

---

**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION FOR  
THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY  
MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND  
CENTRAL PACIFIC**

Sixth session  
Bali, Indonesia  
19 – 23 April 2004

WCPFC/PrepCon/36  
30 March 2004

---

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEETINGS OF WORKING GROUP III DURING THE  
SIXTH SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE**

Note by the Chairman of Working Group III

1. Working Group III will meet during the sixth session of the Preparatory Conference, April 19-23, 2004 in Bali, Indonesia. As noted in the revised Information Note on Matters before Sixth Session of the Preparatory Conference, the WCPF Convention is scheduled to enter into force on June 19, 2004. As a result, PrepCon VI will focus on the most urgent needs of the Commission in its early years. This should also be the case with the work of Working Group III.

2. At its previous meetings, the Working Group has focused the vast majority of its attention on the elaboration of procedure for boarding and inspection on the high seas within the Convention Area. Less attention has been given to the list of other issues on the agenda for the Working Group. At this point, there is a need to move forward on matters where the Commission will be required to take action in the short term. Given these considerations, and based on an exchange of views with the Chairman and the Interim Secretariat, I propose that further work on the elaboration of boarding and inspection procedures be set aside for this session. Instead, I propose that the upcoming session look closely at the list of issues contained in paragraph 5 of the Chairman's Summary Report for WG.III at the PrepCon V (WCPFC/PrepCon/33). These include:

- (a) The Commission's record for vessels and authorization to fish;
- (b) The Commission vessel monitoring system;
- (c) The observer programme;
- (d) A vessel and gear marking scheme; and
- (e) Port State controls.

In particular, two elements would seem vital to establishing the basic foundation of the Commission's monitoring, control and surveillance programme. First, the Commission must know which vessels are authorized to fish in the Convention Area. Thus, establishing the Commission's record for vessels and authorization to fish becomes a high priority. Second, the Commission and its members must have a system that will allow them to identify vessels sighted in the Convention Area in order determine whether they are on the Commission's vessel record. As a result, I believe that the vessel and gear marking scheme should also be a priority area for discussion.

3. Discussion and conclusion of these two issues would provide a solid foundation for the early work of the Commission and I propose that WG.III set this as its goal for the upcoming meeting. Discussion on other issues such as VMS and the observer programme could be discussed to the extent time allows. With respect to Port State Controls, the FAO will convene later this year a technical consultation to discuss this important set of issues. I propose that WG.III await the conclusion of that meeting and consider whether the results might provide a basis for its future work on this topic.

4. A background paper on vessel and gear markings was prepared in advance of the previous session of the PrepCon (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.18). A draft paper on the rights, duties and responsibilities of observers was issued as WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.17.

5. With respect to the vessel record and authorization to fish, the FFA, Japan and the European Community have each prepared submissions on this subject for consideration at the upcoming meeting. Japan and the EC have circulated its submission to the PrepCon participants through the Interim Secretariat (see WCPFC/PrepCon/DP.26 and DP.28 respectively) and I have suggested that the FFA do the same. The Working Group will then be in a position to discuss the various proposals in general terms at its first meeting in Bali. After that discussion, it might be useful for a small group to get together to blend the various proposals into a single composite paper for consideration later in the meeting. Given that a number of regional fisheries management organizations have successfully undertaken similar tasks, I would anticipate that this discussion and subsequent drafting could proceed rapidly.

6. I look forward to seeing all of you in Bali.

---