



# **2026 IOTC Position Statement**

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**GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE**

# STATEMENT TO THE 30TH SESSION OF THE IOTC COMMISSION (2026)

The **Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)** represents a global coalition of processors, distributors and retailers with a direct interest in the sustainability, legality and transparency of tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

While the GTA recognises the progress made by the Commission in recent years, key elements of a fully effective and coherent management system remain incomplete.

This continues to create uncertainty and risk for the market.

The market is committed to supporting progress. However, fisheries that cannot demonstrate credible progress face increasing scrutiny from buyers, with direct implications for sourcing decisions.

## OUR PARTNERS



# KEY MESSAGES FROM THE MARKET

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I.

**Predictable, science-based management is essential for stable sourcing.** Delays to Management Procedures (MPs), particularly for yellowfin and albacore, are increasing uncertainty for global supply chains.

II.

**Without MPs in place, catch limits remain subject to frequent change,** heightening the risk of political interference in management, overfishing and a decline in stock health, all of which undermine third-party certification. Certification is the 'proof point' of a well-managed fishery that supply chain businesses and consumers trust.

III.

**Unresolved allocation frameworks continue to constrain progress,** toward effective long-term management, reducing confidence in the stability of the fishery.

IV.

**Gaps in monitoring and enforcement** undermine the ability of companies to confirm the legality of their tuna supply and to demonstrate compliance with their sustainability and ethical commitments.

V.

**Credible fisheries management must include clear and enforceable labour standards.** Without this, companies cannot fully demonstrate responsible sourcing, weakening confidence in supply chains and increasing exposure to reputational risk.

# GTA PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

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*As part of our commitment to responsible sourcing, Carrefour has decided to maintain the suspension of Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna procurement for our own-brand products. At this stage, current management conditions do not yet provide sufficient assurance for the stock's long-term viability.*

*We look forward to basing our future sourcing decisions on the establishment of robust, transparent, and long-term management measures at the RFMO level, including the adoption of effective harvest strategies.*

*We call for collaboration from all stakeholders to uphold these rules and implement all relevant voluntary practices at their level to ensure long-term resource availability.*

**— Carrefour**

*We urge the IOTC to further implement robust science-based management and harvest procedures for all tropical tuna species, and specifically call on them to agree to a TAC on yellowfin that does not exceed the Maximum Sustainable Yield of 421,000 tonnes. We and our customers are focussed on robust governance. Tangible science and data led actions give our customers increased confidence in the IOTC and in sourcing from the Indian Ocean.*

**— Princes Group**

*We are committed to sourcing from responsible one-by-one tuna fisheries and supporting their long-term sustainability. While the status of yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean is encouraging; stronger, science-based management is still needed. We continue to call for faster development and implementation of robust management procedures (harvest strategies), including an effective yellowfin tuna catch-limit measure with a total allowable catch set at or below MSY (maximum sustainable yield), to ensure these fisheries are sustainably managed over time.*

**— World Wise Foods**

*What we're seeing in the Indian Ocean is a growing disconnect between adopted management procedures and the mechanisms needed to implement them. Without progress on allocation mechanisms, the conditions for stable, long-term sourcing are not yet in place. The market is ready to support progress, but it needs a management framework that provides clarity, predictability, and confidence.*

**— Global Tuna Alliance**

# KEY ISSUES AND GTA'S POSITION

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## 1. Management Procedures (MPs)

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**Markets require predictable, science-based management to support informed sourcing decisions, and to maintain confidence in sourcing from the region.**

- The absence of an agreed MP for yellowfin tuna, and the risk of further delay to the albacore MP, are significant concerns.
- Without MPs, responses to changes in stock status remain subject to lengthy and political negotiation rather than pre-agreed, rules-based systems.
- This creates ongoing uncertainty for supply chains and limits the ability of companies to plan and maintain consistent sourcing from the region.

## GTA Asks

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1. Immediate progress towards the finalisation and adoption of MPs for albacore and yellowfin tuna stocks, without further postponement.
2. Provision of sufficient resourcing and technical support to complete essential Management Strategy Evaluation work, enabling 2028 targets to be realised.



