



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

**APPEAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARVEST STRATEGY FOR YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNAS
FROM FRESH FROZEN SEAFOOD ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (FFSAPI) AND THE SARGEN
FISHPORT TUNA HANDLINE FISHING ASSOCIATION, INC. (SARGEN HANDLINE)**

WCPFC20-2023-OP15
2 December 2023

Submitted by the Philippines



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
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30 November 2023

MS. RHEA-MOSS CHRISTIAN

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SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF THE APPEAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARVEST STRATEGY FOR YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNAS FROM FRESH FROZEN SEAFOOD ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (FFSAPI) AND THE SARGEN FISHPORT TUNA HANDLINE FISHING ASSOCIATION, INC. (SARGEN HANDLINE)

Dear **Executive Director** :

Relative to the above subject, the Philippines respectfully requests for its posting as Observer Paper in the WCPFC20 meeting page.

The Philippines also expresses its strong support to facilitate the development and adoption of the Harvest Strategy for Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas considering that the sustainability of these species are very important to us.

Thank you and looking forward for the WCPFC20 discussions on the above.

Very truly yours,


ATTY. DEMOSTHENES R. ESCOTO

Director





FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Philippines

www.sargenhandlinefip.com

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090203521305>

November 21, 2023

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

PO Box 2356 Kaselehlie Street Pohnpei
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Thru: Ms. Rhea Moss-Christian
Executive Director

APPEAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARVEST CONTROL RULES AND HARVEST STRATEGY FOR YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNAS

Dear Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission:

In the spirit of conservation, our group would like to appeal again to the members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. A similar appeal was submitted for the Scientific Committee Meeting last August 15-24, 2023 in the Republic of Palau.

Our associations based in General Santos City, Philippines, **Fresh Frozen Seafood Association of the Philippines, Inc.** (FFSAPI) and the **Sargen Fishport Tuna Handline Fishing Association, Inc.** (SARGEN HANDLINE), together we have endeavored to embark on the implementation of a fisheries improvement project which we refer to as the **FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE FIP**. This comprehensive 5-year project seeks to make improvements both on the environmental aspect and social aspect of the yellowfin and bigeye tuna handline fisheries in the Philippine's Fisheries Management Areas 2 and 3, with the end in view of securing eco-label certification acceptable by the market thereby ensuring the Philippine tuna product's competitiveness in the world market.

The environmental FIP is now on its second semester of its first year of implementation involving a total of 111 enrolled tuna handline boats, 67 from commercial sector and 44 from the municipal sector ranging in size from 3 gross tons to 66 gross tons. The

social component of the FIP is now being started in order to ensure that fisher rights are protected and our fishers are happy.

While we want to keep the livelihood of the handline stakeholders and continuously provide support for the nations' food security, the **sustainability of our target fish stocks** which in this case **yellowfin** and **bigeye tunas**, is of *paramount importance* to us.

It is in this light that we are appealing to the members of the Commission on the upcoming Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Regular Session on December 4-8, 2023 in Cook Islands **to make best effort possible to expedite the process of the development of harvest control rules and harvest strategy for yellowfin and bigeye in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.**

During the latest WCPFC Science Committee Meeting in August, an update was presented by the Secretariat to the Pacific Community explaining that WCPFC12 agreed to a workplan for the adoption of harvest strategies for WCPO skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin and South Pacific albacore tuna. An important consideration when developing harvest strategies for these stocks was to account for mixed-fishery interactions. SC15 agreed to initially consider a multi-species framework for developing mixed-fishery harvest strategies. Under this framework, fisheries are managed through single stock MPs for skipjack, South Pacific albacore and bigeye. Considering differing views and reactions on the approach among member countries, the approach needs to be **agreed upon by the Commission in December.**

It is only with the establishment of harvest control rules and strategy can our handline fishery be ensured of its sustainability and finally pass eco-label certification's sustainability performance indicators. So again, may we respectfully appeal to the members of the Commission to support the earlier development and adoption whenever possible.

Let us help our fishers protect themselves and their livelihood while sustaining health fish stocks.

We look forward to the adoption of harvest control rules and harvest strategy in the WCPO.

Respectfully yours,


ENGR. EMMA F. GARAY
President, FFSAPI


MERCEDES ONG
President, SARGEN HANDLINE