

**The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

**The Intersessional Meeting to Progress**

**the FFA Consultative Draft Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Limit for South Pacific Albacore**

**Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia**

**4th October 2017**

**MEETING REPORT**

**Issued: 11 October 2017**

**The Commission for the Conservation and Management of**

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**The Intersessional Meeting to Progress the FFA Consultative Draft Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Limit for South Pacific Albacore.**

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**MEETING REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM 1 — OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean held an Intersessional Meeting to Progress the Draft Bridging Measure for South Pacific Albacore (WCPFC-IM-SPA) on 4th October 2017 in Pohnpei, FSM.
2. The following Members and Participating Territories attended the meeting: Australia, the People’s Republic of China, the Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, the Republic of Korea, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Philippines, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United States of America (USA), and Vanuatu.
3. Observers from the following governmental and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) attended: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Pacific Community (SPC), as the WCPFC’s Scientific Services Provider.
4. Observers from the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended: Birdlife International, and the Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW).
5. A list of all participants is found at Attachment A.
6. The meeting opened at 8.40am on Wednesday 4th October 2017.
7. The Commission Chair, Madam Rhea Moss-Christian, opened the workshop, setting the context of this workshop within the wider scope of the Commissions work towards developing Harvest Strategies. The intercessional approach to developing the tropical tuna measure was outlined and a comparison drawn with the South Pacific Albacore intersessional initiative. Although the Harvest Strategy work of the Commission was integral in the process of developing elemental measures, it was noted that it was the role of the Commission to review and update the Harvest Strategy Work plan, and this task did not fall under the purview of this intercessional meeting.
8. The Commission chair outlined the two key purposes of the workshop, which were to i) further define objectives for the fishery and ii) to give consideration to the discussion draft CMM put forward by New Zealand on behalf of FFA.
9. Ian Cartwright introduced himself as the facilitator and outlined the process to be followed during the meeting; the agenda was introduced and adopted and is provided as Attachment B.
10. New Zealand gave a presentation on the background of the CMM to provide context for the day (the presentation is Attachment C).

**AGENDA ITEM 2. PRESENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE’S 13TH ANNUAL SESSION**

1. Graham Pilling (SPC-OFP) presented the status of South Pacific Albacore and the most recent catch estimates, segueing into a summary of the SC13 discussions and recommendations; the presentation is Attachment D.

