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**Opening statement**

**by**

**Akira Nakamae,**

**Deputy Director-General, Fisheries Agency**

**Government of Japan**

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Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to be given this opportunity to address to you, on behalf of the Government of Japan.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the efforts of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia which hosted the Second Regular Session of the WCPFC. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Andrew Wright, Executive Director, who has engaged in the preparation of this meeting as the sole official of the Secretariat, the Government of Australia, which has provided a strong support, and Mr. Glenn Hurry of his efforts as the Chair of the Commission.

Chairman, it is my great pleasure that Japan became a member of this Commission and can actively contribute to the work of the Commission as a Member to achieve sustainable utilization of highly migratory fish stocks.

Japan is a traditional distant-water fishing country but also a traditional coastal State in this region. Japan has a strong interest in the conservation and sustainable utilization of highly migratory fish stocks. We are fully ready to make our maximum efforts and contribution, in collaboration with other members toward this goal. Japan is also ready to take responsible actions for the resource management as the largest tuna importing country.

In this September, Japan hosted several informal meetings regarding the WCPFC. At the informal consultation toward WCPFC2, we had candid and fruitful discussion. We also had an opportunity to meet with representatives from FFA members, and we decided to have regular consultation with a view to building up mutually beneficial relations between FFA and Japan. It is my strong hope that these positive relationship will further develop in the future.

The Scientific Committee of the WCPFC met in August and recommended that fishing mortality for bigeye and yellowfin tunas should be reduced. Japan is ready to work to respond to this scientific requirement. I hope that constructive discussion will take place toward the adoption of appropriate conservation and management measures, while fully taking into account the legitimate fishery development of coastal developing states, particularly small island developing states and territories.

Mr. Chairman, we should not forget the fact that since 1999, we have adopted a series of resolutions to control the fishing capacity with a view to prevent the preemptive moves that might increase the fishing operation before the WCPFC starts. However, one Commission member has drastically increased the number of its purse-seine and longline fishing vessels in contradiction to the resolutions on which that member agreed. I call on the Member to take responsible corrective measures without delay so that the all Commission members can stand at a fair starting line regarding the management of the resources which we are going to discuss.

I heard that there was a slight sign of a polarization during the last week's TCC meeting. I stress that we must avoid such an undesirable situation. We must exhaust our effort to reach consensus, otherwise we cannot reach any result.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, may I wish that this coming week will become a meaningful period for the conservation and management of tuna resources in this region.

Thank you for Mr. Chairman.