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**FFA MEMBER CCMS PROPOSAL FOR A CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
MEASURE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A HARVEST STRATEGY APPROACH FOR
KEY FISHERIES AND STOCKS IN THE WCPO**

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Paper submitted by FFA Members

*** Please note this version addresses formatting errors and reinstates footnote text for footnote 2. In all other respects this version is the same as rev_4.**



FFA

1 November 2014

Dr SungKwon Soh
Interim Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
PO Box 2356, Kolonia
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear SungKwon,

FFA member CCMs proposal for a Conservation and Management Measure to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries in the WCPO

I write in my capacity as the Chair of the Forum Fisheries Committee on behalf of the 17 FFA Members.

At the 10th Forum Fisheries Committee Ministerial Meeting in Tokelau in July this year, Ministers agreed that Target Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules should be developed and adopted for each of the key tuna species as part of a harvest strategy approach.

FFA Members therefore propose the attached conservation and management measure which seeks to build upon the Commission's work on developing management objectives and a harvest strategy approach at the Scientific Committee and Management Objectives Workshop. The proposed conservation and management measure would establish a formal framework for this work, including principles, elements and timelines for the development, discussion, and eventual agreement of harvest strategies for the key tuna fisheries under the Commission's purview.

Yours Sincerely

Feleti Tulafono
Chair
Forum Fisheries Committee

FFA member proposal for a Conservation and Management Measure to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key tuna species

Explanatory Note

The WCPFC, through the work of the Scientific Committee and the Management Options Workshops, has started a process to determine management objectives for key fish stocks with a view to translating these objectives into effective management frameworks and harvest strategies. The proposed CMM seeks the Commission's agreement to formally develop a harvest strategy approach for fisheries for the major tuna stocks under the Commission's purview.

It is envisaged that individual harvest strategies for specific fisheries would subsequently be developed in accordance with this CMM and these will set out the management actions necessary to achieve defined biological, economic and/or social management objectives for each fishery. At the same time, the proposed CMM is drafted to ensure compatibility with harvest strategies and components thereof (such as reference points), that are currently being developed or are already implemented within the region. This revision takes into account comments received from interested Members. As this is a framework measure, the measure is now able to be used for stocks other than tuna, the measure resolves some inconsistencies between the use of terms like 'species', 'stocks' and 'fisheries'. We have also amended the title of the Annex to make it clear that the Annex assigns specific roles and responsibilities to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. The Annex has a new paragraph which requires the Commission to separately determine relevant roles and responsibilities for northern stocks.

Application of CMM 2013-06 criteria for the consideration of conservation and management proposals

The following information is offered to assist the WCPFC to meet the requirements of CMM2013-06 - *Conservation and management measure on the criteria for the consideration of conservation and management proposals*.

For any new proposal being considered by WCPFC, paragraph 3 of CMM2013-06 requires the WCPFC to apply the criteria set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) to determine the nature and extent of the impact of the proposal on SIDS and Territories in the Convention Area.

Note – this explanatory note assesses the proposal to establish a framework for the development of Harvest Strategies. The establishment of this framework does not require any resources, dictate any management action, or place a burden on any CCM. As such, the answers provided below are relatively brief. However, FFA acknowledges that the development and implementation of individual harvest strategies will impose costs and burdens on CCMs. These will come in a number of forms, including technical workshops that CCMs will need to participate in, and the likely need to reduce catch and effort as a result of Harvest Control Rules. Complying with the need to avoid transferring a disproportionate burden onto SIDS will be a key consideration for the Commission when it does develop individual harvest strategies under the proposed framework.

a. Who is required to implement the proposal?

This CMM places obligations on the Commission itself and not on individual Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories. The proposal seeks agreement from the Commission that it shall develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key tuna species under the purview of the Commission. The aim of the draft CMM is to ensure that scientific outcomes and findings are incorporated into the management process as part of the Commission's evidence-based decision making processes.

All CCMs will be required to implement individual harvest strategy CMMs made pursuant to this CMM. The draft CMM includes provisions concerning the special needs of Developing States, in particular Small Island Developing States into the forward process for developing individual harvest strategies in accordance with this CMM.

b. Which CCMs would this proposal impact and in what way(s) and what proportion?

This CMM will not impact any CCMs as the measure simply sets out the Commission's commitment to establish harvest strategies for individual tuna species in accordance with an agreed, clearly articulated framework.

c. Are there linkages with other proposals or instruments in other regional fisheries management organisations or international organisations that reduce the burden of implementation?

This proposal does not impose an implementation burden on any CCMs, as it is intended simply as a binding commitment by the Commission to a way forward in developing individual harvest strategies.

d. Does the proposal affect development opportunities for SIDS?

No (see explanation above).

e. Does the proposal affect SIDS' domestic access to resources and development aspirations?

