



## RECOMMENDATION 25/14 ON THE LIMITATION OF FISHING CAPACITY

### The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

NOTING that the IOTC has introduced and progressively strengthened measures to directly restrict catches of major tuna species, in particular, through Resolution 16/01 *on an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence* and its superseders (Resolution 17/01, Resolution 18/01, Resolution 19/01 and Resolution 21/01), and Resolution 05/01 *on Conservation and Management Measures for Bigeye Tuna* and its superseder (Resolution 23/04);

ACKNOWLEDGING that, although catch limits have recently been introduced for both yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna stocks, their total catches have regularly exceeded sustainable levels in the past;

RECOGNISING that the stock assessment for bigeye tuna conducted in 2022 indicated that the fishing mortality on the stock was 43% above the level that would produce Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY);

ALSO RECOGNISING that, although the stock assessment for yellowfin tuna in 2024 showed the stock back into the green zone of Kobe plot, strong concerns were expressed during the Scientific Committee regarding the results, including the sudden shift of the stock status;

NOTING that the previous stock assessment for yellowfin tuna in 2021 estimated fishing mortality at 32% above the level that would produce MSY;

RECALLING Resolution 03/01 *on the limitation of Fishing Capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties* adopted at the 2003 meeting as well as Resolutions 06/05, 07/05 and 09/02 *on the Implementation of a Limitation of Fishing Capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties* [both superseded by Resolution 12/11, then Resolution 15/11];

RECOGNIZING that reducing fishing capacity in the IOTC area of competence, as a supplemental measure of catch limits, will promote stock conservation;

CONSIDERING that the excess fishing capacity should be avoided to ensure the catch is kept within the appropriate catch limit;

RECOMMENDS, in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 8 of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) are committed to managing the total fishing capacity in the region to achieve sustainable catch levels of tropical tunas in the Indian Ocean. Except for those CPCs that have already reduced their capacity over the past years, CPCs are recommended to reduce the number of their vessels of 24 m overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, fishing for tropical tunas in the IOTC Area, to the extent possible, by 30% from the number of their vessels that were active on the historical record of the IOTC.
2. In relation to paragraph 1, the interests of the coastal States, in particular developing coastal States, including Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries within the IOTC area of competence, should take precedence, and due consideration will be given to their rights and obligations in accordance with paragraph 3 and 4 of IOTC Resolution 03/01 *On the limitation of Fishing Capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties*.

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3. This recommendation will be applicable until the Commission adopts a measure concerning allocation criteria. The provisions of this Recommendation will not prejudice future discussions on quota allocation for tuna and tuna-like species, taking into account, *inter alia*, legitimate aspirations of the Coastal States, in particular developing coastal States, including small island Developing States and Least Developed Countries to develop their fishing capacity.