



## **FOURTH REGULAR SESSION**

3-7 December 2007

Tumon, Guam, USA

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### **EL SALVADOR DECLARATION FOR COOPERATING NON-MEMBER (CNM) STATUS OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION, GUAM, DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2007**

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**WCPFC4-2007/OP09**

**4 December 2007**

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Commission and all those present for the opportunity you have given us to further explain our arguments in order to become a part of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission as Cooperating Non Members (CNM).

Aware of the Commission members' concern about the state of the tuna stocks and indicating that El Salvador is fully respectful and observant/compliant with all international dispositions which promote responsible fishing, we wish to emphasize the following:

On August 31<sup>st</sup> 2007, within the 90 day deadline, in full compliance with WPCFC CMM-2004-02, El Salvador sent our request to become a CNM of this Commission attaching all information according to the requirements expressed within, including all historical catches of our vessels in the Western and Central Pacific area.

El Salvador is a small developing coastal country that borders the Pacific Ocean. The tuna industry has become one of the country's principal economic revenues and represents the livelihood of a large number of families who live directly and indirectly from it.

Our tuna purse seine fleet consists of only four vessels whose main tuna catches are made within the Eastern Pacific Ocean. These vessels are fully controlled by two effective monitoring tools: VMS (hourly messages are received) and 100% observer coverage by the IATTC program, who remains on board even when the vessel operates outside of IATTC Convention Area. In this sense, we are already implementing many of the tools that WCPFC is considering to approve. In addition, we comply with regulations such as: Fishing Capacity Limits, prohibition of at sea transshipments, and also strong bycatch conservation measures regarding shark finning, dolphin protection, and sea turtles, amongst other species. In addition to implementing a fisheries closure, a management measure we would like to promote in the area also.

As you can see all our vessels are fully controlled and compliant, and our record of compliance in the IATTC and AIDCP is excellent. In the Western Pacific, our fisheries have been conducted pursuant to licensing of coastal states of the region.

As tuna stocks have no boundaries, as members of the IATTC we believe that it is very important that both the IATTC and WCPFC cooperate to effectively manage this fishery. Only joint management can help make it sustainable for all, as we all fish within the same Pacific Ocean for the same stocks.

El Salvador's interest in applying for CNM status is based on a historic presence of our vessels in the WCPF, which our vessels have done since 2001, and on our continued interest in occasionally fishing in this area. It is a major desire and commitment of my country that this be done in full compliance and observance of the WCPFC dispositions and Art. 118 of UNCLOS which promotes cooperation among states for the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

El Salvador also would like to express the desire, and if invited, consider applying for full membership in the WCPFC.

Additionally we would like the Commissions members to take into consideration Art. 87 (e) and Art. 116 of UNCLOS regarding fishing rights, and Art. 5 of FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing which states the right of developing countries to participate in and have access to high sea fisheries.

Finally, we emphasize that El Salvador is a small coastal state with interest and dependency of our communities on the tuna fishery and therefore, very respectful of the management dispositions implemented in order to promote sustainable fisheries. It is our complete commitment to not only give full compliance to the measures emanating from the WCPFC but also actively participate in the work of this Commission. We are at the disposal of any of the members to provide further information. We hope that you can accept our request and that we can work together in a cooperative manner in the future.

Thank you very much.