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**EU Proposal for a Resolution on the Best Available Science**

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**EU PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE**

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

RECOGNIZING the importance of sound scientific advice as the centre piece for the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in line with international law and recommendations and the needs of the WCPFC Scientific Provider;

AWARE that the availability of adequate scientific information is fundamental to carrying out the objectives of the WCPFC Convention laid down in its Article 2;

RECALLING that in accordance with Article 5 of the WCPFC Convention, CCMs shall adopt measures to ensure long-term sustainability of highly migratory fish stocks in the Convention Area based on the best scientific evidence available,

CONSCIOUS of the vulnerability of developing States, in particular SIDS and Territories, which are dependent on the sustainable exploitation of marine living resources, and therefore on availability of best science,

NOTING the role of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP) which is contracted to provide independent scientific advice;

NOTING the role the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) which provide scientific advice for the northern stocks;

RECOGNIZING the limited financial resources of small island developing coastal States and Territories and wishing to assist in building their scientific capacity;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to improve the availability and quality of data used for the provision of scientific advice, including on bycatch and discards;

BUILDING on the deliberations and recommendations of the Kobe process;

NOTING the Review of the Performance of the WCPFC and the recommendations related to the quality and provision of scientific advice;

*Resolves in accordance to articles 5, 10, 12, and 13 of the Convention to:*

1. Take all measures which would be appropriate:
  - i. To improve the communication between CCMs, CNMs, the WCPFC, SPC-OFP, ISC, scientific experts by enabling a continuous dialogue, for example, through the use of electronic discussion groups and tele-/video-conferencing;
  - ii. To improve the collection and submission of data to SPC-OFP and ISC, including on bycatches;
  - iii. To support research programs and projects supporting the work of WCPFC SPC-OFP and ISC;
  - iv. To facilitate participation in meetings of the Scientific Committee, as well as in other relevant scientific bodies, of scientists with suitable scientific qualifications from all CCMs;
  - v. To promote the scientific collaboration between WCPFC and IATTC,
  - vi. To contribute to the training of scientific researchers, including young scientists.
2. Preserve and promote the professional independence and excellence of the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC, and the relevance of their work to the information needs of the WCPFC, by:
  - i. Enhancing the participation of scientists in meetings of the Scientific Committee, including scientists involved in other tuna RFMOs and other relevant scientific bodies;
  - ii. Promoting the collaboration of scientists with SPC-OFP and ISC;
  - iii. Drafting a code of conduct for the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC, for adoption by the WCPFC. For this purpose, the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC may develop rules to avoid conflict of interests, to ensure the quality, relevance and professional independence of scientific activities and, where applicable, to maintain the confidentiality of the data used;
  - iv. Drafting a strategic plan for the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC for adoption by the WCPFC. The strategic plan shall be used to guide the work of the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC in assisting the WCPFC to effectively achieve its mandate.

- v. Ensuring that relevant, professionally independent and objective scientific advice, based on the best available and peer-reviewed scientific analysis, is presented by the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC to the WCPFC;
  - vi. Ensuring that sources and history of revisions of all documents submitted to and assessed by the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC are fully documented;
  - vii. Providing clear, transparent, and standardized formats for the provision of advice to the WCPFC;
  - viii. Providing for well-defined rules for formulating scientific advice to the WCPFC, reflecting different views while striving for consensus, to promote consistency and transparency;
  - ix. Ensuring that the key role of the Scientific Committee in reviewing the plans, proposals and research programs of WCPFC, as well as reviewing any relevant assessments, analyses, research or work, as well as recommendations prepared for the Commission by SPC-OFP and ISC prior to consideration of such recommendations by the Commission as established by Article 12 of the WCPFC Convention is respected;
3. Strengthen peer review mechanisms within the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC by participation of invited experts (e.g. from other RFMOs or from academia), particularly for stock assessments. These outside experts shall be subject to the data confidentiality rules and procedures currently applicable in the WCPFC.
  4. Continue to support the Scientific Committee, SPC-OFP and ISC's initiatives to publish its scientific findings in the scientific peer-reviewed academic literature.
  5. With the aim of meeting the above-mentioned objectives, consider broadening financial support and mechanisms, including *inter alia*, contributing to the "Voluntary Contributions Fund", for the purpose of the implementation of this Resolution, in particular to:
    - i. Contribute to the scientific capacity building of the small island developing States and Territories and to enhance their effective participation in the work of the Scientific Committee;
    - ii. Provide necessary resources for the Scientific Committee.

## Explanatory Memorandum

### EU PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

Sound scientific advice is the centre piece for the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Western Pacific Ocean and is fundamental to carrying out the objectives of the WCPFC Agreement, in particular for optimum management and conservation of the resources. It is therefore necessary that the WCPFC scientific providers are in a position to deliver the best available scientific advice for the optimal management of WCPFC stocks.

This recommendation outlines actions necessary to preserve and promote the independence and excellence of the scientific providers by, inter alia, securing independent and objective input, improving the quality of presentation of the scientific results to the managers, and strengthening peer review mechanisms.

Moreover, improved communication between managers and scientists, enhanced collection and submission of data to carry out scientific work, development of new research projects and capacity building are all essential elements for strengthening the scientific work.

An enhanced, effective participation of scientists in the work of the scientific providers from all CCMs will ensure that quality data is readily available on by-catch and discards. Such participation will also facilitate regular assessments of WCPFC performance, including the work of the scientific provider.

In this context, it is vital to define a clear framework emphasising the use of the best available science within the WCPFC.