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FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TUNAS

Joint Tuna RFMOs in Kobe

The Course of Actions Adopted to Improve Management of Tuna Stocks

The First Joint Meeting of the world's five Regional Tuna Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) was held in Kobe, Japan, from January 22 to 26, 2007.

The five RFMOs are the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The meeting was organized by the Government of Japan, with technical assistance by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and was participated in by 54 member countries of the above organizations and cooperating non-Members, as well as representatives of the Secretariats of the RFMOs, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

At the end of the five-day meeting, participants jointly committed to take urgent actions to co-operate through tuna RFMOs and adopted the Course of Actions for RFMOs, which describes (1) 14 key areas and challenges, (2) technical work to cooperate across RFMOs to address the challenges, and (3) follow-up actions.

It was agreed that enhanced cooperation among tuna RFMOs can increase their effectiveness and efficiency and provide improved management of all tuna stocks.

The Course of Actions included controls, such as capacity reduction to ensure resource sustainability of tuna stocks, development and implementation of stronger measures against illegal fishing activities and establishment and implementation of a system to monitor catches from catching vessels to markets. Research and development of techniques to reduce incidental take

of juvenile tuna during tuna fisheries, in particular FAD operations was also included.

The key to the success of the Course of Actions lies
(to be continued on Page 2)

WTPO/OPRT JOINT DECLARATION

OVERFISHING CAPACITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

WTPO and OPRT presented the joint declaration at RFMOs

Mr. Julio Moron, representative of the Spanish tuna fishing industry, as a spokesperson of WTPO and OPRT, reported at the joint RFMOs meeting on the Joint Declaration (see next page) adopted by them prior to the meeting.

The Joint Declaration called on the RFMOs to ensure that total tuna fishing capacity shall not
(to be continued on Page 2)



Mr. Julio Moron, WTPO/OPRT Spokesperson

Tuna RFMOs (continued from top page)
in how effectively the countries can take concerted actions for attainment of the goal.

In addition to the 14 key areas and challenges, four areas of technical work were identified, such as improvement of the trade tracing program including the tagging system, use of a permanent unique identifier for each vessel and the creation of a global list of IUU vessels.

Participants agreed to hold the next joint meeting around January-February in 2009, after meetings of the chairs of the five RFMOs as well as meetings of the working group to deliberate technical issues.

**A gist of the Course of Actions
Key areas and challenges**

1. Improvement and sharing of catch data, stock assessments and research methodologies;
2. Equitable and transparent allocation of catch quota among member States;
3. Controls of fishing capacity, including capacity reduction as appropriate to ensure resource sustainability of tuna stocks.
4. Ensuring management measures based on the best scientific advice and consistent with the precautionary approach and ensuring compliance through establishment of integrated monitoring, control and surveillance measures
5. Implementation of stronger measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing;
6. Implementation of a system to monitor catches from catching vessels to markets
7. Development of techniques to reduce incidental catch of juvenile tunas, in particular FAD operations
8. Provision of capacity building for developing coastal states towards responsible fishery development.

**Technical work to cooperate
across RFMOs**

1. Improvement of trade tracing program
2. Creation of harmonized list of tuna and a global list of IUU vessels.
3. Harmonization of transshipment control measures

Mr. Moron WTPO/OPRT (continued from top page)
increase above the current level on a global basis.

Mr. Moron stated: "WTPO and OPRT represent the majority of the legitimate operators of industrial tuna fisheries in the world and we recognize that overfishing capacity is a fundamental problem that should be urgently addressed. In order to ensure sustainability of tuna stocks, control of tuna fishing capacity should be put on the first priority to be dealt

with by RFMOs for ensuring sound tuna fisheries management."

With regard to the desire of developing coastal states to develop tuna fisheries, he said that "cooperation and dialogue are needed to accommodate to the interest of developing countries to enter into tuna fisheries. Legitimate rights of developing countries are as legitimate as the rights of those countries that have developed tuna fishing technique and invested and risked money in developing their tuna fisheries".

He further noted that "maintenance of tuna stock at a level of sustainable use is the main objective that all parties should pursue at present."