**Discussion Points**

1. A statement from the FFA noted that given the circumstances of the fishery, with 2016 catch and effort the lowest in a decade there is a very real opportunity and need for action.
2. The stock assessment projection results present a less pessimistic view of future stock status, but only if low effort levels are maintained. Concern was expressed that there will be spikes in catch and effort as per 2009 and 2012. Those spikes were followed by declines in both catch and CPUE, with CPUE not returning to previous levels during subsequent recoveries. This variability is not in anyone’s interests. It does not provide: a stable investment environment for vessel owners, a sound basis of domestic development; and a stable supply to processors.
3. Some contention arose regarding the area assessed for SPA between
   * WCPO South of the equator; and
   * WCPO South of 10 degrees south of the equator
4. Based on the information available to SPC, it is challenging to identify longline activity targeting south Pacific albacore. As a proxy for targeting, SPC uses the effort south of 10 degrees south as representing that area were focused longline effort targeting south Pacific albacore occurs. North of 10 degrees south is assumed to represent that area of the tropical tuna fishery where albacore is more of a bycatch. Furthermore, CPUE is much higher south of 10 degrees south.
5. In response to a query regarding inter-ocean stock connectivity, including connectivity between the WCPO and the Indian Ocean, SPC explained that there is not much information currently available, and given the relatively low level of tagging of SPA there isn’t much information available on SPA movement and hence connectivity. The assumption is made that the assessed area represents a suitable stock unit. This assumption is comparable to that for other Commissions assessed stocks, being modelled with the assumption that they are WCPO stocks.
6. Following a query about different flagged fleets showing differences in CPUE, it was explained that these differences are often explained in the operational data and are factored in the modelling.
7. The trend of CPUE in the Pacific Ocean that was presented at SC13, showed high levels of fishing pressure around the New Caledonia EEZ. It was noted that some territories e.g. New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Samoa and American Samoa rely on SPA for their domestic market, and SPA has an important role in food security. The American Samoa LL fishery was especially noted to be in a poor state, close to collapse, even against a background of relatively low fuel costs. In the past American Samoa had 70 fishing vessels [40 small and 30 large], the fishery has dwindled to 1 small and 15 large fishing vessels.
8. In summary, SC 13 noted that SPA is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.
9. The results of stock projection analyses assuming 2015 fishing effort levels continued into the future indicated there was a 7% risk of falling below the LRP in 2033. Previous projection analyses had indicated that, based upon the fishing effort of 2013, the risk of falling below the LRP in 2033 was 20%. This difference arises because fishing effort has declined between 2013 and 2014, so we may expect the result next year may be more positive. It was queried how these large annual fluctuations in the risk are considered in future management.
10. SPC noted that previous projections were based on different effort levels and the projections varied accordingly. For example, due to the lower effort level in 2015, assuming that level of effort continued into the future, the resulting stock decline was lower. If the catch levels for a particular year, rather than effort levels, are used in the projections, the outcomes would be more pessimistic. However, recent catches aren’t currently used within the projections since there is less confidence in catch data coverage for, for example, 2016.
11. It was also noted that for some flag states, SPA are caught as bycatch for boats targeting other species such as South Pacific Bluefin.
12. It was observed that over time SPC had presented various levels of MSY, and examples were given with the corresponding catch which was consistently lower than MSY. Hence it was queried why there was an apparent urgency to develop a TRP for SPA.
13. SPC explained that there were changes in the assessment over time which led to variability in MSY, and furthermore the geographic area assessed has changed between assessments. In turn, recent assessments have presented a better encapsulation of the uncertainty than previous assessments, and hence provide a wider range of MSY values. SPC also noted that the value of MSY is challenging to estimate. It is influenced by the selectivity of the gears operating, but also by the assumptions made on the form of the stock recruitment relationship, which as scientific committee has noted is highly uncertain. This is one reason SC has moved away from considering MSY-based levels for limit reference points, and adopted depletion estimates which are considered more robust to this uncertainty. It was also noted that SPA longline fisheries target the adult stock, and MSY is consistent with an adult stock at 14% of unfished levels. In turn, when the stock is at MSY, there is a very high probability (76%) that the stock will be below the adopted LRP. At the current fishing levels, projections indicate that the stock will decline but not to 14%.
14. It was suggested that stock variability (and estimates thereof) is one of the reasons why our focus should be on catch rates and economics as the basis for setting target reference points rather than MSY.
15. It was felt by some that using MSY as a TRP facilitated a Commission objective of optimal utilisation of the stock. Economics are hard to control at the RFMO level. Competition should be considered a reality and if old [traditional/inefficient] fishing methods are non-competitive, perhaps a mechanism should be devised to support traditional methods. It was important that new technology should not be excluded from the fishery on purely on the grounds that some fleets without that technology were uncompetitive.
16. Wez Norris (FFA) provided a summary of cost structures for the southern longline fishery; this is found at Attachment E. SC13 paper ST-WP-08 was referenced in the presentation.
17. In response to a query on the metrics used for the labour costs, it was explained that non-fuel costs, including labour, were derived from 3 studies of LLs fishing for SPA, where each quantified the proportion of overall costs that were fuel and non-fuel. An additional complexity arises when considering labour cost, given the tendency for some more developed flag states to use labour from other countries.
18. Regarding the cost per hook estimates in the previous SPC presentation, the average price per hook was the best estimate put together by SPC and FFA in 2013; it was recognised that there are clear differences between the operational costs of some fleets as expressed in cost per hook metrics and that was why three different levels of cost per hook were used in the analysis. The cost per hook included all for all species taken in the SLL south of 10 degrees south of the equator, i.e. catches of yellowfin and bigeye tuna were among the species included in the analysis.
19. The highly variability of costs between fleets that makes averaging such data problematic; hence the current push to obtain more economic data.
20. A statement on behalf of FFA members noted that there is a trending deterioration in the economic conditions of the fishery; of the three main contributing factors to this trend, fuel costs, fish prices and CPUE, the latter is the only one that can be controlled. Any improvement to CPUE would have a significant positive impact. This is against a background of investment opportunities being constrained in ‘hard’ times.
21. Following a query on the important consideration of fuel prices in relation to fishing fleet profitability, it was queried why averages were derived over such a long period [>30 years], rather than more recent years. It was explained that whilst fuel prices are low now and are offsetting the relatively low catch rates, it should not be assumed that these prices will persist. During the previous peak years, the fishery was supported/mitigated by higher catch rates. The long time line simply helps us understand where we are now with respect to the relate contributions of cost and catch rates to profitability compared with the average over previous years.
22. SPA catch rates are strongly declining and the economic situation is poor in the large EEZ of French Polynesia where a relatively low pressure domestic fishery contributes to food security. There is concern that fishing strategies will change with an expected move to larger vessels taking with further and longer trips with associated upgraded safety standards etc. This activity will inevitably drive down catch rates and the strong preference is to maintain the status quo and this can only work if the Commission takes appropriate action.
23. It was recognized that the index of fishing cost should be included in economic analyses, labour costs and labour conditions on SPA vessels are an important consideration.
24. The treatment of crew costs and welfare in economic analyses and subsequent management discussions/decisions are an issue for many participants There is an upcoming workshop in Honiara with ILO in the week commencing 9 October to develop minimum standards for crew etc.
25. 2004 and 2016 showed quite different economic conditions, although the profitability index is similar. The principle differences were due to the albacore price being slightly lower in 2004 with catch rates that were less negative than in 2016. Access fees etc. are built into the economics model, where they are assumed to be constant and are raised only with inflation; whereas oil prices fluctuate and are clearly not constant.
26. It was appreciated that the overall trends presented were more important than relatively minor considerations related to specific data and that currently, the fishery is reliant on relatively lost costs of operation due to the fuel price which is offsetting the relatively low catch rate.
27. The meeting was advised that the original paper provided a forecast that shows that economic conditions deteriorate, particularly as fuel prices increase – this analysis was was not presented

