



25 March 2020

IOTC CIRCULAR 2020-16

Dear Madam / Sir

A COMMUNICATION FROM JAPAN ON THE IOTC REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME

Please find attached a communication from Japan regarding IOTC Circular 2020-14 on the temporary suspension of observer deployments under the IOTC regional observer programme.

Yours sincerely

Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

1. Letter from Japan

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom ("BIOT"), Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Senegal. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only

Attachment 1. Letter from Japan



FISHERIES AGENCY

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8907, Japan

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24 March 2020

Dr. Christopher O'Brien,
IOTC Executive Secretary

Dear Dr. O'Brien,

**Notification of force majeure in at-sea transshipment observation
in accordance with paragraph 19 of the Resolution 19/06**

Thank you for IOTC Circular 2020-14 which notifies temporal suspension of new observer deployment under IOTC Regional Observer Programme (ROP).

Upon the notice, all the carrier vessels will inevitably become unable to have an ROP observer onboard for observation of at-sea transshipment from Japanese fishing vessels, in accordance with Resolution 19/06 on Establishing a Programme for Transshipment by Large-Scale Fishing Vessels.

Given the exceptional situation relating to COVID-19, Japan considers this fully qualifies as "force majeure" in accordance with paragraph 19 of Resolution 19/06, and hereby would like to notify its application to upcoming at-sea transshipments of Japanese fishing and carrier vessels, until the ROP observer deployment is resumed. Meanwhile, Japan will continue to duly submit its requests for ROP observer deployment and transshipment declaration forms as instructed in the Circular 2020-14.

During the suspension of the ROP, Japan will take measures as an alternative to monitoring of the at-sea transshipments, including strengthened inspection in Japan and cooperation with port authorities of relevant coastal states for the inspections at their ports.

Please circulate this letter to all CPCs.

Sincerely yours,

Shingo Ota

Japan's Commissioner to IOTC