**WTPO/OPRT JOINT
DECLARATION**

The Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) and the World Tuna Purse Seine Organization (WTPO) who are committed to responsible tuna fisheries for the sustainability of tuna stocks,

Concerned about the stock status of the world tuna resources being exploited close to, or over the level capable of producing the maximum sustainable yield, and recognizing that Tuna RFMOs recommended that a reduction in the catches or fishing effort on bigeye and yellowfin tunas should be implemented as soon as possible;

Being aware with grave concern that the Tuna fishing capacity has been growing;

Acknowledging that the excess fishing capacity makes it more difficult for RFMOs to implement effective conservation and management measures for the fisheries;

Recognizing that 2006 FAO Workshop on the Management of Fishing Capacity recommended that immediate moratorium on the entry of additional large scale tuna vessels should be implemented;

Resolved to take a leadership to conserve the tuna resources and its rational utilization; and

Well resolved to contribute to the optimal and sustainable exploitation and utilization of tuna resources, through the application of effective conservation and management measures, in full cooperation with the tuna RFMOs:

Call on the Joint Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations Meeting to adopt measures necessary to ensure that total tuna fishing capacity shall not increase above current level on a global basis.

(The current number of WTPO members is 9: Ecuador, France, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Spain, Taiwan, Panama, and the Federated States of Micronesia. Over 60 % of large scale purse seiners in the world are registered in WTPO.)

(The current number of OPRT members is 16, including tuna longline fishers as well as traders, distributors and consumers in Japan. Members, who are fishers, are from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, China and Ecuador. Over 90% of large scale tuna longliners are registered in OPRT.)

Interview

Kobe meeting brought to light three major issues surrounding tuna resource management: Miyahara

What follows is an English summary of the interview by the Nikkan Suisan Keizai Shimbun with Masanori Miyahara, Director, the Fisheries Agency of Japan, who chaired the joint tuna RFMOs meeting.



QUESTION: *What was the significance of the Kobe meeting?*

MIYAHARA: I think the significance was that the international community came to recognize the fact that the tuna resources in the world's oceans are used almost to their maximum limit and there are some issues to be tackled with in order to ensure the sustainability of the resources in the future. In the Course of Actions, the meeting made clear to the world the issues we have to cope with in the years ahead.

QUESTION: *Tuna resources have so far been managed on an area-to-area basis.*

MIYAHARA: Yes, but discussion at each regional management organization has tended to focus on its internal issues. At times, the egotism of member countries prevailed, and we have seen many cases in which the solution of important issues was postponed. But, at the Kobe meeting, the five RFMOs agreed to hold regular joint meetings and to carry out the performance review to assess the efforts of each organization objectively. By doing so, I believe the motivation of each organization will be strengthened. It will certainly provide a good opportunity to improve the tuna resource management.

QUESTION: *What were the common issues that emerged after the five organizations held a joint meeting?*

MIYAHARA: Three major inherent issues became obvious.

The first issue is how to adjust the interest of traditional fishing nations, like Japan, and, at the same time, to ensure the rights of developing countries to develop their own fisheries, while controlling fishing capacity as a whole. This issue came out in various stages of discussion at the meeting.

The second issue is how to shift the resource management from the previous pattern dependent on flag States into the one oriented toward international management. As corporate activities and investment are moving beyond the national boundaries, there are cases where large-scale tuna fishing is conducted by evading the compliance with obligations. We are beginning to see the limit of the resource management solely dependent on flag States. ICCAT already started management measures such as obligation of observer boarding on carrier boats—a case of management led not by the national governments but by the international organization.

The third issue pertains to purse-seine and longline fishing. You can put the issue in terms of confrontation between tuna fishing for processing and that for producing sashimi. Lately, the issue has been further complicated as some fish caught by purse-seine are used also for sashimi. This confrontational situation between purse-seine fishing (developed mainly in Europe and Latin America) and longlining (which is mainly conducted by countries as Japan and Chinese Taipei which also have purse-seine fishing) presents a very complex and deep-rooted problem.

