The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

Recalling that the Resolution on the Conservation of Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean approved by the IATTC at its 69th meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico, encouraged states and fishing entities with large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVS) to undertake initiatives similar to that of Japan, i.e. reduction by 20% of its fleet, in accordance with the FAO International Plan of Action,

Being aware with grave concern that, despite the above Resolution, the catch of bigeye tuna by LSTLVS and their fishing capacity are still growing in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), which for the purpose of this Resolution is the area bounded by the coastline of the Americas, the 40°N parallel, the 150°W meridian, and the 40°S parallel,

Having responsibility for the scientific study of the tunas and tuna-like fishes of the EPO, and for the formulation of recommendations to the High Contracting Parties with regard to these resources, and having maintained since 1950 a continuing scientific program directed toward the study of those resources,

Notes that the tuna resource of the EPO supports one of the most important surface fisheries for tunas in the world,

Recognizes that, based on past experience in the fishery, the potential production from the resource can be reduced by excessive fishing effort,

Notes that in the years from 1980 through 2002, excepting 1987, the Director recommended conservation measures to the Commissioners, and that in turn such measures were approved by the Commissioners for recommendation to their respective governments,

Believing that it is important to follow a precautionary approach when addressing conservation and management measures for the tuna resource of the EPO, and

Considering that the studies of yellowfin and bigeye tuna presented at this meeting show that, the current fishing effort (2000-2001 average) would be above the average maximum sustainable yield levels for both species if recruitment is strongly dependent on the amount of spawning.

Resolves:

1. That this resolution is applicable to 2003, except for paragraph 6, which is also applicable to 2004;
2. Pole-and-line and sportfishing vessels are not subject to this resolution.
3. That the fishery by purse-seine tuna-fishing vessels in the EPO be closed from 0000 hours on 1 December to 2400 hours on 31 December;
4. To discourage landings and commercial transactions in tuna or tuna products originating from
fishing activities prohibited by this resolution. The Director may provide relevant information to the Parties to assist them in this regard.

5. Each IATTC Party, cooperating non-party, fishing entity or regional economic integration organization (collectively “CPCs”) shall, for purse-seine fisheries:

5.1. On or before 1 October 2003, inform all interested parties in its national tuna industry of the closure, and send a copy of this notice to the Director.

5.2. Ensure that at the time the closure begins, and for the entire duration of the closure, all purse-seine tuna-fishing vessels flying its flag in the EPO are in port, except that vessels carrying an observer from the AIDCP On-Board Observer Program may be at sea provided they do not fish in the EPO.

5.3. Take the relevant measures and inform the Director of these on or before October 1, 2003.

6. That each CPC shall take the measures necessary to ensure that its total annual longline catch of bigeye tuna in the EPO during 2003 and 2004 will not exceed that in 2001. Each CPC with LSTLVs shall provide monthly catch reports to the Director.

7. This resolution shall not be considered to prejudice any future arrangements by the Commission for the conservation of bigeye tuna.

8. That the Commission shall, at its 71st Meeting, develop a long-term program for the conservation of bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the EPO.

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1 The Parties acknowledge that France, as a coastal State, is developing a tuna longline fleet on behalf of its overseas territories situated in the EPO.