

**Course of Actions for RFMOs from the Kobe meeting of joint tuna RFMOs  
January 26, 2007  
Kobe, JAPAN**

The assembled members and cooperating non members of the five tuna RFMOs present at the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs, recognizing the critical need to arrest further stock decline in the case of depleted stocks, maintain and rebuild tuna stocks to sustainable levels and deal effectively with overfishing, overcapacity and IUU fishing activities, jointly commit to take urgent actions to co-operate through tuna RFMOs in accordance with their obligations under international law.

While noting that tuna RFMOs have different characteristics, pressures on their individual stocks, and management arrangements, it was agreed that enhanced cooperation among tuna RFMOs on a broad range of issues can increase their effectiveness and efficiency and provide improved management of all tuna stocks.

I. Key areas and challenges

Recognizing that priorities may vary from tuna RFMO to tuna RFMO, the following are identified as key areas and challenges to be urgently addressed through effective cooperation and coordination among the five tuna RFMOs to improve their performance:

1. Improvement, sharing and dissemination of data and stock assessments and all other relevant information in an accurate and timely manner including development of research methodologies
2. Development, where appropriate, and application of equitable and transparent criteria and procedures for allocation of fishing opportunities or level of fishing effort, including provisions to allow for new entrants
3. Controls, including capacity reduction as appropriate, to ensure that actual total catch, fishing effort level and capacity are commensurate with available fishing opportunities in order to ensure resource sustainability of tuna stocks while allowing legitimate fishery development of developing coastal states, particularly small island developing states and

territories

4. Ensuring that management measures are based on the best scientific advice available and consistent with the precautionary approach, particularly, with respect to establishment of effective stock rebuilding measures and other measures to maintain stocks at sustainable levels
5. Ensuring compliance through establishment of integrated MCS (monitoring, control and surveillance) measures that could include VMS, observers, boarding and inspection schemes, port state controls, market state measures, stronger controls on transshipment, and monitoring of bluefin tuna farming, and the harmonization of those measures across the five tuna RFMOs where appropriate to avoid duplication and increase cost efficiency
6. Application of penalties and sanctions of adequate severity to deter IUU fishing by both non-members and members
7. Development and implementation of stronger measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing including, mechanisms to identify and quantify IUU activities based on trade and other relevant information, a system to exchange information on IUU fishing among RFMOs and among flag states, port states and market states and coastal states, consolidation of the positive and negative lists as described in section II below, effective control over nationals in accordance with their duties under international law, identification of beneficial ownership and demonstration of “genuine link” and dissemination of relevant information to the public
8. Establishment and implementation of a system to monitor catches from catching vessels to markets
9. Reviewing the performance of tuna RFMOs in accordance with ANNEX I
10. Implementation of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management including improved data collection on incidental by-catch and non-target species and establishment of measures to minimize the adverse effect of fishing for highly migratory fish species on ecologically related species, particularly sea turtles, seabirds and sharks, taking into account the characteristics of each ecosystem and technologies used to minimize adverse effect
11. Development of data collection, stock assessment and appropriate

- management of shark fisheries under the competence of tuna RFMOs
12. Research and development of techniques to reduce incidental take of juvenile tunas during tuna fisheries, in particular FAD operations
  13. Provision of adequate capacity building assistance, including human resource development, for developing coastal states, particularly small island developing states and territories, towards responsible fishery development, including participation in RFMO and scientific meetings, fisheries data collection and stock assessment and implementation of MCS measures
  14. Enhancement of cooperation among scientists, relevant experts and with other relevant fisheries organizations possibly through organization of symposia or working groups on appropriate topics of common interest. Coordination of timing of annual meetings and scientific meetings with a view to avoiding their overlap as well as allowing an adequate interval between scientific and annual meetings and between proposal submission and annual meetings
- II. Technical work to cooperate across RFMOs will commence by addressing the following challenges.
1. Harmonization and improvement of the trade tracking programs and, as appropriate, development of catch documentation including tagging systems as required
  2. Creation of a harmonized list of tuna fishing vessels that is as comprehensive as possible (positive list) including use of a permanent unique identifier for each vessel such as an IMO number. The positive list should include support vessels. Creation of a global list of IUU vessels.
  3. Harmonization of transshipment control measures
  4. Standardization of presentation form of stock assessment results
- III. Follow-up actions
1. Report to 2007 FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)
- Participants request Japan to report the results of this Meeting to the 2007 COFI.

2. Implementation at each RFMO in 2007

Members shall commence implementing the measures foreseen in this Course of Actions at the 2007 annual meeting of each tuna RFMO as a matter of priority, consistent with the respective convention.

3. Establishment of a follow-up mechanism (ANNEX II)

(1) Policy level

An ad-hoc tuna RFMO Chairs' meeting should be held in January or February 2008 in the United States to discuss follow-up actions by each tuna RFMO. The meeting should be held with the participation of the appropriate representation from the tuna RFMOs secretariats, as well as representation from the FAO.

(2) Technical level

A technical working group (WG) consisting of appropriate experts from tuna RFMOs is established to consider technical issue 1 in section II of this Course of Actions. The first WG meeting will be held in July 2007 in the United States in conjunction with the ICCAT intersessional meetings and the tuna RFMOs will consider the results of such work during the 2008 annual meetings. The 5 tuna RFMO secretariats will jointly consider the technical issues 2 and 3 in section II on the occasion of the meeting of FAO COFI in 2007. Technical issue 4 will be considered by the scientific chairs of the 5 tuna RFMOs. The results on the 4 technical issues should be reported to the next joint RFMO meeting.

4. Next joint RFMO meeting

The next joint RFMO meeting is expected to be held in January/February 2009 in the European Community. It is desirable to hold the following joint meetings every two years but such frequency of meetings should be subject to a decision by the 2nd joint RFMO meeting.

**ANNEX I**

Attachment on RFMO Performance Review

The five tuna RFMOs should have reviews of their performance conducted in accordance with a common methodology and a common set of criteria. The goal of the performance reviews shall be to assist the RFMOs, through these evaluations, in improving their effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling their mandates.

As decided by each tuna RFMO, the reviews should be conducted by a team of individuals drawn from the RFMO secretariat, members of that RFMO and outside experts, with a view to ensuring objectivity and credibility. .

The results of the performance reviews should be presented in the first instance to the tuna RFMO in question for consideration and possible action. The results of the reviews should also be made public on the respective RFMO website, and may be considered as well at future meetings of the five tuna RFMOs, COFI, and other relevant bodies.

The first performance reviews should commence as soon as practicable, following the development of a performance review framework through electronic means which is subject to the approval of the tuna RFMOs. The performance standards (criteria) contained in the framework should be based on the common elements of the tuna RFMO charters, best practices of each tuna RFMO and relevant provisions of applicable international instruments.

Each tuna RFMO should decide on the precise timing of its first performance review and on follow-up performance reviews, with a view to having performance reviews undertaken every 3-5 years.

