



Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources, and Agriculture

Male', Republic of Maldives

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10 May 2019

Dr. Christopher O'Brien,
Executive Secretary,
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),
Le Chantier Mall,
Victoria Mahé,
Seychelles.

Dear Dr. Chris O'Brien,

Warm greetings from the Maldives.

I take this opportunity to respond to the *Feedback Letter Regarding Compliance Issues* of the Maldives that were raised during the 15th Session of the IOTC Compliance Committee. The Committee raised twelve outstanding issues which clarifications was provided during the Session. However, as requested by the Commission Chair, I take this opportunity to put forward our comments and clarification in writing.

1. *Has not reported the list of vessels for Tropical Tuna during 2006 as required by Resolution 15/11*

Maldives has sent the list to the secretariat few days prior to the start of 22nd Session of the Commission.

- 2. *Has not implemented the observer scheme, no deployment as required by Resolution 11/04***
3. *Has not implemented the observer scheme, no observer coverage at sea for vessel > 24m, as required by Resolution 11/04*

Marine Research Center has been conducting an observer programme for pole and line and handline fishing trips since 2016 and some of the data have already been shared with the Secretariat. Recently the information has been reported on the IOTC observer trip report template.

4. *Has not implemented the observer scheme for artisanal landing, as required by Resolution 11/04*

Under the World Bank funded Sustainable Fisheries Resources Development Project, Maldives is implementing a fisherman reported reporting scheme for the artisanal fleet, where fishermen report on their fisheries activities. Further, MRC is in the process of identifying Fisheries Officers at key artisanal landing sites to monitor landings and record information on catch, effort and size.

5. *Has not provided observer report, as required by resolution 11/04*

A full-fledged observer programme has not been implemented so far due to budgetary and human capacity constraints. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to implement a human observer scheme although and for reasons mentioned above the current policy is to implement e-monitoring to collect the information as required by the relevant Resolution.

Ministry is now in official negotiations with a service provider and it is expected that a contract will be signed in the next quarter to start e-monitoring to fulfill the observer requirements which will be progressively achieved in an 18-month period from the date of contract signing.

The Marine Research Centre, has submitted 1 report in 2017 and 2 reports in 2018, in accordance with the Resolution.

6. *Has not reported size frequency for the coastal fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*

7. *Has not reported size frequency for the surface fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*

Maldives implements a size sampling program at the key tuna landing sites through port samplers and fishermen samplers. Additionally, fishermen samplers also collect the data. The program covers vessels from the coastal and commercial fleets. However, the data was not submitted separately for the fleets. Submissions from now on will separate the coastal fisheries. All size data were reported on time to IOTC although the data does not meet the required sample numbers.

8. *Has not reported size frequency for the longline fisheries to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 15/02*

Size frequency data are collected through an appropriate port sampling scheme in the Maldives. However, for 2017 this scheme has not been implemented to the full as planned due to capacity constraints both, human and financial. The new World Bank Project has identified resources to improve the scale of the sampling activities. Ministry has also put in place other measures to collect the size-frequency data through fish purchasers and it is now a requirement under the license condition for the fish purchasers to record and report size data.

9. *Has not reported nominal catch on sharks to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 05/05*

10. *Has not reported catch and effort on sharks to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 05/05*

Shark species are protected by law in the Maldives and retention of sharks is also prohibited. All sharks that are caught have to be released alive wherever possible. Hence, catch and effort data is non-existent for Sharks caught by the Maldivian fishing fleet following the inception

of longline fleet operated by the Maldives. Furthermore, it is not feasible for the longline fishing vessels to record size of sharks that are caught incidentally as sharks are immediately released when they are brought alongside the fishing vessel using de-hookers or line cutters. Maldives is looking at other way of addressing this recurrent issue of “non-compliance”.

11. Has not fully implemented the requirements on IMO numbers for eligible vessels, as required by Resolution 15/04

Measures have been put in place to ensure IMO numbers are reported to the secretariat in a timely and efficient manner. This information is now collected during the licensing stage for eligible vessels and are reported with information on AFVs. With the help of PEW Charitable Trusts Maldives carried out an exercise to obtain IMO number for all eligible vessels. At the moment from all eligible fishing vessels currently there is only 1 vessel listed in AFVs without an IMO number that we are working to obtain the necessary IMO number.

12. Has not provided the annual report of the Statistical Document programme to IOTC standard, as required by Resolution 01/06

The IOTC Statistical Document Programme was reported to the secretariat along with the Report of Implementation as required. However, due to an administrative error the mandatory report and the implementation report for 2018 was sent after the deadline and thus it was not captured in the compliance assessment and consequently Maldives was marked non-compliant against this requirement.

13. Has not provided the Report on import, landing and transshipment of tuna and tuna-like fish products in ports to IOTC standard: no information on imports, as required by Resolution 10/10

As Maldives is a major fishing nation import of tuna like products to the Maldives was limited until recently. However, we have seen an increase in the amount of exports, as identified by Maldives Customs Service’s import statistics. At present, there is no system in place to collect detailed information as required by the IOTC on the imports of tuna and tuna like products through air cargo. Government of the Maldives is trying to review and amend the regulations to incorporate documentations on imports of tuna.

14. Has not provided the Report on progress of implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution to IOTC standard: some section of FAO guideline not covered, as required by Resolution 12/04.

Progress on implementation of the FAO guidelines was provided in the Report of Implementation. However, as the Report of Implementation was only communicated to the secretariat after the deadline this was not adequately captured in the Compliance Assessment for the Maldives and consequently Maldives was marked non-compliant against this requirement. This issue will be addressed and reported accordingly with the next Implementation Report.

15. Has not provided port inspection reports, as required by Resolution 16/11.

Maldives does not receive foreign fishing vessels seeking port call for landing and resupplying or any other use of port facilities. However, carrier vessels call into Maldivian ports to export fish that has previously been landed.

Maldives is currently drafting the necessary regulations to implement PSMA and the relevant IOTC resolution which will allow the Ministry to address the issue as the competent authority.

16. Has not provided the report on landing of foreign vessels in national ports, as required by Resolution 05/03.

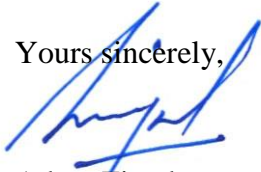
Foreign fishing vessels do not land fish to Maldives. This issue was flagged due to issues relating to the late submission of the Implementation Report 2018.

17. Has not provided the report on transshipment of LSTVs in foreign ports, as required by Resolution 17/06.

Maldivian fishing vessels do not land or transship fish in foreign ports. This issue is again linked to the late submission of the Report of Implementation.

I also take this opportunity to reaffirm the Secretariat of our commitments to the work of the Commission and reiterate the assurances of my highest considerations.

Yours sincerely,



Adam Ziyad
Director