



IPNLF POSITION STATEMENT

19th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Busan, Rep. of Korea, 27 April – 1 May 2015

The International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) is an international charity working to develop and demonstrate the value of pole-and-line caught tuna to thriving coastal fisheries. Our charity's principal aim is to improve the wellbeing of coastal fisheries, and the people and seas connected with them, through environmentally and socially responsible pole-and-line fishing. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector to achieve this.

At this year's Commission meeting, we urge Contracting Parties to adopt several critically important proposals to that, together, will set the framework for sustainable exploitation of tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean. These are:

- Support the establishment for reference points and harvest control rules for all major tuna species;
- Support improvements in data acquisition and reporting;
- Support improved data collection and regulation of undermanaged fishing gears, including fish aggregating devices; and
- Mitigate bycatch and protect endangered, threatened, or protected species.

The proposals on reference points and harvest control rules are the result of the IOTC MSE Work Programme and recommendation from the Working Party on Tropical Tunas and the Working Party on Methods endorsed by the most recent Scientific Committee meeting. If adopted, more sustainable management frameworks will benefit every member of the IOTC, and facilitate future eco-labelling efforts which can bring positive returns to fishing communities and safeguard the ocean ecosystem as a whole.

IPNLF is a key partner in supporting the coastal states and developing coastal states in establishing and supporting fishery improvement programmes with a view towards achieving eco-labelling. In addition to supporting management strategy evaluation work at the IOTC, we are supporting the Fishermen's Association of the Maldives on training programmes targeted for tuna fishermen on responsible fishing practices including compliance to local fishery regulations.

We are also developing fisher improvement programmes for selected sectors of Indonesian pole-and-line and handline fisheries, including livebait management and improved data recording and monitoring. Recent workshops have allowed greater outreach with Indonesian fisheries managers, processors and fishers, and have resulted in a number of recommendations including widespread application of the precautionary approach, providing training on livebait handling and storage, and protection of critical habitats.

While several important proposals will be considered by IOTC members during the 19th Session of the Commission, IPNLF urges the Commission to adopt resolutions on reference points and harvest control rules as a matter of priority for 2015. Such action will improve the management framework of the tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean, while preventing overfishing and offering long term stability in fisheries.

We look forward to working with you during the 19th Session of the IOTC, and hope that Members will fully support these important resolutions.