



FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

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DECLARATION BY THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR AT THE 4TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC), 3-7 DECEMBER 2007, GUAM

WCPFC4-2007/OP07

4 December 2007

First of all I would like to thank the member governments to this Convention for allowing us a few minutes in this meeting to explain our request to become Cooperating Non Party to the WCPFC.

Ecuador is a coastal country with a long history of fishing in the Eastern and Central Pacific Ocean, as tens of thousands of people and their families have depended on the harvest of marine resources in our territorial waters, Economic Exclusive Zone and adjacent areas, to support life in coastal communities and small cities along our coastline.

The greatest development in the last 25 years has occurred in the tuna fishery, expanding to a large area of the Eastern and Central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the highly migratory movement of the tuna species used for human consumption and, therefore, this has become an important part of the production and marketing chain wherein thousands of people of limited economic resources work daily as a vital element for social development.

Having grown constantly and consistently has led us to become members of important RFMOs, such as the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) where, in a coordinated manner and on the basis of scientific information as well as social and economic elements, management actions and measures have been implemented to preserve the fisheries resources.

There and in other similar fora, we have always been consistent in working in an integrated and respectful manner with the governments of other countries to ensure that our fisheries have an appropriate management framework that will result in activities with a high level of responsibility regarding the sustainable use of marine resources and their ecosystems, always aware of the fact that this human activity generates jobs, injects dynamism into local and regional economies and provides nutrition to consumers.

Within this context, some months ago the Government of Ecuador requested that the Parties to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission grant us the status on Cooperating Non Party. Our country was not a party to the MHLC negotiations, but was able to get an invitation as an Observer to the last session held in Honolulu in September 2000. At that meeting, the Delegation of Ecuador read a Declaration supporting signature of the Convention, which we think in some way helped make its adoption possible.

Given the particular proximity of IATTC and WCPFC, within the framework established by UNCLOS, we believe that in order to ensure conservation and promote the optimum utilization of shared resources, it is our duty to cooperate with WCPFC, an action that is also linked to our historical rights in the high seas of the Central Pacific Ocean.

In compliance with CMM 2004-02, four months ago we documented to the WCPFC Secretariat that a large portion of the tuna fleet has been operating regularly in Central Pacific waters for many years, which means there would be no increase in fishing effort. This fleet has been operating legally in the high seas under the provisions of Articles 64, 87, 116 and 118 of UNCLOS, the international regulatory framework endorsing our historical presence in this part of the ocean.

The Government of Ecuador has absolute control over the vessels flying its flag in the high seas, applying MCS measures that go beyond WCPFC requirements, like 100% coverage of observers on board, even in international waters outside IATTC jurisdiction. We are also in the process of applying mandatory use of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for the entire fishing fleet.

In view of the foregoing and having complied with the requirements of this organization, as Under Secretary of Fisheries Resources and Head of this Delegation, I respectfully ask the Delegates of the High Contracting Parties to the WCPFC, on behalf of the Government of Ecuador, that our country be granted the status on Cooperating Non Party, under the provisions of Article 32.4 of the WCPFC Convention and Article 64 of UNCLOS, and we hereby commit to comply with all management and conservation measures adopted and to be adopted by this regional organization.

The people of Ecuador, in particular the fishermen, vessel owners and the national government will be able to recognize this act of good will by the Parties to the WCPFC in approving our entry into this important regional tuna management and conservation organization.

Guam, December 4th, 2007

Guillermo Morán Velásquez

Under Secretary of Fisheries Resources