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## ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS IT RELATES TO THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION

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### About this revision

Changes to the text are as marked in yellow.

### Explanatory memorandum

The Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC states, with high confidence, that climate change causes the redistribution of marine fish stocks, increases the risk of transboundary management conflicts among resource users, and negatively affects the equitable distribution of food provisioning services as fish stocks shift from lower to higher latitude regions. The report also notes that climate-related extremes have affected the productivity of the fisheries sector, with negative consequences for food security and livelihoods. The report further highlights the particular risks to small islands, where impacts are forecasted to be felt more keenly. For small island developing states, where fisheries remain one of the main livelihood activities and source of food security, the implications go beyond an economic crisis; the cumulative impacts of climate change pose an existential threat for such states.

Consequently, many governments and organisations have echoed urgent calls for action in this regard. Several international and regional management measures have been established to address the growing problem. However, most tuna RFMOs have given little consideration to climate change and its impacts. While some work has been carried out by individual member countries to assess and model the impacts of climate change on global tuna fisheries, there is little concerted effort in this regard. However, with the passing of the landmark Resolution 2019-01 (Resolution on Climate Change, As It Relates to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission) in 2019, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) became the first tuna RFMO to pass a dedicated resolution on climate change.

While momentum is building for climate-informed transboundary management and cooperation, much work still needs to be done to safeguard our shared fisheries resources and protect those that depend on them. In this vein, this proposal aims to accomplish the following:

1. Support the long-term sustainability of all IOTC species, their associated by-catch species, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent on or associated with the target stocks.
2. Contribute to improving our understanding of the impact of climate change on tuna stocks and the ecosystems of which they are part.
3. Build the capacity of developing State CPCs, in particular, Least Developed States and Small Island Developing States, to address the impacts of climate change on tuna stocks and fisheries, through the improvement of climate science in such states.

**RESOLUTION 22/XX**  
**ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS IT RELATES TO THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION**

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Precautionary Approach

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

RECOGNISING international initiatives to address the impacts of climate change including through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement;

NOTING the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

MINDFUL of the work of the Scientific Committee and the Working Parties in assessing the impacts of climate change on tuna stocks and by-catch, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent or associated with the target stocks in the Convention Area;

CONVINCED of the importance of addressing the potential impacts of climate change and other environmental degradation on target stocks, non-target species, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent or associated with the target stocks in the IOTC Area of Competence;

BEARING IN MIND that the Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) was adopted in cognisance of the need to avoid adverse impacts on the marine environment, preserve biodiversity, maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems and minimise the risk of long-term or irreversible effects of fishing operations;

RECALLING that Article 5 of the UNFSA requires States to assess the impacts of fishing, other human activities and environmental factors on target stocks and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon the target stocks and to adopt, where necessary, conservation and management measures for species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon the target stocks, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened;

CONCERNED by the findings of the 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change with high confidence that climate change is causing the redistribution of marine fish stocks, increasing risk of transboundary management conflicts among fisheries users, and negatively affecting equitable distribution of food provisioning services as fish stocks shift from lower to higher latitude regions, thereby increasing the need for climate-informed transboundary management and cooperation

RECALLING the concern of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tuna that the changes in ocean temperatures could have direct impacts on fish tuna spatial distributions and stock dynamics in particular with the Indian Ocean Dipole showing significant impacts on yellowfin tuna catchabilities.

FURTHER RECALLING that the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee noted the importance of understanding the impact of climate change in particular on tropical tuna;

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

1. CPCs The Commission shall in their its deliberations, to the extent possible, including in the development of conservation and management measures, take into account scientific information available from the Scientific Committee and other relevant international processes on the potential impacts of climate change on tuna stocks, bycatch and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent on or associated with tuna stocks.

2. CPCs The Commission shall support further development of science on scientific research into the relationship between climate change, tuna fisheries and tuna stocks, bycatch, and ecosystem or dependent on or associated with the tuna stocks, as well as interrelationships with other factors that affect these stocks and species and estimates of the associated uncertainties including research to inform potential measures to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change impacts.
3. The IOTC Scientific Committee, when requested by the Commission, shall consider and where possible, advise on the potential impacts of climate change on highly migratory fish stocks and any related impacts on the economies, food security and livelihood of CPCs in particular developing States among them Least Developing States and Small Island Developing States.
4. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall consider how climate change and fishing activities may be related and provide advice to the Commission on the potential implications for these relationships for the conservation and management of tuna and associated stocks. recommend to the Commission measures address any potential impacts
5. The IOTC Executive Secretary, with the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee, upon the availability of supplementary funds, shall undertake capacity-building programs in particular in the developing Coastal States among them the Least Developed States and Small Island Developing States, to improve climate change science and the understanding of climate change impacts on tuna stocks, bycatch and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent on or associated with the tuna stocks.
6. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall seek funding for the implementation of climate change related scientific works and capacity building programs through various funding mechanisms such as the Global Environmental Facility, World Bank and others for the implementation of this resolution.
7. 5. CPCs The IOTC Executive Secretary shall propose for endorsement by the Commission, for its 2023 session, further consider the options and alternatives to reduce the environmental impacts of the IOTC activities related to headquarters' operation and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. In particular, the Secretariat is requested to propose guidelines to reduce the impact of in person meetings, including a list of meetings to be held virtually.