



**COMMISSION  
NINTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Manila, Philippines  
2-6 December 2012

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**OPENING STATEMENT BY PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS TO WCPFC9**

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**WCPFC9-2012-OP12  
19 December 2012**

## Gerald Leape Head of Delegation

The Pew Environment Group (the environmental arm of the Pew Charitable Trusts) is pleased once again to have the opportunity to be an observer at the 9th regular meeting of the WCPFC. We would like to thank the Government of the Philippines for hosting the meeting and offering these fine facilities.

The WCPFC is at a critical juncture. In March, the Commission failed to fulfill its obligation to strengthen measures to protect bigeye through enactment of 2011-01. It is of critical importance that parties come to agreement this week on a new measure that will require greater reductions in catch of both adult and juvenile bigeye tuna. In order to reach agreement on a new measure, reductions need to be taken in both the longline and the purse seine catches which will require compromise from all parties. In addition, the WCPFC needs to strengthen its FAD management at this meeting and the US proposal is a good start in that direction.

On sharks, the WCPFC has failed to fulfill its obligations to protect sharks by only acting on one species the Oceanic white tip. At this meeting, WCPFC parties have an opportunity to take three important actions to save sharks. First, we call on all parties to support Australia's proposal to ban the intentional setting of nets around whale sharks. Second, the Commission to tighten regulations to implement its shark finning ban by requiring all sharks to be brought to shore with their fins naturally attached and finally, there is a proposal to ban the use of wire leaders in the tuna fisheries.

Finally, Pew calls on the WCPFC to strengthen its efforts to reduce illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. Specifically, the WCPFC should follow the lead of ICCAT and establish minimum standards for port inspection of boats suspected of being engaged in IUU fishing. This is an essential step towards eliminating the markets for these illegally caught fish. Pew is also calling on the WCPFC to require IMO numbers (unique vessel identifiers) for all vessels fishing in WCPFC fisheries that are greater than 24 meters in length and 100 GRT.

Thank you Mr. chairman and Pew looks forward to working with all WCPFC members to achieve these objectives.