequency of meetings should be subject to a decision by the 2nd joint RFMO meeting.

Attachment on RFMO Performance Review

The five tuna RFMOs should have reviews of their performance conducted in accordance with a common methodology and a common set of criteria. The goal of the performance reviews shall be to assist the RFMOs, through these evaluations, in improving their effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling their mandates.

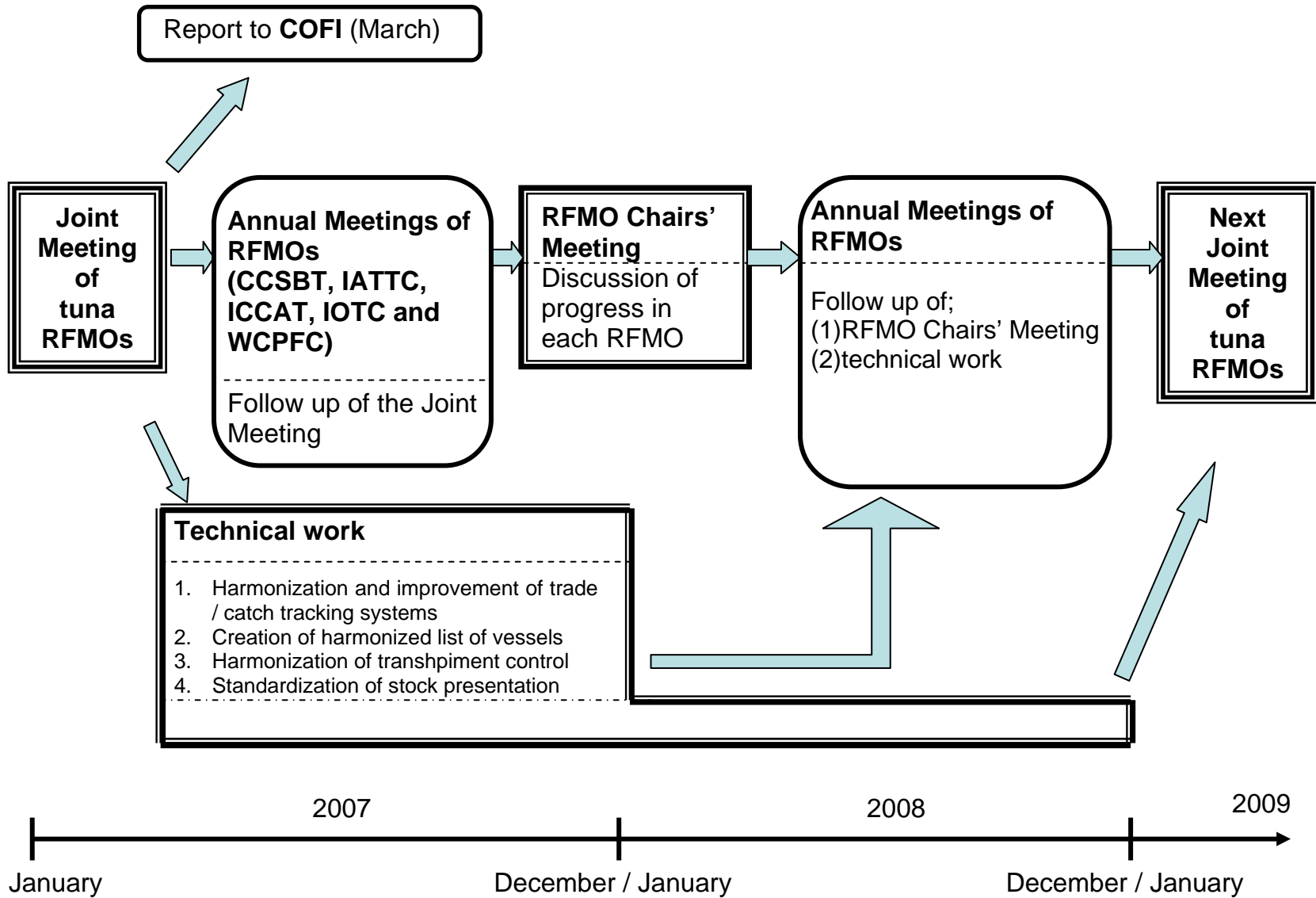
As decided by each tuna RFMO, the reviews should be conducted by a team of individuals drawn from the RFMO secretariat, members of that RFMO and outside experts, with a view to ensuring objectivity and credibility. .

