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STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES TO PLENARY ON PANEL 1

The United States would like to comment on the correspondence decision-making process undertaken by Panel 1 and issues now facing the Commission Plenary.

The United States is in agreement with Japan's view expressed in PLE_135. The Commission agreed that the default management approach for expiring measures is a rollover unless there is new scientific information indicating an urgent situation. As there was no new assessment of bigeye tuna in 2020, document PA1_503A appropriately reflects a rollover of the expiring provisions of Rec. 19-02. The alternative text in PA1_525 Annex 3 is a brand-new approach to management that was presented after several rounds of correspondence. In line with our agreed procedures, any such new proposal was to have been submitted to ICCAT at the latest by October 15. Furthermore, no substantive concern and certainly no objection was raised by any CPC to the Chair's proposal during Panel 1's first correspondence round. Thus, per the rules set out in Circular 5924-20, the rollover proposal was adopted. The few non-substantive comments that had been provided during the first round to clean up the text were subsequently incorporated and, for transparency, the Chair recirculated the proposal as PA1-503A. By the Commission's own decisions in setting up the correspondence process, substantive objections and alternative management proposals that came after the established deadlines cannot be considered.

For the above reasons, the Commission has no choice but to follow its agreed process and procedures and consider the Panel 1 Chair's rollover proposal, as reflected in PA1_503A, adopted. We recognize that this is not a satisfactory result for most CPCs, including the United States, but it is a practical approach while Panel 1 works intersessionally in 2021 to find a more acceptable way forward.

Finally, we appreciate the effort to reschedule the Panel 1 intersessional meeting after the bigeye tuna stock assessment meeting, as requested by the United States and several other CPCs. Unfortunately, in PLE_106B the new proposed dates (September 1-3) now conflict with the SCRS second bluefin intersessional meeting. The original rescheduling request was intended to ensure Panel 1 could take advantage of the most up-to-date scientific information from the SCRS. Toward that end, participation by the SCRS Chair and other scientists is essential. We are concerned that the conflict with the SCRS bluefin tuna meeting will prevent the level of scientific participation needed to adequately support the Panel 1 meeting. We suggest that the Panel 1 intersessional meeting be postponed until the week of September 13 to address this situation, although we are open to other solutions as well.