

Original: English

**STATEMENT ON PANEL 2, ROUND 1**

*(Presented by Canada)*

Canada supports the Chair's proposals on North Atlantic albacore tuna (PA2-606 and PA2-607).

Canada has reviewed the Chair's first proposal on western Atlantic bluefin tuna (PA2-608) and that submitted by the United States of America (PA2-610).

We recognize the limitations of the western bluefin tuna 2020 updated stock assessment and in order to address these limitations Canada supports the United States' proposal calling for a stock assessment in 2021.

The Commission should request a full assessment as was performed in 2017, not an interim or "turn of the crank" update as conducted in 2020 where new data was added to the 2017 models. Canada is open to discussion on how this new stock assessment would fit in to the work of the SCRS, including potentially delaying other work scheduled for 2021 if there is less urgency for results on other stocks.

Canada also proposes that an external stock assessment expert be contracted to participate in the new stock assessment in order to address concerns about the existing assessment process for this stock by including external expert input and review.

The market demand for Atlantic bluefin tuna has decreased in 2020 as a result of the global pandemic response such as the closing of restaurants and decreases in travel and tourism. In light of this, and in light of the fact that the interim SCRS advice for 2021-23 assumes that all quota included in the 2020 TAC would be caught in 2020, Canada proposes a temporary increase in the maximum percentage of underharvest that some CPCs are permitted to carry forward, as specified in paragraph 7(a) of the Recommendation by ICCAT for an interim conservation and management plan for Western Atlantic bluefin tuna [Rec. 17-06], from 10 percent to 25 percent.