The results of the performance reviews should be presented in the first instance to the tuna RFMO in question for consideration and possible action. The results of the reviews should also be made public on the respective RFMO website, and may be considered as well at future meetings of the five tuna RFMOs, COFI, and other relevant bodies.

The first performance reviews should commence as soon as practicable, following the development of a performance review framework through electronic means which is subject to the approval of the tuna RFMOs. The performance standards (criteria) contained in the framework should be based on the common elements of the tuna RFMO charters, best practices of each tuna RFMO and relevant provisions of applicable international instruments.

Each tuna RFMO should decide on the precise timing of its first performance review and on follow-up performance reviews, with a view to having performance reviews undertaken every 3-5 years.

ANNEX II: Future Work Plan



**REPORT OF THE JOINT TUNA RFMO WORKING GROUP ON TRADE
AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES**
(Raleigh, North Carolina, USA - July 22 to 23, 2007)

1. Opening of the Meeting

Dr. Bill Hogarth (USA), Chair of ICCAT, welcomed everyone to Raleigh, North Carolina, and opened the meeting.

The List of Participants is attached as **Appendix 1**.

2. Election of Chair

The Chair of the Joint Tuna RFMO Summit, Mr. Masanori Miyahara (Japan), was elected Chair of the technical Working Group.

3. Appointment of Rapporteur

Ms. Kelly Denit (USA) was appointed Rapporteur.

4. Adoption of the agenda and meeting arrangements

The Agenda was adopted and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

5. Review of current trade and/or catch documentation schemes currently in place in RFMOs

The Secretariats for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), each presented an overview of the trade and/or catch documentation schemes that their RFMO has in place. The papers that were presented are attached as **Appendices 3, 4 and 5**. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) was not able to attend this meeting therefore, the Chair of the meeting provided an overview of IOTC statistical document programs (SDPs). Currently the SDP for bigeye is implemented in ICCAT, IATTC, and IOTC whereas that for swordfish is implemented only in ICCAT.

The Parties discussed the challenges and benefits of the current programs. It was noted that traceability from catch to market was a key area for improvement. Concern was expressed regarding the SDPs and the lack of coverage for domestically landed product. Parties acknowledged that the objectives of the SDPs when they were designed were different from how the programs are being used now. It was brought to the attention of the Working Group that ICCAT has already launched a process for the review of the three SDPs under its purview.

Many Parties expressed concern about the slow pace at which improvements to SDPs in RFMOs are being pursued. Parties noted the moves by ICCAT and CCSBT toward catch documentation schemes (CDS) for bluefin tuna. FFA noted that it had resisted the introduction of a statistical document program into the WCPFC but was supportive of the implementation of a catch documentation scheme.

Parties also expressed concern regarding the current verification processes. It was noted that it was, in the current programs, very difficult to identify the actual level of catches and the respective catch areas and to have real-time data exchange between Parties regarding the verification of certain shipments. Dealing with fraudulent documents and improving efficiency in the systems were also noted as key concerns. Gaps in the coverage of the current SDPs were noted, particularly the lack of coverage of swordfish by all RFMOs where it is fished, the lack of any program in the WCPFC area and the lack of coverage of fresh bigeye tuna and purse seine bigeye catch.

6. Proposals for harmonization and improvement of current programs

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented a document based on reports from two of its previous meetings on the harmonization of catch and trade documentation schemes (see attached **Appendix 6**). The FAO representative noted the shift of primary interest in SDPs towards traceability of fish and fishery products and emphasized the importance of holistic network approaches in its implementation.

