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**Proposal to Amend 16/01: ON AN INTERIM PLAN FOR REBUILDING THE INDIAN  
OCEAN YELLOWFIN TUNA STOCK IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE**

**SUBMITTED BY SOUTH AFRICA AND MALDIVES: 21 APRIL 2017**

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**Explanatory Memorandum**

Supply vessels unduly increase fishing capacity and efficiency leading to difficulties in quantifying effective fishing effort use of supply vessels in purse seine dFAD fishing. It should also be noted that the concerns of the 19<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee, regarding the decrease on free school catches especially with the decline in catch per set on drifting FADs (Fish Aggregating Devices), in parallel to the overall increase in number of drifting FADs deployed at sea and number of supply vessels, and the decrease on free school catches are thought to be of some concern.

These indicators may suggest some increase in fishing mortality or a process of school fragmentation caused by the large number of drifting FADs. In addition, the marked decline in the relative proportion of skipjack in drifting FAD catches, should be further investigated and explained. IOTC area of competence is among only two RFMOs which allow supply vessels to operate and with the concerns of overexploitation of stocks, it is suggested for a phasing out of supply vessels by 2020.

**RESOLUTION 17/XX**

**ON AN INTERIM PLAN FOR REBUILDING THE INDIAN OCEAN YELLOWFIN  
TUNA STOCK IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE**

**Keywords:** Yellowfin tuna, Kobe Process, Maximum Sustainable Yield, Precautionary Approach, Time-area-closures

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

CONSIDERING the objectives of the Commission to maintain stocks in perpetuity and with high probability, at levels not less than those capable of producing their maximum sustainable yield as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors including the special requirements of developing States in the IOTC area of competence;

BEING MINDFUL of Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement regarding the rights of Coastal States and of Article 87 and 116 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea regarding the right to fish on the high seas;

RECOGNISING the special requirements of the developing states, particularly Small Island developing states in Article 24, of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA);

RECALLING that Article 5, of UNFSA entitles the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks are based on best scientific evidence available and with special reference to Resolution 15/10 for a stock where the assessed status places it within the red quadrant, and with an aim to end overfishing with a high probability and to rebuild the biomass of the stock in as short time as possible.

FURTHER RECALLING that Article 6, of UNFSA, requires the states to be cautious during the application of precautionary approach when information is uncertain, unreliable or inadequate and this should not be a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

CONSIDERING the recommendations adopted by the KOBE II, held in San Sebastian, Spain, June 23 – July 3 2009; implementing where appropriate a freeze on fishing capacity on a fishery by fishery basis and such a freeze should not constrain the access to, development of, and benefit from sustainable tuna fisheries by developing coastal States.

FURTHER CONSIDERING the recommendations adopted by the KOBE III, held in La Jolla, California, 11- 15 July 2011; considering the status of the stocks, each RFMO should consider a scheme for reduction of overcapacity in a way that does not constrain the access to, development of, and benefit from sustainable tuna fisheries, including on the high seas, by developing coastal States, in particular small island developing States, territories, and States with small and vulnerable economies; and Transfer of capacity from developed fishing members to developing coastal fishing members within its area of competence where appropriate.

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FURTHER CONSIDERING the report by International Council for the Exploration of Sea and FAO Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour (2006), Gillnets are considered to be one of the least catch controllable and least environmentally sustainable gears;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the recommendations of the 18th Scientific Committee held in Bali, Indonesia, 23 – 27 November 2015 that the catches of Yellowfin tuna have to be reduced by 20% of the 2014 levels to recover the stocks to levels above the interim target reference points with 50% probability by 2024.

FURTHER CONSIDERING the concerns of the 19<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee held in Seychelles, 1- 5 December 2016, especially regarding the decline in catch per set on drifting FADs, in parallel to overall increase in number of drifting FADs deployed at sea and number of supply vessels,

BEING MINDFUL that over 80% of the purse seine fishing is now on dFADs and a significant number of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tuna are being taken which is adversely affecting the recovery of yellowfin stock.

