

### Statement to Panel 1 by Ghana

It is an honour to be granted the opportunity to make a statement at the 24th Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which is being held in the beautiful city of Limassol in Cyprus. I am grateful to the Chairperson and Executive Secretary of ICCAT for the opportunity.

Let me use this opportunity to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Cyprus for hosting this important meeting and for the hospitality accorded me and my delegation since our arrival in Cyprus. It takes hard work and planning to organize such a meeting, and I say AYEKOO (meaning well done) to everyone who has contributed to making this meeting a success.

I bring you warm greetings from the Government and good people of Ghana on the occasion of the 24th Special Meeting of ICCAT and wish you a successful meeting.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the fisheries sector plays a significant role in our government's socio-economic agenda. Over three (3) million people are employed along the sector's value chain in Ghana. In 2023, the industry contributed over 684,000 metric tons of fish to the national food and nutritional security, with the per capita consumption of fish estimated at 20 kg. Again, in 2023, the country earned over USD 420 million from the export of fish and fishery products.

It is worthy of note that over 80% of foreign exchange earnings from the export of fish and fishery products was contributed by the tuna subsector; given this, the Government is committed to sustainable management of the tuna resources in the Atlantic Ocean for the good of our country,

ICCAT is the tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization mandated and tasked with the responsibility for the sustainable exploitation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean. It is for this reason that the Government of Ghana pays a keen interest in the outcomes of ICCAT meetings, especially recommendations adopted for the management of the skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, and billfish, the leading resource base of our tuna industry.

The recommendations of ICCAT are based on science, so my government has no problem implementing them. Currently, my country is implementing, among others, the following ICCAT Recommendations: i) close area and a moratorium on the use of FAD; ii) deployment of observers on tuna vessels; iii) TAC allocation of bigeye tuna; (iv) the Vessel Monitoring System.

The Government of Ghana is confident in ICCAT's ability to deliver on its mandate, and we know ICCAT would make Member States proud. Ghana will continue to play its role as a Contracting Party to ensure the organization's success.