

REPORT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL OBSERVER PROGRAM FOR AT-SEA TRANSSHIPMENT

Information Paper submitted by Japan

Background

At the 2004 annual meeting, laundering activities by LSTLVs involving cargo vessels were exposed, and effective monitoring and control measures for transshipment, in particular at-sea transshipment, were discussed. Japan proposed an observer program to strictly monitor at-sea transshipment to eliminate laundering activities using cargo vessels.

Japan conducted an experimental observer program from June to September of this year to examine feasibility and effectiveness of a measure to deploy neutral observers to freezer cargo vessels for monitoring at-sea transshipment and issuing certificate of transshipment to verify the catch data reported by fishing vessels.

Implementation

The experimental program was implemented by the Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) and the cost was covered by contribution of OPRT members.

From the end of June to the beginning of September, each of three cargo vessels conducting transshipment in the Atlantic accepted one observer.(Table 1)

Table 1 Result of the Cruises

Cargo Vessels			Boarding
Vessel	Tonnage	Flag	
A	1,500	Japan	Jun. 27 – Jul. 31 (35 days) (Las Palmas - Panama)
B	2,100	Panama	Jul. 7 – Aug. 23 (46 days) (Cape Town - Cape Town)
C	2,700	Japan	Aug. 5 – Sep. 1 (28 days) (Cape Town - Las Palmas)

Although this experimental program was implemented as a voluntary basis, the observers selected were internationally recognized surveyors belonging to survey and inspection institutes authorized to conduct inspections by laws and regulations. The observers collected the following data and information, and submitted Note of Confirmation to OPRT and the Japanese Fisheries Agency for each at-sea transshipment.

Fishing vessel: Name
 Flag
 International Radio Call Sign
 Positive List Number
 Length, Tonnage, Fish Holding Capacity

Catch Transshipped: Date and Location of Transshipment
 Species and Quantities of Catches transshipped
 Date of Catch

Result

During 109 days of total boarding days for three cargo vessels, 2,042.5 MT of catches were transshipped to the cargo vessels from 45 fishing vessels. Most of the transshipments were conducted at high sea area off Abidjan. (Table 2)

Table 2 Result of Transshipment

Transshipment				Number of Cargos Imported to Japan (as of October 14)
Cargo Vessel	Number of Transshipment (Number of Cargos)	Total Weight (MT)	Flag	
A	16	682.5	China, Japan	12
B	21	934	CT, Philippine, Japan	17
C	8	426	CT, Japan	

The Japanese Fisheries Agency checked the Note of Confirmation with the Statistical Document at the application for the import. There was no discrepancy between NOC and SD.

Cost

The cost includes personnel cost, travel, accommodation, communication, food and insurance. The cost was calculated by each cargo vessel. (Table 3)

Table 3 (Unit:US\$)

	Cargo vessel		
	A	B	C
Personnel cost	11,455	14,181	9,000
Travel	6,843	7,411	7,508
Accommodation	452	273	285
Communication	57	140	33
Food	636	836	509
Insurance	148	406	148
Others	302	0	249
Total	19,280	23,247	17,732

Discussions

This program was implemented as voluntary cooperation by the cargo vessels as well as the fishing vessels. In some cases, the observers had difficulty with obtaining the information from the fishing vessels such as the call sign, and date and area of the catches transshipped. To ensure effective implementation of observations, some mechanism to allow observers to access to the necessary information of the fishing vessels should be established.

As a technical aspect, species identification of catches is difficult especially in case where highly processed. However, it was proved that the skill can be established through the technical training.

In conclusion, monitoring of at-sea transshipments and issuance of NOC can be effectively implemented to eliminate falsification of vessel names, catches and species. Further, the monitoring of transshipment at sea makes it difficult to falsify area of catches in light of the location of transshipment. The NOC issued by observers on board the cargo vessels will contribute flag states of fishing vessels to monitor and control their fishing vessels by checking NOC with the catch report by the vessels.