## 2. Allocation to Support Functioning Management Frameworks

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**The GTA remains concerned that the absence of effective allocation mechanisms for each stock continues to be a major barrier to achieving long-term stability in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.**

- Progress on MPs is increasingly hampered by the Commission's lack of progress in agreeing allocation mechanisms.
- Agreed sharing arrangements are a vital component of a robust, fit-for-purpose fisheries management system and are integral to the effective operation of an MP.
- Their absence across the IOTC creates uncertainty about the responsiveness and robustness of management measures and undermines the stability of supply to the market.
- While interim catch limits provide a necessary short-term safeguard, they are not a substitute for a comprehensive allocation agreement.
- Limited catch data constrains allocation discussions and reduces the ability of companies to achieve the level of traceability increasingly required by the market.

### GTA Asks

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1. Provide the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) with appropriate terms of reference that facilitate the objective of reaching mutually agreed allocation mechanisms for key tuna stocks.
2. Improve data availability, including mandatory reporting of catch areas by national jurisdiction and the high seas, to provide the geospatial clarity needed to move beyond the current impasse.
3. Commit to advancing allocation-framework development concurrently with MPs and treat both as equal priorities, ensuring that unresolved allocation issues cannot delay MP adoption.

### 3. Social Responsibility and Labour Standards

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**Social responsibility is now a core requirement for responsible sourcing and an expectation of GTA partners. There are two key challenges:**

- Binding measures on crew welfare and labour standards, aligned with global standards such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 188, are not yet in place, leaving the IOTC increasingly out of step with global expectations and developments in other RFMOs.
- The lack of a clear pathway to action limits the ability of companies to demonstrate responsible sourcing, creating reputational and operational risks for supply chains.

#### GTA Asks

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1. Formally recognise labour practices and crew working conditions across tuna fleets operating in the Indian Ocean as an integral component of the IOTC's fisheries management framework.
2. Commit to and implement a clear, time-bound process for the development of binding measures on working conditions and welfare standards.
3. Commit to aligning with internationally recognised frameworks, including ILO 188.
4. Ensure that agreed measures relating to working conditions and crew welfare are practical, monitorable, and enforceable.



## 4. Monitoring and Enforcement

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**Effective monitoring and enforcement are essential to a credible fisheries management system and underpin confidence in the legality, sustainability, and integrity of tuna sourced from the Indian Ocean.**

However, this is being compromised because:

- Current observer coverage remains insufficient to provide the level of independent verification expected by global markets.
- There is no clear, time-bound pathway for increasing monitoring coverage (human and electronic) across tuna fleets.

In turn:

- Limited monitoring reduces visibility at sea, constraining the ability to verify compliance with management measures and due diligence requirements.
- The absence of a formal high seas boarding and inspection scheme remains a significant gap in the region's IUU deterrence capabilities.
- Inconsistent or incomplete vessel tracking through the lack of a regional VMS system (as exists in other tuna RFMOs) reduces the ability to detect and prevent illegal activity and provide a full picture of fishing effort.

### GTA Asks

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1. Establish a clear, time-bound roadmap toward 100% independent monitoring coverage across industrial tuna fisheries, through a combination of human observers and Electronic Monitoring (EM).
2. Establish a formal high seas boarding and inspection scheme.
3. Develop a safe and transparent framework for at-sea inspection.
4. Accelerate progress toward a regional Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).
5. Strengthen and consistently apply compliance and enforcement frameworks to ensure a level playing field across all operators.

# CONCLUSION

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The Commission has made welcome progress in recent years, and the GTA acknowledges these efforts. However, key elements of a fully effective management framework remain missing or incomplete.

Without further progress, uncertainty will persist, limiting the ability of companies to maintain stable and responsible sourcing from the Indian Ocean.

## The GTA therefore calls on the Commission to:

- Finalise and implement Management Procedures for priority stocks without delay.
- Progress allocation frameworks alongside MPs.
- Establish a pathway to comprehensive monitoring coverage.
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement mechanisms.
- Advance binding measures on social responsibility.

These are established expectations of the global market and are **essential to maintaining market confidence to source from Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.**

The extent to which they are delivered will shape the future role of these fisheries within responsible global supply chains.

**The GTA remains ready to support this work** and to engage market stakeholders in driving progress. However, expectations are clear, and the need for timely action is increasing.



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## CONTACT

If you require further information or to discuss any of the issues raised, please email Dr Wetjens Dimmlich. He will also be attending the Commission meeting and is happy to speak in person.

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