



**SIXTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia  
7-11 December 2009

---

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARAGRAPHS 22 OF CONSERVATION AND  
MANAGEMENT MEASURE 2008-01

---

**WCPFC6-2009/DP13**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**Proposal by the Philippines**



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Agriculture  
**Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources**  
PCA Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1101  
Tel. No. 632-928-40-38  
Fax No. 632-929-80-74

November 6, 2009

Andrew Wright  
Executive Director, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission  
PO Box 2356  
Kolonia, Pohnpei State 96941,  
Federated States of Micronesia

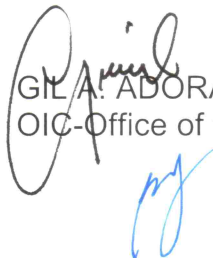
SUBJECT: Proposed Discussion Paper  
for the 6<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting

Dear Andrew,

I hope that you are in good health and high spirits.

Attached is a copy of the discussion paper which the Philippines is requesting to be circulated with the Commission with the intention of initiating reactions and discussions for the purpose of amending paragraph 22 of CMM 2008-01 and effecting paragraph 21 thereof.

Thank you for taking time to consider this request.

  
GIL A. ADORA  
OIC-Office of the Director



Frontiers... balancing production & conservation



PHILIPPINE DISCUSSION PAPER ON  
PARAGRAPH 21 OF  
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE 2008-01  
ON THE WCPFC CLOSURE OF THE POCKETS OF HIGH SEAS  
ON PARAGRAPH 22 THEREOF

**INTRODUCTION**

1. In December 2008, the member parties of the WCPFC have come to a consensus on Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) to protect the dwindling bigeye and yellowfin tuna populations. One of the proposed measures was the total closure of the two pockets of high seas indicated in Attachment D of the Western and Central Pacific high seas between 20°N and 20°S latitude.

2. Notably, fishing in the high seas along with fishing in the Philippine EEZ and territorial waters along with the other components of the fisheries sector contribute about 23.2% in the gross value added (GVA) of the Agriculture Fishery and Forestry (AFF) Sector of the country's economy. Its critical part in the Philippine economy is further highlighted by its role as a major source of protein for the Filipinos. It has always been a staple in the Filipino diet that major changes in fish availability as well as prices cause quite a stir among the Filipino populace.

3. In recent years, global warming has become one of the factors that seriously threaten the sustainability of the Philippine fisheries, more particularly the tuna industry. As sea temperatures rise, the migratory patterns of tuna species have been altered and more dispersed and have gone eastward away from Philippine waters. This decline of tuna populations in the Philippine waters becomes more observable as over the past several years, tuna catch have slowly declined.

4. As presented, it can be deduced that the ability to fish in the high seas has become critical for the Philippines. As the industry grows and increases its share in the economy, the importance of the high seas becomes more amplified. Since the industry is deeply integrated with many economic sectors at all levels, the loss of catch from the high seas threatens to reverberate throughout the whole economy and cause significant dislocations as far as jobs are concerned.

**POSITION STATEMENT**

Given these realities, the Philippines strongly urges the WCPFC to hold in abeyance the full implementation of paragraph 22 of CMM 2008-01 on high seas closure in the WCPO next year and in lieu thereon a Vessel day Scheme be put in place. Closure of the high seas would result to the shift to the Philippine coastal areas where juvenile tunas are more vulnerable which would negate our plans to protect these tuna spawning areas as part of our commitment to the Coral Triangle Initiative on protected seascapes.

The social and economic costs of such measure to our country includes massive

dislocation of jobs, investments and livelihood and even reinforce insurgency, most especially in Mindanao where the majority of the tuna industry is located. It is expected that competition between fishing sectors will become amplified. The hardest hit would be the poor and vulnerable as well as communities employed in the fishing and allied industries.

Furthermore, the haste of the time it will take before the implementation of the measure commences leaves little or no window for the Philippines to undertake alternative strategies as well as develop and implement safety nets to mitigate the effects of the high seas closure.

The Philippines has recently finalized the guidelines for a FAD Management Program, is on its way to develop a Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) to limit purse seine fishing days in the high seas and a Vessel Monitoring System [VMS] to better monitor compliance of fishing vessels to CMMs. However with the coming total closure of the high seas in January, all these efforts would seem to have been compromised.

On our bid to share in the collective effort of sustainable fisheries in the Pacific, the Philippines has always supported the need to set-in place concrete measures to effectively manage our fisheries resources. But we appeal to the WCPFC that in proposing measures by which all member countries must abide in, we must always strike a balance between the short term and the long term. There is no sense in focusing our efforts in pursuing a long term good by completely disregarding the short term impact. In the case of the high seas closure, we focus on achieving sustainability for the fisheries sector but at a massive cost to our industry, economy and food security as well as to the peace and security in Mindanao due to the impending job losses that will result from this CMM.

With these concerns we appeal to the WCPFC and to our partner countries to help us find solutions to our current predicament. We are not yet ready for the sweeping implementation of the CMM regarding high seas closure but we are very much willing to exhaust all efforts in finding an alternative solution, one which can achieve both the long term sustainability of the tuna fisheries industry without prejudicing the needs of the present.

In summary, the Philippines proposes that a vessel day scheme be put in place in 2010 to control the catch and effort in the high seas based on the verified data submitted to the Commission [Attachment B of CMM 2008-01].