



SIXTH REGULAR SESSION
Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia
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TUVALU – OPENING STATEMENT

WCPFC6-2009/DP36
10 December 2009

Submitted by Tuvalu¹

1. Chairman, Honorable fellow Ministers, distinguished Commission members, observers, ladies and gentlemen.
2. Allow me to convey warm greetings from the government and people of Tuvalu to all Commission members and to all the people of French Polynesia.
3. First of all let me congratulate you for assuming the Chairmanship of the WCPFC. I can assure you that my delegation and officials will cooperate fully with you during your tenure as Chair of the WCPFC. Allow me also to thank the Government of France and the people of French Polynesia for the wonderful arrangements and the splendid venue provided for this meeting and the warm welcome and courtesies that has extended to my delegation and others since our arrival in this beautiful country.
4. My delegation would also like to register our appreciation and congratulation to the Executive Director and his staff for the excellent preparation of meeting materials and papers and for the logistical support to the meeting.
5. Tuvalu would also like to associate and render its support to the Opening statement presented by the distinguished Minister of Marine Resources of Niue and Chairman of FFC on behalf of the FFA, and the statement presented by the distinguished Minister of Marine Resources of the Republic of Kiribati on behalf of the PNA.
6. My delegation acknowledged the achievements of the Commission in only its fifth year of existence. There are already significant progress made in terms of conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission. There are also new proposed management measures that the Commission will consider in this session which if adopted would significantly enhance the conservation and management framework for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.
7. I am mindful of the time Mr. Chairman and the need to get to the substantive issues on the agenda but I would like to raise here a couple of points that are pertinent and of critical importance to Tuvalu's aspirations to develop its fisheries resources and maximize economic returns from its utilization.

¹ Presented by the Tuvalu Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

8. Tuvalu, Mr. Chairman and distinguished colleagues, has limited or no land based resources and rely heavily on the sustainable development of its marine resources, in particular, its fisheries resources.

9 In that regard, Mr. Chairman, the government of Tuvalu is continuing to explore avenues to maximize the economic returns from its marine resources and at the same time mindful of the long term sustainability of the fisheries resources. This year Tuvalu has achieved one of its development aspirations in terms of acquiring of our Purse seine vessels under a Joint Venture arrangement with one of the Commission member. This, as far as my government is concern is just the beginning for a new era in our effort to develop our own domestic tuna fisheries and the fisheries sector in Tuvalu.

10. Tuvalu is now seeking and working together with other FFA members and the wider Commission Membership to amend some provision in CMM 2004-01. It is to our view that it is the sovereign right of a coastal state to choose who to fish in it water.

11. Mr. Chairman, as part of our legitimate development aspiration, Tuvalu is going to enter into more Joint Venture arrangements and Charter arrangements starting as early as next year. As a way forward, Tuvalu sees that this in the best path to take in our effort to maximize the benefits from our marine resources. Tuvalu is looking at expanding cooperation through JV's and Charter arrangements with some CCM's and at the same time try to phase out fishing in our waters by some CCM's who have failed to cooperate in our domestic development.

12 Mr. Chairman, the recognition of the need to provide for and to take into account the special requirements and needs of small island development states, was acknowledged and commended as a significant feature and achievement of the WCPFC. It is in my delegation's view that it is a strict obligation of the Commission, to ensure that those special requirements and needs of small island developing states must be safeguarded in all the conservation and management measures adopted and to be adopted by the Commission.

13. Tuvalu and I believe that we have the same understanding with other Small Islands Developing states, relying heavily on the provision of article 30 of the Convention in becoming a member of the Commission. It is this provision that we genuinely believe will safeguard our special needs and our aspirations to develop our own domestic fisheries given our inherent disadvantages and acute constraints on our capacity to discharge our obligations as members of the Commission.

14. Mr. Chairman, these are the position and views of my government on some of these issues and I would reserve our comments on the other issues until they come up in the agenda.

15. Thank you Mr. .Chairman and I look forward to working with you and the rest of the Ministers and other Commission Members.

Thank you.