

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL
PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION'S TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE
COMMITTEE**

Brisbane, Australia

28 September – 3 October 2006

**OPENING STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF
THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY (FFA)**

1. Mr Chairman, I am making this statement on behalf of the 17 members of the Forum Fisheries Agency.
2. Firstly, let me thank our host Australia for the excellent arrangements for the meeting and the WCPFC Secretariat for the documentation and preparations for the meeting.
3. At the outset, let me assure you Mr Chairman that we will be working closely with you and the Commission Secretariat and with other delegations to make sure that we achieve the task that has been set for us over the next six days. The TCC has a full agenda and the schedule of meetings for the next few days will be taxing especially on small delegations. As we noted at the Heads of Delegations meeting last evening, we are concerned that the indicative schedule is too extensive and may not allow adequate space for our members to caucus at the margins of the meeting. The change to the daily start time is therefore much appreciated. However, in acknowledging this concession we also ask that consideration be given to ensuring that smaller delegations are not unduly disadvantaged by programming concurrent activities during the remainder of the meeting. Also in that connection, we would ask that some prioritisation be given to the agenda items so that agenda items likely to require more deliberation can be considered early on in the proceedings.
4. Mr Chairman, Article 14 establishes the three functions of the TCC and it is important that we address all of these functions. TCC1 endorsed a work programme for this Committee that prioritises areas for focus. Given the tight timetable for this meeting there is a need to prioritise the items under each function to ensure we fulfil our role as a Committee.
5. In respect of the implementation of the Commissions' MCS measures TCC1's work programme included the establishment of standards, specifications and procedures for the operation of a vessel monitoring system; defining and establishing an MCS component of the Commission observer programme; and establishing procedures for high seas boarding and inspections. In terms of the function to provide information and technical advice we consider the item on the mitigation of by-catch as being important. In respect of monitoring and review of compliance with conservation and management measures we should give priority to the items on authorisation to fish and the further development of the Annual Reporting template.

6. FFA members see these areas as being of great importance and priority and want to see real progress made at this session on recommendations that can be forwarded for consideration and adoption at the third session of the Commission. FFA members also attach importance to the other programmes, however, we see these issues as being fundamental in terms of the priority that should be given to their finalisation. In this regard, FFA members hope that real progress can be made at this TCC meeting and we will work closely with other delegations to ensure substantive progress is made on these issues.

7. Mr Chair, FFA Members will be making specific proposals on how we would like the Commission regional observer programme to work. Although we appreciate the work that the Secretariat and the consultant have done on this issue, we are concerned about a number of aspects of the consultant report which might affect the progress of consideration of this issue at this session of TCC. However, we as a group are well prepared on this matter and look forward to making an active contribution with other delegations to progress this issue. We would also make proposals on how we would like the Commission VMS operate taking into account the Consultant report and requirements of the FFA members.

8. Mr Chairman, the TCC will recall that with respect to the catch documentation scheme, the Commission at its second regular session noted concerns expressed by a number of Members pertaining to the proposal only requiring the documentation of traded products rather than all catch. In this regard, it was agreed that concerned members should work inter-sessionally with Japan to develop a more comprehensive scheme covering all catch for consideration at the third session of the Commission. FFA Members will be circulating a proposed scheme before the Commission Meeting in Apia in this regard and would also like to progress it through the joint meeting of regional fisheries management bodies in Japan early next year.

9. FFA members were also looking forward to make significant progress on some of the other issues like boarding and inspection; transshipment monitoring; and a commission charter scheme. We regret to note that there had been significant proposals that had been tabled by some delegations at the last minute that our members would need significant time to consider before we could provide constructive comments on those proposals and a way forward. With limited time available to our members to caucus on these proposals because of the tight schedule ahead we would find ourselves in a difficult position to progress these issues. But we would assure the meeting that we would make all efforts to progress these issues as far as we can.

10. FFA Members will also be making specific proposals on other agenda items and we would do so when those agenda items are being considered.

11. Mr. Chairman, FFA Members look forward to working constructively with you and other Members of the TCC in ensuring a successful Meeting.

Thank you

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