No (see explanation above).

f. What resources, including financial and human capacity are needed by SIDS to implement the proposal?

None (see explanation above).

g. What mitigation measures are included in the proposal?

None (see explanation above for why).

h. What assistance mechanisms and associated timeframe, including training and financial support, are included in the proposal to avoid a disproportionate burden on SIDS?

Note that the draft CMM makes provision for the Commission to facilitate the effective participation of SIDS in Commission meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies undertaking work on harvest strategies. It also imposes an obligation on the Commission to avoid the transfer of a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto developing States, and territories and possessions.



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CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ON ESTABLISHING A HARVEST STRATEGY FOR KEY FISHERIES AND STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN

Conservation and Management Measure 2014-xx

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

Noting that the objective of the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* (the Convention) is to ensure through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the highly migratory fish stocks of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (the 1982 Convention) and the *Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks* (the UN Fish Stocks Agreement);

Recalling Article 6 (3) of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and Article 6 of the Convention, which call for the establishment of precautionary stock-specific reference points to implement the precautionary approach, as well as action to be taken if such points are exceeded;

Further recalling that Article 6(1)(a) of the Convention provides that the guidelines set out in Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement form an integral part of the Convention and shall be applied by the Commission. These guidelines provide guidance on the application of precautionary reference points in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, including the adoption of provisional reference points when information for establishing reference points is absent or poor;

Further recalling Article 5b of the Convention establishing MSY among the principles for guiding science-based conservation and management of fish stocks under the purview of the Commission;

Noting that Article 7.5.3 of the *FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* also recommends the implementation of stock specific target and limit reference points, inter alia, on the basis of the precautionary approach;

Concerned that fishing mortality for some tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean is in excess of the range of maximum sustainable yield;

Recalling the recommendations from the Performance Review of the WCPFC on the Precautionary Approach and Limit Reference Points, which the Commission considers to be a high priority;

Mindful of the work underway on the development of reference points and harvest control rules for a

number of highly migratory fish stocks in the Eastern Pacific Ocean by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

Adopts, in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention, the following conservation and management measure with respect to establishing harvest strategies for key fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean:

Objective of this measure

1. To agree that the Commission shall develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for each of the key fisheries or stocks under the purview of the Commission according to the process set out in this conservation and management measure (CMM).

General provisions

2. A harvest strategy is a framework that specifies the pre-determined management actions in a fishery for defined species (at the stock or management unit level) necessary to achieve agreed biological, [ecological](#), economic and/or social management objectives.
3. The Commission agrees that harvest strategies established pursuant to this CMM may be developed for a fishery that targets or catches either a single, or a number of, species (at the stock or management unit level) including as incidental catch, or stocks that are harvested by several fisheries.

Harvest Strategy Principles

4. Harvest strategies are considered to represent a best-practice approach to fisheries management decision making. Harvest strategies are proactive, adaptive and provide a framework for taking the best available information about a stock or fishery and applying an evidence and risk-based approach to setting harvest levels. They provide a more certain operating environment where management decisions relating to the fishery or stocks are more consistent, predictable and transparent.
5. Harvest strategies developed in accordance with this CMM shall set out the management actions necessary to achieve defined and agreed biological, ecological, economic and/or social objectives in the fisheries. Each harvest strategy shall contain a tailored process for conducting assessments of the biological, economic and social conditions of the fisheries and pre-defined rules that manage the fishery or stock in order to attain the objectives.
6. In developing individual harvest strategies for fisheries or stocks within the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, the Commission shall have regard to the principles set out in the Convention, in particular Articles 5 and 6.

Elements of a harvest strategy

7. Each harvest strategy developed in accordance with this CMM shall, wherever possible [and where appropriate](#), contain the following elements:
 - a. Defined operational objectives, including timeframes, for the fishery or stock ('management objectives')
 - b. Target and limit reference points for each stock ('reference points')
 - c. Acceptable levels of risk of not breaching limit reference points ('acceptable levels of risk')
 - d. A monitoring strategy using best available information to assess performance against

reference points ('monitoring strategy')

- e. Decision rules that aim to achieve the target reference point and aim to avoid the limit reference point ('harvest control rules'), and
 - f. An evaluation of the performance of the proposed harvest control rules against management objectives, including risk assessment ('management strategy evaluation').
8. Further detail on each of these elements is set out in Annex 1 of this CMM.
 9. Notwithstanding paragraphs 7 and 8 of this CMM, in developing individual harvest strategies, the Commission may tailor elements on a case by case basis to suit the specific requirements of a particular fishery or stock. This may include agreeing to interim or provisional elements of a harvest strategy. The absence of appropriate scientific information shall not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to adopt harvest strategies.
 10. In developing individual harvest strategies, the Commission shall take into account and apply Article 8 of the Convention, on compatibility of conservation and management measures on harvest strategies and elements thereof that have already been implemented in the region.

