
RESOLUTION 24/01
ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS IT RELATES TO THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION

Keywords: Climate change, capacity building

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;

ACKNOWLEDGING that several regional fisheries management organizations, including the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) have adopted measures to prepare for and understand the impacts of climate change on the fisheries within their management mandate, and have given tasks with a specific timeline to their respective scientific or decision-making bodies;

RECALLING the concern of the 23rd Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tuna that changes in ocean temperatures could have direct impacts on tuna spatial distributions and stock dynamics.

FURTHER RECALLING that the 24th Session of the Scientific Committee noted the importance of understanding the impact of climate change in particular on tropical tuna and the 26th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee noted the need to provide capacity building to facilitate better understanding of climate change issues;

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

1. The Commission shall in 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. The Commission shall support further 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, 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 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.
5. To support and accelerate consideration of climate change issues in the Commission:
 - a) The Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) shall include climate change as a standing agenda item of its regular meeting, to include an assessment of the impacts (actual and potential) of climate change on IOTC fisheries. On that basis, the WPEB shall provide information or advice to the IOTC Scientific Committee on an annual basis in line with its current reporting processes.
 - b) The Working Party on Socio-Economics (WPSE) shall assess the socio-economic impacts (actual or potential) of climate change on IOTC fisheries. On that basis, the WPSE shall provide information or advice to the Commission and the IOTC Scientific Committee.
 - c) All other Working Parties reporting to the IOTC Scientific Committee shall include climate change as a standing agenda item at their regular meetings and provide any relevant information or advice to the IOTC Scientific Committee in line with their current reporting processes.
 - d) The IOTC Secretariat shall continue its work to develop and keep up to date, a dedicated IOTC webpage on climate change and its impacts on IOTC fisheries.
6. 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.
7. To support the capacity-building programs undertaken by the IOTC Secretariat, CPCs are encouraged to share relevant information, approaches and experiences, including on capacity-building, via the relevant IOTC bodies.
8. 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.
9. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall monitor, and as it deems necessary, propose for endorsement by the Commission, 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.

10. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall:

- a) At its annual meetings, review and consider any climate change information and advice from the WPEB, and from any other bodies or sources as relevant;
- b) On an annual basis, provide advice to the Commission based on its review and consideration of the information and advice in accordance with subparagraph a), and suggest any further steps that may be taken to integrate climate change considerations and analyses into its deliberations and decision-making processes;
- c) at its 28th annual meeting in 2025, review and propose amendments to its own Terms of Reference and those of its subsidiary bodies to meet the scientific needs stipulated in this Resolution.

11. At its annual session in 2025, the Commission shall consider whether to add climate change as a standing agenda item thereafter.

12. Resolution 22/01 *On Climate Change as it Relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* is superseded by this Resolution