

### Statement by Egypt to Panel 4

In the beginning, Egypt would like to appreciate your efforts that are given continuously to achieve and implement the ICCAT principles and its international rules. Throughout 16 years which reflect our contribution in ICCAT since Egypt joined in 2007, we have been trying hard to fulfill all our obligations and compliance with the ICCAT recommendations.

In 2019 Egypt requested to catch swordfish to benefit from its territorial water resources and we provide all evidence showing our historical rights to have our own quota in Mediterranean swordfish as Egypt has great and large-scale fishing vessels which are submitted yearly in the Annual Report to ICCAT. It is indicated that Egypt has more than 3000 registered fishing "coastal catching" vessels operating only in the Mediterranean Sea. Also, Egypt includes data of its catch of swordfish every year in the Annual Report submitted to the Commission, and due to our domestic observation, the catch of the swordfish is still limited. However, the abundance of the swordfish in the Egyptian water allows for more catch.

In point No. 5 on page 2 of the Report of the Intersessional Meeting of Panel 4 on Mediterranean Swordfish, held in Madrid in February 2017, the Egyptian delegation announce our position regarding the distribution of the allocated swordfish quota as following:

#### **5. Establishment of CPC quotas for 2017 without prejudice to the allocation scheme aforementioned**

The delegates of Egypt and the United States also reserved their positions, in order to consult. Further, the delegate of Egypt reported that its government would gather and report catch statistics to the SCRS and reiterated Egypt's interest in being included in the quota for Other CPCs.

In November 2018 at the Compliance Meeting in Croatia, Egypt reaffirmed its rights in a rightful quota.

So, in that regard, Egypt would like to recall the request raised during the 23rd Special Meeting held in Portugal in 2022 to ask for a fair quota of SWO. Egypt has therefore submitted a fishing plan as well as a management plan besides a record of its vessels and ports registered in ICCAT records as a step to comply with the regulation and Recommendation of ICCAT.

During this year, Egypt renews its request for a fair quota, specially when observing that the total allocated catch of SWO-MD is estimated at 10500 t in reference to Rec. 16-05 and the total quota fished during 2023 for the Med. countries is computed as 8962.61 t. And if we add the current catch of Egypt which is estimated by 75 t as mentioned in the fishing plan submitted by Egypt, the total catch of SWO-MD will be 9037.3 t. Furthermore, in the SCRS report for SWO-MD, the new recommended TAC is to be 9500 t.

From previous calculations we conclude that if the Commission decided to allocate a share for Egypt from the unallocated quota which exceeded 900 t, we would find a good opportunity for Egypt to have a fair quota of 250 t from the unallocated quota which will not affect the conservation of SWO-MD stock, because we are still under the new recommended Total Allowable Catch by more than 200 t.

Today, with a deep understanding of the importance of preserving our fish resources, Egypt asserts its claim within this meeting to assign a fair and equitable share of the Mediterranean swordfish quota with a kind request for the approval from different CPCs in PA4.