**AGENDA ITEM 3. HARVEST STRATEGY**

1. The WCPFC Secretariat presented on the progress of the harvest strategy for South Pacific albacore (Attachment E).
2. SPC provided a supplementary presentation on TRPs (Attachment D).
3. In response to a query from the floor, the WCPFC legal advisor summed up the significant relevant provisions of the WCPFC Convention regarding MSY and the degree to which decisions of the Commission were tied to achieving MSY. The Commission is expected to use the best available science to inform actions to maintain or restore stocks. MSY is qualified by relevant SIDS related factors, including the interests of artisanal and subsistence fishers. The precautionary approach is also referenced [UNFSA] and account should be taken of factors including environmental and socio-economic conditions. The limit reference point is biological, noting that it is a minimum not a maximum, and may be set at any level below MSY. However, the target reference point is based upon a management decision which should consider all relevant fishery objectives and in particular in the case of albacore, economic factors. Among a number of references to MEY in the the Convention and UNFSA, Article 5 b) of the Convention requires states to : ….maintain or restore stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors, including the special requirements of developing States.
4. In conclusion, it was noted that references to the treatment of MSY as a reference point in Convention and UNFSA allow for a degree of flexibility around the establishment of a TRP, based on economic and other relevant factors.
5. Following a query on whether the same process is used for SPA as was used for the SKJ TRP of 50%, it was explained that the 40%, 50% and 60% TRPs were all considered in the analysis used to inform the determination of an interim TRP for the PS fishery. The TRPs were measured against candidate fishery objectives, including the achievement of acceptable economic rates of return.
6. Against a background of fluctuations in annual fishing effort, the price of fish also fluctuates. Within the projections, future effort is relative to a given baseline, e.g. that in 2013, which provides an ‘anchor’ for subsequent analysis. Future effort within the projection can be related to this baseline level. It should be noted that the baseline selected for the projection does not affect the level of fishing mortality that provides MSY, nor the stock size that results (e.g. Fmsy and SBmsy, respectively).
7. Some members supported proceeding immediately with the setting of an interim TRP for SPA given the biological and economic status of the fishery. However, consensus was not reached, with others indicating that a TRP set this year would be premature against a background of improving knowledge of the fishery and a better understanding of MSY. Further a new stock assessment is due in 2018. Given that an interim TRP had already been set for SKJ, some members would like to see how that worked before moving on to set a TRP for other fisheries. It was also queried why there was an urgent need to set a TRP for SPA, rather than for bigeye tuna or yellowfin tuna. It may be possible to agree that SPA could be the second stock after SKJ to be the focus of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy work. In response, other members asked the group to focus on the SPA draft bridging measure within the harvest strategy approach, which they consider to be a priority.
8. The meeting was reminded of its previous commitment at the Commission to the Harvest Strategy Work plan which was now well behind schedule. On that basis the view was expressed that work on an albacore TRP should not be further delayed.

