

10 November 2015

Mr Feleti Teo OBE
Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
PO Box 2356
Kolonia, Pohnpei State 96941
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Mr. Feleti Teo OBE

This letter is submitted on behalf of the undersigned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that participate in the work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and its subsidiary bodies, including as accredited observers, or may do so in the future. We appreciate and thank yourself and the Commission Chair, Ms. Rhea Moss-Christian, for facilitating the discussion with NGOs in the margins of the recent Technical and Compliance Committee meeting.

As noted during that meeting, while NGOs share the same overarching objective for the fisheries resources under the Commission's mandate, they have limited opportunities to engage in or contribute to the work of the Commission, particularly during meetings. To support your efforts to engage NGOs further and facilitate strengthened cooperation with our organizations in the WCPFC, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the ways that NGOs support the Commission's work:

- Supporting research and trials, such as for electronic monitoring and reporting;
- Providing expert input into the Science Committee processes through presentation of papers. For example, NGOs have presented papers on fisheries risks, bycatch mitigation and best practices, and risks to bycatch (e.g., seabirds);
- Developing analytical materials in support of the goals and objectives of the Commission;
- Facilitating of capacity building and training materials, including bycatch species identification guides and other best practices in relation to mitigation, handling and non-entangling FAD designs;
- Supporting data entry both at the Commission and at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community;
- Supporting the development and publication of materials for the fishing industry, e.g., identification guides; and importantly
- Through advocacy and representation of the industry, retailers, civil society and other components of the tuna supply chain.

In addition, NGOs have also sought to ensure that, where possible, our organisations collaborate and coordinate on issues of mutual interest. These efforts have resulted in unified positions that have been presented to the Commission as interventions and letters. A number of NGOs have also jointly supported important intersessional activities, such as trials and workshops. In our view, such NGO collaboration is impactful as it has enabled Commissioners to be presented with consistent positions from a diverse range of stakeholders on a range of complex and important issues facing the WCPFC.

We applaud your initial step to recognise our collective role. As discussed during the side meeting at the TCC, we are pleased to work with you both to further enhance the role of NGOs, and identify options for enabling greater participation during meetings and for how our work can make a deeper contribution to the Commission. To that end we suggest the following, non-exhaustive list, of possible additional avenues to profile NGO activities in the Commission's work:

- The preparation, with input from NGOs, of an Executive Director's Annual Report highlighting the NGO activities undertaken since the previous Commission meeting.
- The development of a WCPFC Policy regarding involvement of accredited NGOs in the Commission's work and during open meetings and in working groups.
- Identification of budgetary gaps that NGO participants might be able to help support in order to meet the needs of the Commission.
- Facilitating improved NGO participation during meetings through:
 - Allowing accredited NGO Delegation position statements to be circulated as delegation papers, and included on the Commission's annotated agenda, and offering an opportunity for these NGO positions to be expressed; and
 - Providing a roving microphone on the accredited NGO Observer Delegation tables so that interventions can be made efficiently thereby minimising interruption of the Commission's work (or that of its subsidiary bodies).

We look forward to continuing this constructive dialogue and collaboration with the WCPFC members directly and within the Commission more broadly.

Sincerely,



David



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