

September 29, 2008

Protecting Pacific Tuna Stocks

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. For five days from Thursday 2 October 2008 participants from member countries of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will meet at the Commission's headquarters, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia to discuss practical ways to better conserve and manage the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) region's rich tuna stocks. The WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) meeting's primary task is to provide advice and recommendations to the WCPFC Commission that will next meet at Busan, Korea in December 2008 on key issues associated with monitoring WCPO tuna fleets. The TCC has met three times since the Commission commenced operations in July 2005.

In pursuit of its goal of developing a comprehensive suite of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) tools to safeguard regional tuna stocks, the TCC meeting will further develop a schedule and priorities for the phased implementation of a programme to place observers on fishing vessels so that fishing operations can be monitored, and refine and further develop draft standards, specifications and procedures for the Commission's satellite-based Vessel Monitoring System. The TCC will also discuss the implementation of a new high seas boarding and inspection scheme that became operational in the WCPO in 2008.

The TCC meeting will prepare a provisional list of fishing vessels alleged to have undertaken illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activity in the WCPO region in 2007/08 and review the current IUU Vessel List comprising three fishing vessels. Given that one of the priority issues for the Commission in 2008 is the development of a Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna, the TCC meeting will develop advice and recommendations on implementation issues associated with a comprehensive Measure that will also be negotiated during the Korea meeting.

Ends.....