

ON ENHANCING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN FISHERIES SCIENTISTS AND MANAGERS

SUBMITTED BY: MALDIVES AND MOZAMBIQUE, 1 MAY 2014

Explanatory Memorandum

The Kobe process began in 2007 and has played a key role in moving the tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (tRFMOs) towards more consistent science-based management approaches to ensure sustainability of the tuna resources. The process also provided impetus for all tRFMOs to engage in the process of the Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE) leading to the work of establishing stock reference points and harvest controls associated with the desired management objectives of the Commissions.

This drive towards achieving the goals of Kobe process is creating undue apprehension by many Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) particularly the developing coastal CPCs on understanding this process and the scientific results that it provides. The stock assessment outputs and interpretation of assessed quantities are often daunting for commissioners and managers who are not familiar with the modern stock assessment methods.

The existing working parties (such as the Working Party on Tropical Tunas) does not create conditions for effective communication and interpretation of the results to make participants understand the implications to the stock status and Conservation and Management Measures that is derived from them.

The Science Management Committee (SMC) proposed here is to create enabling conditions to bridge this gap. Specifically the SMC is dedicated fostering dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers, under guidance from the Commission. The Committee will also facilitate the dialogue on the management objectives that is now urgently required for the MSE work programme. The Committee is also expected to drive the capacity building activities that are now started by the IOTC Secretariat.

RESOLUTION 14/XX
ON ENHANCING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN FISHERIES SCIENTISTS AND MANAGERS

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

HAVING responsibility for the sustainable utilisation of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean;

RECOGNISING the need for action to ensure the achievement of IOTC objectives to conserve and manage tuna resources in the IOTC area of competence;

RECALLING that Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA), on the strengthening of existing organisations and arrangements;

NOTING recommendation 30 of the Performance Review Panel, adopted by the Commission as Resolution 09/01 *on the performance review follow-up* requesting that new guidelines for the presentation of more user-friendly scientific reports in terms of stock assessments should be developed;

RECALLING that the IOTC Scientific Committee has initiated a process leading to a Management Strategy Evaluation process to improve upon the provision of scientific advice on Harvest Control Rules (HCRs);

ACKNOWLEDGING that continuing dialog between scientists and managers is necessary to define appropriate HCRs for the IOTC tuna and tuna-like stocks;

CONSIDERING scientific advice provided by the Scientific Committee as the corner stone for establishing an effective management framework for stocks and fisheries under the purview of the IOTC;

RECOGNISING that the Commission has limited time during its annual Sessions to consider the level of detail contained within the annual report of the Scientific Committee, and that a dedicated Committee formed to assist in the synthesis of the SC recommendations and in particular on how they may be used to develop scientifically-based Conservation and Management Measures would be highly beneficial to the IOTC process;

HIGHLIGHTING the need to further enhance the dialogue between fisheries managers and scientists in the coming years in order to achieve the Agreement objectives in the most efficient and effective way;

STRESSING that such enhanced dialogue should, in particular, allow the Commission to focus on the establishment of management frameworks that take into account the recommended interim Target and Limit Reference Points, consistent with Resolution 13/10 *on interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework*, or any subsequent revision;

RECALLING that provisions laid down in Resolution 10/05 *on the establishment of a meeting participation fund for developing IOTC Member and Non-Contracting Cooperating Parties (CPC's)*, establishing a meeting participation fund should ease the attendance of fisheries scientist and managers from developing Contracting Parties and therefore contribute to an inclusive and participative dialogue;

EMPHASISING that the Commission management decisions should be based on the best available science independently developed by the Scientific Committee;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. A Science-Management Committee (SMC) dedicated to enhance the dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers is established under the following rules:

- a) The Commission shall select the Chair and Vice-Chair of the SMC;
 - b) The SMC shall meet in 2015, 2016 and 2017, prior to the respective Commission Annual Sessions;
 - c) The Commission shall review the work of the SMC at its Annual Session and also provide further direction to the Committee;
 - d) Meetings of the SMC shall be open to fisheries managers of Contracting Parties, Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Scientific advisers, Chair of the Scientific Committee and accredited observers;
 - i. Other experts may be invited depending on the topics to be discussed;
 - ii. The structure of the meetings shall include an open forum/dialogue.
 - e) Recommendations to the Commission shall be developed through Sessions of the SMC.
2. The Terms of Reference, including the objectives of the SMC shall include, but not be limited to:
- a) Enhancing communication and fostering mutual understanding between fisheries managers and scientists;
 - b) Promoting the efficient use of scientific resources and information;
 - c) Identifying potential improvements in IOTC science and management processes and research needs and priorities, in particular in the context of the Commission's science annual work programme;
 - d) Identifying capacity building activities, which enhance CPC understanding of the Science to Management process within the IOTC;
 - e) Establishing management strategies for the IOTC fisheries, which are consistent with the objectives of the IOTC Agreement, and ecosystem-based approach to fisheries (EAF) and a precautionary approach for the consideration of the Commission. Specifically, consideration of:
 - i. Data collection needs and priorities;
 - ii. Research needs and priorities;
 - iii. Overarching management objectives to guide the development of management strategies for the IOTC fisheries;
 - iv. Target and Limit Reference Points with reference to the use of interim B_{MSY} and F_{MSY} or other proxies as Target and Limit Reference Points as identified in Resolution 13/10 *on interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework* (or any subsequent revision);
 - v. Harvest Control Rules (HCRs), and associated probabilities of achieving these targets or limits, allowing, in particular, the implementation of a precautionary approach' as required by Resolution 13/10 *on interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework* (or any subsequent revision);
 - vi. Discuss risks to the fishery and the resource at these limit and target reference points in the context of different hypothetical HCR's and assessing the time and probability to rebuild stocks to the prescribed targets for stocks identified in Resolution 13/10 *on interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework* (or any subsequent revision);
3. The effectiveness of the SMC shall be reviewed at the Annual Session of the Commission in 2018.