

---

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

Fourth session  
Nadi, Fiji Islands  
5 – 9 May, 2003

WCPFC/PrepCon/DP.15  
9 May 2003

---

**RESPONSE OF CHINESE TAIPEI TO FACT SHEET PRESENTED BY JAPANESE  
DELEGATION ON EXPANSION OF FISHING CAPACITY OF PURSE SEINERS IN THE  
WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC**

Submitted by the delegation of Chinese Taipei

It is interesting that at this time of depression of tuna market, Japan has presented such a fact sheet. We hope there is no implication of industry factor in between. It is our belief that sustainable exploitation of any fisheries resource should be allowed, and to restrain exploitation of a resource which is sustainable will have great impact on the economy of island nations in the region and a loss to the normal food supply to the world.

Figures as indicated in the Japanese fact sheet, only represent part of the scenario as documented in the SCG1 report after deliberations by the participating scientists. Unfortunately, Japan did not attend the SCG1 meeting, and we are willing to quote what was stated in the report for the reference of our Japanese friends:

1. Purse seine catch in the western and central Pacific Ocean comprises around 75% of skipjack. The status of the stock is “capable of sustaining the current catch without the adverse effects to the overall stock.”
2. “Yellowfin tuna is likely to be nearing full exploitation.”
3. “Bigeye tuna is nearing full exploitation”.

SCG1 report also expressed that “the catches and fishing mortality of juveniles have increased greatly over the past decade, due primarily to increased catches in [two archipelagic countries] and the international purse seine fishery. In respect of the purse seine fishery, the increased use of drifting FADs has increased juvenile mortality of the bigeye tuna.”

From the report through the hard work of scientists in SCG1, we have the impression that the investment in purse seine fishery for skipjack in the region has been conducting in a manner which will sustain the current exploitation, whereby contributing to the food security of the world. This investment can be considered as a positive one.

In view of the fact that bigeye and yellowfin tunas are nearing full exploitation, during the operation of purse seine fishery in the region, more attention should be paid on reducing juvenile catch. One of the most effective measures is to minimize the use of FADs. We note there has been outstanding success in some regional fisheries management organizations such as IATTC, on regulating the use of FADs.

With regard to the issue of FOC purse seine vessels as indicated by Japan, we would like to give some comments as follows:

1. Operation of FOC purse seine vessels in the Pacific region has a long history, and notably their operators are among the nationals of some of those countries sitting around this table today.

2. FFA has imposed certain management measures to the operation of purse seine fishery, including the so-called FOC vessels as indicated by Japan. Among the measures imposed, are vessel registration system, VMS, observer program, weekly and trip catch reporting. Any vessel applying fishing permits to fish in the South Pacific region has to obtain the status of good standing from FFA. In other words, without the status of good standing, the vessel will not be permitted to fish in the EEZ of any member of FFA. By fishing only on the high seas, the operation of purse seine fishery will not be viable.

The above description well reflects the exact scenario in the region, but it does not imply our support of fishing operations under FOC vessels. Our current fisheries policy still maintains that the number of purse seine fishing vessel shall be limited at 42. The phenomena of fishing operations under FOC vessels is in fact the result of FFA's policy of encouraging foreign vessels to seek localization in the island developing States in the region under FSM arrangement. We hope FFA can assist the concerned flag States in the region in promoting sound conservation and management measures. In addition, we also welcome Japan's proposal in requesting SCG to study the status of tuna stocks in the region in more details, exploring the possibility of sustainable exploitation of skipjack while reducing the catch of juveniles of bigeye and yellowfin tunas. However, we feel uncomfortable that Japan seems to have concluded in advance that there is an overcapacity of purse seine fishery in the region and requesting to take actions accordingly.

Finally, we reiterate our full respect to SCG's advice on the status of the tuna resources. We assure that our scientists will be working closely with all other scientists involving in the work of future SCG.

- - -