

OPENING STATEMENT BY BRAZIL

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to convey the great satisfaction of the Brazilian delegation to participate in the 27th Regular Meeting of the Commission and give our contribution to a successful event.

We would like to thank the ICCAT Secretariat for the hard work not only in preparation for the present online meetings, but also for all the work done since 2020 during these extraordinary times. Brazilian experts in the panels have been able to participate in excellent intersessional meetings and we reach today's 27th Regular Meeting of the Commission ready for productive discussions.

Mr. Chair, Colleagues of the ICCAT community,

Brazil wants to take the opportunity of our Opening Statement to express our deep appreciation for the messages and eulogies regarding our respected dear Professor Fabio Hazin. We feel that his passing was a great loss for the ICCAT community, for Brazil and for us as friends.

This year the Commission starts the present Meeting with challenges ahead, if we want to fulfill our obligations under the Convention. First, the negotiations of the TAC and quotas of the bigeye tuna stock. Regarding this challenge, Brazil supports the need to adopt TACs and catch limits in conformity with advice provided by the Scientific Committee on Research and Statistics for all target species, so that we can prevent overharvesting. Brazil is of the opinion that quota allocations must be decided in a fair, transparent and equitable manner, taking also into account existing agreements under other multilateral fora that set especial provisions for developing coastal States, that is to say the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United Nations Fish Stock Agreement and, adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and, also, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

In that light, for the purposes of the allocation of quotas, Brazil underscores the fact that it is developing its fisheries for tropical tunas, mainly by giving opportunity to the expansion of small-scale fishery with handline, in a progressive and gradual manner, in conformity with international rules and regulations.

Another issue that is very important for Brazil is the urgent need to reduce by-catch in all fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species. We recognize progress achieved by this Commission, with marked improvements in the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the observance of the precautionary approach. We understand that such improvements, with the consequent reduction of the bycatch of species such as sharks, billfishes, turtles and seabirds, results from the work of this Commission with the adoption of several recommendations over the last years.

In recent years, Brazil also has achieved significant progress in reducing bycatch and mortality of sea turtles by longline fishing. Brazilian regulations make it mandatory the use of circle hooks by all longline fishing vessels. For seabirds there's also specific regulations to mitigate their incidental catch and mortality, which is stricter than the Commission's recommendation.

We also want to inform that in the year 2021 Brazil has advanced in the implementation of its integrated electronic monitoring system, which will soon include the use of cameras onboard, and the developing of a new scientific observer project. In 2021 Brazil and the Global Fishing Watch signed an Agreement to improve the Brazilian National Vessel Monitoring System Program, strengthening transparency, good governance, and the actions against IUU fishing.

To conclude our Statement, Mr. Chairman, Brazil would like to reaffirm our commitment with the duly implementation of all management and conservation measures adopted by ICCAT. We are open to cooperate with you and all delegations, this time in the virtual format, to make this a successful meeting and to help us fulfil this Commission's mandate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Benhur Peruch Viana
Head of Delegation for Brazil