

**RESOLUTION 98/03
ON SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA**

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

MINDFUL that southern bluefin tuna (SBT) is a highly migratory species whose range includes, but extends beyond, the Indian Ocean;

RECALLING the competence of the IOTC, under the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (the Agreement), for tunas in the Indian Ocean, including SBT most of whose range falls within the IOTC area of competence;

RECALLING ALSO that the objective of the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (the Convention) is to ensure, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilisation of SBT throughout its entire range;

FURTHER RECALLING Article XV of the Agreement and Article 12 of the Convention, each of which provides for cooperation between the IOTC or the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (the CCSBT) respectively, and other relevant international organisations, while also seeking to avoid duplication with respect to their work;

BEARING IN MIND that the recognition by the IOTC of the prime responsibility of CCSBT for conservation and management of SBT, recorded at paragraph 31 of the Report of the First Special Session of the IOTC, was taken at a time when a total allowable catch (TAC) for SBT was in force under the Convention;

CONCERNED at the difficulties between CCSBT member States, due mainly to differences on SBT stock status assessments and projections, as reported to the IOTC by its Scientific Committee in the Report of its First Session, which are currently preventing the CCSBT from agreeing to a TAC;

CALLS upon the CCSBT member States urgently to overcome their difficulties in order to achieve the objective of the Convention and, to this end, offers to them the good offices of the IOTC Chairperson, the Chairperson of the IOTC Scientific Committee and the IOTC Executive Secretary, or their nominees, who may invite the contribution of other experts if appropriate, to advise on means to achieve this objective;

AGREES to review, at its fourth session, the progress made in overcoming those difficulties, and, if necessary, to decide whether a Working Party on SBT or on temperate tunas should be established to advance the effective conservation and optimum utilisation of SBT.