

ATTN: Heads of IATTC Delegation

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Dear Delegates,

The participating vessel owners and industry participants of fishery improvement projects (FIPs)<sup>1</sup> of tuna purse seiners in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (OPAGAC and TUNACONS) would like to communicate what they consider to be priority actions and objectives discussed at the next IATTC Commission meeting, beginning on August 24, 2018.

These priority actions are reflected in the FIP action plans and address harvest control rules, monitoring control and surveillance, scientific advice, compliance, management of Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD), and multilateral cooperation:

### **Assessments of stocks of tropical tunas**

- We request that the staff of IATTC consider the following recommendations in future stock assessments of tropical tunas with the objective of reducing uncertainty: i) incorporate indices of abundance from alternative fisheries, in particular indices developed by using catch-and-effort data from Japan and other fleets combined, along the lines of what IOTC has done in recent assessments; ii) continue the joint IATTC-WCPFC work to harmonize relevant input data and procedures used for the stock assessments of shared stocks, in particular bigeye tuna; iii) implement a large-scale tuna tagging programme in cooperation with the WCPFC; iv) proceed with the management strategy evaluation work.
- We recommend that the scientific staff of the IATTC consider setting the collection and validation of catch-and-effort data from longline fleets operating in the EPO as a priority of its science plan in order to improve the information used in the assessments of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna.

### **Management measures of tropical tunas**

- We recommend that the IATTC scientific staff consider conducting an evaluation of the impact of the existing management measures on the status of stocks for which the staff recommends new management measures and presents the results to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), including the reasons why the existing measures are thought inefficient. This work should follow guidelines recommended by the SAC and shall contemplate the existing management framework, presented in IATTC's Resolution 17-02.

### **Harvest Control Rules**

- IATTC to progress towards the consolidation, by 2020 at the latest, of the Harvest Control Rules it is using to manage the main market species (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tunas). Finalize the ongoing Management Strategy Evaluation for tropical tunas and for IATTC members to work towards

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<sup>1</sup> OPAGAC Global Tuna FIP <http://opagac.org/en/fip/>; <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/eastern-pacific-ocean-tropical-tuna-purse-seine-opagac>  
TUNACONS <http://www.tunacons.org/responsive/tunafip.html>; <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/eastern-pacific-ocean-tropical-tuna-purse-seine-tunacons>

consensus on management objectives and allocation criteria so that the *ad-hoc* HCR currently in place is made explicit and formally adopted by the Commission.

### **Monitoring Control and Surveillance**

- IATTC to consider a plan to gradually increase observer coverage on poorly monitored fleets, including the following two main objectives:
  - Extend observer coverage: attain by 2020 levels of coverage by human observers or Remote Electronic Monitoring such as CCTV at or above 20% of the fishing operations for all longline and small purse seine vessels (below category 6) in the IATTC record of authorized vessels, as recommended by Scientific Committees of other RFMOs.
  - Electronic Monitoring Systems: Observer programmes are a key component of the sustainable management of tuna fisheries in the EPO. For class 6 purse seiners, IATTC a 100% observer coverage, whilst only 5% for the longline fleet. For the longliners, such coverage should be of at least 20%, as with the current one it is not possible to obtain good impact estimations of the fishing gear on some sensitive species, since the possibility of collect interaction data is extremely low. In cases where there is no possibility to have a human observer (i.e. lack of space onboard), then these fleets shall adopt EMS.

### **Scientific Advisory Committee**

- IATTC to consider formalizing the role of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and empowering of the SAC as the only body responsible for the review, adoption, and generation of scientific recommendations and scientific advice to the Commission.

### **Commission Contracting Parties Compliance**

- The implementation of a scheme of sanctions that works efficiently to curb non-compliance from IATTC Members. And strengthening of reporting tools and capacity building activities for longline and small-scale fisheries.

### **FAD Management**

- Through the FAD working group, IATTC and their CPCs to agree and develop a comprehensive FAD management strategy to minimize their ecological impacts and properly manage and monitor fishing activities from all fleets fishing on FADs. IATTC should prioritize Pilots to test the use of biodegradable materials on FADs.

### **Harmonization**

- IATTC to continue working with other tuna-RFMOs, especially WCPFC, in a process of harmonization of measures and procedures on MCS, data collection, management and dissemination, and assessment and management of stocks. This work should be conducted under an agreed work plan among both RFMOs.

### Capacity management regional plan

- The growth in the last two decades of the fishing capacity of the tuna fleet that operates in the EPO, has caused that the current capacity of the fleet is greater than the optimum level recommended for the Eastern Pacific. . Thus, IATTC should continue working on the capacity management plan currently being developed and should consider all the support from different stakeholders and projects that may contribute to its development.

### Observer security onboard

- Considering the recent tragic events involving observers in both WCPFC and IATTC convention areas, particularly the loss of a transshipment observer in IATTC in September 2015, IATTC must establish urgently observer security rules, at least compatible with the ones adopted by the WCPFC in December 2016.

