

## **Statement of Korea on Proposal Y on Establishing Catch Limits for Skipjack**

Skipjack is the valuable species managed by IOTC, and we believe it is valuable for every CPC including Korea. Thus, Korea has been working closely with other CPCs including the proponents in considering this proposal.

It is regrettable to see the suggested catch limits for skipjack discussed in the 29th session of the IOTC annual meeting. Conservation and management measures should be based on the best scientific evidence available, but there is no scientific evidence provided that can justify anything in the proposal other than the TAC recommended by the Scientific Committee.

The reference years are usually the recent 4 to 5 years in RFMOs as is also the case for the proposal regarding bigeye submitted this year. However, this proposal on skipjack suggests the recent 3 years for the reference years and there is no justification nor explanation provided for that. Korea expressed its concern on that on the first round of the discussion and requested to change them to address our concerns, but unfortunately it was not incorporated.

In addition to that, there are other things that remain unclear in this proposal. For example, what's the rationale for the threshold of 9,000 that divides the Categories A and B and what's the rationale for changing that to 10,000. Now the revised version is suggesting a 2-year suspension for Korea and Mauritius in application of their catch limits, but considering the small amounts of catches of the two CPCs, that will not necessarily provide meaningful contribution to managing the stock nor the TAC.

Korea has made itself clear that in order for the Commission to properly manage the stock, those countries that have caught much should reduce more with the bigger percentages applied for reduction. We believe that is the fair, equitable and common way of managing the stock.

Korea used to have five purse seiners but has only two now due to our efforts to help rebuild the yellowfin tuna whose stock status experienced a sudden decrease years ago. That was a 60% decrease of our fishing efforts thus it was a huge sacrifice. This proposal on skipjack will add significantly adverse impacts on our fishing operations in IOTC especially given skipjack and yellowfin tend to be caught together in the Indian ocean. It is, once again, regrettable to see this suggested catch limits on the proposal. Therefore, Korea cannot agree with this proposal and cannot join the consensus.

The IOTC is an RFMO that manages one of the valuable fishing grounds for Korea's tuna fisheries. Korea will continue to closely work and cooperate with other CPCs for the sustainable management of the tuna and tuna like species managed by the IOTC.

Thank you