



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

**Sixth Regular Session**

30 September - 5 October 2010

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

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**ADDITIONAL CLOSURES BY PNA – REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS ON  
BEHALF OF THE PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT**

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**Paper prepared by Republic of the Marshall Islands on behalf of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement**



**STATEMENT BY PNA CHAIR GLEN JOSEPH TO THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE WCPFC TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE ON ADDITIONAL HIGH SEAS CLOSURES BY PNA**

1. Mr. Chairman, we wish to advise TCC of measures taken by PNA to close additional high seas areas to purse seine vessels licensed to fish in PNA EEZs. The areas concerned are the additional high seas areas between 10°N and 20°S and 170°E and 150°W.
2. TCC will recall that after the failure of the Commission to adopt appropriate measures for conservation and management of bigeye and yellowfin tuna at its 4<sup>th</sup> session in December 2007 in Guam, the PNA adopted a 3<sup>rd</sup> Implementing Arrangement under the Nauru Agreement which applied a package of measures including a closure of two high seas pockets to purse seining.
3. This closure was subsequently adopted with other PNA measures by the Commission and came into force from January 1, 2010 through CMM 2008-01.
4. Subsequently, the Scientific Committee advised that additional measures are necessary to conserve bigeye tuna. The SC expressed concern at the possible effects of a transfer of purse seine effort from the two closed high seas pockets to other areas of high seas in the east where bigeye tuna generally form a greater proportion of the catch. Analysis by the SC shows that the daily catch rate of bigeye by purse seine vessels in the east, including most of the area proposed for closure is 2 to 5 times higher than in the west. With the closure of the western pockets, some vessels may shift to fishing in the open high seas area in the east. This would increase bigeye mortality and require other measures such as extending the FAD closure or limiting overall purse seine effort to compensate for the additional bigeye mortality. The impact of these measures would generally fall on fishing in PNA EEZs.
5. We can see from data presented to this meeting by the WCPFC Secretariat that several fleets are already exceeding their high seas effort limits which only serves to compound the problem.
6. In the October 2009 Bikenibeu Declaration, PNA Fisheries Ministers “noted the serious impact on the bigeye stock from fishing by distant water longliners and purse seiners in the high seas and that the high seas continues to provide a safe haven for IUU fishing.” The Ministers agreed that “further work will be taken on closures of additional high seas areas.

7. In February, PNA Leaders agreed to the closure of additional high seas to all purse seine vessels licensed to fish in the EEZs of the PNA. This decision was affirmed by PNA Fisheries Ministers at their meeting in April. It was also agreed that the closure would take effect from 1 January 2011. The closures have been given effect through amendments to the PNA 3<sup>rd</sup> Implementing Arrangement. No purse seine vessel licensed by any of the PNA will be allowed to fish in this area. It will be a violation of a license issued by any PNA for a vessel to fish in the EEZ for that vessel to fish in those areas.

8. Closing these areas is a large step towards establishing sanctuaries for stocks of tuna and other species affected by fishing. These closures will therefore reinforce the very large efforts being made by the Parties for broader marine biodiversity conservation by their efforts through the Coral Triangle Initiative, the Micronesian Challenge, Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected Area and other national marine protected areas.

9. Mr. Chairman, while the Commission is making progress in controlling high seas fishing, the level of control in the high seas still lags behind the quality of control in EEZs. Tight controls are being applied in EEZs, but vessels continue to fish in the high seas in contravention of effort limits, and fishing states continue to oppose and obstruct control of high seas fishing. Most major fishing state CCMs are failing even in their most basic responsibility to provide timely data at the level of detail required for scientific purposes. In addition to the failure to effectively regulate fishing in the high seas, vessels continue to use the high seas as havens from which to operate illegally in the waters of PNA and other Pacific Island countries, further undermining the measures that PNA are taking. Closing the additional high seas areas to purse seiners as a condition of licensing in PNA EEZs will reduce the risk of damage done to the Parties management, conservation and protection efforts by fishing in nearby high seas areas.

10. Mr. Chairman, it is in the interest of the Commission that such a measure applies to all fleets operating in the region. If some fleets are exempted from the measure, it would not have the efficacy desired of it. TCC therefore may wish to discuss how the Commission should apply such a measure through a new conservation and management measures specifically on the closure of additional high seas areas to be compatible with those adopted by PNA.