



FIFTH REGULAR SESSION

8-12 December 2008

Busan, Korea

IUCN – OPENING STATEMENT

WCPFC5-2008/OP11

10 December 2008



Mr Chairman,

On behalf of IUCN I would like to express our appreciation on being invited to attend this WCPFC 5th meeting as an observer. IUCN- The International Union for Nature Conservation and Natural Resources is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network. It has more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, as well as some 10,000 scientists and experts in its specialist groups from 160 countries. Six WCPFC member countries are also National State members of IUCN (Australia, China, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and United States).

The mission of IUCN is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. IUCN has been active in the Oceania region for many years, working through its scientific and technical commissions and with partners. The IUCN-Regional Programme Office for Oceania was established in Suva in 2005 to allow IUCN to focus more of its efforts on the Pacific Region.

IUCN stands ready to assist in the work of the Commission related to conservation of resources for sustainable use. We host six specialist commissions, whose members could be called upon to provide advice if required. The four with the most relevance to the work of the WCPFC are:

- *The Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)*, which advances environmental law by developing new legal concepts and instruments, and by building the capacity to employ environmental law for conservation and sustainable development.

- *The Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)* provides expert guidance on integrated ecosystem approaches to the management of natural and modified ecosystems.
- *The Species Survival Commission (SSC)* provides advice on the technical aspects of species conservation and mobilizes action for those species that are threatened with extinction.
- *The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)* promotes the establishment and effective management of a worldwide representative network of terrestrial and marine protected areas.

At the recent World Conservation Congress held in October 2008, a number of resolutions were passed and recommendations made in relation to oceanic fisheries. These sought to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems beyond national jurisdiction, curb illegal fishing, create marine protected area networks, and proactively manage human activities to prevent significant adverse effects. Over 6,000 delegates voted and agreed on these proposals. Those most relevant for WCPFC included:

- Resolution 4.031, related to achieving conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdictions;
- Resolution 4.032, regarding the coordination of the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge
- Recommendation 4.113, on conserving migratory and oceanic sharks
- Recommendation 4.114, on a global policy against shark finning
- Recommendation 4.117, related to Flag State responsibility regarding Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The full text of these resolutions and recommendations can be found on the IUCN website, http://www.iucn.org/congress_08/assembly/policy/index.cfm

IUCN is the only international observer organization in the United Nations General Assembly with expertise in issues concerning the environment, specifically biodiversity, nature conservation and sustainable natural resource use. In this role IUCN provides guidance and support to UN countries, and can therefore bring any important issues to the attention of the UN on behalf of WCPFC.

IUCN promotes the ecosystem based approach to fisheries management, based on the best available scientific advice. In situations where sufficient data and information is not yet available, IUCN supports the use of a precautionary approach, until the requisite information is available. We look forward to your well considered decision from this meeting with regard to the reduction in total catch of bigeye tuna by 30%, as recommended by the Scientific Committee, with measures starting in January 2009. We also look forward to well considered decisions in relation to conservation and management measures for turtles, sharks, yellowfin tuna and swordfish.

Thank you.

Busan, December 8th, 2008