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

Seventh session
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
6-7 December 2004

WCPFC/PrepCon/DP.37
6 December 2004

PAPUA NEW GUINEA POSITION ON THE SAPPORO WORKSHOP OUTCOME

Submitted by the delegation of Papua New Guinea

The “Sapporo” meeting was not a formal meeting of the PrepCon process. As noted by all participants at PrepCon 6, in Bali, it was a Japanese initiative to invite interested parties to an informal workshop on Compliance with the Resolutions. Japan’s desire to uphold the MHLC and Prepcon resolutions is commendable. However, it might be noted that Japan abstained from signing the final act of the MHLC of which the resolutions are a part.

It is clear that the Sapporo document is not a resolution, but rather an outcome document of an informal process sponsored by Japan. For the purposes of the PrepCon process, it is merely a delegation paper that is to be noted at this conference.

PNG recalls the MHLC resolutions of 19/2/99 and 15/9/99. These acknowledges the legitimate PIC growth in effort within the limits of the Palau Arrangement ceiling of 205 boats. As there is no expansion over this limit, there is no issue of over capacity, and therefore no breach of the resolutions.

However, we note Japan has shown no interest in promoting the essence of the second resolution, although it is noted in the outcomes document, *‘to request future Commission to cooperate and coordinate with other RFMOs, Coastal States and the Flag States and entities to avoid transfer of capacity from one region to another if it creates overcapacity’*. Although we do not support the spirit of the Sapporo outcome document, we believe that this clause effectively includes all transfers of flags within and into the region since these resolutions were adopted. This will have much wider ramifications than just those vessels currently targeted.

PNG maintains a sound regionally acclaimed sustainable tuna management plan, and total effort is within this and the regional ceiling.

PNG’s developmental needs, especially shore based investments, require efficient fishing effort. The purpose built Vanuatu flagged boats provide this. It is PNG’s prerogative to utilize the most efficient boats available for such domestic growth.

We do this as a sovereign nation through issuance of legitimate licenses in accordance with our laws and consistent with regional and international management obligations.

The vessels listed in the annex of the Sapporo workshop outcome document specifically target PNG.

It must be noted that these vessels were all contractually agreed to between South Seas Tuna Corporation, a joint venture PNG incorporated company, and the Government of Papua New Guinea as part of a phased development and were progressively built and commissioned under this schedule to serve our onshore processing. These vessels do not contribute to any new effort in the region, as they are within the 205 ceiling.

It must be further noted that this State Agreement which actually provided for them predates the two resolutions of 1999.

PNG's programme of onshore fisheries development is in accordance with the goals of food security, employment, and poverty alleviation in accordance with Papua New Guinea's Medium Term Development Strategy [MTDS].

We note also that despite the assurances and commitments at the Sapporo workshop, where it was noted in the outcomes document that (quote) "*this document should not be applied to hinder legitimate fisheries development of coastal states*" (unquote) it is clear that vessels engaged by Papua New Guinea to foster fisheries development goals in support of the MTDS have been targeted. We would sincerely hope that this is not the intention of the Sapporo workshop outcome.