



Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association

Shark Sanctuary

Introduction:

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I am making this statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) which has a membership of 14 of the FFA member countries, including the FSM National Offshore Fisheries Corporation. The main purpose of my statement today is to formally put on record of this meeting and WCPFC the grave concern that the tuna industry in this region now faces as a result of the recently adopted Shark Sanctuary resolution of the 15th Micronesian Chief Executive Summit held on July 25-28, last month.

PITIA would at the outset like to acknowledge the Conservation and Management obligations of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) under United Nations Law of the Sea but also note the 2008-01 Resolution on Development Aspirations of Small Island Developing States.

Problems & Issues:

Let me begin by saying, although great effort has been put forth into the adoption of the resolution, the industry as a crucial stakeholder of the tuna industry was omitted from the process that has led to the adoption of the Shark resolution. This omission has created a gap in this process and the commercial practicality of the industry not being considered which will lead to social and economic adverse effects.

PITIA and its membership accept its responsibilities and the large role it needs to play in fisheries conservation and management but the increasing cost of compliance that this poses on small domestic fleets create an environment that is progressively commercially crippling. Ideally there should be a cost benefit analysis of such initiatives however realistically and a more comprehensive approach would be to consult operators which would still work towards reducing the impact on domestic fleets and small island economies whilst at the same time achieving management targets.

There are more practical approaches to the conservation of sharks that could be adopted which will more efficiently reduce the catching of the species yet not pose such an adverse effect to an already struggling industry.

At this time we would like to urge the Science Committee of the WCPFC to extend this consideration not only when it considers measures in the protection of Sharks and by-catch species but rather as a principle component and approach to fisheries management. It would however be remiss of me not to acknowledge the special consideration extended to Development Aspirations of SIDS and the sovereign rights of Coastal states, however the intention is not always translated from paper to operational level.

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Conclusion:

Mr. Chairman, I wish to conclude my short statement by offering the support of the organisation as one that strives to represent domestic industry interest to assist in providing a commercial perspective at this level, non-withstanding the close collaboration at the national level.

We look forward to working with WCPFC, FFA and SPC to achieve conservation policies that extends consideration to all aspects of the tuna fishery.

Thank you

Delivered by:

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Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association

PITIA