



COMMISSION
Twentieth Regular Session
4-8 December 2023
Rarotonga, Cook Islands (Hybrid)

An Option for Addressing Climate Change at TCC

WCPFC20-2023-DP08_rev2¹
02 December 2023

Submitted by the United States and Chinese Taipei

*** Explanatory Note for Rev2***
WCPFC Colleagues,

Attached, please find DP-08 Rev 2 which in addition to being co-submitted by the United States and Chinese Taipei, also contains the following changes from DP-08 Rev 1:

1) Chinese Taipei has committed to making a \$20,000 voluntary contribution in support of the proposed consultancy.

2) The proposal now seeks to identify co-leads of the TCC agenda item on Climate Change rather than the formation of a TCC small working group.

¹ Original DP08 was posted for WCPFC20 on 3 November 2023

An Option for Addressing Climate Change at TCC

The 19th meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC19) debated the role of TCC in supporting the Commission's work to address climate change. TCC19 asked WCPFC20 for guidance on the issue, noting it would be beneficial for TCC to receive direction from the Commission on incorporating climate change discussions into the work of TCC ([TCC19 Outcomes](#), paragraphs 26-28).

One of TCC's three functions is to *provide the Commission with information, technical advice and recommendations relating to the implementation of, and compliance with, conservation and management measures* [Convention Article 14.1(a)]. In addition, WCPFC Resolution 2019-01 resolves that the Commission consider the uncertainties associated with climate change as well as the effects of a changing climate on conservation and management measures.

Many provisions of WCPFC CMMs are implemented based on 1) certain target or bycatch species, 2) specific geographic areas, or 3) different gear types. The vulnerability of each of these three elements of fisheries conservation and management has not been explored or discussed by TCC or the Commission. Further, such vulnerability to climate change is highly variable among species, areas, and fisheries under the competence of the Commission, and advice on how best to prioritize efforts and resources would be valuable for members to consider.

Consequently, information and technical advice on the climate vulnerabilities among WCPFC's conservation and management measures falls well-within the purview of TCC and should be addressed by the subsidiary body beginning in 2024. Using the Convention and Resolution 2019-01 as guides, TCC should consider providing the Commission with information and advice as to whether climate change is already having, or likely to have, an effect on implementation of, or compliance with, conservation and management measures (CMMs). Specifically, **a TCC assessment of the climate vulnerability of WCPFC CMMs would help the Commission and other subsidiary bodies prioritize and focus work flows and resources towards the most emergent and climate vulnerable elements of fisheries management within the Commission.**

An assessment of CMM climate vulnerability by TCC would require collection and review of active CMMs to identify which provisions are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The WCPFC Secretariat and SPC are best positioned to collect information and provide a summary review for TCC consideration and assessment. Given the urgency of climate change within the Commission, and the need for TCC to advance its work on this issue, the United States has provided a \$55,000 voluntary contribution that could be used to support a Secretariat consultancy to undertake a review of active CMMs and produce a qualitative assessment that would inform TCC's discussion of climate effects - pending agreement from other members. If the review were endorsed by the Commission, Chinese Taipei would make an additional voluntary contribution of \$20,000 to support the work.

Given the urgency of the issue, it may also be helpful for TCC20 to establish Climate co-leads to ensuring progress on the work in 2024. Undoubtedly, this task is large and members may want to consider 2024 as a starting point in a recurring effort to assess climate vulnerability of CMMs and other obligations under the Convention - with potential recommendations and future work incorporated into the TCC workplan.

The following draft recommendations could be considered by members for deliberation at WCPFC20.

Draft WCPFC20 Recommendations

WCPFC20 requested the Secretariat, with the Scientific Services Provider, conduct a climate vulnerability assessment of active CMMs and present the findings to TCC20.

WCPFC20 recommended co-leads be identified to facilitate discussion of the Climate Change agenda item at TCC20. The co-leads will initially be one representative from a Small Island Developing State and one representative from the United States. These co-leads would facilitate discussion of the Consultancies findings on CMM climate vulnerability and to support the work of TCC on developing climate change recommendations to the Commission.

The co-leads on Climate Change will seek to ensure the TCC work plan addresses the risks of climate change to CMMs and other obligations.

The United States and Chinese Taipei welcome input and invite other members to join as co-authors of this paper.