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**TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS,  
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES AND OBSERVERS**

**Circular No.: 2020/24  
Date: 8 April 2020  
No. pages: 02**

**Decision Regarding Commission Chair's Proposal in Response to COVID-19**

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to thank everyone for your consideration of the Chair's Proposal in Response to COVID-19 which was conveyed in Circular 2020/21 of 31 March 2020. I particularly appreciate your flexibility and your willingness to use an expedited procedure to address this unprecedented situation.

Thank you to all those who have provided a response. I confirm that I have received no objections to my proposal. In line with the expedited procedure I set out in my letter of 31 March 2020 and contained in Circular 2020/21, the following decision has therefore been adopted by the Commission:

1. The Commission agrees to suspend the requirements for observer coverage on purse seine vessels set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of CMM 2018-01 and CMM 2018-05 until 31 May 2020.
2. The temporary suspension will apply to new trips after a vessel operator has met any requirement for repatriation of observers currently on board a vessel. Repatriation, in this context, means returning the observer to his/her home port, in consultation with the observer provider.
3. Repatriation is to be expedited by the vessel operator and the relevant flag State, in close consultation with the relevant national Observer Provider. The observer's costs will continue to be met by the vessel operator until such time as the observer is returned to his/her home port.
4. During the period of suspension, the VMS requirements and procedures of paragraphs 33 and 37 of CMM 2018-01 that apply to purse seine vessels during FAD closure periods will also apply to purse seine vessels which are not carrying observers.

I wish to clarify the following points concerning the interpretation of the decision which may not have been clear in my earlier communication and have been raised by several Members in their comments on the proposal:

- a. The decision will go into effect immediately.
- b. The requirements for observer coverage on purse seine vessels set out in CMM 2018-05, which are suspended under paragraph 1 of the Commission decision until 31 May 2020, mean the requirements in paragraph 6 of Annex C of CMM 2018-05 relating to purse seine vessels, and no other requirements of CMM 2018-05.
- c. Consistent with the application of the relevant provisions of CMM 2018-01 and CMM 2018-05, the decision applies throughout the Convention Area.
- d. The decision seeks to support the repatriation of individual observers where appropriate, and it is acknowledged that this is a matter for flag CCMs and observer providers.

Thank you all again for agreeing to take such swift action in these difficult and challenging times.

Keep safe and well.

Best Regards



Jung-re Riley Kim  
**WCPFC CHAIR**

cc: Feleti P Teo, OBE, WCPFC Executive Director  
Josie Tamate, WCPFC Vice Chair