**AGENDA ITEM 4. KEY ISSUES**

1. Some members thought that there was a need to address economic issues against a background of potentially low catch rates, noting that actions will be harder to take when the fishery is in trouble, and they supported moving forward with the SPA HS elements.
2. Regarding the Tokelau Agreement, it was understood by some that there was an internal agreement to establish an interim TRP of 45%. Based on this 45% TRP [refer the excel sheet associated with the measure], the catch level to support that TRP would be 44k tons overall. However, a catch level of 70k tons has been suggested as a starting point for the albacore catch within zones (including the current version of the TKA Catch Management Agreement), leaving little room for any allocation for the high seas. The Tokelau Arrangement TRP was developed to influence WCPFC actions.
3. It was recognized by some that a catch limit should be set some time in the future, perhaps in 2 years, and a TRP could be set then. It was also thought that a 45% TRP seemed very high; it may be appropriate to set a TAC for fleets in the future as well as establish transferrable catch limits.
4. An alternative view suggested that perhaps a TRP could be set as early as next year.
5. The Cook Islands is establishing its own TAC, and started the process in 2011/12, which was before the advent of the Tokelau Arrangement. Have taken 9698 mt. as their initial TAC, Cook Islands are working towards “notional TRP” of around 7K mt.
6. However, others thought that SPA sustainability is a prime concern, and individual establishment of catch limits is somewhat hazy. A priority is to establish interim management measures.
7. A statement on behalf of FFA noted that appropriate objectives for this fishery are set out in the strawman document developed during the WCPFC MOW process. The fishery should be economically viable and to achieve that there is a need to build the spawning biomass to support higher catch rates. This in turn will provide greater stability and reduce variability in the fishery. Performance indicators presented by SPC show how the objectives outlined in the Strawman may be assessed within the Harvest Strategy framework.
8. There was a strong view that the establishment of an interim TRP in the short term is important and a new CMM is a good first step in the process. There is a need to maintain healthy stocks, associated catch rates that will provide for economic sustainability, Currently, as identified by SC13, the economic conditions in the fishery are poor and the American Samoan fishery struggling to survive at current catch rates was provided as an example of the economic challenges facing the SLL fishery.

**From the discussions, it was clear that there was strong support from some CCMs to move forward with development of a harvest strategy for SPA, including the establishment of an interim TRP. This view was based on the status of the albacore stock and the economic conditions of the fishery as presented by the SPC and FFA Secretariat. Other CCMs considered that there were a number of barriers to doing so, including a desire to see how the interim TRP for skipjack was operationalized and the high level of proposed zone-based catches relative to the prospective TRP of 45%.**

**Candidate Management Objectives on the screen**

1. The Facilitator recapped the discussion around the development of candidate management objectives derived from the MOW process and other sources, which were summarised in a presentation by New Zealand. The meeting was invited to add other objectives and consider how the wide range of candidate objectives (Presented in Attachment C slide 8 & Attachment F slides 5 & 6) could be condensed/summarized for inclusion in the draft CMM.

