

**Explanatory note on a Draft Resolution by ICCAT on the creation
of a Standing Joint Experts Group on Climate Change**

(submitted by the United Kingdom)

ICCAT has recently taken the first steps to plan for and respond to climate change impacts as described in the [Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change \(Res. 22-13\)](#). Res. 22-13 provided for the ICCAT Climate Change Joint Experts Meeting, which was held 11-12 July 2023. Res. 22-13 also called for the development of a workplan, and the Chair of the Joint Experts meeting tabled an initial Draft Plan of Action during the meeting for consideration by the meeting participants.

The July 2023 meeting convened managers, scientists, and other experts to have a frank and necessary discussion about climate change in the ICCAT context. At the core of the meeting's success was the recognition that the challenges posed by climate change directly impact ICCAT's work. To continue to be able to function effectively and meet the objectives of the Convention, ICCAT therefore needs to adapt accordingly and incorporate climate change considerations into its work. In other words, the short- and long-term response to climate change requires a joint, consolidated effort across both the science and management sides of the organization.

The proposed resolution represents the next critical step in ICCAT's work on climate change and seeks to establish a Standing Joint Experts Group on Climate Change (SJEG-CC) in line with the draft Plan of Action. It specifies the core functions and procedural details of the SJEG-CC, which we suggest will have a key role in tracking, overseeing, and coordinating the climate change work set out in the Plan of Action, and provide a dedicated, focused forum for discussing relevant issues. The SJEG-CC will consider and advise the Commission on the issues specified in Res. 22-13, including matters introduced at the July 2023 Climate Change Experts Meeting, while ensuring continued close coordination between the SCRS and Commission on climate change matters.

**Draft Resolution by ICCAT on the creation
of a Standing Joint Experts Group on Climate Change (SJEG-CC)**

(submitted by the United Kingdom)

RECALLING the Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change (Res. 22-13);

FURTHER RECALLING the important presentations and discussions held at the ICCAT Climate Change Experts Meeting (11-12 July 2023) that highlighted the climate crisis facing ICCAT;

RECOGNISING that the July 2023 Experts Meeting was the start of a critical conversation within ICCAT on climate change;

WELCOMING the Plan of Action developed as a result of the July 2023 Experts Meeting [and endorsed by the Commission;]

ACKNOWLEDGING that understanding, adapting to, and mitigating climate change impacts on ICCAT target stocks, non-target species and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon target stocks in the Convention area, as well as understanding any related socioeconomic or other impacts on the fisheries, including on CPCs and their fishing communities, requires ongoing close cooperation and collaboration between the SCRS and the Commission;

CONVINCED of the need to establish a standing body in ICCAT to consider in detail these climate change impacts as well as adaptation strategies to ensure climate resilient fisheries in ICCAT by leveraging the expertise of relevant scientists and managers, and to oversee the plan of action;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. A Standing Joint Experts Group on Climate Change (SJEG-CC) is established with the following terms of reference:
 - a. The SJEG-CC provides a dedicated forum in ICCAT to consider and, where appropriate, advise the Commission on effective approaches for advancing the scientific, management, and related issues specified in the *Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change* (Res. 22-13), including the matters discussed at the July 2023 Experts Meeting.
 - b. In carrying out the work specified in paragraph 1a) above, specific tasks of the SJEG-CC will include the following:
 - i. Review and drive progress on implementation of the ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change;
 - ii. Share information on climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives of relevance to ICCAT fisheries, including any efforts undertaken to encourage a lower carbon footprint in CPC fisheries, and consider the utility of establishing an information repository for access by CPCs and, as appropriate, other RFMOs;
 - iii. Explore ways to engage with stakeholder groups to strengthen the base of knowledge on climate change and its impacts and ensure more inclusive and informed decision making on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, such as by, where appropriate, encouraging CPCs to include stakeholders on their delegations and/or holding special open sessions of the SJEG-CC to hear from stakeholders directly;

- iv. Discuss the potential impacts of climate change (such as changes in temporal and spatial distribution of stocks, reduced recruitment, reduced individual fish size, changes in species interactions, and increases in bycatch rates) on relevant conservation and management decisions, including, inter alia, Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting, allocation arrangements, spatial and temporal management, minimum sizes, and risk considerations, and consider adaptation strategies and approaches, including, as appropriate, those that are being implemented by CPCs, that will prepare ICCAT to address such potential eventualities;
 - v. Consider and advise the Commission on other potential actions that ICCAT and/or its CPCs could take, individually or collectively, to address challenges related to climate change, including through cooperation and collaboration with other RFMOs, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the cross-RFMO meetings it is leading in 2023 and 2024, and other intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), as appropriate;
 - vi. Consider, in consultation with the SCRS, the need for capacity building and technical assistance, including to gain access to and use climate/environmental data, to improve climate science as it relates to understanding, predicting, and addressing the potential impacts of climate change on ICCAT stocks, species, and related ecosystems, as well as impacts on fisheries, including fishers and communities, and to explore ways to provide such assistance, where appropriate; and
 - vii. Consider other relevant issues with regard to ICCAT and climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as periodically organising, together with the ICCAT Secretariat, symposia on topics related to climate change and highly migratory species research and management, as approved by the Commission.
2. The SJEG-CC will meet intersessionally beginning in 2024, either virtually or in hybrid format, in conjunction with another ICCAT intersessional meeting, where possible, and preferably with the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch. Interpretation into the three official languages of ICCAT will be provided at every SJEG-CC meeting.
 3. To facilitate immediate work by this body, the SJEG-CC will be initially chaired by the Chair of the July 2023 ICCAT Experts Meeting unless and until the SJEG-CC elects another chair. Given the joint science-management nature of the group, the SJEG-CC Chair and SCRS Chair will work in partnership to facilitate its discussions. In addition, to further facilitate information exchange between the SCRS and the SJEG-CC and enhance the scientist-manager dialogue, relevant SCRS scientists, including office holders of the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch and/or other relevant SCRS subsidiary bodies working on climate change matters, should participate in meetings of the SJEG-CC and report back to the SCRS and its subsidiary bodies on relevant issues.
 4. All CPCs are encouraged to participate in SJEG-CC meetings and to include climate and other relevant scientific and management experts on their delegations. For CPCs eligible to receive travel support from ICCAT's Meeting Participation Fund, as established by Rec. 20-09, up to two members per delegation (one manager and one scientist) are eligible to receive such assistance as opposed to the usual one member. In addition, outside experts, particularly those with expertise in climate and fisheries matters, may be invited to join SJEG-CC meetings, as needed and appropriate.
 5. At the 2024 and future ICCAT annual meetings, the SJEG-CC will report on the progress made in carrying out its tasks, including with respect to the implementation of the Plan of Action, and present to the Commission any substantive or procedural recommendations it may have, including advising the Commission on the frequency and duration of future intersessional meetings of the SJEG-CC. The Commission will consider this input and decide on next steps.
 6. This Resolution will be reviewed by the Commission at least every 5 years and revised as necessary and appropriate.