

**STATEMENT TO BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON PANEL 4 - ROUND #2**  
*(Documents PA4-804, PA4-805 & PA4-806)*

The European Union would like to thank the Chair of Panel 4 for his efforts in seeking consensus between the three proposals tabled this year in relation to northern shortfin mako. Despite these efforts, it has so far not been possible to find a solution to the current impasse between the different approaches foreseen. The European Union is particularly disappointed by this lack of progress as it increasingly looks like the current measures will be rolled over for another year, while additional action is required to rebuild the stock.

This lack of progress would not reflect well on ICCAT or on its ability to manage shark fisheries in the future. In this particular case, ICCAT's difficulties to make progress are a direct result of the polarisation of the positions around the issue of a compulsory retention ban which has been wrongly presented as the only solution to the current situation, although this assertion does not stand up to closer scrutiny. A full retention ban, might give the perception that strong action had been taken but the reality would be very different since it would not lead to less mortality, except on paper, as dead fish would merely be returned to the sea, and the problem hidden. Instead, the European Union strongly believes that ICCAT CPCs must use their common experience and expertise to agree on a set of management measures to deliver an effective and comprehensive plan for rebuilding of the stock of northern shortfin mako.

Despite the current lack of progress and the impossibility to agree on a long-term plan this year with the limited time left, the European Union believes that the current measures are insufficient and that ICCAT can and should improve them already this year for the benefits of the stock even if a more long-term plan needs to be adopted next year. Without pre-judging possible future discussions, we therefore propose to adopt one-year interim rebuilding measures, which would include ending exemptions (paragraph 3 and 4 under the Recommendation 19-06) and introducing a TAC to end overfishing, while programming intersessional work to continue improving the management framework for shortfin mako.

We are aware of the limitations of this interim approach, including the need for the TAC to account for total mortality and the EU had in fact proposed in its draft recommendation for SCRS to be tasked with advising managers on this so the TAC could be adapted as necessary. However, we also believe that there is a scope for the fleets to further avoid shortfin mako, as recent catch figures strongly suggest, and for the TAC to therefore become a valuable tool to help rebuilding the stock. The criticism directed at a TAC approach from the proponents of a retention ban is in part justified by assuming that it would not account for full mortality. Apart from the fact that a process is actually already foreseen in our proposal for taking account of all mortality, no-one has so far been able to provide a valid explanation on how mortality would be reduced when fish under a retention ban would simply be discarded at sea.

The European Union confirms here its commitment to continue working towards this objective and urge all CPCs to be constructive and to avoid a simple roll-over of the current measures. We are convinced that this is still possible if everyone accepts to compromise on modifying the existing measure for one year so that it at least would take a step towards ending overfishing and thus bring us closer to the common goal of rebuilding the stock.