Parties expressed general agreement that the SDPs had major shortcomings and that movement to catch documentation schemes that covered product from catch to market was needed. Suggestions included movement to a CDS for all species covered by the various RFMOs, particularly bluefin tuna. Increased efficiency in communication for verifying documentation and resolving disputes via electronic means was also discussed as a way to move the RFMOs forward. The report of ICCAT's 2nd meeting of the working group to improve statistical document programs was also discussed. The United States presented an information document regarding the outcomes from this ICCAT meeting that they deemed relevant to the discussion of this working group (see attached **Appendix 7**).

Centralized data exchange was noted as an important element in improving current programs, though concern was expressed regarding the increased financial and human resource requirements for such programs. Centralizing data exchange was also acknowledged as a way to harmonize the programs across the tuna RFMOs and electronic systems were noted as potentially being more efficient. The Parties also stated the need to connect trade and/or catch tracking programs with other monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures, including unique vessel identifiers.

7. Possible recommendations to RFMOs

Japan presented its proposal for a possible harmonized statistical document for bigeye covering all the Oceans. There was a general discussion on the merits and demerits of the proposal. Based on these discussions, modifications were made to Japan's proposal and the revised document is attached for consideration by RFMOs (see attached **Appendix 8**).

Canada, the European Community and the United States presented a proposal on recommendations to refer to the RFMOs, including objectives for trade tracking programs and ideas for best practices. The working group modified the document and the revised version is attached for consideration by RFMOs (see attached **Appendix 9**).

El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, and Panama presented a proposal on how to track purse seine catches from vessel to market. The document was revised based on the discussion and is attached for consideration by RFMOs (see attached **Appendix 10**).

8. Future work, including possible development of catch documentation including tagging systems

Parties agreed that there was a need to move toward a CDS in tuna RFMOs, particularly for bluefin tuna. However, Parties expressed different views regarding which other species need to be covered by a CDS and how quickly the transition should occur. Some Parties stated that all species should move to a CDS as quickly as possible. Others noted that CDS would be an ultimate goal, but in the meantime, improvements and harmonization of the current SDPs should be pursued. There was some concern expressed regarding the resource implications for CDSs for developing states, though it was stated that capacity building assistance could help. Parties also briefly discussed using the AIDCP program as a model for how to link catch to trade.

Some Parties who use tagging programs described those programs for the working group. It was noted that tagging, especially of bluefin, can be an important component of any CDS, where effective and feasible. Parties did state that tagging may not be appropriate for all species, but this should be further analyzed.

Australia presented a proposal they have submitted to the CCSBT for a CDS and tagging program for bluefin (see attached **Appendix 11**). The proposal has three main components: 1) a catch documentation scheme, 2) tagging requirement and 3) general requirements including enforcement aspects and movement to an electronic system.

9. Other matters

No other matters were discussed.

10. Adoption of the report

The report of the meeting was adopted by consensus.

11. Adjournment

The Chair thanked the Parties for their hard work over the past two days. In addition, he thanked the interpreters and the ICCAT Secretariat for their help throughout the meeting.

The Parties thanked the Chair for his efforts during the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRALIA**Williams, Rob**

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, 1601 Massachusettes Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036-2209 United States

Tel: +1202 797 3319, Fax: +1202 797 30 37, E-Mail: rob.williams@dfat.gov.au

CANADA**Lapointe, Sylvie**

Director Highly Migratory and Anadromous Species and Aquaculture Management, International Directorate, Fisheries, Department of Fisheries & Oceans, 200 Kent Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Tel: + 1 613 993 68 53, Fax: + 1 613 993 59 95, E-Mail: Lapointesy@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

McMaster, Andrew

200 Kent St. Ottawa, Ontario, KIA OE6

Tel: +1 613 993 1897, Fax: +1 613 993 5995, E-Mail: mcmastera@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Rashotte, Barry

Associate Director General Resources Management, Fisheries Management, Department of Fisheries & Oceans, 200 Kent, Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Tel: +1 613 990 0087, Fax: +1 613 954 1407, E-Mail: rashottb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

EL SALVADOR**Salaverría, Sonia**

CENDEPESCA, Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, 1ª Ave. Norte y Ave. Manuel Gallardo, Santa Tecla