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| **The following list of objectives were agreed to represent reasonable set of overarching objectives for the fishery, noting that there is a need to define operational objectives to inform the establishment of a TRP and decision (control) rules.** |
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| * **Spawning biomass remains about the adopted limit reference point of 20% above that of unfished spawning biomass** |
| * **Maintain spawning biomass at a level that supports longline catch rates higher than the levels observed in recent years** |
| * **Manage the fisher in a way that prevents large inter-annular variations in catch and effort** |

1. The need for an objective to improve the welfare of fishermen was highlighted, given the poor working conditions experienced on some longline vessels. It was noted that as per the list of objectives presented by New Zealand, there were social objectives for the fishery, which could include the issue of crew welfare and be monitored. However, the issue is not one that fits into a form harvest strategy process in terms of establishing reference points and decision rules. Local on-shore employment was raised as another important fishery objective.

**AGENDA ITEM 5. DRAFT BRIDGING CMM**

1. The meeting was then invited to discuss the draft bridging measure for South Pacific albacore and provide advice on the components of the CMM including setting an interim limit and apportioning catch, facilitating cooperation, and how the CMM fits within the development of a harvest strategy.
2. The meeting had no issue with the summary objectives developed or their inclusion in the draft discussion CMM, noting that a somewhat refined list facilitates the testing of various management strategies and can help to provide values for any given concepts. It was thought, however, that the list of objectives should not be thought of as exclusive, recognising that other objectives may be added later.
3. It was noted that there are different classes of fisheries management objective. They may be classified as:

* **Overarching objectives** that are contained in the Convention
* **Fishery objectives** such as the three summary objectives to be included in the draft discussion CMM for SPA
* **Operational objectives** such as rebuilding a stock to a given level within a given time frame

1. It was noted that some economic objectives are SIDS centric, however these are not necessarily multilateral objectives that are shared by all CCMs. The challenge is to achieve management settings for the fishery that provide an acceptable outcome to parties to enable their agreement and implementation.
2. The WCPFC Chair clarified that objectives in the Harvest Strategy are recorded, not adopted. At the last Regular Session of the Commission, the southern longline fishery objectives were not discussed; for the purse seine fishery, the objectives were understood not to be binding but were intended to be used for MSE testing etc.
3. The ecosystem approach to fisheries management should minimize the catch of non-target spp. However, although SPA may be the main target spp. others are taken. It was suggested that there should be a reference to non-retention of non-landed species/non-commercial spp.
4. Others noted that non-target species, e.g. shark, may be commercially valuable in other parts of the WCPO.

**Consideration of Draft Discussion CMM**

1. It was noted that the version of the paper under review was posted on the previous evening, which does not allow sufficient time for proper consideration, review and sharing with government and stakeholders. Some members had tabled internal meetings based on the earlier circulated document, not on the last-minute revision posted the evening before the meeting.
2. To facilitate ease of reference between the draft CMM and the following discussions a cleaned version of the track change paper presented is found at Attachment H.
3. The facilitator noted that the meeting was not attempting to wordsmith the text. Just to get some reactions, impression and guidance for a proposal that will be made to WCPFC14 by NZ or FFA members. The main issue is to ensure that the key components of the CMM are in the document
4. Having potentially different management measures applying to the fishery i.e. catch limits for the SLL and effort limits (vessel days) for the TTL was somewhat confusing for some members. There was also difficulty for some members understanding the implications relate to the proposal having two catch limits – EEZ and High Seas.
5. New Zealand for FFA indicated that they had an expectation that the bridging measure would to be adopted this year.
6. Some participants thought it more appropriate to wait until next year when the document would have been properly reviewed., noting that there will be a new stock assessment for SPA in 2018 and everyone will be better informed.
7. There appears to be no justification for limiting the range of the measure to south of 20 degrees south and it was thought that the stock should be managed throughout its range. The Tokelau Arrangement establishing a voluntary catch limit of 70k t leaves little room for negotiation.
8. It was noted that the draft measure doesn’t mention relationships with chartering flags.
9. It was thought that SIDS could establish their own catch limits under the total catch limit, and these may be transferable between SIDS.
10. The draft document has to be posted 30 days before the Commission Meeting.
11. Comments were made earlier referencing a 70k ton limit were considered somewhat misleading, Tokelau arrangement limits may vary and have not been finalised, and they are not referenced in the measure.
12. In response to the concerns of some members, FFA indicated that there were no plans to change or impact the charter arrangements. Regarding the attribution of catches, it was intended to develop a system similar to that for purse-seines, where there is responsibility for management in separately for management in EEZs and on the high seas.
13. It was suggested that the title of the draft measure was too narrow and could be improved to better reflect the scope of the measure.
14. The measure is intended to establish both monitoring measures and limits.

