



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

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Statement to TCC20

WCPFC-TCC20-2024-OP06

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Submitted by The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation

**The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation
Statement to the 20th Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee
September 24-October 1, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia**

The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation welcome the opportunity to participate as observers to the 20th regular session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). We appreciate the work of the Chair, Members and Secretariat to convene this meeting for in-person and virtual participation. We urge all members to consider how to hasten the adoption of approaches that would provide greater resilience and stability to the region's fisheries.

In relation to the agenda, we urge TCC to:

Electronic Monitoring

Advance the development of Interim Electronic Monitoring (EM) Standards. EM is a key tool that will allow the Commission and its members to improve data collection and transparency in the fisheries they oversee. At this year's TCC meeting, the EMandER Intersessional Working Group should advance this work by:

- Agreeing on a set of interim EM technical standards;
- Recommending that the Science Service Provider assist in developing a set of minimum EM data standards;
- Agreeing guidelines on how to assure that members that use EM are submitting accurate and useful data, including requiring that all minimum data fields must be submitted in order to satisfy reporting requirements; and
- Developing a workplan that includes activities and timelines for 2025, including development of a draft WCPFC EM Program CMM for adoption at WCPFC22.

Transshipment

Recommend that the Commission adopt improvements to the monitoring of at-sea transshipment. After five years of work, it is time for members of the Transshipment IWG to reach agreement on a proposed set of amendments to CMM 2009-06 that improve monitoring and management of carrier vessels and reflect the FAO Guidelines on Transshipment. Specifically, those improvements should include:

- Strengthening reporting requirements to include catch quantities on board prior to and post transshipment events to aid verification of catch data and transshipment quantities;
- Requiring the submission of information on non-fish transfers involving carrier vessels, such as bunkering, or crew/supply transfers;
- Inclusion of IMO numbers on transshipment observer forms and transshipment declarations; and
- Submission of observer reports on transshipments in the overlap area to both IATTC and WCPFC Secretariats.

If final agreement can't be reached during the TCC, members should ensure the Transshipment IWG meets virtually before WCPFC21 so a revised measure can be adopted in Fiji. Lastly, TCC should recommend that the IWG-ROP prioritize the development of draft modifications to ROP data fields for observer transshipment monitoring of these activities.

Port State Measures

Recommend amendments to align the port State measures CMM with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Regional PSM Framework. WCPFC adopted CMM 2017-02 on minimum standards for port State measures in 2017. Only a small proportion of members (10 of 26) have designated ports to opt into the measure. At a minimum, a revised CMM should be binding and include provisions to require port designation and advance entry requests; allow for denial of port entry; and ensure effective national coordination and exchange of information to facilitate risk assessment in port.

Formalizing the WCPFC measure with the already operational FFA regional PSM framework, which meets the needs of small island developing States and is compatible with the minimum standards of the PSMA, will ensure that illegally caught fish does not reach the market. The regional framework includes elements such as risk assessment through a risk assessment criteria and supports real time data exchange via an e-PSM system. These updates will bring WCPFC practice in line with other RFMOs and international best practice. **If TCC20 cannot make progress in reviewing CMM 2017-02, as scheduled, members should create a virtual working group with a task to produce recommendations for TCC21.**

We also recognize the special requirements for developing States and urge members to ensure an assistance fund is created to provide targeted assistance to ensure all remaining members opt into the current measure or can effectively implement a revised measure as soon as possible.

Compliance

Accelerate progress on the remaining Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) 'future work' items. A robust CMS is essential to ensure members are held accountable for meeting their obligations, identifying capacity needs, highlighting where measures need to be amended, and supporting sustainable fisheries. In 2018, WCPFC identified several priority work items that were necessary to improve the CMS. Several work items remain outstanding. We urge TCC to address these issues this year by:

- Agreeing on a terms of reference for the corrective actions work, which should focus on the development of responses for non-compliance, including both corrective and supportive actions, such as additional capacity building;
- Developing guidelines that ensure accredited observers can participate in the review of compliance monitoring reports, recognizing that full observer participation in the CMS process is consistent with the WCPFC Convention; and
- Appointing a new lead and agreeing on a deadline to draft and adopt audit points for any remaining CMMs for which audit points have not yet been agreed.