

## **Statement by the Delegation of Guatemala**

### **At the Opening of the 4th Meeting of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group**

Good morning, Madame and Mr Co-Chairs,

The Delegation of Guatemala wishes to express its appreciation to the IATTC Secretariat for the commendable effort undertaken to organize this meeting under challenging circumstances related to funding and coordination, and to the Co-Chairs for their dedication, which, together with our collective commitment, gives us confidence that this meeting will be highly successful.

Guatemala takes this opportunity to refer to a matter that it considers fundamental. The importance of this Working Group is evident in light of the provisions of the Antigua Convention, which call for management approaches aligned with the principles and elements underpinning the Ecosystem Approach. This approach represents one of the most significant challenges for regional fisheries management organizations, as it highlights the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of fisheries management, drawing upon the multiple scientific disciplines—both natural and social sciences—that contribute to the effectiveness of our work.

For this Delegation, there is a structural and fundamental consideration. The IATTC operates through the integration of two clearly identifiable phases established under the Antigua Convention: first, a scientific cycle that develops through continuous interaction between the scientific staff and the delegations, culminating in the deliberations of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), from which the best available scientific information is provided to the Commissioners for the adoption of appropriate management decisions; and second, a management cycle that integrates all inputs received from scientists and managers through the relevant working groups and committees.

The Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group serves a purpose that, while not exclusively scientific, forms part of the essential elements that the Scientific Advisory Committee must consider because it directly affects scientific work and, in turn, should benefit from the deliberations of this Working Group. For this reason, while this Delegation acknowledges the provisions contained in paragraph 3 of Resolution C-22-06 regarding the possibility that matters reviewed by the Working Group may be submitted directly to the Commission, we understand that such circumstances arise only exceptionally, when those matters cannot be considered by the Scientific Advisory Committee, which is the body specifically mandated to review them. Likewise, those provisions do not preclude this Working Group from adopting specific measures to ensure that the issues addressed herein are reviewed

by the SAC, thereby preserving sound institutional discipline and the spirit of the Antigua Convention.

Consistent with the important agenda before us, Guatemala wishes to express its readiness to join the consensus reached by this Working Group, provided that all decisions and recommendations adopted are submitted to the SAC for timely consideration.

My Delegation respectfully requests that this statement be reflected in the official minutes of this meeting.