**Purpose (Para 1)**

1. The term ‘zone-based’ as it was referred to in discussing catch and effort attribution to coastal states or territories was unclear to some members, and they were unsure how to explain the term to industry.
2. One member asked for the para 1 section iv to be removed.

**Principles for Application (Para 2)**

1. It was noted that where a stock extends into the E. Pacific it would be better to be considered Pacific wide rather than WCPO as in this revision. However, it was explained that this edit was made to reference the area where this group could directly influence management und the Convention. Some thought, given that the stock extends into the E Pacific, IATTC should align its measures to those of WCPFC and indeed, an action taken here could encourage IATTC to take a similar action

**Reference Points (Para 6)**

1. Given that there are longliners that may take some SPA as bycatch, it was suggested that the measure should state that it applied to “only vessels targeting albacore”. It was thought by some that it should be possible to identify SPA targeting vessels simply by having the relevant flag state submit a list identifying those vessels licensed to catch Albacore and which are known to be targeting SPA.
2. An alternative suggestion was to identify the boats that have a large (to be defined) proportion of SPA in the catch; and this would avoid issues when boats switch targeted spp.
3. It was explained that the CMM covers the whole stock, and would include the area between the equator and 10 degrees south, recognising that it is difficult to confirm if vessels are targeting SPA in that area.
4. SPC noted that there is no clear signal to indicate if a vessel is targeting for SPA within any given year; although for stock assessment, the provision of full operational data would allow for an analysis that would be better able to differentiate those vessels fishing for albacore.
5. Other parties preferred all catches of SPA to be considered in the measure.
6. It was generally agreed that the text should reference the stock south of the equator.
7. Some states thought that it would be difficult to take para 4 home and explain it to industry, particularly as it relates to chartering.
8. It was clarified that catches within EEZ should be attributed to the catching state as per the tropical tuna measure.

Noting that 97% of the SPA catch is by long liner, it was queried whether the measure should be limited to longliners, and ignore the troll elements of the fishery which has a small impact overall.

1. It was suggested to add the word ‘interim’ before ‘harvest strategy’.

**Management Objectives (Para 7)**

1. Discussed and agreed earlier starting para 57.

**Improved Longline and Troll Fishery Monitoring (Para 8)**

1. Noting that this was new text, some participants thought there was insufficient time to give the text due consideration.
2. New Zealand/FFA noting advice from the floor agreed to add the word ‘observer’ should be added to ‘Coverage’ under bullet 8d.
3. One member thought that a step might have been missed in that we should section 8 should cover the conduct of a gap analysis, which would recommend potential solutions. In support of that comment another member thought that some elements of para 8 would be hard for small scale fisheries, against a background of longliners targeting other species. It was further suggested that there should be more discussion before firming up a timeline for the proposed measures.
4. Concern was expressed by some regarding the lack of clarity regarding how different elements under the WCPFC would combine to improve SPA management.
5. There was also substantial of concern regarding proposed actions in relation the proposed use of new technology which has yet to be fully tested, e.g. e-monitoring and e-reporting. Which although supported for development at some point in the future are neither fully tested nor operational.
6. It was suggested that these measures should be considered place-holders to help planning for science and management etc. and would be phased in over time. Different time lines would also apply to their introduction to different elements of the fleet e.g. small vs large vessels.
7. Regarding para d, and for the record, Japan does not accept an increased observer coverage to 20%; another member noted that this part of the draft measure was clearly directed towards longliners and may not be appropriate for troll fisheries.

