

Explanatory Memorandum

This revision corrects a few typographical errors. No other changes were made.

KOREA'S STATEMENT ON RESOLUTION 25/03

SUBMITTED BY: REPUBLIC OF KOREA

As you may recall, the Republic of Korea raised an objection to Resolution 25/03 On Establishing Catch Limits for Skipjack Tuna in the IOTC area of competence in July 2025 following the 29th Session of the IOTC, in accordance with Article IX(5) of the IOTC Agreement.

Korea attaches a great deal of importance to the spirit of international cooperation and collective action when it comes to conservation and management of fisheries resources, among others, and as many of you may appreciate, Korea has never shown this level of strong reaction to any decisions made at the meetings of RFMOs, including the IOTC before.

While we fully understand that it is always extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have negotiations on catch limits or quota allocation with outcomes equally satisfactory or disappointing to everyone, we must again express our concern about the way the proposal on Skipjack tuna was discussed and concluded.

First of all, we believe that certain factors such as scientific contribution and developing coastal state status, etc. were taken into account during the negotiation in deciding the level of reduction that each CPC should apply based on their 2021-2023 catch level. CPCs should have had discussions and agreement first, on what factors should be considered and how much they would affect the reduction rate.

Secondly, the baseline period of 2021-2023, was too short to cover each CPC's important historical fishing events and normal catch levels. Considering the interruptions that the COVID-19 caused to the normal fishing operations in multiple years, at least 10-year period would need to be examined in order to properly capture each CPC's catch level or fishing impact.

We would like to reiterate that Korea reduced the number of its purse seine vessels from five to two in 2016 and 2017, which we believe must have had a significant positive effect on the tropical tuna resources. Due to this reduction or sacrifice, Korea is now the CPC with the smallest catch record for the baseline period among the CPCs in the table under paragraph 5 of Resolution 25/03. It is unfair to impose a subsequent disproportionate burden on Korea without an adequate justification.

Apart from the universal practice across many RFMOs that a more flexible or less stringent approach is taken for smaller fleets when establishing regulations, we firmly believe that Korea deserves a special consideration in future negotiations on fishing opportunities for purse seine fisheries taking into account the fact that it is the only CPC which reduced its fishing capacity or effort by more than half in recent 10 years. We note that this unique history of Korea's purse seine fishing operation in the Indian Ocean was generally recognized and considered in the case of the Yellowfin tuna measure.

Having said that, although we believe that our objection remains necessary, Korea is committed to the conservation and management of tuna resources in the Indian Ocean, tropical tunas in particular, and looks forward to constructive

engagements with other CPCs and future discussions on conservation and management measures.

Finally, any future arrangements regarding fishing opportunities for Skipjack tuna must be based on agreed principles and informed by the MP outputs and we would like to work closely with all CPCs to make it happen.

Thank you.