



**COMMISSION
THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**
Denarau Island, Fiji
5 – 9 December, 2016

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSO) ROUNDTABLE ON
PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES**

**WCPFC13-2016-OP15
7th December 2016**

Submitted by WWF



WWF

SUBMISSION

WCPFC 13

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A 2-DAY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSO) ROUNDTABLE ON PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES ORGANISED BY WWF-PACIFIC AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ASSOCIATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (PIANGO) AND FUNDED BY THE OFMP II PROJECT UNDER A GEF GRANT COORDINATED THROUGH THE FFA AND SUPPORTED BY WWF WHICH WAS HELD ON 29TH - 30TH NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE TANOA PLAZA HOTEL IN SUVA, FIJI.

Background

Pacific tuna stocks represent a critical global protein and food security resource and a substantial contributor to the economies of Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). Participation by Pacific Small Island Developing States CSO's to inform fisheries policy-making of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and other sub-regional fisheries bodies that manage the region's highly migratory fish stocks is critical to the development of socially responsible and sustainable Pacific tuna fisheries.

A two-day Civil Society Organisations (CSO) roundtable on Pacific tuna fisheries co-hosted by WWF Pacific and PIANGO with in-kind support from Pacific Dialogue Ltd (PD) and funded by the OFMP II Project under a GEF grant coordinated through the FFA and supported by WWF met to discuss issues relevant to the management of Pacific tuna resources by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Representatives from government agencies, regional organisations, the private sector, faith-based organisations, and the diplomatic corps also participated.

The workshop aimed to improve levels of awareness and understanding by Pacific CSOs on the current environmental, economic, and social issues related to policy and institutional arrangements for managing Pacific tuna fisheries; provide opportunities for open dialogue and share experiences on social, economic and environmental issues associated with tuna fisheries at national level; and identify challenges that CSOs face in engaging with the tuna fisheries sector; identify opportunities for CSOs to effectively

engage through collaboration and partnerships at the national and regional levels towards the improvement of Pacific tuna fisheries management; and list and prioritise social, economic and environmental policy recommendations to the 13th Annual Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC 13).

Civil Society Organisations were represented by ALFA Fishing (Vanuatu), PIANGO, Pacific Dialogue, Conservation International (CI), Wantok Moana, Oxfam (Regional Office), Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG); Fiji Environmental Law Association (FELA), Social Empowerment Education Programme (SEEP), Women In Fisheries Network (WIFN-Fiji), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF Pacific/WWF NZ).

The Ministry of Fisheries (Fiji) and the Fiji Police Force attended from the public service sector. Private sector participants included Golden Ocean Fish Ltd and the Fiji Ports Corporation. Also in attendance were the Methodist Church in Fiji from the faith-based organisations and the Embassy of Indonesia from the diplomatic corps. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and University of the South Pacific (USP) were also represented.

At the meeting, delegates identified areas of concern that require immediate action to reduce overexploitation of these national and regional resources and ensure that the safety and basic human rights of fishing industry workers are adequately met.

In the course of deliberation, workshop participants noted the following main concerns for the Commission to immediately address:

- 1. A lack of transparency in the decision-making process, and lack of information to the owners of the resource (which include civil society groups);**
- 2. Inadequate recognition and implementation of basic human rights, safe working conditions and deficiency of social justice in the tuna fishing industry;**
- 3. An absence of accountability by the publicly-funded Commission, which makes decisions on a regional resource; and**
- 4. Failure of the Commission to take account of scientific evidence that highlights a lack of basic management and promotes unsustainable exploitation of the tuna resource.**

Civil Society Organisations participating in the Round Table are committed to supporting the sustainable use of natural resources such as fish stocks, and the equitable distribution of benefits arising from that use. We call on the Commission to take urgent action to address our concerns, and we urge Parties to consider the following actions:

1. **Allow accredited media access to the entire proceedings of the Commission's annual meeting, and participate in regular press conferences to address questions from civil society and the media;**
2. **Increase the number of independent fisheries observers on board vessels operating within the Commission's jurisdiction, and full support by Parties for all proposals aimed at ensuring the safety of every fisheries observer;**
3. **Implement robust, comprehensive harvest strategies for all major tuna stocks within the Commission's waters by 2020.**
4. **Commit to address human rights issues on fishing vessels and in processing facilities, including by Parties ratifying relevant labour conventions; and**
5. **Commit to implementing strong Port State Measures throughout the Commission's area of jurisdiction.**

Conclusion

We, the CSO representatives at the CSO Round Table on the Pacific Tuna Fisheries thank the Commission for the opportunity to table our concerns in the hope that the outcomes from WCPFC 13 will truly be conservation oriented, robust, and positive for Pacific Island communities, the resource and resource owners.

The following organisations hereby endorse this communique:



Oxfam in the Pacific