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Letter from General Tuna Corporation (GENTUNA) on Harvest Strategies

WCPFC22-2025-OP23

29 November 2025

Submitted by The Philippines

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To the Esteemed Members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

Subject: *Support for Steady Progress on Harvest Strategies and Control Rules for Skipjack, Yellowfin, and Bigeye Tuna*

Dear Esteemed Members,

Warm greetings from the Philippines.

On behalf of General Tuna Corporation (GENTUNA), we express our appreciation for the Commission's continued work to protect and sustain tuna stocks across the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

GENTUNA leads the GENTUNA Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) for skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna purse seine fisheries operating in High Seas Pocket 1 (HSP1). Our company is a member of the Tuna Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (TMAP), and our participating fishing operators are members of the South Cotabato Purse Seiners Association (SOCOPA), both of which are active members of Socskargen Federation of Fishing and Allied Industries Inc. We remain committed to responsible and sustainable fishing practices that support the long-term health of tuna stocks and the communities that rely on them.

Acknowledging Scientific Progress

We welcome the results of the 21st Meeting of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC21), which reported continued progress in developing harvest strategies for tropical tunas. In particular, SC21 highlighted:

- updated science for skipjack, confirming the need to follow the agreed management procedure
- steady progress on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work for yellowfin and bigeye tuna, including the testing of possible harvest control rules
- the importance of improving data, especially for bigeye, which remains close to its management limits

These developments are important for our purse seine fisheries in HSP1, especially as we work to strengthen data reporting, monitoring, and compliance under our FIP.

Our Appeal to the Commission

As WCPFC22 meets in Manila this December, we respectfully ask the Commission to continue moving forward with the development of harvest strategies and control rules for tropical tunas.

Specifically, we appeal to the Commission to:

1. Continue advancing Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) and Target Reference Points (TRPs)

These tools will help secure stable, science-based management for skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna in the long term.

2. Prioritize the bigeye harvest strategy

Because bigeye remains near important limit levels, completing the MSE work and HCR testing is essential for precautionary management.

3. Strengthen mixed-fishery MSE work

For purse seine operations, it is important that models reflect actual fishing conditions, including FAD sets, free-school sets, skipjack targeting, and incidental catches of yellowfin and bigeye.

4. Support improvements in data, monitoring, and reporting

We reaffirm our commitment to vessel monitoring, observer coverage, electronic monitoring, accurate logbooks, and cannery data all highlighted in SC21 as areas that need continued attention.

5. Maintain a balanced and development-sensitive approach

We hope the Commission will continue considering the needs and realities of developing coastal states, including the Philippines, whose fleets depend on fair and workable management measures.

Why This Matters

For the GENTUNA FIP, progress on harvest strategies especially for bigeye directly affects our improvement scores, future market access, and long-term planning. A clear, science-based harvest strategy helps:

- protect our fishing access
- build confidence among canned tuna buyers
- support stable and predictable management decisions
- prepare our industry for future certification pathways

We thank the Commission, the Scientific Committee, and all members who work tirelessly to ensure the sustainable future of the region's tuna resources.

GENTUNA and our FIP partners stand ready to support the WCPFC's efforts and to continue improving our practices in line with regional and global sustainability standards.

Thank you very much for your continued leadership.

With sincere respect,



ROBERT MANANSALA
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