



Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture
Male', Republic of Maldives

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19 June 2017

Mr. Alejandro Anganuzzi,
Executive Secretary (Interim),
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),
Le Chantier Mall,
Victoria Mahé,
Seychelles.

Dear Mr. Anganuzzi,

Warm greetings from the Maldives.

I take this opportunity to respond to the *Feedback Letter Regarding Compliance Issues* of the Maldives that were raised during the 14th Session of the IOTC Compliance Committee. The Committee raised twelve outstanding issues which clarifications was provided during the Session. However, as requested by the Commission Chair, I take this opportunity to put forward our comments and clarification in writing.

1. Has not reported the list of vessels for Tropical Tuna during 2006 as required by Resolution 15/11

As stated on previous occasions, a fishing vessel licensing scheme for the Maldivian vessels was established in 2010. Prior to 2010, a “life-time” registration scheme which did not require regular renewals was in effect. As a result data on fishing vessels is inconclusive for the year 2006. However, serious effort has been put into establishing a true list of fishing vessels fishing for tropical tunas in 2006 through secondary data etc. This list will be communicated to the Commission in due course.

2. Has not reported size frequency (Provisional) for the longline fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02

3. *Has not reported size frequency (Final) for the longline fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*
4. *Has not reported size frequency for the coastal fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*
5. *Has not reported size frequency for the surface fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*

Size frequency data are collected through an appropriate port sampling scheme in the Maldives. However, for 2014 this scheme has not been implemented to the full as planned due to capacity constraints both, human and financial. The new World Bank Project has identified resources for the next 5 years and we expect to improve the scale of the sampling activities. At the same time electronic observer systems has been identified as a potential solution to address the issue and the project will finally be underway this year. It is expected that a better data set would be provided as per the requirements of this resolution once the E-observer system is in place.

6. *Has not reported nominal catch on sharks to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 05/05*
7. *Has not reported catch and effort on sharks to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 05/05*
8. *Has not reported size frequency on sharks, as required by Resolution 05/05*

Shark species are protected by law in the Maldives and retention of sharks is also prohibited. All sharks that are caught have to be released alive wherever possible. Hence, catch and effort data is non-existent for Sharks caught by the Maldivian fishing fleet following the inception of longline fleet operated by the Maldives. Furthermore, it is not feasible for the longline fishing vessels to record size of sharks that are caught as sharks are immediately released when they are brought alongside the fishing vessel using de-hookers or line cutters. Maldives is looking at other way of addressing this recurrent issue of “non-compliance”.

9. *Has not fully implemented the requirements on IMO numbers for eligible vessels, as required by Resolution 15/04*

Measures have been put in place to ensure IMO numbers are reported to the secretariat in a timely and efficient manner. This information is now collected during the licensing stage for eligible vessels and are reported with information on AFVs.

10. *Has not implemented the observer scheme, no deployment as required by Resolution 11/04*
11. *Has not implemented the observer scheme, no observer coverage at sea for vessel > 24m, as required by Resolution 11/04*
12. *Has not implemented the observer scheme for artisanal landing, as required by Resolution 11/04*

13. Has not provided observer report, as required by resolution 11/04

This programme has not been implemented so far due to budgetary and human capacity constraints. An observer scheme that was put in place was not successful for reasons mentioned above and the new policy of the government is to implement an electronic observer systems to collect the information as required by the Resolution. A pilot project on establishing e-observer is to commence this year with a plan of gradually expanding the scope in order to achieve the full requirements under this resolution within 5 years.

14. Has not provided the annual report of the Statistical Document programme to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 01/06

The IOTC Statistical Document Programme has been implemented for all the exports from the Maldives. However, due to constraints in acquiring and collating data, Maldives was not able to provide full data set to IOTC this year. We are hopeful that for next year, Maldives will be able to provide full data set to the IOTC.

15. Has not provided the report on the import, landing and transshipment of tuna-like fish products in ports as requested by Resolution 01/06

As Maldives is a major fishing nation import of tuna like products to the Maldives was limited until recently. However, in 2017, level of tuna imports spiked, as identified by Maldives Customs Service's import statistics. As present, there is no system in place to collect detailed information as required by the IOTC on the imports of tuna and tuna like products through air cargo and Government of the Maldives is trying to review and amend the regulations to incorporate documentations on imports of bigeye tuna.

I also take this opportunity to reaffirm the Secretariat of our commitments to the work of the Commission and reiterate the assurances of my highest considerations.

Yours sincerely,



M. Shiham Adam
Commissioner to the IOTC