
**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION FOR
THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY
MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND
CENTRAL PACIFIC**

First session
Christchurch, New Zealand
23 – 28 April, 2001

WCPFC/PrepCon/6
28 April 2001

**WORKING GROUP II: SCIENTIFIC STRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF INTERIM
SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

Summary report by the Chair of the Working Group

1. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the inaugural meeting of Working Group II recognized two main tasks: the need for the Preparatory Conference to obtain provisional scientific advice on the status of tuna stocks; and the longer term need for advice on implementation of articles 12 and 13 of the Convention. The Working Group agreed that participants should consider available information before providing recommendations on the implementation of articles 12 and 13. Consequently, it agreed to concentrate on assembling information and designing a workplan that would enable participants to systematically address the requirements at future Working Group meetings.
2. In conducting its work, Working Group II considered the following papers:
 - Draft Terms of Reference for Working Group II: Scientific Structure and Provision of Interim Scientific Advice (25 April 2001);
 - Working Group II: Scientific Structure and Provision of Interim Scientific Advice. Draft Agenda (26 April 2001);
 - Comments by the Republic of Korea on the Interim Scientific Advice (26 April 2001);
 - WCPFC/PrepCon/BP.5: Draft Agenda IX: Provision of Interim Scientific Advice;
 - US Proposal: System for Providing Interim Scientific Advice to the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (25 April 2001);
 - Terms of reference and description of Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB).
3. Working Group II identified the following principles to guide its work:
 - the desirability of maintaining a range of options to be evaluated for the provision of scientific services and advice within the scope provided by articles 12 and 13 of the Convention;
 - the importance of transparency in deliberations of the Working Group;

- the need to provide for participation by small island states in the scientific work of the Commission and also during the interim period prior to the Commission's establishment;
 - to the extent possible, the need to utilize the scientific resources of various national and regional organizations and arrangements and to avoid duplication of scientific effort and to ensure economy and efficiency;
 - the need for close coordination between Working Group II and Working Group I (Organizational Structure, Budget and Financial Contributions);
4. With regard to the implementation of articles 12 and 13, Working Group II requested:
- that a review of the WCPFC Convention be undertaken to identify science needs; data requirements; priority-setting, planning and coordination of research; and the review of scientific work;
 - that information be sought from regional organizations and arrangements (including, but not limited to, SCTB, SPC, IATTC and ISC) on the processes used by those organizations to identify their requirements;
 - that information also be sought from such organizations and arrangements on their current activities, including species covered, membership, staffing levels, sources of funding, budgets, sources of data and methods used to collect data; and potential overlap with the WCPFC Commission's scientific activities;
 - that the review of the WCPFC Convention and information from such organizations and arrangements be provided to the next Preparatory Conference meeting for consideration by Working Group II.
5. Regarding the need to identify costs and options associated with the Commission's scientific work, Working Group II agreed that its subsequent meetings should develop a research plan based on the needs identified by the review of the Convention and information on other organizations and arrangements. To the extent possible, the Working Group's research plan should include estimates of costs associated with each activity. At the Working Group meeting, views were expressed regarding the need to ensure that the Commission's scientific work does not rely on cross-subsidization by other organizations or that the Commission does not cross-subsidize the activities of other organizations.
6. With regard to provisional advice on the status of tuna stocks, Working Group II agreed:
- to recommend that the Preparatory Conference approach relevant national and regional organizations and arrangements, such as SCTB, SPC, IATTC and ISC, for reports and summaries of existing information on the status of the stocks in their various areas of competence (the draft request is annexed to this report). In order to minimize costs the Working Group suggested that the request to relevant organizations and arrangements for reports and summaries of stock status should emphasize that the reports and summaries be based on existing information;

- that any such information received should be assembled and, where possible, summaries of that information prepared for circulation to all participants in the Preparatory Conference before its next meeting;
- the information provided by relevant organizations and arrangements might also be used by subsequent meetings of the Working Group when identifying scientific advice needs and data requirements and in research planning;
- depending on any agreed process for providing the Preparatory Conference with scientific advice, the information provided by relevant organizations and arrangements might also be used by the Preparatory Conference to determine whether it may need to consider recommending conservation and management measures for the stocks.

7. An interim secretariat may be required to undertake the tasks identified by the Working Group.

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**ATTACHMENT 1. DRAFT OF REQUEST FOR PROVISIONAL SCIENTIFIC ADVICE
ON STOCK STATUS**

Date

Address to Secretariat/Contact Point for:

Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
North Pacific Albacore Workshop
Interim Scientific Committee
Relevant national research agencies

Dear Sir or Madame;

The Preparatory Conference for the establishment of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean requests your assistance in providing information on the status of tuna stocks in your area. We request copies of the most recent reports and summaries of the status of the tuna stocks in your organization's area of competence or interest for consideration by the Preparatory Conference in our deliberations. If summaries of the status of one or more of the stocks in your organization's area of competence or interest are not available, your advice to that effect would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Chair of the Preparatory Conference

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