



STATEMENT to Panel 1

Despite the encouraging results of the recent stock assessment for bigeye tuna, it is important to note that the existing sources of uncertainty, still call for a precautionary approach in managing this stock. WWF supports the management recommendation of the SCRS to adopt a precautionary Total Allowable Catch (TAC) that would shift the stock status of bigeye towards the green zone of the Kobe plot with a high probability. Maintaining a TAC of 61.500 t is considered to be a level that allows meeting this objective, while maintaining the management and monitoring measures that ensure catches are kept within this limit.

On the other hand, WWF is particularly concerned for the continuous overshooting of Yellowfin tuna TAC that also occurred in 2020. In order to prevent overfishing of this stock, catch limits should be maintained below the current level and we call on CPCs to agree on a solid allocation scheme to ensure the effective monitoring of catches.

The last stock assessment for skipjack tuna dates back to 2014. It is urgent to schedule and agree on an update of this stock assessment, including this issue in the already busy agenda of the SCRS for 2022.

Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) deployed by the Atlantic purse seine fleets, significantly contribute to the overfished state of bigeye tuna due to the high catch of juveniles of both bigeye and yellowfin tuna. WWF strongly believes that the use of FADs in the Atlantic needs to be further regulated, besides the provisions of ICCAT Recommendation 19-02, to limit their impact on stocks and ecosystems, and welcomes the SCRS recommendation to revitalize the FAD working group that last met in 2017.

WWF considers the development of a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for tropical tuna and other species to be a priority in ICCAT and urges the Commission to devote resources to fast track this process.