

Original: English

U.S. STATEMENT TO PANEL 2 (ROUND #2)

The United States notes that some of its edits to northern albacore proposals PA2-606A and 607A were not accepted. We maintain that Panel 2 will need to consider all relevant SCRS input in 2021 and have slightly revised edits to both proposals as well as a small edit to ensure consistency between the two proposals. The United States previously questioned the *pro rata* allocation of the TAC increase, especially its application to small harvesters and Japan's soft bycatch limit; this would be a novel approach for ICCAT. However, given the Chair's clarifications in PA2-616, the challenges of correspondence decision-making, and understanding that the approaches in these one-year measures do not set a precedent for our decisions in 2021, we can go along with PA2-606A and PA2-607A with our edits included.

Unfortunately, we are still not in a position to agree to the EBFT proposal. The Commission's agreed approach was to extend measures for one year; thus, a decision on the 2022 TAC should be deferred to next year. As the SCRS will review EBFT stock indicators next year but not provide quantitative TAC advice, we also continue to consider that 36,000 t should be specified as an upper limit for the 2022 TAC. We respectfully offer our edits to the Chair's proposal again and request they be taken onboard. Regarding Korea and Chinese Taipei's request to reinstate their quota transfer provision (Paragraph 5), we disagree with the Chair that this provision is not necessary to include in PA2-609A in light of Rec. 19-04, paragraph 10. Because that paragraph does not explicitly derogate from Rec. 01-12, which requires Commission authorization of temporary quota transfers, Korea and Chinese Taipei are correct that they will need authorizing language in PA2-609A.

The U.S. WBFT proposal (PA2-610) did not propose a TAC; given the range of scientific advice provided, we preferred to wait to hear the views of other CPCs. Unfortunately, this unprecedented year has made it virtually impossible to have meaningful negotiations. After two rounds of correspondence, a divergence of views remains. The Chair has worked diligently to find a path forward that is in line with the scientific advice and that everyone can live with. The SCRS provided a number of management scenarios for the three-year projection period that address overfishing with at least a 50% probability. Given the varying positions expressed by CPCs, the Chair made a thoughtful revised proposal that includes following scenario 3 as a way forward for this year under the current challenging circumstances. The Chair's revised proposal also incorporates a stock assessment in 2021, as originally proposed by the United States. We recognize that this is not the usual way ICCAT operates, nor should it become the norm. But in this very specific case, it is wholly appropriate given the legitimate and specific scientific issues identified intersessionally by the SCRS Bluefin Tuna Technical Sub-Group on Abundance Indices and confirmed by the SCRS Chair during the correspondence period. We also noted the SCRS Chair's definitive confirmation that the SCRS can carry out this assessment in 2021 without derailing progress on the bluefin tuna MSE or other SCRS activities. While there are some aspects of the Chair's proposal that need adjustment, particularly as this is, as previously agreed by the Commission, a one-year measure, we believe it provides a good basis for efforts to reach consensus in the limited time available to us. With a view to advancing that consensus, we have submitted specific edits to the Chair's proposal separately for consideration.