

IOTC CIRCULAR 2013-09

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: PREPARATION OF THE NEXT IOTC COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE (COC) AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES OF CONCERN

In my capacity as the Chair of the Compliance Committee, and following the practice started last year, I would like to start setting into motion the preparatory task for the next IOTC Compliance Committee that will be held in early May 2013.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reflect on some compliance obligations that were identified at the last meeting so that CPCs are reminded to attend to some of these pending issues.

As you will no doubt agree, we have in the last two years made progress towards increasing the level of compliance to our collective decisions. Nonetheless, we need to further consolidate our efforts to strengthen our Commission.

1) Compliance Committee preparatory works

As has been the case in the last two years, the Secretariat has circulated, a standard questionnaire on compliance to which CPCs will be required to provide their feedback. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all CPCs to make a special effort to provide their feedback to this questionnaire, since the reply serves as a key source of information from which the Secretariat will compile the country-based Compliance Reports.

As you will recall, the basis for this stems from the decision of the Commission to strengthen the Compliance Committee through the adoption of IOTC Resolution 10/09, which redefined the way in which CPCs are assessed against their obligations to the Commission.

2) State of play at December 2012

According to the procedures and decisions made by the Commission, the Chairman of the Commission provided all CPCs present at the 16th Session of the Commission, with a "Letter of Feedback" on compliance issues. For those CPCs who were not present at the 16th Session, the Secretariat forwarded a copy of the "Letter of Feedback" to you by e-mail on the 18th May, 2012.

To date, only nine CPCs have responded to the "Letter of Feedback". This is a similar situation that was recorded at the same stage last year and it does not bode very well with our effort to create a more effective process for addressing the constraints identified in compliance. Therefore, I would like to make a special call to those CPCs that have not yet provided their feedback to the letters to consider doing so as a matter of urgency.

As recommended by the Compliance Committee the Secretariat made follow-ups with the four CPCs, namely Eritrea, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Sudan, which did not submit their Report of Implementation at the 9th Session of the Committee. However, no feedback has been received from any of these countries. The lack of engagement of these countries in the IOTC process makes the task of having an effective Commission even more difficult. I would, therefore, appeal to these countries to ensure that they make a special effort to provide their outstanding Report of Implementation for 2011.

Distribution

IOTC Members: Australia, Belize, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Yemen.

Cooperating non-Contracting Parties: Senegal, South Africa.

Chairperson IOTC

Copy to: FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs

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In spite of the sustained effort by the Secretariat to bring to the attention of CPCs reporting requirements and deadlines for conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission, the majority of CPCs are still failing in their reporting obligations. Concerning the progress of implementation of a vessels monitoring system (VMS) only four CPCs have provided their report so far this year. There are currently only three CPCs that are providing reports of the inspections that they have undertaken on foreign fishing vessels, in the course of implementing the IOTC port State measures resolution. The level of data reporting has been exceptionally low in some cases; for example, only two CPCs have reported against Resolution 10/03 *Concerning the recording of catch by fishing vessels in the IOTC area* (now superseded by Resolution 12/03 *On The Recording Of Catch And Effort By Fishing Vessels In The IOTC Area Of Competence*).

Furthermore, with regards to the Regional transshipment monitoring programme (Resolution 12/05); only four of the twelve fleets which have transhipped under the programme during 2012 have submitted their mandatory report at the deadline of 15th September 2012. Concerning the Regional Observer Scheme (Resolution 11/04) only 38 observer reports have been received since the coming into force of this resolution on 1st July, 2010, and for the Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document Programme (Resolution 01/06), only six CPCs have reported information relating to imports of bigeye tuna for the first semester of 2012. To end with, the National Report to the Scientific Committee (SC15, 2012), a total of 26 National Reports have been received and almost 20% of CPCs have still not submitted their report.

Whilst the above paints a very poor picture of the level of compliance by CPCs, I would like to note here that there has been some areas where progress have been made, notably in the completeness of information for vessels listed in the Authorised Record, the number of CPCs that have reported their Active Vessels List for 2011 and the high number of National Reports submitted for the Scientific Committee meeting.

3) Follow-up

Mindful that the process that we have recently embarked on to increase the level of compliance by CPCs is not going to bear fruit overnight, I would like to urge CPCs to reflect on the Letters of Feedback that were provided to you by the Chairman of the Commission and to provide your own feedback on steps taken to overcome these challenges.

Furthermore, I would like to invite you to also take time to refer back to the Reporting Guidelines that were circulated by the Secretariat (IOTC Circulars 2012/03 and 2012/85) and to ensure that your respective administrations have responded to their applicable reporting obligations.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks to all of you for your support and endeavours to help transform the IOTC into a more effective Commission.

Yours sincerely



Roberto Cesari
Chairman
IOTC Compliance Committee

Attachments:

- None