Tel: +503 2228 0034, Fax: +503 2228 0074, E-Mail: ssalaverria@mag.gob.sv

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**Vergine, Jean Pierre**

Administrateur principal, Commission européenne, DG Pêche J-99 3/51, Rue Joseph II, 99, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

Tel: +322 295 1039, Fax: +322 295 9752, E-Mail: jean-pierre.vergine@ec.europa.eu

Wieland, Friedrich

Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Fisheries, Common Organization of Markets and Trade J-99 3/7, Rue Joseph II, 99, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

Tel: +322 296 3205, Fax: +322 295 9752, E-Mail: friedrich.wieland@ec.europa.eu

Blasco Molina, Miguel Angel

Jefe de Servicio, Secretaría General de Pesca Marítima, Subdirección General de Relaciones Pesqueras Internacionales, c/José Ortega y Gasset, 57, 28006, Madrid, Spain

Tel: +34 91 347 61 78, Fax: +34 91 347 6042, E-Mail: mblascom@mapya.es

Dion, Michel

ORTHONGEL, 7 rue des Sardiniers, 10 - B.P. 127, 29181, Concarneau Cedex, France

Tel: +33 2 98 97 19 57, Fax: +33 2 98 50 80 32, E-Mail: orthongel@wanadoo.fr

O'Shea, Conor

Regional Sea Fishery Control Manager, Seafood Control Division, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Leeson Lane, 2, Dublin, Ireland

Tel: +353 87 821 1729, Fax: +353 51 383 045, E-Mail: conor.o'shea@sfpia.ie

Roubin, Jean-Christophe

Direction de pêches maritimes et de l'agriculture, 3 Place de Fonteroy 75007, Paris, France

Tel: +01 49 55 82 95, Fax: +01 49 55 80 37, E-Mail: jean-christophe.roubin@gov.fr

France (ST. PIERRE & MIQUELON)**Leguerrier Saubona Suraud, Delphine**

Chargée de Mission "Affaires internationales", Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche, Direction des Pêches Maritimes et de l'Aquaculture, 3, Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France

Tel: +33 1 4955 8236, Fax: +33 1 4955 8200, E-Mail: delphine.leguerrier@agriculture.gouv.fr

GUATEMALA**Alsina, Hugo**UNIPESCA, Ed. La Ceiba, 3^{er} Nivel, Km. 22, Ruta al Pacífico, Barcena, Villa Nueva

Tel: +502 6640 9320, Fax: +502 6640 9321, E-Mail: hugo.alsina@maga.gob.gt

JAPAN**Miyahara, Masanori**

Director, Fisheries Coordination Division, Resources Management Department, Fisheries Agency of Japan, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-Ku, 100-8907, Tokyo

Tel: +81 3 3501 3847, Fax: +81 3 3501 1019, E-Mail: masanori_miyahara1@nm.maff.go.jp

Shikada, Yoshitsugu

Deputy Director, International Affairs Division, Resources Management Department, Fisheries Agency, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, 100-8907, Tokyo

Tel: +81 3 3591 1086, Fax: +81 3 3502 0571, E-Mail: yoshitsugu_shikada@nm.maff.go.jp

Tanaka, Kengo

Deputy Director, Far Seas Fisheries Division, Fisheries Agency, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-Ku 100-8907 Tokyo

Tel: +81 3 3502 8204, Fax: +81 3 3595 7332, E-Mail: kengo_tanaka@nm.maff.go.jp

MOROCCO**El Ktiri, Taoufik**

Chef de service à la Direction des Pêches Maritimes et de l'Aquaculture, Ministère de l'Agriculture, du Développement Rural et de la Pêche, Direction des Pêches Maritimes et de l'Aquaculture, Nouveau Quartier Administratif, Haut Agdal, Rabat

Tel: +212 37 68 81 15, Fax: +212 37 68 8089, E-Mail: elktiri@mpm.gov.ma

MEXICO**Aguilar, Mario**

Representante Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca en Washington D.C., 1666 K St., Washington DC, United States

