

November 6, 2015

Dear Delegates,

This letter is submitted on behalf of the undersigned non-governmental organizations and fishing industry organizations that participate the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Commission) process, or may seek to do so in the future.

Collectively our organizations have thousands of staff working in offices and partner organizations in over a 100 countries and engage suppliers and provide advice to retailers, buyers and food service sectors regarding improvements in tuna sustainability. In addition, the undersigned industry organizations represent a considerable number of purse seine, longline and pole & line vessels active in tuna fisheries and we recognize that the sustainability of tuna stocks is integral to our businesses as well as the health of the marine environment.

We are writing to bring to your attention our views on harvest control rules and reference points – an issue we see as a fundamental to sustainable fisheries management -- and one on which the Commission must take action.

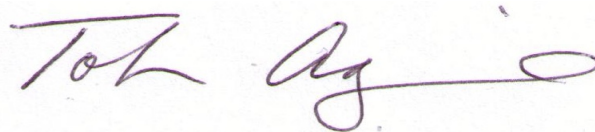
We support the Commission's efforts to adopt fundamental science-based management measures to ensure the sustainability of tuna populations in the Atlantic Ocean, and we request your support for additional management reforms. We also support the application of the Precautionary Approach using clear target and limit reference points and harvest control rules, as called for by the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. Harvest control rules are a set of well-defined management actions to be taken in response to changes in stock status, and include appropriate, biologically-based reference points. However, we are concerned that the Commission has not yet adopted interim biological reference points or harvest strategies, including harvest control rules, for most priority tuna stocks.

As you prepare for the upcoming 24th Regular Meeting of the Commission, we urge governments to support the adoption of robust and precautionary harvest strategies, including appropriate biologically-based reference points, harvest control rules and acceptable levels of risk, for priority tuna stocks, noting the positive progress towards the implementation these elements in the North Atlantic albacore fishery. In addition, we request that the Commission adhere to best practices when developing harvest strategies, and establish clear interim deadlines where appropriate to ensure progress toward implementation. Finally, in order to optimize harvest control rules for all tuna stocks in the

future, we suggest that the Commission request regular updates from your scientific advisors regarding reference points and performance indicators, and consider a monitoring scheme.

We urge ICCAT to take these actions at its upcoming Commission Meeting as a matter of priority.

Sincerely,



Michael McNicholas



Margaret Spring



A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.



Wm. Joseph

