CLIOTOP Working Group 5

Environmental Variability and Fisheries Management through RFMOs

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WCPFC Convention Area
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
I. **Structure and function**

1) **History and membership**

June 2004: the Convention became effective

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Scientific Committee</th>
<th>Technical and Compliance Committee</th>
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<td>Inaugural – Dec. 2004 Pohnpei, FSM</td>
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Objective of the Convention
To ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean.

WCPFC Secretariat
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (www.wcpfc.int)

Participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contracting states (25)</th>
<th>Australia, Canada, China, Cook Islands, France, Fiji, FSM, (Indonesia), Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, (USA), UK, Vanuatu</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Regional economic integration organization</td>
<td>EU (Spain)</td>
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<td>Fishing entity</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
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<td>Territories (6)</td>
<td>French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna (France); Tokelau (New Zealand); Guam, Northern Mariana Islands (USA)</td>
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## 2) Decision-making procedure

Decision-making of the WCPFC is basically by consensus.

| Consensus | • Rules of procedure  
|           | • Allocation of the TAC/TAE and the exclusion of vessel types  
|           | • Adoption of each Committee’s reports.  
|           | • Financial regulations  
|           | • Adoption of the budget  
|           | • Contribution formula and its amendment  
|           | • New entrants  
|           | • Amendments to the Convention  
| 3/4 (3/4 FFA and 3/4 non-FFA) and Review Panel (Article 20 and Annex II) | Questions of substance  
| 1/2 | Questions of procedure |
3) Management Issues

- Tuna science: SCTB (1988 – 2004) and WCPFC-SC since 2005
- Through the MHLC, Preparatory Conference and recent Commission meetings, overcapacity has been one of the hot issues and capacity-related resolutions and measures have been adopted.
- **Bigeye and yellowfin tuna**: highest priority of the Commission’s concern
- Though both stocks are **not in an overfished state**, there is clear evidence that **overfishing has been occurring**.
- Reduction of incidental mortality of other species and ecosystem management are areas of active discussion.
Bigeye Tuna
model period (1952–2005)

Yellowfin tuna
model period (1952–2005)
4) Enacted regulatory measures

• To date, members have hesitated at adopting strong management measures as recommended by the SC – a 25% reduction in F for bigeye, and a 10% reduction for yellowfin from the average levels for 2001-2004.

• Though not as strong as requested, the Commission has adopted measures related to capacity, mitigation of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna catch, and no further increase of fishing effort on other species such as South Pacific albacore, swordfish, and marlin.
II. Management challenges or coordination problems in relation to climate-related changes in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

- The Convention Area tuna catch for 2005 = 2,145,367 mt
  - 77% of the total Pacific Ocean catch
  - 49% of the global tuna catch
- Catch from EEZs: about 80%; Catch from DWFNs: about 70%

Therefore, the economic concerns of Pacific Island States are a crucial factor influencing tuna fisheries management in the region.
• Research on climate-related changes

SPC-OFP (Tuna Ecology and Biology section): researches on spatial variability, vertical distribution, recruitment and population abundance and long-term climate change

• Social and economic aspects

- Under climate-related changes, variability of income for PICs may occur as a result of changes of fish distribution among their EEZs.

- FFA: Monitoring fishing activities in the WCPO, mainly from DWFNs and developing Island States’ fisheries since 1979

- Vessel Day Scheme of the Parties to the Nauru (PNA): a framework to regulate access of foreign fishing vessels to their EEZs by capping the number of total fishing days and allocating them to its member states – will be fully implemented by 1 December 2007
• **Current challenges of the WCPFC**

  - **Harmonization** of diversities in social and economic interests among members, and differences and aspirations associated with future development of the fishery

  - **During its formative stages**, agreeing to management objectives, comprehensive data collection and management, and establishment of an integrated MCS system.

  - **Allocation** of available target stocks within sustainable limits. The discussion is scheduled to commence at the coming Commission meeting in December 2007.

• **Because of the above priorities, however, CLIOTOP-related issues shouldn’t be a second priority.**
III. How to maintain sustainable and equitable management of the fisheries in the presence of environmental variability

- The reflection of climate-related changes into fisheries management
  - Integration of environmental variability into the scientific work of the Commission
  - Cooperation with the SPC-OFP (WS on planning a five-year ERA research in August)
  - Participation in WCPFC-SC/SWGs (SA-, EB-SWG)
  - Introduce CLIOTOP issues at Allocation WS planned in 2008 by New Zealand
IV. Closing Remarks

With continuous recommendations from the Scientific Committee of the importance of CLIOTOP issues and educational presentations at the Commission-level meetings, the interplay between resource changes (driven by both harvesting and natural variability) and the development and functioning of RFMOs will be promoted.