

Original: French

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF PANEL 4

**STATEMENT BY MOROCCO REGARDING THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON SHORTFIN MAKO
(PA4-804, 805, 806)**

Morocco is concerned about the state of the shortfin mako stock and participates, along with other ICCAT CPCs, in the collective efforts to preserve and protect this species. Shortfin mako is not a species targeted by Moroccan fleets but is taken as bycatch in other ICCAT fisheries. Morocco has ensured a reduction in catches of the species in 2020 and has strengthened the scientific monitoring and traceability measures implemented for the species, in accordance with ICCAT and CITES recommendations (inclusion of the species in Appendix II).

Notwithstanding, it should be noted that it has not been possible to hold the intersessional meeting of Panel 4 due to current health context, and that there is a lack of indicators on the state of the stock in 2020, taking into account that the latest available data on this species are those of the 2017 assessment, updated by the SCRS. Also, the Sharks Species Group concentrated in 2020 on the porbeagle stock assessments. No additional information on shortfin mako has been provided. The SCRS recommended that the Commission adopt a non-retention policy without exception in the North Atlantic for shortfin mako as in 2019.

On account of the foregoing, and of the difficulties encountered even during the in-person meeting in 2019 (2019 ICCAT Commission Meeting in Palma) regarding agreement on the proposals submitted by different CPCs, Morocco has concerns regarding the effectiveness of discussions and agreement by correspondence in relation to the draft recommendations submitted by the EU, the United States, Canada and Senegal for agreement and implementation of a shortfin mako recovery programme. Morocco thanks these CPCs for their proposals, but considers that the discussions on a shortfin mako recovery plan should be commenced at a later date during an in-person meeting.

In our opinion, the requests expressed by some CPCs in their draft recommendations for the SCRS to advise on spatio-temporal identification of nursery areas and areas of high concentration of shortfin mako in the North Atlantic, on identification of permanent or seasonal bycatch areas, and on the issue of whether space-time closures would be useful to reduce encounter and mortality rates, warrant particular attention.

We also think that zero catch proposal for shortfin mako will not reduce the mortality levels of this stock but, to the contrary, will lead to an increase in discards of this species.

Taking into account the arguments put forward, Morocco recommends extension of the recommendation in force (Rec. 19-06) on shortfin mako for 2021.