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**DRAFT RESOLUTION TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF TUNA FISHING  
ON SEA TURTLES**

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**WCPFC/Comm.2/DP.13  
21<sup>st</sup> November 2005**

**Sea Turtle Conservation and Management**

Proposal submitted by the United States

*Members and Cooperating Non-Members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC):*

*Recognizing* the ecological and cultural significance of all species of sea turtles in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO);

*Considering* the adverse effects of tuna fishing on regional populations of sea turtles in the WCPO through incidental capture, injury, and mortality;

*Recalling* that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) acknowledges fishing can have serious impacts on certain sea turtle populations and the need for urgent attention to reduce fishery-related capture, injury, and mortality of sea turtles;

*Noting* the need to collect scientific data regarding all sources of mortality for sea turtle populations, including, but not limited to, fishing operations within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries (WCPF) Convention Area, in order to enhance the proper conservation of sea turtles;

*Recognizing* that the FAO adopted Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations at its Twenty-sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, held in March 2005, and recommended their implementation by regional fisheries bodies and management organizations;

*Agreeing* that measures should be immediately undertaken to reduce the incidental capture, injury, and mortality of sea turtles in tuna fisheries in the WCPF Convention Area;

Members and Cooperating Non-Members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, in accordance with Article 5 of the WCPF Convention:

*Resolve as follows:*

1. Directs the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Science and Technical and Compliance Committees, to develop protocols for the appropriate handling of sea turtles, including requiring fishermen to bring on board and resuscitate, if practicable, turtles that are comatose or inactive. These

protocols shall be developed and presented to the WCPF Commission for its consideration and adoption as soon as possible, but not later than its third annual meeting scheduled for 2006.

2. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to require the prompt release of all incidentally caught (hooked or entangled) sea turtles.

3. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to educate fishermen through awareness-raising activities, including outreach, distributing information materials, and organizing training workshops and/or seminars on, *inter alia*, reducing the bycatch of turtles where practicable, safe handling techniques of incidentally caught sea turtles, and gear modification and innovations to reduce sea turtle interaction rates.

4. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to require the deployment and use of necessary equipment for appropriate release of incidentally caught sea turtles during the course of fishing by purse seine and longline vessels operating within the Convention area.

5. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to comply with Annex V of MARPOL 73/78 and prohibit the disposing of salt bags or any plastics at sea.

6. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to require that purse seine vessels flying their flags:

i) Avoid encirclement of sea turtles to the extent practical and if encircled or entangled, take all practicable measures to safely release sea turtles.

ii) Take all reasonable efforts whenever a sea turtle is sighted in the net to rescue the turtle before it becomes entangled in the net, including if necessary, the deployment of a speedboat.

iii) Stop net roll, if a turtle is entangled in the net, as soon as the turtle comes out of the water and, to the extent practicable, assist the recovery of the turtle before returning it to the water.

iv) Take necessary measures to monitor fish aggregating devices (FADs) that pose a threat to sea turtles and release any that become entangled and consider FAD designs and use that reduce the likelihood of sea turtle entanglement.

7. Urges Members and Cooperating Non-Members to require that longline vessels flying their flags:

i) Use large (18/0 or larger) circle hooks with no greater than 10 degrees offset in longline gears set at depths of less than 120 meters from the surface.

ii) Do not to use squid as bait with longline gears set at depths of less than 120 meters from the surface.

iii) Carry on board and employ the necessary equipment (e.g. de-hookers, line cutters, and scoop nets) for the prompt release of incidentally caught sea turtles.

8. Requests that all Members and Cooperating Non-Members collect and provide the Scientific Committee with all available information on interactions with sea turtles by vessels flying their flags targeting the species covered by the WCPF Convention, including information on successful mitigation measures and incidental catches and other impacts on sea turtles in the WCPF Convention Area, such as the deterioration of nesting and foraging habitats. It is further requested that priority be placed on

obtaining information and conducting research on the incidental capture of sea turtles in deep set longline fisheries and in artisanal and coastal longline fisheries.

9. Direct the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Scientific Committee, to centralize bycatch and observer data to obtain better estimates of total catch and mortalities of sea turtles within the Convention Area.

10. Urges cooperation with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission in order to share data on sea turtle bycatch and to develop and apply compatible bycatch reduction measures given the migration patterns of many species of sea turtles.

11. Decides that resources available in the Special Requirements Fund may be used to assist developing State Members and territories in implementing the FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations.

12. Encourages Members and Cooperating Non-Members to contribute to the Special Requirements Fund to support eligible small-island developing States, territories, and possessions in implementing this resolution, or to do so through bi-lateral arrangements.

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