NOTING THAT supply vessels contribute to the increase in effort and capacity of purse seiners and that the number of supply vessels has increased significantly over the years.

FURTHER CONSIDERING the discussions of the Working Party on Tropical Tuna held in Montpellier, France, 23 – 28 October 2015 on the limitations and the uncertainties in the stock assessment models due to the unavailability of standardized Yellowfin tuna CPUE data;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the call by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/75 upon the states to increase the reliance on scientific advice in developing, adopting and implementing conservation and management measures and to take into account the special requirements of developing states, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as highlighted in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; Page 9 of 226

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

1. This resolution shall apply to all fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna like species in the Indian Ocean of 24 meters overall length and over, and those under 24 meters if they fish outside the EEZ of their flag State, within the IOTC area of competence.

2. The CPCs will reduce their catch of Yellowfin as follows:

3. Purse seine:

- a. CPCs whose Purse seine catches of Yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their Purse seine catches of Yellowfin by 15 % from the 2014 levels.
- b. The number of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) as defined in Resolution 15/08, paragraph 7, will be no more than ~~425~~250 active instrumented buoys and ~~850~~500 acquired annually instrumented buoys per purse seine ~~vessel-~~vessels.

~~a. Supply vessels: The total number of supply vessels by CPC on the IOTC active list shall not exceed half of the number of Purse seine vessels reported per CPC on the IOTC~~

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~~active list for the same year. Complementary to Resolution 15/08 on "Procedures on FADs Management Plan including a limitation on the number of FADs, more detailed specifications of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species" and to Resolution 15/02 "Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)", CPC shall report annually which Purse seiners are served by each Supply vessel.~~

- c. Supply vessels: Considering that supply vessel unduly increase fishing capacity and efficiency leading to difficulties in quantifying effective fishing effort use of supply vessels in purse seine dFAD fishing should be phased out by 2020. CPCs shall submit plans for phasing out the use of supply vessel to the Scientific Committee no later than 2017 .

In the light of assessments made available by the Working Group (WG) on FADs and the Scientific Committee, the Commission shall update, if necessary the above limits in point b) and c).

4. Gillnet: CPCs whose Gillnet catches of Yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 2000 MT to reduce their Gillnet catches of Yellowfin by 10 % from the 2014 levels.

5. Longline: CPCs whose Longline catches of Yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their Longline catches of Yellowfin by 10 % from the 2014 levels.

6. CPCs' other gears: CPCs whose catches of Yellowfin from other gears reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their other gear catches of Yellowfin by 5 % from the 2014 levels.

7. Flag States will determine appropriate methods for achieving these catch reductions, which could include capacity reductions, effort limits, *etc.*, and will report to the IOTC Secretariat in their Implementation Report, the measures they have taken.

8. CPCs shall monitor the Yellowfin tuna catches from their vessels in conformity with Resolution 15/01 "On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence" and Resolution 15/02 "Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)" and will provide a summary of most-recent Yellowfin catches for the consideration of the IOTC Compliance Committee.

9. Each year, the Compliance Committee shall evaluate the level of compliance with the catch limits deriving from this Resolution and shall make recommendations to the Commission accordingly. The Scientific Committee via its Working Party on Tropical Tunas, shall in ~~2016~~2018, conduct a new assessment of the status of the Yellowfin stock using all available data.

10. The Scientific Committee via its Working Party on Tropical Tunas shall in 2018 undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures detailed in this Resolution, taking into account all sources of fishing mortality and possible alternatives aiming at returning and maintaining biomass levels at the Commission's target level. After consideration of the results of this evaluation, the Commission shall take corrective measures accordingly.

11. The Commission shall, based on the improved artisanal fishery data and the assessment of the state and impact of the artisanal fishery on the Yellowfin stocks, take appropriate measures on the management of the artisanal Yellowfin tuna fishery, at its Commission meeting in 2018.



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12. The measures contained within this Resolution shall come into force from 1st January ~~2017~~2018; it shall be considered as interim measure and will be reviewed by the Commission no later than at its annual Session in 2019.
13. Nothing in this resolution shall pre-empt or prejudice future allocation mechanisms.