Tel: +1 202 2938 138, Fax: +1 202 2418 138, E-Mail: mariogaguilars@aol.com

NAMIBIA**Ithindi, Andreas P.**

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Private Bag 13355, 9000 Windhoek

Tel: +264 61 205 3020, Fax: +264 61 224 564, E-Mail: pithindi@mfmr.gov.na

NEW ZEALAND**Stuart, Stephen**

Ministry of Fisheries, National Manager Fisheries Compliance, P.O. Box 1020, Wellington

Tel: +64 4819 4747, Fax: +64 4 819 4644, E-Mail: steve.stuart@fish.govt.nz

PANAMA**Silva Torres, David Iván**

Autoridad de los Recursos Pesqueros Acuáticos de Panamá, Altos de diablo, Edificio de la Autoridad Maritima de Panamá, Ancon

Tel: +507 232 75 10, Fax: +507 232 7510, E-Mail: davidssilvat@yahoo.com

SENEGAL**Ndaw, Sidi**

Chef du Bureau des Statistiques a la Direction des Pêches, Ministère de l'Economie Maritime, Direction des Pêches Maritimes, Building Administrative, B.P. 289, Dakar

Tel: +221 823 0137, Fax: +221 821 4758, E-Mail: sidindaw@hotmail.com

UNITED STATES

Hogarth, William T.

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282
Tel: +1 301 713 2239, Fax: +1 301 713 1940, E-Mail: bill.hogarth@noaa.gov

Denit, Kelly

NOAA Fisheries Service, 1315 East West Hwy, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282
Tel: +1 301 713 2276, Fax: +1 301 713 2313, E-Mail: kelly.denit@noaa.gov

Karnella, Charles

1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Honolulu, Hawaii
Tel: +808 944 2200, E-Mail: charles.karnella@noaa.gov

Koehler, Holly

U.S. Department of State Office of Marine Conservation, Rm. 2758, Washington, DC 20520
Tel: +1 202 647 3073, Fax: +1 202 736 7350, E-Mail: koehlerhr@state.gov

Lynch, Kris

227 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
Tel: +202 224 8172, E-Mail: kris_lynch@commerce.senate.gov

Mcinnis, Rod

National Marine Fisheries Service, 4200 W. Ocean Blvd., Ste 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802
Tel: +562 980 4003, Fax: +562 980 4018, E-Mail: rod.mcinnis@noaa.gov

Park, Caroline

NOAA Office of the General Council, SSMC3-Room 15114, 1315 East-West Highway - Rm 15123, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282
Tel: +1 301 713 9675, Fax: +1 301 713 0658, E-Mail: caroline.park@noaa.gov

Rogers, Christopher

Chief, Trade and Marine Steward Ship Division, National Marine Fisheries Service/NOAA, Office of International Affairs, 1315 East-West Highway- Rm 12657, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282
Tel: +1 301 713 9090, Fax: +1 301 713 9106, E-Mail: christopher.rogers@noaa.gov

Stephan, Dianne

NMFS/NOAA, 1 Blackburn D.R., Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930
E-Mail: dianne.stephan@noaa.gov

Thomas, Randi Parks

US Tuna Foundation, 1101 17th Street, NW Suite 609, Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: +1 202 857 0610, Fax: +1 202 331 9686, E-Mail: RPThomas@tunafoundation.org

Thompson, Gloria

1315 East-West Highway - Room 14627, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Tel: +1 301 713 2239, Fax: +1 301 713 1940, E-Mail: gloria.thompson@noaa.gov

URUGUAY

Gilardoni, Rolando Daniel

Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos, Constituyente 1497, Montevideo
Tel: +5982 409 2969, Fax: +5982 401, E-Mail: dgilardoni@dinara.gub.uy

COOPERATING PARTIES/ENTITIES

CHINESE TAIPEI

Chou, Shih-Chin

Fisheries Agency, 2 Chao Chow St., Taipei
Tel: +886 2 3343 6267, Fax: +886 2 3343 62 68, E-Mail: shihcin@msl.f.a.gov.tw

