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REGULAR SESSION**
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**WWF Communique of a Civil Society Organisations Round Table
on Pacific Tuna Fisheries**

**WCPFC15-2018-OP14
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**Submitted by
WWF**



COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE-DAY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSO) ROUND TABLE ON PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES, WHICH WAS HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER 2018 AT THE WWF-PACIFIC REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN SUVA, FIJI. THE CONSULTATION WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP A CSO POSITION TO WCPFC15 WAS HELD WITH SUPPORT FROM THE FFA OFMP II PROJECT.¹

Background

Tuna species are highly migratory and require international collaboration to ensure their sustainability. The WCPFC has the mandate to ensure well-managed tuna populations can provide economic security and livelihoods for many countries, particularly the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). To ensure the sustainable management of this economically valuable natural resource provides equitable benefits for Pacific Island people, it is essential that civil society representatives have a voice in all parts of the decision making process.

The decisions made by the 15th Regular Session of the WCPFC will not only influence the future of tuna and other highly migratory fish stocks and associated species in the WCPO, these decisions will directly shape the future of people and communities working in and derive their livelihood from the fishery.

The outcomes of the WCPFC15 deliberations must continue progress toward achieving the goals of the Pacific Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries including improving overall sustainability for the four key tuna species, safeguarding food security, value, employment opportunities, and safety of those working in the fishery and associated industries. A resilient and sustainable tuna fishery also contributes to safeguarding and enhancing the resilience of the Pacific Islands region to the impacts of climate change.

Representatives of Pacific-based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) convened a roundtable meeting on 21st November 2018 to discuss upcoming issues at WCPFC15. CSOs representatives included the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation (PIANGO), Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO), Women in Fisheries Network (WiFN), Pacific Dialogue Limited (PDL), Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), Suva District Council of Social Services (DCOSS) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

The safety and basic human rights of fishing crew, marine pollution, transparency and accountability of the Commission were highlighted as concerns by the Round Table, without losing sight of the importance of the sustainability of the WCPFC's tuna resource.

We express our particular concern over South Pacific Albacore. The sustainability and economic viability of this fishery is of particular importance for those PSID Coastal State members that depend on the domestic fishery for their livelihoods and economic opportunities.

ISSUES

CSO representatives agreed that some of their concerns raised at previous sessions of the Commission have not been sufficiently addressed. As such, the following issues have been identified as of primary importance to be considered by WCPFC15:

1. Urgency for collective agreement to establish a target reference point (TRP) for South Pacific Albacore tuna at WCPFC15 without any further delay.
2. Limited observer participation and the need for greater transparency in the Commission's decision-making process to ensure sufficient accountability and openness in the management of our tuna resource.
3. The need for greater observer coverage in the longline fishery to ensure the accuracy and adequacy of data enhances the Commission's ability to effectively manage the tuna fishery sustainably. Limited observer coverage limits the ability to monitor compliance with conservation and management measures.
4. Controlling high seas catch, effort, capacity and associated activities in particular, at sea transshipments. In addition, the use of FADs and the impacts to coastal

communities and small-scale fisheries and fishers must be taken into consideration in deliberations on FAD management.

5. Safe working conditions and well-being of fishing crew and of fisheries observers, and the documentation and supporting mechanisms for reporting of incidences while they are at sea.
6. Impacts on the wider oceanic environment of marine pollution from fishing vessels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Organisations that participated at the November 2018 CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna Fisheries support the sustainable utilization of tuna resources in the WCPFC Convention Area and the equitable distribution of returns to benefit all including PICs domestic industrial fishers and local coastal communities thereby safeguarding their food and economic security.

We, the 2018 CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna Fisheries participants call on the Tuna Commission to:

1. Ensure safe and decent working conditions of fishing crew and fisheries observers operating in the Convention Area. We strongly support FFA's draft *Resolution on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels* and urge CCMs to adopt the Resolution which builds on progress for addressing observer safety and is a step toward ensuring that appropriate labour conditions for both crew and fisheries observers are put in place. In addition there is a need to improve requirements and avenues for reporting of incidents involving crew safety to ensure accountability, transparency and to inform future management of this issue. Furthermore we urge CCMs to take the necessary steps to adopt and implement the ILO Convention No. 188 or *ILO – Work in Fishing Convention, 2007* (No.188) that came into force on 16th November 2017 including related instruments.
2. Without any further delay, establish a target reference point (TRP) for South Pacific Albacore tuna that will accomplish objectives to ensure the long-term sustainability, productivity and social benefits of the fishery.

3. Improve transparency of the WCPFC proceedings to ensure consistency with Article 21 of the Convention. The Commission should consider the following:
 - a. Allow WCPFC observers access to all sessions of the WCPFC including matters relating to Compliance;
 - b. Ensure WCPFC observers are included in the final Terms of Reference for a Science-Management dialogue.
 - c. Review the decision regarding the participation fees for WCPFC observers. Fees should not prohibit participation of CSOs from developing countries.
4. Increase the number of fisheries observers on board longline fishing vessels operating within the Commission's jurisdiction to ensure improved catch data, reporting and compliance with regulations. Furthermore, CCMs must continue to facilitate the uptake of electronic monitoring systems, along with standards that are consistent and compatible in use and practice particularly on the high seas, to complement the work of fisheries observers as a means to ensure full observer coverage on all longline fishing vessels is achieved.
5. We recommend prohibiting at sea transshipments particularly on the high seas given the challenges of effectively monitoring transshipments on the high seas and recommend that transshipments take place in port. CCMs must also take the necessary steps to implement *CMM 2017/02 Conservation and Management Measure on Minimum Standards for Port State Measures* in order to strengthen efforts to combat IUU fishing. We encourage CCMs to conduct more port inspections particularly on vessels suspected of being involved in IUU fishing activities.
6. CCMs should take the necessary steps to implement *CMM 2017/04 Conservation and Management Measure on Marine Pollution* in particular prohibiting the discharging of any plastics and we call for further action to prohibit the deliberate abandonment of fishing gear currently not covered under *CMM 2017/04*.
7. Continue progressing, without delay, the development and adoption of robust and comprehensive harvest strategies including key elements, for all major tuna stocks.

Conclusion

We, the CSO representatives at the CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna that met in November 2018 wish to thank the Commission for the opportunity to table our joint concerns.

We continue to emphasise that the concern about the sustainability of the tuna resource is a concern that is shared by the CSO Round Table. We also care as it not only translates to economic security of our nations, private and public sectors, communities, and families, but also to social, cultural, health, biological and environmental securities that need to be addressed in this and future deliberations of the Commission. We remain hopeful that the outcomes from WCPFC15 will reflect this.

The following organisations hereby endorse this communiqué:



Pacific Islands Association of
Non-governmental Organisations | *Association Des Ongs
Desiles Du Pacifique*



The Locally-Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Network



Abbreviations

CCMs	-	Cooperating Commission Members
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
DCOSS	-	District Council of Social Services
EEZ	-	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAD	-	Fish Aggregation Device
FCOSS	-	Fiji Council of Social Services
FFA	-	Forum Fisheries Agency
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
IUU	-	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
OFMP II	-	Oceanic Fisheries Management Project II
PDL	-	Pacific Dialogue Limited
PIANGO	-	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation
PIPSO	-	Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation
PSIDS	-	Pacific Small Island Developing States
SPC	-	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TRP	-	Target Reference Point
WCPFC	-	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCPFC15	-	15 th Regular Session of the Commission
WCPO	-	Western and Central Pacific Ocean
WIFN	-	Women in Fisheries Network
WWF Pacific	-	World Wide Fund for Nature Pacific