

Original: English

LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

(ICCAT Circular #6494/16)

27 September 2016

SUBJECT: Priorities and logistical matters for the forthcoming Commission meeting

Dear colleagues,

As usual, with a view to ensuring the most efficient working procedures and best use of time during the forthcoming Commission meeting, I should like to inform all delegations about the priorities and logistical procedures. However I would also like to thank you all for the concern shown for my health and the good wishes for my recovery. An update is provide later for your information.

1. Priorities

I would like to make sure that there is plenty of time this year for discussion of some pending important issues for ICCAT:

- i) Outcomes of the second ICCAT Performance Review: the Coordinator of expert panel will report and there will be a plenary discussion;
- ii) Progress made on the Convention Amendment: the Convention Amendment Working Group has made a lot of progress and it is my understanding that outstanding issues relate to provisions on dispute settlement and to the non-party participation of fishing entities resulting in associated changes on depository. Between now and the 20th Annual Meeting it is my hope that members will carefully think through these issues with a view to resolving them at the meeting. We can then move to the final stage of Convention amendment process; and,
- iii) Finalize of the Terms of Reference of the process for the selection of the Executive Secretary.

It is essential that we conclude discussions in these areas.

Other priority issues are given below:

- i) Species for which new assessments have been carried out should also be assigned priority. This concerns Atlantic albacore, yellowfin tuna, sailfish and Mediterranean swordfish. Notwithstanding, discussions relating to other species may also be required.
- ii) We also need to follow-up on the findings of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures and the Working Group of FADs, and discuss any necessary actions.
- iii) I do also intend to arrange for sufficient time to allow for thorough assessment of compliance by Contracting Parties, as well as time to follow up on the issues arising from the intersessional meeting of the Compliance Committee.

While naturally all CPCs may raise issues and present proposals which they consider of importance, I should like to focus on the aforementioned issues as much as possible.

2. Draft proposals and other documents

All draft proposals for Recommendations and Resolutions, as well as other meeting documents, should be sent to the Secretariat as far in advance of the meeting as possible, to allow early translation and circulation to give time for all CPCs to study them in advance. As last year, open access to the documents will be made available in advance. CPCs wishing to submit documents for restricted circulation should indicate this at the time of their submission, and such documents will be made available through a regular ICCAT circular.

The deadline for submitting draft measures that are not dependent on SCRS advice, as well as reports and documents to be submitted in accordance with the Commission requirements, is **14 October 2016**. Proposals and documents received within this deadline will be translated and circulated in advance of the meeting, and will be given priority in discussions. Proposals which are submitted after the deadline will not be considered at the 2016 meeting.

Draft proposals dependent on SCRS advice should be submitted to the Secretariat by **7 November 2016**, where possible. The final deadline for receipt of proposals is 11:00 am on **16 November 2016**. Proposals received after that date will not be considered.

Proposals which were deferred from the 2015 meeting or intersessional meetings will not be re-tabled unless resubmitted by the sponsors before the **14 October 2016** deadline, or referred from an intersessional meeting for consideration by the Commission by the Chair of the subsidiary body.

In developing proposals, delegates are requested to follow the guidelines for submission of proposals which were adopted by the Commission in 2012, and avoid duplication with existing measures as much as possible. In addition, if a proposed measure rescinds previous measures, this should be stated in the draft proposal where possible.

All proposals and other meeting documents must be submitted through the ICCAT Secretariat. Documents submitted during the meeting, and changes to previously distributed documents should be given to the ICCAT reception desk for registration. All meeting participants are requested to refrain from distributing documents in the pigeon holes. As usual, space will be made available for unregistered documents, leaflets, etc., for informal distribution.

3. Budgetary issues

As you will be aware, the biennial budget for the 2016/2017 period has already been approved. Any proposal which may have budgetary implications such as scientific research, significant increases in Secretariat workload or the establishment of projects/programmes, which would require financing, should be submitted early to STACFAD. I should like to request all CPCs to take into consideration any additional resources which may be required when submitting draft proposals, and in addition to consider alternative ways of financing the various capacity building funds that are currently financed from the Working Capital Fund.

Taking into account that the current contract with the eBCD implementing Consortium (TRAGSA & the Server Lab) will terminate on the 31st of December 2016, particular attention has to be given on how to assure the means for the future development and maintenance of the eBCD system, so as to avoid relying on the use of the Working Capital Fund.

4. Compliance Tables

The final deadline for changes to Compliance Tables is 18:00 hours on Monday **14 November 2016**. No further changes can be accepted to the tables without an explicit ruling from the Compliance Committee Chair. All changes to compliance tables must be given in writing to the ICCAT reception desk. Changes to previously submitted figures should be accompanied by an explanation and a carry-over form if applicable. Differences between compliance table figures and Task I submissions should be explained in writing.

5. Meetings of Officers and Head Delegates

As customary an ICCAT Officers meeting will be held at 16:30 on Sunday, 13 November at the meeting venue and a meeting of Head Delegates at 08:30 on Wednesday, 16 November.

I count on the cooperation of all CPCs to contribute to the efficient and effective use of our meeting time and trust the outcome will be fruitful.

In regards to my health, I have been undertaking a period of recuperation and treatment in Australia since my stroke in March 2016. Assuming current progress and with advice from my doctors, I was planning to attend the 20th Annual Meeting in Portugal. However a quarterly review by my neurological specialist is scheduled for the 14th November 2016. I have tried unsuccessfully to bring the date of the review forward to enable me to attend the Special meeting.

I met with my doctor today and he advised that in the absence of an update report from the upcoming appointment with the neurologist, he would advise against long distance air travel. I do not wish to go against medical advice, so reluctantly I wish to inform you in advance that I will not be able to join you in Portugal for the 20th Special Meeting. I sincerely hope you will understand my decision.

On consideration it seems to me to be the right time to apply Rule 6.3 of the Commission's rules of Procedure which provides; *"In the absence of the Chairman, the first Vice-Chairman or, in his absence, the second Vice-Chairman shall exercise the functions of the Chairman"*. In the interest of the Commission and to ensure certainty and continuity, I also think it is appropriate for me to step aside as Chairman of the Commission in order for alternative governance arrangements to be made, if the Commission wishes to do so.

I thank you sincerely for the confidence shown in me by electing me Chairman of ICCAT for the 2016-2017 period. I wish you a very profitable meeting in Portugal and would appreciate your support of the Vice Chairman in the exercise of the Chair. I wish to thank Stefaan, for stepping in beyond the calls of duty to exercise the function of the Chair for the last six months and Mr. Driss Meski the Executive Secretary for his support. I also thank you sincerely for your patience and understanding over the past six months and for the good wishes that have been forwarded to me for my recovery. I wish you a very fruitful meeting and look forward to joining you at some future juncture.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Tsamenyi
Commission Chair