**Interim Limits and Proportional Shares (Paras 9 & 10)**

1. It was noted that delegations were unable to agree to this part of the CMM
2. Concern was expressed regarding the way the measure was currently drafted to develop separate allocations for the EEZ vs High Seas. At least one member had an issue with an associated footnote which was considered to offer a loophole for additional fishing. It would be preferential to develop a TAC and then later try to agree allocations
3. At least one SIDS wanted to keep the footnote
4. If there was a single overall TAC then there would be no need to consider allocations and transferability.
5. NZ/FFA noted that the footnote essentially said that there would be no limits for SIDS fleets. SIDS would be able to charter boats on to the high seas but would not have a high seas limit.
6. One member suggested that there should be a mechanism to manage changes in fishing behavior, especially regarding fishing location. There was thought to be a lot more variation in fishing behavior in the longline fishery compared to the purse seine fishery. Hence setting a single overall catch limit without allocation between zones and high seas would be the most sensible approach.
7. A counter argument was put forward that catch limits needed to be shared among CCM so that CCMs can be held accountable.
8. Confusion was expressed by members regarding the intention of the language used. It was queried whether there was a total catch limit in high seas or not - it seemed that there would be a catch limit to non-SIDS, but the exemption for SIDS on the high seas would not be part of a TAC.
9. It was noted that if the footnote was to me retained, it should be made clearer to avoid confusion.

**Compliance with previous CMMs (Para 11)**

1. The 20-degree south element was considered to be a problem and it was suggested that this paragraph should be deleted to be replaced an alternative paragraph indicating that “this measure should replace – 2015-02”. Fish stocks should be managed throughout their range and given that there is on scientific justification for the 20-degree south of the equator limit, China would not agree with the measure if this remained in the document.
2. The document should clarify that the term SIDS includes territories.

**Implementation (Para 12)**

1. A collective limit is hard to monitor and regulate, providing a rationale for allocation.

**Concluding remarks**

1. There was little disagreement that there was a need to take management action for SPA. The key disagreements revolved around the pace at which such action should take place and concern that the current perceived in-zone aspirational allocations were very high relative to likely TRP, leaving very limited fishing opportunities for other CCMs.

**AGENDA ITEM 6. NEXT STEPS**

1. NZ/FFA have noted the comments and would reflect them in the draft which will be prepared and submitted by 30 days of the upcoming WPCFC14.

**AGENDA ITEM 8. OTHER MATTERS**

1. It had been mooted that there might be a one day SPA meeting to progress this work before the Regular Session of the Commission in December. Some members indicated that they could not logistically be able to tag an additional day onto the beginning of the regular session. The Commission Chair indicted that, depending upon progress especially with regard to the tropical tuna measure, time may be allocated during the Commission Meeting to further discuss SPA.

**AGENDA ITEM 9. CLOSE OF MEETING**

1. On behalf of the Commission, the Chair thanked New Zealand and the Facilitator and declared the meeting closed.

**ATTACHMENTS**

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| **Attachment A** | List of Participants |
| **Attachment B** | Adopted Agenda |
| **Attachment C** | Presentation by NZ/FFA outlining the draft interim measure for SPA |
| **Attachment D** | Presentation by SPC-OFP on the status of SPA stocks and relevant outputs from SC13. |
| **Attachment E** | Presentation by the FFA on the economic condition of the southern longline fishery |
| **Attachment F** | Presentation by the WCPFC Secretariat on the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Process in relation to SPA |
| **Attachment G** | Consultative Draft – Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Limit for South Pacific Albacore Rev 1 **Track Change** (3 October 2017) |
| **Attachment H** | Consultative Draft – Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Limit for South Pacific Albacore Rev 1 **Track Change ACCEPTED** (3 October 2017) |