

Draft document on item 9.3 of the Plenary agenda

(submitted by the Commission Chair)

Following the recent adoption of global instruments i.e. the World Trade Organization (WTO) Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the BBNJ Agreement, it seems appropriate for the Commission to envisage considering how to approach this new context globally in order to better understand the implications as well as the role it intends to play in their implementation. Although it seems premature to establish a clear and definitive overview of the implications of the provisions contained in these texts on the activities of RFMOs, it is nevertheless possible to admit that ICCAT will have to face challenges in terms of its contribution in taking account of the new context, through its various bodies.

Furthermore, and in particular for the BBNJ Agreement, clarifications are expected on the nature of the collaboration, consultation, cooperation and coordination with relevant global, regional, sub-regional and sectoral bodies. Therefore, since tuna fishing will be the most affected of the fishing activities, and in the context of its relations with this Agreement, the Commission may be consulted, for example, for the definition of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs), and environmental impact assessments, and the SCRS may be called upon for its scientific input. At this stage, neither the extent nor the frequency of potential consultations are known, but this does not mean that they cannot be envisaged.

The first Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the BBNJ Agreement will be held in the year following the Agreement's entry into force, which will take place once 60 Parties have deposited their instruments. This CoP will provide an opportunity for better coordination, which has often been lacking at State level, and for fisheries experts to participate in a meaningful way, with a view to providing guidance that will enable the role of RFMOs to be better established. This weakness in national coordination does not seem to be confined to the BBNJ process, but has also affected discussions on the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

Finally, the advent of the instruments referred to above is an opportunity for the Commission to revitalise and strengthen its cooperation with the relevant organisations, in the light of the enshrinement of the ecosystems approach to fisheries through the amendment of its Convention.