

International Seafood Sustainability Foundation

January 25, 2011

**A STATEMENT OF CONCERN REGARDING EXCESS FISHING CAPACITY AND
CAPACITY LIMITATIONS**

Despite the general consensus among scientists, regional bodies, and many governments that excess fishing capacity exists in most of the tuna purse-seine fisheries and large-scale longline fisheries, several recent attempts to limit or even discuss management of capacity within the tuna RFMO context have failed.

The IHS-Fairplay administered International Maritime Organization numbering system (IMO number) provides a mechanism and registry for the unique identification and registration of vessels, which is a necessary first step for the accurate quantification and management of fishing capacity. In 2010, ISSF adopted a conservation measure that tuna vessels of a size subject to listing on an RFMO authorized vessel record and capable of being issued an IMO number, must register with IMO and thus receive an IMO number by May 31, 2011.

The first step towards managing capacity is to establish limited entry, as might be set up via a closed vessel registry, after which reductions in the number of vessels can be negotiated. In a fully-exploited fishery, coastal states' rights to expand their participation in a tuna fishery must be accommodated by mechanisms for reducing the participation of others.

ISSF calls upon the RFMOs, their member nations, and the fishing industry to develop a global record of tuna fishing vessels with unique identifiers such as those provided by IMO. There is no good reason for further delaying this simple --yet important-- action. In addition, RFMOs must make meaningful progress toward limiting entry, creating a closed vessel registry and ultimately reducing the number of vessels to a level that is commensurate with the productivity of the resources.