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TOKELAU – OPENING STATEMENT

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Submitted by Tokelau

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE KURESA NASAU, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

Honourable Chair His Excellency Ambassador Satya Nandan

Honourable Ministers and Excellencies

Distinguished Members of the Commission, the Secretariat, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Greetings and Malo ni from Tokelau. Please accept our greetings from the people, the elders and the Government of Tokelau.

Mr Chairman,

Firstly, we continue to acknowledge and give thanks to the Almighty for His continuing protection and guidance that has enabled all of us to be here today.

Tokelau would like to join with others to congratulate you in your role as Chair of the Commission and wish you well in your task ahead steering our canoe in the next few days.

I wish to thank the Government and people of French Polynesia for their hospitality in hosting this 6th Annual Session of the Tuna Commission.

Mr Chairman, I wish to convey to the Commission today three main messages. These are:

Tokelau as a Participating Territory to the Commission is committed to the work of the Commission;

Tokelau does not condone illegal fishing in Tokelau EEZ and we will take all necessary steps to address and resolve the issue of illegal fishing in our fisheries waters; and

Tokelau's EEZ is a major part of sustainable development for Tokelau under our National Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2015 therefore we look forward to the Commission for support and help Tokelau as a small island territory meet her development needs and aspirations.

Mr Chairman,

Tokelau is the smallest island territory participating in the work of the Commission, hence active participation to the annual meetings of this Tuna Commission provides a platform for Members of the Commission to raise and address our concerns and aspirations towards improving our efforts to effectively implement the management and conservation measures we put in place to manage and

maximise benefits from our fisheries resources for sustainability and economic benefits for present and future generations.

As Minister for Fisheries, I travelled here with my delegation Mr Chairman to address and resolve the cases of illegal fishing in Tokelau EEZ as this is of the utmost importance for Tokelau. IUU fishers continue to pick on the small island **developing countries** such as Tokelau in the hope that they are not detected. These are serious violations and illegal fishers must be punished. Tokelau will comment further on this issue when we get to the agenda on IUU listing.

As the smallest member of the Commission, Tokelau fully supports effective MCS tools that assist even our small administrations and the assistance of other CCMs to protect our waters against IUU activities. Given our limited resources, Tokelau is heavily dependent on our fisheries resources for **food security for our livelihood**. Plundering our resources undermines Tokelau's efforts to effectively conserve, manage and develop its fisheries resources for present and future generations likewise the work of the Commission and FFA Secretariat.

Monitoring Control and Surveillance activities of Secretariat, as well the Conservation Management Measures of the Tuna Commission to combat IUU Fishing operations in our waters is critical and must continue. Tokelau believes that fishing vessels that deliberately and illegally fishing within our EEZ must be punished, and we greatly value the opportunities to pursue them including through the Commission.

Tokelau is committed to work co-operatively with other small island developing states and territories in promoting national and regional activities in the area of fisheries. The development aspirations of Small Island states and territories is paramount and Tokelau looks towards the Commission members to fulfil this obligation under the Convention. I urge that members of the Commission, to move forward together to manage our resources effectively and honour the conservation and management measures put in place. I believe we are all responsible to effectively manage our resources for our future generation. In this regard, I urge that the Commission take practical and immediate steps to assist small island states and territories in achieving their development aspirations.

I wish to also take this opportunity to join others to thank and acknowledge Mr Andrew Wright, Executive Director of the Commission for his hard work and dedication to the work of the Commission. May God bless you and your family with your future endeavours.

Finally, but certainly not the least, I would also like to acknowledge those that have made this trip a success for me while here in Papeete especially to FFA Secretariat and the Commission Secretariat..

May the Almighty God bless you all in your work and guide your deliberations accordingly.

Fakafetai lahi