

Opening Statement to the Seventh Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

6-10 December, Honolulu,
Hawaii

Mr Chairman, The Executive Director, Honorable delegates, fellow observers, ladies and gentleman.

Greenpeace would like to extend our gratitude to the state and people of Hawaii for their welcoming hospitality and the government of the United States for hosting this meeting. We would like to welcome Professor Glenn Hurry in his capacity as Executive Director and we look forward to his visionary leadership and expert steering and working with him in the near future.

This 7th Commission meeting is a critical meeting, since tuna is increasingly seen around the world as under threat giving this meeting the opportunity to set things right by preventing the fishery from becoming the next casualty of rampant global overfishing.

The future of the Pacific and its people will be in your hands as you make decisions this week.

Greenpeace would like to commend the leadership and continued efforts by all the Pacific Island countries that are members of the Commission to secure and safeguard the future of this fishery. In particular The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) for taking the bold and positive step by agreeing to the implementation of the 3rd Implementing Arrangement and we urge this Commission to adopt compatible measures as mandated by the Convention.

This year, the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC) reported that measures agreed in 2008 do not go far enough to halt overfishing in the region, and the crisis facing particularly bigeye stocks continues to deepen. Signs of decline in even the once robust skipjack stock are now starting to appear as a result of massive fishing capacity and deadly efficiency. These declines are placing great threats on the region's food security and economic prosperity, and the current mismanagement is undermining the marine ecosystem and the fishing industry itself. This is a huge wake-up call for the region. Time and tuna are running out. The Commission continues to fail in its mandate to conserve the region's precious tuna resources, and unless firm decisions are taken in Hawaii, it is on a path to repeat the same mistakes of other failed Tuna Commissions and faces the risk of becoming redundant as the competent body for sustainably managing the region's highly migratory fish stocks.

Following the debacle of bluefin tuna under ICCAT's mismanagement, attention is turning to other species of tuna heading to same fate, especially bigeye and yellowfin tuna of the WCPO. The world's markets are beginning to reject unsustainable tuna, including skipjack originating from purse seine FAD associated fisheries. Greenpeace will continue to expose to the public the unsustainable and wasteful practices of tuna fishing globally and corporate players responsible for the continued use of these methods. The WCPFC member countries would be wise to embrace

the demand for sustainable products and enforce policies that meet the standards of the market place.

The WCPFC needs to build on the measures agreed in 2008, that closed off two high seas pockets to purse seine fishing as well as banning the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) in purse seine fisheries. These measures are shown to be effective but currently are not adequate enough both temporally and spatially to respond to level of the crisis in the region.

Greenpeace proposes that WCPFC7 agreed to:

- ❖ ***Adopt and Implement the closures of all pockets of high seas to all types of fishing. This will complement the benefits derived from the existing high seas pockets closures and will prevent any transfer of high seas fishing effort, in particular IUU fishing effort, from the closed pockets into other high seas areas.***
- ❖ ***Adopt and implement a complete year-round ban on the use of FADs in association with purse seine fishing.***
- ❖ ***Implement an immediate and necessary 50% reduction in tuna fishing effort across the entire WCPO fisheries based on the average 2001-2004 levels.***
- ❖ ***Support Canada's proposal on establishing a formal process that NGOs can submit compliance information to the Technical and Compliance Committee.***

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