WCPFC11 adopted amendments to the VMS Standards Specification and Procedures (SSPs) for the period 1 March 2015 to 1 March 2017

Section 5 of the Commission’s VMS SSPs is to be modified as follows:

“4. In the event of non-reception of two consecutive, programmed high seas VMS positions, and where the Secretariat has exhausted all reasonable steps\(^1\) to re-establish normal automatic reception of VMS positions the Secretariat will notify the flag State CCM who shall then direct the vessel Master to begin manual reporting. During this period the vessel shall be required to report its position manually to the Secretariat every 6 hours. If automatic reporting to the Commission VMS has not been re-established within 30 days of the commencement of manual reporting the flag state CCM shall order the vessel to cease fishing, stow all fishing gear and return immediately to port. The vessel may recommence fishing on the high seas only when the ALC/MTU has been confirmed as operational by the Secretariat following the flag State CCM informing the Secretariat that the vessel’s automatic reporting complies with the regulations established in this SSP.

4bis. The standards outlined in Paragraph 4 above will apply for the period 1 March 2015 to 1 March 2017 and will be reviewed for MCS effectiveness by TCC.

5 In exceptional circumstances\(^2\), the flag State CCM may extend the period established in paragraph 4 for an additional consecutive 15 days during which time the vessel will continue to report its position manually every 4 hours to the Secretariat while on the high seas. When such permission is provided the flag State CCM shall provide a report to the Secretariat as to the nature of the exceptional circumstances and steps taken to re-establish automatic reporting. Such reports shall be included in the Secretariat’s annual report on the operations of the Commission’s VMS to the TCC as required under paragraph 7.3.9.

Footnotes:

1 The flag State CCM, in coordination with the Secretariat and through communication with the vessel master as appropriate, will endeavour to re-establish normal automatic reception of VMS positions. If such efforts reveal that the vessel is successfully reporting to the flag State CCM’s VMS or a sub-regional VMS (indicating that the vessel’s VMS hardware is functional), the Secretariat, in coordination with the flag State CCM will take additional steps to re-establish automatic reporting to the Commission VMS.

2 Exceptional circumstances includes such events as satellite malfunction unrelated to MTU/ALC and mechanical failure of fishing vessel that reduces the ability of the fishing vessel to return to port within 30 days.”