TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

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DRAFT BIGEYE TUNA STATISTICAL DOCUMENT PROGRAM

Paper submitted by Japan Delegation

Summary:

Statistical document and catch document has different objectives. The former intends to obtain relevant information on IUU fishing through trade data; the latter tries to verify all the reported catches on near real time basis. As far as current situation of WCPFC concerned, there is no immediate need for the Commission to introduce the catch documentation scheme which requires comprehensive coverage over all fisheries, because no TAC and its allocation system were established. Statistical Document Program will pinpoint the area of concern, i.e., IUU fishing activities, with less transaction costs and burden for fishermen and government authority than catch documentation. In order to urgently address IUU fishing on bigeye, Statistical Document Program is the internationally established tool, which only WCPFC has yet to adopt.

1. Introduction

At the 2nd regular session of the Commission, which was held in December 2005, some members expressed concerns relating to the Japanese proposal on the Statistical Document Program for bigeye tuna because it requires the documentation against the products subject to international trade only, rather than all the catches including those for domestic markets. Some members think that catch documentation scheme which covers all the catches including those for domestic markets may be relevant. Because of different views expressed among the members in this respect, the Commission agreed to defer consideration of this proposal to the 3rd session in 2006.

Since Japan's basic position on this item remain unchanged, Japan is planning to re-submit its proposal on bigeye statistical document program at the 3rd session of the Commission for adoption. In order to obtain understanding among the members , Japan prepared this explanatory notes to illustrate why statistical document program is needed for WCPFC by comparing suitability and feasibility of a catch documentation scheme with those of statistical document program.

2. Current situation of other RFMOs

All tuna RFMOs other than WCPFC (ICCAT, IATTC, IOTC, and CCSBT) already developed and implemented the statistical documentation program on their target species. On the other hand, CCAMLR has its own catch documentation scheme on Patagonian toothfish. In order for the members to further consider this issue, the backgrounds, objectives and technicalities for these schemes introduced by these RFMOs should be fully examined.

As for Tuna and Tuna-like species, ICCAT has the longest period of experience in developing and implementing such statistical documentation. In 1993, ICCAT started the Statistical Document Program for frozen bluefin tuna. This Program obliges Parties of ICCAT to require their importers of bluefin tuna to submit the documents issued by the flag state of the vessel which validate necessary information on the products (e.g., flag state, name of the vessel, area of harvest, and quantity of harvest). It should be noted that statistical document itself is not in itself a trade restrictive measure but merely a requirement of information upon international trade.

The main objective of the Program was to collect information, through trade data, on the catch of bluefin tuna in particular by non-Parties of the ICCAT; catch data of the Parties are already collected and reported respectively to the Scientific Committee of ICCAT. Since ICCAT was unable to legally obligate non-members to submit its detailed catch data, and most of the bludfin catch was exported to foreign market, information obtained through international trade was effective and valuable tool for the Commission to obtain catch data of non-Parties. In fact, almost all the bluefin tuna products harvested by IUU fishing were destined to the Japanese sashimi market, information on IUU fishing was effectively extracted by Japan through the Program and shared by the Members.

Later, taking account of technical feasibility, ICCAT expanded the Program, to fresh bluefin tuna and other species such as fresh/frozen swordfish and frozen bigeye tuna. Based on information collected by the Program, ICCAT developed additional measures against IUU fishing activities such as trade restrictive measures and positive vessel listing scheme in conformity with international laws. Similar programs to ICCAT Statistical Document were also developed and implemented by the other tuna RFMOs: IOTC and IATTC for frozen bigeye; CCSBT for frozen and fresh southern bluefin tuna. These facts mean that statistical document sprogram is already internationally established tool and constituted as one of the basic prerequisite for tuna RFMOs to combat IUU fishing.

The Catch Documentation Scheme, developed and implemented by CCAMLR in 2000, has similar objective to collect information on the catch by non-Parties as well as Parties of CCAMLR, keeping transparency of catch amount reported among them. These features of the scheme are closely related to its resource management measure introduced by CCAMLR. CCAMLR sets TACs for toothfish in each region in the Convention area without quota allocation to each Party. Catch information is centralized to the Secretariat and closely monitored so that it can announce the timing of closure to Parties when total catch is expected to reach the limit of TACs.

In order to implement such measures effectively, workable verification system for catch report by the Parties is essential. The master of the vessel should complete catch document when it lands or transships its products; then, the flag state will provide the information of these document to the Secretariat. Landing, transshipment and import without catch document is prohibited by the Parties.

