

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**90TH MEETING (RESUMED)**

La Jolla, California (USA)

12-14 October 2016

PROPOSAL IATTC-90 I-1A**SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES****RESOLUTION ON IMPROVING OBSERVER SAFETY AT SEA****EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

Rationale: Observer programs collect data essential to the functions of the Commission and the safety of observers is critical to their ability to perform their duties. There are no established requirements for safety equipment for IATTC observer programs, and these requirements vary among the national observer programs. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission adopted minimum standards to improve observer safety at sea at its meeting in December 2015.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

Taking into account that observers collect data that is essential to the functions of the Commission and that the safety of observers is critical to their ability to perform their duties;

Recognizing that certain IATTC resolutions require longline, purse-seine, and transshipment vessels to carry observers;

Concerned about the lack of safety equipment requirements for IATTC observer programs and by the variability in these requirements among the national observer programs; and

Considering that consistent safety requirements should apply to all observers operating within the legal and institutional framework of the IATTC;

Agrees that:

1. All IATTC observer programs, including the Regional Observer Program for transshipment, the national observer programs for longline vessels, and any future observer program established by the IATTC, shall ensure that, when observers embark on a vessel for a trip, they are provided with (1) an independent two-way satellite communication device, and (2) a waterproof personal life-saving beacon. This may consist of a single device, such as a "Satellite Emergency Notification Device", or a combination of an independent two-way satellite-based device, such as a satellite telephone, and a portable lifesaving beacon, such as a Personal Locator Beacon or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon. These devices must be approved by the IATTC.
2. All IATTC observer programs must have a designated person or persons responsible for monitoring the signal from the observers' satellite communication devices at all times.
3. All IATTC observer programs must have an established procedure for a designated person or persons to contact the observer, the vessel, and, if necessary, the competent authority of the Member or Cooperating Non-Member with jurisdiction over the vessel; this procedure must clearly describe the steps that must be taken in the event of various emergencies, including situations where an observer is assaulted, intimidated, interfered with or harassed while on board a vessel and/or the observer requests to be removed prior to the conclusion of the fishing trip.
4. All national observer programs must provide safety training for observers, which must at a minimum meet the International Maritime Organization (IMO) safety training standards.

5. This Resolution shall enter into force on 1 January 2018.