Debate at RFMOs

Japanese delegate stresses the need to control large-scale purse-seine fishing at RFMO meeting

At the first joint meeting of tuna RFMOs in Kobe, Katsuma Hanafusa, head of the Japanese delegation, stressed that “the most urgent issue to be tackled with in terms of management of tuna resources is uncontrolled increase of large-scale purse-seine fishing.”

“When one large-scale purse-seine boat is constructed, it means that catch volume will increase

by 10,000 tons a year. Purse-seine boats catch small-size bigeye incidentally, deteriorating the resource status. Japan, as a responsible fishing nation, has not increased the number of its purse-seine fishing vessels during the past decade, while the number elsewhere in the world has been on an increase. The most effective precautionary measure in resource management is 'not to construct fishing vessels.' A comprehensive approach is necessary, not only focusing on the issue of longline tuna fishing alone in face of limited availability of the resources," Hanafusa said. He thus strongly alerted the participants' attention to the issue of large-scale purse-seine fishing.

Regarding **the assistance to developing countries**, the Japanese chief delegate noted that "it is necessary to support the development of fisheries in developing countries. But what those countries need in developing and maintaining fisheries on a sustainable basis is not by purse-seine fishing that requires an enormous amount of investment, but small-scale fisheries, like trolling fisheries. Increasing purse-seine fishing capacity in a developing country may lead to the destruction of its fishery resources."

Hanafusa further noted the issue of massive increase in the **number of fishing vessels less than 24 meters** while the number of large longliners is being reduced. Having made that observation, he drew the attention of the participants to the need of controlling the number of 24 meter-minus vessels.

With respect to the issue of **incidental catch of small-size bigeye tuna**, he urged the need to develop technique to cope with the issue effectively and suggested reduction of catch effort by purse-seine unless the issue is dealt with adequately. He also encouraged the wider use of recently-developed circle hooks for reducing **incidental catch of sea turtle**.

On the issue of **tuna farming**, Hanafusa pointed to the fact that the number of farming cages doubles the total allowable catch (TAC) in the Mediterranean Sea. Such a situation obviously causes adverse impact on the bluefin tuna resources in the area. He expressed a strong concern over the fact that effective measures are not taken to the situation where the amount of fish brought in the cage is not known clearly.

In response to the remark by Japan, the representative from the EC commented that realistic approach should be taken to both longlining and purse-seine fishing, not blaming each one of them unilaterally. Regarding the issue of support to the developing countries, he noted that it is not the issue pertaining to the type of fisheries but an issue of control. On the issue of tuna farming, he said that "tuna farming has been developed by Japan's

investment and the farmed products are directed to the Japanese market. Moreover, tuna farming is now subject to stricter monitoring."

India supported Japan's view on the desirable state of assistance to developing countries, saying that it will cooperate with Japan as a responsible coastal States.

RFMOs discuss ways to reduce fishing capacity

--Activities of multinational firms were discussed--

In this discussion, the facilitator presented an outline of the issue surrounding fishing capacity. Reports were made on the present situation where fishing vessels less than 24 meters (which are not subject to the regulations) and those registered in developing countries are increasing although each RFMO made clear its resource management policy.

Further, it was reported that excessive fishing is carried out by some multinational firms engaging in IUU fishing. It was made clear that in the background of slow progress in addressing the issue of tuna resource management are the issues involving activities by some multinational firms as well as the issues pertaining to developing countries.

Various views were presented by participants to further reinforce management. Some pointed out that the problem lies in non-implementation of the measures that are clearly recommended by the RFMOs, while others said that the RFMOs should more effectively fulfill their responsibility in the international society.

Japan stressed that it is crucial not to increase fishing capacity further; to consider ways to develop fisheries in developing countries while not expanding the global capacity as a whole; and seek the means to control the activities of multinational companies.

Some participants expressed the view that common monitoring and compliance measures should be in place and it is desirable that the RFMOs can tie-up in their management efforts.

Chinese Taipei calls for the need to control building of fishing vessels to reduce fishing capacity

Chinese Taipei expressed the view that there is need to regulate building of fishing vessels in order to reduce fishing capacity. It said that "measures should be taken to regulate fishing vessel construction and exports. In case some countries intend to import fishing vessels, they should first reduce the number of their existing vessels so that the total number may not increase."