Because of the need to verify the information in a timely and comprehensive manner, it is easily assumed that catch documentation scheme put considerable burden to legitimate fishing activities by dully authorized fishermen of the Parties as well as to the authorities of the Parties that responsible for the management. As far as CCAMLAR concerned, it seemed to have reasonable ground to introduce comprehensive catch documentation scheme in order to verify the catch data reported on real-time basis. In terms of its technical feasibility, since type of fishing vessel for toothfish is almost uniform (i.e., large-scale longline) and total vessel numbers is substantially limited (about 200), CCAMLAR could overcome such technical difficulties in order to manage the resource.

3. Feasibility and suitability of documentation schemes for WCPFC

(1) Objectives
Main objective of the Japanese proposal is to combat IUU fishing, not necessarily to verify catch data. As was noted, IUU fishing activity is the common problem for all the tuna RFMOs including WCPFC. Various stakeholders are making every effort to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing on tuna and tuna-like species. Precise information on the vessels engaging in IUU fishing activities is critically necessary for a RFMO to consider and develop

measures to combat against IUU fishing.   As was stated, statistical document program is the tool for this purpose.

Taking advantage of their statistical document programs, all other tuna RFMOs have positive listing measures, by which they could prevent the products caught by IUU vessels from entering into Parties' markets by refusing acceptance of the statistical documents issued for the vessels that are not on the list of vessels authorized to fish in their Convention Areas (positive list).

The important objective of a catch documentation scheme is to verify and secure transparency of catch statistics by all the fisheries of all the flags.   It should be noted, however, that this is not critically required for WCPFC at this stage: WCPFC did not introduce TAC scheme without quota allocation which CCAMLR did.   Therefore, the Commission is unable to refer to the case of CCAMLR as a reasonable analogy in introducing catch documentation scheme for WCPFC.

(2) Technicalities

Technical and administrative feasibilities are another aspect to be well considered by the Commission.   The amounts of catches of tuna species (e.g., bigeye: 120,000 ton, yellowfin: 400,000 ton) are quite larger than that of toothfish (34,000 ton).   In addition, these tuna species are harvested by far larger number of vessels (well over 5,000) and wider variety of fishing vessels and gears (see Table below).   In administrative and technical senses, it is almost impossible for the Commission to oblige all the fishing vessels and gears, including those of small-scale fishers in developing nations, to obtain catch documentation.

In addition, catch documentation scheme puts considerable burden to legitimate fishing activities by dully authorized fishermen of the Parties.   Transaction cost for this scheme is considerably high not only for the fishermen but also for the government authorities that have to issue catch documentation upon request.   WCPFC does not have such background and urgent need as CCAMLR had.   Catch documentation scheme is merely a duplication of collection of catch data.

As for the collection of catch data including those for domestic market, each members need to consider other available means as a separate issue.   In fact, member nations are employing other tools such as periodical reporting system and wholesale market information, in order to fulfill their reporting requirements.   Catch documentation scheme may be one of the options for this purpose, but because of these problems its needs, applicability and feasibility should be fully clarified.

(3) Scope and Target species of the program

Taking into consideration the needs and realities, WCPFC documentation scheme, if introduced, should target the species whose stock statuses are concerned about and being considerably exploited due to IUU fishing.   In WCPFC, bigeye has the highest priority for adoption of the scheme.

It should be noted that all the Statistical Document Programs adopted by the other tuna RFMOs applied to frozen bigeye caught by longline vessels and not applied to purse seine and other fisheries.   This is because frozen bigeye is the item pinpointed for IUU longline vessels equipped with ultra-low temperature freezer for Japanese market and purse seine is a mixed fishery and fish species are impossible to be identified at the time of catch and thus impossible to validate statistical documents.   As long as the Commission's target is confined to IUU fishing, the statistical document program for frozen bigeye would cover the major concern.

4. Japanese proposal

Taking into consideration the situation mentioned above, Japan believes that it is appropriate to consider again at WCPFC3 for adoption and implementation of the Bigeye Statistical Document Program in order for WCPFC to keep compatibility and consistency of measures against IUU fishing activities throughout the oceans.   Moreover, WCPFC has yet to complete its positive list; combined with a lack of a statistical document program, the western central Pacific Ocean will be easily abused as a loophole.

Japanese proposal on the Program is very similar to those adopted by the other RFMOs, which consist of Statistical Document Program and positive listing measure for frozen bigeye to shut out the products caught by IUU vessels from international trade.　Members should request importers intended to import frozen bigeye products to submit to a competent authority of that importing member a statistical document validated by the flag state authority, and if the products are identified as catch by unauthorized fishing activity, the Japanese proposal provides members with a legal tool to implement the Commission's requirement to refuse the entry of such products into members' markets.

Table: Difference of characteristics between toothfish and bigeye tuna

	Toothfish	**Bigeye**
Catch amount	*34,000 MT*	*120,000 MT*
Number of vessel	*< 30*	*> 5,000*
Gear	*LL*	*LL, PS, PL, etc.*
Product type	*Frozen*	*Fresh/Frozen*