



**COMMISSION  
FOURTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Manila, Philippines  
3 – 7 December 2017

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**COMMUNIQUÉ OF A CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS ROUND  
TABLE ON PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES**

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**WCPFC14-2017-OP11  
2 December 2017**

**Submission by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**



COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE-DAY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSO) ROUND TABLE ON PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES, WHICH WAS HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER AT THE WWF-PACIFIC REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN SUVA, FIJI. THE CONSULTATION WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP A CSO POSITION TO WCPFC14 WAS HELD WITH SUPPORT FROM THE FFA OFMP II PROJECT, AND THE PIFS NSA PROGRAMME FUNDED THROUGH THE EU'S EDF10 AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT (PIFS).<sup>1</sup>

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## Background

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Tuna species are highly migratory and require international collaboration to ensure their sustainability. Well-managed tuna populations can provide economic security and livelihoods for many countries, particularly the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). To ensure the sustainable management of this economically valuable natural resource provides equitable benefits for Pacific Island people it is imperative that civil society representatives have a voice in the decision making process.

Representatives of Pacific- based civil society organisations (CSOs) convened their second meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 to discuss upcoming issues at WCPFC14. CSOs representatives included the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA), Locally Managed Marine Areas Network (LMMA), Pacific Dialogue (PD), Women in Fisheries Network (WiFN), Oxfam in the Pacific, and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Transparency and public accountability of the Commission, and the safety and basic human rights of fisheries observers and fishing crew were highlighted as major concerns by the Round

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<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: This position submission is produced with the assistance of the European Union and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; and the Forum Fisheries Agency. The contents are the sole responsibility of the regional Civil Society Roundtable participants and can in no way be reflected to be views of the European Union, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Forum Fisheries Agency

Table, without losing sight of the importance of the sustainability of the WCPFC's tuna resource.

## ISSUES

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CSO representatives agreed that their concerns raised at WCPFC13 have not been sufficiently addressed by the Commission. As such, the following issues have been identified as of primary importance to be considered at this year's 14<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Commission:

1. Limited public participation, restricted media access, and lack of transparency in the decision making process presents a significant barrier to ensuring sufficient accountability in the management of a publicly owned resource.
2. Insufficient fisheries observer coverage in the longline fishery adversely impacts on the accuracy and adequacy of catch data which limits the ability to effectively manage the tuna fishery sustainably. The lack of observer coverage also limits the ability to monitor compliance with existing regulations. There is also inadequate uptake of electronic monitoring systems to complement the work of fisheries observers.
3. Inadequate measures to control high seas efforts and capacity
4. Delay in the collective agreement to support target reference points (TRPs) for SP albacore tuna.
5. Failure of CCMs to adopt management measures for non-target species in line with obligations under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
6. Inadequate recognition of safe working conditions and well-being of fishing crew and the safety of fisheries observers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Civil Society Organisations that participated at the November 2017 CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna Fisheries unequivocally support the sustainable utilization of tuna resources in the WCPFC Convention Area and the equitable distribution of returns to benefit all including domestic industrial fishers and local coastal communities. We, the 2017 CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna Fisheries participants call on the Commission to:

1. **Improve transparency of the WCPFC proceedings to ensure consistency with Article 21 of the Convention. It requires the Commission to “to promote transparency in its decision-making processes and other activities...to participate in the meetings of the Commission...as appropriate”....and where “the rules of procedure shall not be unduly restrictive...” Furthermore, “such intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations shall be given timely access to pertinent information subject to the rules of procedures which the Commission may adopt.” To achieve this, the Commission must:**
  - a. **Allow observers access to all sessions of the WCPFC including matters relating to Compliance;**
  - b. **Review the WCPFC media access policy allowing media access to the entire proceedings of the Commission’s annual session and subsidiary bodies, and provide a space throughout the week to participate in regular press conferences with media and civil societies;**
  - c. **Ensure consistency with other best practices for accredited observer participation in other tuna RFMOS and other international forums;**



## Conclusion

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We, the CSO representatives at the CSO Round Table on Pacific Tuna met in November 2017 wish to thank the Commission for the opportunity to table our joint concerns.

We wish to emphasize that the concern about the sustainability of the tuna resource is a concern that is shared by the CSO Round Table. We also care as it not only translates to economic security of our nations, communities, and families, but also to social, cultural, health, biological and environmental securities that need to be addressed in this and future deliberations of the Commission. We remain hopeful that the outcomes from WCPFC14 will reflect this.

The following organisations hereby endorse this communiqué:



## Abbreviations

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CCMs	-	Cooperating Commission Members
CITES	-	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna & Flora
CMS	-	Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
EEZ	-	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	-	European Union
FFA	-	Forum Fisheries Agency
GEF	-	Global Environment Facility
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
LMMA	-	Locally Managed Marine Areas Network
NSA	-	Non-State Actor
OFMP II	-	Oceanic Fisheries Management Project II
PCC	-	Pacific Conference of Churches
PD	-	Pacific Dialogue
PIFS	-	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PINA	-	Pacific Islands News Association
PITIA	-	Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association
PSIDS	-	Pacific Small Island Developing States
PSM	-	Port State Management
SPC	-	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TRP	-	Target Reference Points
WCPFC	-	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCPFC14	-	14 <sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Commission
WWF Pacific	-	World Wide Fund for Nature Pacific