

**OPENING STATEMENT BY NAMIBIA AT THE 24th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS
(Malta, 10-17 November 2015)**

This Regular Meeting of ICCAT is remarkable for Namibia due to the fact that a new Government was inaugurated since April 2015 when a new Head of State took the reigns of our Republic. The new Head of State His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob explicitly and clearly stipulated three mayor objectives for the coming five years which are Inclusivity, hunger eradication and economic development. The Namibian Delegation thus has a mandate to at minimum derive the above stated from this meeting. We have not been deriving optimum benefit from the ICCAT total allowable catch as of late and we have seen our catches for tuna and tuna-like species dwindling. We have been hampered by low fishing capacity in this case where we have to charter tuna vessels from our neighbours who in turn should be exploiting their quota before engaging with our fishermen. Second, a significant limiting factor and which is destabilizing is the presence of seismic activities in our waters and within the same period with our tuna fishing season. The performance of this subsector is seriously hampered by these activities. We are however in scientific and technical tug-of-war with the mining industry with regard to this issue. It has been proven through empirical work in other parts of the world that seismic activities are detrimental to fisheries. Namibia needs technical and scientific assistance from ICCAT in order to prove to the mining sector that seismic activities have led to reduction in catches. We need a dedicated scientist to analyse seismic data, its implication and guide the implementation and research strategy.

Mr Chairman, we would like to thank the Working Group on Convention Amendment for the work they have done so far during the intercessional period. We understand that this WG has made quite a good progress on most of the proposals put forward for amending the Convention. In particular, we fully concur with the proposal agreed upon by this Working Group that only those by-catch species (caught in relation to ICCAT targeted fisheries) that are not already managed by other International Fisheries Organisations or that are not under the competent authority of coastal states, should fall under the mandate of ICCAT.

We are also really satisfied by the good work done by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), this is quality work and the current and previous Chairs of this body are being commented by Namibia. The Committee delivers the best scientific information to the Commission, Namibia urges the Commission to always abide by the scientific recommendations of this important organ of the Convention. Looking at the biology, indicators, state of the stock and management recommendation from the SCRS, Namibia is satisfied that perpetuity in exploitation of this resource will be attained if management measures are adhered to.

The additional endeavor should be the creation of dialogue with other users of the ocean environmental resources such as maritime traffic, mineral exploration, tourism and any such as cultural utilization of the oceans. We are called to establish some kind of strategic environmental assessment for sustainable

use of the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. Co-existence of these livelihood vital activities should be investigated and resolutions found for implementation for an equitable and just global society.

Finally, Namibia as a Developing State is open to cooperation with Developed partners for the sake of safeguarding the Atlantic Ocean and Adjacent Seas, as we borrow these from future generations and they need this intact. We shall welcome relevant assistance in perfecting our surrounding for sustainable utilization and prudent management thereof.

Namibia would like to thank you all and we are looking forward to a successful 24th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.