

Original: Spanish

**RESPONSE BY COLOMBIA TO COC CHAIR LETTER**  
(COC\_325/2020)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Directorate of Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs – extends its greeting to the Honourable International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and has the honour to refer to ICCAT Circular 8644/20 of 21 December 2020 and to document COC\_324/2020, concerning the renewal of Columbia’s status as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party.

We were surprised at the objection submitted by the European Union (EU), considering that Columbia has demonstrated its sustained commitment to strengthen and comply with the provisions on sustainable fishing, both within the context of ICCAT and other fisheries management organizations with whom we work.

Through the National Aquaculture and Fisheries Authority (AUNAP), Colombia has honoured the responsibilities undertaken as part of the Collaborator status, and in this respect, has responded to the periodic reports established by ICCAT and to the different reporting requirements of the Commission and its members.

It should be noted that the Colombian fisheries authority has reiterated the existing commitment to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, in accordance with the international commitments and compliance with national fisheries regulations.

Therefore, on 23 October, the date on which ICCAT notified the irregularities concerning the vessel *Haleluya*, and related to the actions of the Colombian authorities, AUNAP embarked on a technical study to compile evidence and determine the existence or not of an alleged infringement of the fisheries regulations within the framework of this Commission and national sovereignty. The documentation and inquiry on this matter were submitted through the established channels of communication, as stated in ICCAT Circular # 8131/20 of 26 November last.

In light of the above, it is clear that Colombia has fulfilled its obligations as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party and is committed to continuing to do so.

Finally, Colombia reiterates its special interest in implementing the Operational Plan submitted for 2021, following confirmation of the requested status. The foregoing is consistent with what has been indicated in Memorandum AUNAP-DG-0407-2020, which was submitted on 23 November 2020, and provides a response to EU concerns on renewal of Cooperator status.

Therefore, it is respectfully requested that ICCAT – and the delegation of the European Union, with whom Columbia has maintained close cooperation – reconsider and reassess the possibility of maintaining cooperator status for Columbia. The country is also fully willing to implement any possible suggestions of the Compliance Committee in the corresponding scenario.