Special requirements of Developing States

11. In recognition of the special requirements of Developing States Parties to this Convention, in particular Small Island Developing States and of Territories and Possessions, in relation to conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, the Commission will facilitate the effective participation of these States, Territories and Possessions in Commission meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies undertaking work on harvest strategies, and will apply the provisions of Article 30(2) of the Convention in the development of CMMs resulting from that work.
12. Harvest strategies shall not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto developing States Parties, and territories and possessions.

Timelines for the adoption of harvest strategies

13. The Commission shall agree a workplan and indicative timeframes to adopt or refine harvest strategies for skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin, South Pacific albacore, Pacific bluefin and northern albacore¹ tuna by no later than the twelfth meeting of the Commission in 2015. This workplan will be subject to review in 2017. The Commission may agree timeframes to adopt harvest strategies for other fisheries or stocks.

Resources

14. In formulating their budget and work programme, the Commission, Scientific Committee and any relevant WCPFC sub-committees are expected to ensure that the tasks listed in this measure are sufficiently resourced in terms of time and budget to achieve the agreed timeframes.

¹ Draft timeframes and harvest strategies for stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20°N to be developed and recommended by the Northern Committee.

15. The Commission may draw on funds earmarked for this purpose from the Voluntary Contributions Fund to achieve the tasks listed in this measure.
16. In the interests of efficiency and ensuring full participation by all CCMs, the Commission may decide to use existing WCPFC meetings to undertake the work set out in this CMM or convene additional workshops or meetings to consider the tasks set out in this CMM.

Additional detail on the elements of a harvest strategy and roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

1. This Annex sets out further details on each of the elements to be developed for individual harvest strategies, wherever possible, and sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.²

Management objectives

2. For each harvest strategy, the Commission shall determine agreed conceptual management objectives for that fishery or stock. In determining these objectives, the trade-offs between each objective, as well as trade-offs between objectives for different fisheries or stocks and harvest strategies shall be considered and any contradictions and tensions between competing objectives should be reconciled to the extent possible.
3. The Scientific Committee, and, where appropriate, other relevant subsidiary bodies shall translate these conceptual management objectives into operational objectives that have a direct and practical interpretation in the context of the fishery or stock and against which performance can be evaluated ('operational management objectives'), if needed.

Reference points

4. To achieve the agreed operational management objectives, the Commission shall, taking into account relevant advice from the Scientific Committee and other relevant subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, establish stock-specific reference points that identify:
 - i. targets intended to meet management objectives ('target reference points'), and
 - ii. limits intended to constrain harvesting within safe biological limits ('limit reference points').
5. Where the Commission has already adopted target or limit reference points for particular stocks, those agreed reference points shall be incorporated into the harvest strategy for that fishery, unless the Commission decides otherwise.

Acceptable levels of risk

6. The Commission shall define acceptable levels of risk associated with breaching limit reference points, and if appropriate, with deviating from target reference points, taking into account advice from the Scientific Committee and, where appropriate, other subsidiary bodies. In accordance with Article 6(1)(a) of the Convention, the Commission shall ensure that the risk of exceeding limit reference points is very low.
7. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, target reference points shall be conservative and separated from limit reference points with an appropriate buffer, with a view to ensuring that the target reference points are not so close to the limit reference points that the chance that the limits are exceeded is greater than the agreed level of risk.

² [For fisheries based on stocks which occur mostly north of 20°N, the roles and responsibilities are to be separately agreed by the Commission.](#)

Monitoring strategy

8. As part of an individual harvest strategy, the Commission may adopt a monitoring strategy for a fishery or stock relying on data provided to the Commission.
9. For each fishery or stock with an established harvest strategy, the Scientific Committee and other relevant subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, shall periodically evaluate the performance of the fishery or stock against the agreed operational management objectives (as specified through the ~~performance indicators and~~ reference points and harvest control rules). The Scientific Committee shall report its findings and advice to the Commission.

Harvest control rules

10. The Commission shall decide, based on the advice of the SC, on a set of clear, pre-agreed rules or actions used for determining a management action response to changes in indicators of stock status or other indicators, as appropriate, with respect to reference points ('harvest control rules').
11. Notwithstanding paragraph 12 of this Annex, the Commission may decide to implement interim harvest control rules prior to a full management strategy evaluation being completed by the Scientific Committee.

Management strategy evaluation

12. Prior to implementation of formal harvest control rules, an evaluation of the likely performance of any proposed harvest control rules in achieving the operational objectives should be undertaken by the Scientific Committee and other relevant subsidiary bodies, as appropriate. These evaluations may be performed through simulation modelling.
13. As part of this process, the Scientific Committee and other relevant subsidiary bodies, as appropriate shall estimate or describe key uncertainties including with respect to stock assessments and available data

