

### US STATEMENT TO CHAIR ON PANEL 1

We would like to begin by offering our appreciation to the Panel 1 Chair for his efforts to draft a proposal to extend the expiring provisions of the *Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 16-01 by ICCAT on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas* [Rec. 19-02].

The United States notes that Recommendation 19-02 calls for a reduction in the bigeye tuna TAC of 1,000 t (from 62,500 t to 61,500 t) for 2021. While the Chair's proposal (PA1-503) does not contemplate the slight reductions needed in binding CPC catch limits for bigeye tuna to align them with the lower 2021 TAC, our strong preference is that any measure adopted for 2021 reflect such reductions. It is unclear to us if this omission in the Chair's text was intentional, and we are seeking clarification. If the intent is not to adjust binding catch limits for 2021 to bring them in line with the TAC, this should be a concern to all CPCs. A TAC of 61,500 t is already *substantially* higher than the scientific advice calls for to stop overfishing and begin rebuilding of the stock. Panel 1 needs to be prepared to take the needed steps to ensure this TAC level is not exceeded.

The United States is also offering in-line edits to PA1-503 to ensure the scope and effect of the measure are clear. These edits are not intended to change the substance of the measure. Note that we are proposing to strike the reference to Rec. 19-02 paragraph 17 in paragraph 1 of the proposal, as the yellowfin tuna TAC clearly applies to "2020 and subsequent years," so its inclusion is not necessary.

Regarding document PA1-502, "2020 Bigeye tuna catch limits (including suggested limits)", we note that this document was originally developed to support expected 2020 intersessional discussions by Panel 1 that were not able to take place, and those discussions are also not possible during this correspondence process. In light of that, the United States does not consider that any action on this document is necessary at this time. We suggest that Panel 1 simply take note of the document and its potential utility in supporting future allocation discussions. The annex provides important context and should also be taken note of by the Panel. With regard to the recent communication by Guatemala (ICCAT Circular #6957), the United States agrees that 2021 catch limits should be based on the most up-to-date Task 1 data, provided that CPCs follow the proper notification and data revision protocols required by the SCRS.