

### Statement of Egypt to ICCAT

Egypt wishes to formally elaborate on its perspective regarding the discussions and decisions made during the Commission meeting concerning the allocation of Bluefin Tuna (BFT) quotas."

**Firstly: Egypt reserved its position in the draft proposal PA2\_636 & PA2\_636A** which is based basically on some variables; the most important of which is "the utilization rate". This objection arises from four closely related issues that are: the unjust distribution of foundational quotas, the new punitive mechanisms, the direct negative impact on Egypt's quota, and a lack of transparency and equity in distribution.

- The Proposal Solely Harmed Egypt's Quota as Egypt asserts that this proposal has resulted only in harming and reducing Egypt's quota alone from the baseline established in Recommendation 22-08, which Egypt absolutely rejects.
  - The Proposed Automatic Punitive Mechanisms are Unacceptable as It is illogical and unfair to penalize parties with an allocated quota for not fully exploiting a quota that is, in itself, unfair from our perspective. These mechanisms punish developing nations for circumstances often beyond their control.
  - The management system must not be used to punitive measure against countries that did not utilise their quota non-action. Furthermore, this system is inherently unfair. This deep disparity is evident as Egypt and other similarly situated countries face penalties, while the draft recommendation simultaneously grants preferential opportunities for quota increases to another group of countries.
  - Furthermore, Egypt strongly objects to the methodology of allocating quotas based on an excessively short and limited timeframe (only two years), which explicitly contradicts the principle of historical fishing enshrined in the Commission's Resolution 15-13 as a fundamental criterion for equitable fisheries management as Egypt believes that relying on such short period (2023-2024) to establish foundational quotas introduces a fundamental bias and deliberately ignores Egypt's long-term historical fishing record, which reflects its longstanding commitment and established role in this fishery. This approach marginalizes acquired rights and creates a clear discrimination against nations that have sustainably fished the resource for decades, to the benefit of other parties.
- **Secondly: Egypt reserved its position in the draft proposal PA2\_636B** in which, the new punitive mechanism is deleted based on concerns of many parties raised against, however Egypt was remained effectively penalized based on a criterion that does not exist in the current proposal, namely "rate of utilization." Since this variable has been removed from the draft recommendation, the reason for the reduction suffered by Egypt becomes null and void (Punishment Based on Non-Existent Criterion)
- Furthermore, this management plan is fundamentally based on an unjust quota distribution system, which contradicts the principles of fairness and transparency that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) must adhere to.
  - In addition, the current distribution systematically hinders the legitimate aspirations of developing coastal states, such as Egypt—which was not even permitted to retain its current distribution percentage—to develop its economy and sustainably and legitimately exploit its marine resources.

- **Third: Egypt expresses its strong reservation with regard to the decisions issued of the last plenary session during the ICCAT meeting**, specifically, when Algeria requested 17 tonnes, representing the entire reserve for the Mediterranean and East Atlantic Bluefin Tuna stock (after transferring 100t to the Western Stock without satisfying Eastern members), and the Chair **immediately** approved the request and took the decision without allowing other members the opportunity to express their views and without the consideration of concerns raised by other CPCs regarding their quota and regardless of the scientific risk of no reserve **which in turn reflects The absence of fairness and equality, in addition to the scientific basis which has been disregarded with the existence of a "zero" reserve, a practice that the Committee has long objected to in order to maintain the health of the stock.**

Despite above-mentioned concerns, and although that the current proposal not only deviates from the spirit of Resolution 15-13 but also undermines the principles of fairness and equity that must govern any future quota system, necessitating an immediate correction of this grave methodological flaw, **Egypt had no objection to approving the current document (PA2\_636C)** in consideration of the interests of all parties and to ensure collective satisfaction and happiness for our colleagues.

However, with reference to the significant concerns outlined, particularly the procedural bias witnessed in the last plenary session, the depletion of the reserve, and the fundamentally unfair quota reduction targeting Egypt based on an illegitimate premise, **continue to recall its concerns and reservation in all future relevant deliberations.**

We kindly request the Secretariat to enclose Egypt's statement along with the decisions/recommendations issued by ICCAT, including our strong reservation on the allocation of the reserve, in the meeting report, and **we request that this statement be attached to the meeting report.** We call on contracting parties and the secretariat to seriously consider the concerns raised by Egypt in the very near future.