



SIXTH REGULAR SESSION
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HIGH SEAS VESSEL DAY SCHEME

WCPFC6-2009/17
7th November 2009

Prepared by the Secretariat

Introduction

1. Para. 325(d) of the Summary Record of the Fourth Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC4) states:

“the Executive Director will commence a process in early 2008 to support the implementation of similar measures [*sic.* Vessel Day Scheme (VDS)] to limit purse seine effort on the high seas, consistent with paragraph 9 of CMM 2005-01, and in waters under the national jurisdiction of non-PNA members of the Commission, consistent with paragraph 10(ii) of CMM-2005-01;”

2. The Fourth Regular Sessions of the Scientific Committee (SC4) (WCPFC-SC4-2008/ST-WP04) and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TTC4) (WCPFC-TCC4-2009/WP-15 and WP-15 Suppl.) in 2008 were invited to consider the:

- a. unit of measurable fishing effort to apply to purse seine vessels; and
- b. availability of data for a suggested unit of purse seine effort in the high seas and the waters under the national jurisdiction of non-PNA members of the Commission.

3. The status of consideration of this issue at SC4 and TCC4 was reported to the Fifth Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC5) at Busan, Korea in December 2009 (WCPFC5-2008/13). Para. 168 and 169 of the Summary Record of WCPFC5 invited Members, Cooperating Non-members and Participating Territories (CCMs) to provide comments on the options and recommendations contained in WCPFC5-2008/13 and referred the issue of a high seas VDS to SC5 and TCC5 for further discussion.

Related developments

High seas pockets

4. CMM 2008-01 (para. 22) provides that two high seas pockets will be closed to fishing from 1st January 2010, unless the Commission decides otherwise at WCPFC6 in December 2009. At that meeting the Commission will also consider the closure of all high seas pockets in the Convention Area between 20° North and 20° South. The fate of the historical effort (in fishing days) for those pockets in relation to whether i) they are removed from the fishery, or ii) they remain available for use in other areas of high seas areas, remains uncertain.

Contributions from CCMs

5. In the first five months of 2009 the Secretariat received written comments from i) Chinese Taipei, the PNA, Philippines and USA (See WCPFC-TCC5-2009/22 and WCPFC-SC5-2009/GN-WP-16 Attachment A (Chinese Taipei), B (the PNA), Table 1 (Philippines) and Attachment C (USA)).

Commission Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)

6. The Commission VMS has operated uninterrupted since it became operational on 1st April 2009. Since then the Commission has received reports for high seas purse seine fishing activity via the FFA VMS (214 vessels) and from a single purse vessel reporting direct to the Commission.

Fifth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee, 10-21 August 2009, Port Vila, Vanuatu

7. The SC's Statistics Specialist Working Group (ST-SWG) was presented with a report from the Secretariat (WCPFC-2009-SC5/GN-WP-16) advising of developments during 2009 which included provisions of CMM 2008-01 relating to the implementation of the Commission's VMS, communications with CCMs concerning validation of historical (2001-2004) high seas purse seine effort and the fate of historical effort in the high seas pockets when they are closed in January 2010.

8. At SC5 one CCM stated that consideration of this is a wider issue than simply a high seas vessel day scheme because it also impacts upon allocation and that risks associated with the potential relocation of fishing effort from the high seas to EEZs and the varies "exemptions" provided for under "existing arrangements" also needed to be considered (refer to paragraph 185 SC5 Summary Report).

Fifth Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee, 1-6 October 2009, Palikir, FSM

9. TCC5 recorded that "All CCMs voicing an opinion on the potential high seas Vessel Day Scheme advocated postponing discussion on this issue until a later date".

SC5 and TCC5 Advice and recommendations

10. Para. 21 of Conservation and Management Measure 2008-01 (CMM 2008-01) adopted at WCPFC5 invited SC5 and TCC5 to provide advice and recommendations to the Commission at its annual session in December 2009 (WCPFC6), for the consideration of the development of a high seas VDS to be compatible with the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) VDS to provide a common currency for managing purse seine fishing effort.

11. Apart from proposing discussion of this matter "at a later date" no additional advice or recommendations were forthcoming from SC5 and TCC5.

Advice and recommendations

12. WCPFC6 is invited to provide advice and recommendations in relation to:

- a. Further development of the options presented in WCPFC-TCC4-2009/WP-15 and WP-15 Suppl, or other arrangements, that might be developed and implemented;
- b. the submissions from CCMs in relation to this matter; and
- c. any additional work required to support the Commission's further consideration of the development of a high seas VDS.