Ho, Peter Shing Chor

President, Overseas Fisheries Development Council, 19 Lane 113, Roosevelt Road Sec. 4, 106, Taipei
Tel: +886 2 2738 2478, Fax: +886 2 2738 4329, E-Mail: pscho@ofdc.org.tw

Huang, Hsiang-Wen

Chief, Deep Sea Fisheries Division, Fisheries Agency, Council of Agriculture, 2 Chao-Chow St., 100, Taipei
Tel: +886 2334 36120, Fax: +886 2334 36268, E-Mail: julia@ms1.f.a.gov.tw

Sha, James Chih-I

Deputy Director General, Fisheries Agency, Council of Agriculture, 2 Chao-Chow St., 100 Taipei
Tel: +886 2 23511452, Fax: +886 2 23411953, E-Mail: james@ms1.f.a.gov.tw

Tsay, Tzu-Yaw

Director, Division of Deep Sea Fisheries, 2, Chao-Chow St., Taipei
Tel: +886 2 3343 6110, Fax: +886 2 3343 6268, E-Mail: Tzuyaw@ms1.f.a.gov.tw

TUNA RFMO SECRETARIATS

CCSBT

Neil, Hermes

P. O. Box 37, Deakin West, Act 2600, Australia

Tel: +01 49 55 82 95, Fax: +01 49 55 80 37, E-Mail: jean-christophe.roubin@agriculture.gov.fr

IATTC

Allen, Robin L.

Director, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, IATTC, Shores Drive 8604, 92037-1508, La Jolla, California, United States

Tel: +1 858 546 7100, Fax: +1 858 546 7133, E-Mail: rallen@iattc.org

ICCAT

Meski, Driss

Executive Secretary, C/ Corazón de María, 8 - 6th floor, 28002 Madrid, Spain

Tel: + 34 91 416 5600, Fax: +34 91 415 2612, E-Mail: info@iccat.int

Restrepo, Víctor

Assistant Executive Secretary, C/ Corazón de María, 8 - 6th floor, 28002 Madrid, Spain

Tel: + 34 91 416 5600, Fax: +34 91 415 2612, E-Mail: info@iccat.int

WCPFC

Richards, Andrew H.

Compliance Manager, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Kaselelieh Street, P.O. Box 2356, 96940 Pohnpei State, Kolonia, French Polynesia

Tel: +691 320 1992, Fax: +691 320 1108, E-Mail: andrewr@mail.fm

OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

FAO

Tsuji, Sachiko

Senior Fisheries Stastician, Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service, Fisheries and Aquaculture Departement, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Roma, Italy

Tel: +39 06 570 55318, Fax: +39 06 570 52476, E-Mail: sachiko.tsuji@fao.org

FFA

Malsol, Nanette

P. O. Box 5050, Korori, Palau 96940

Tel: +680 488 3125, Fax: +680 488 3555, E-Mail: tunapal@palaunet.com

Park, Timothy

P. O. Box 629, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Tel: +677 21124, E-Mail: tim.park@ffa.int

Riepen, Mike

Consultant, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, P.O. Box 2130, Raumati Beach 6150, New Zealand
Tel: +64 4 292 8500, E-Mail: mikeriepen@xtra.co.nz

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

WWF

Graham, Alistair

Advisor, WWF International, 37 Rocky Bay Road, Cygnet 7112, Tasmania, Australia
Tel: +61 439 568 376, E-Mail: alistairgraham1@bigpond.com

Translators

Campoy, Rebecca

De Andrés, Marisa

Navarret, Christel

Auxiliary staff

Moreno, Juan Ángel

Interpreters

Baena Jiménez, Eva

Faillace, Linda

Jeelof-Wuhrmann, Jolyn

Liberas, Christine

Meunier, Isabelle

Sánchez del Villar, Lucia

Appendix 2

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Chair
3. Appointment of Rapporteur
4. Adoption of the Agenda and meeting arrangements
5. Review of current trade and/or catch documentation schemes currently in place in RFMOs
6. Proposals for harmonization and improvement of current programs
7. Possible recommendations to RFMOs
8. Future work, including possible development of catch documentation including tagging system
9. Other matters
10. Adoption of the Report
11. Adjournment