

Opening Statement

20th Special Meeting of ICCAT
Vilamoura, Portugal
14-21 November 2016

Japanese Delegation

On behalf of the Government of Japan, our delegation would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Government of Portugal and the European Union for hosting this important meeting in this beautiful city, Vilamoura. We also thank Mr. Driss Meski, the Executive Secretary, and the other ICCAT Secretariat staff for the excellent preparation and arrangements.

At this Commission meeting, ICCAT needs to agree on Recommendations on several species since current Recommendations for those species will be expired this year. Some of the Recommendations on such as Yellowfin, Albacore, Mediterranean Swordfish and Sailfish can be reviewed based on the SCRS stock assessment, whereas no stock assessment was conducted on North and South Sword fish and West Atlantic Bluefin tuna. Japan proposes that these Recommendations without new stock assessment should be rolled over until new stock assessment is conducted by the SCRS.

In recent years, ICCAT has been paying much attention to conservation of sharks. At the last year's annual meeting, a proposal prohibiting separation of shark fins from bodies was put on the table again. Japan does not believe that such a prohibition will contribute to shark conservation. Rather, the information on the implementation of shark conservation measures submitted by CPCs based on Rec. 12-05 clearly demonstrated that what ICCAT really needs to do is to ensure that all the CPCs fully implement the existing management measures, including full utilization of sharks. Towards this goal, Japan submitted a proposal on improvement of compliance review of shark conservation and management measures. This proposal shows Japan's strong commitment to conservation of sharks. Japan hopes that other CPCs will support this proposal.

Japan welcomes the full implementation of eBCD in accordance with the [Rec. 15-10] starting from this July and would like to express appreciation to Chair of Technical Working Group (TWG) for his hard work. Basic functionalities of eBCD system have already been developed, however, further work is still necessary. The TWG for eBCD must be continued possibly with less frequency to further improve the system.

Japan is ready to work closely and cooperatively with other delegations to find good solutions and sincerely hopes that this annual meeting will be successfully and fruitfully concluded.

Last but not least, the Japanese delegation sincerely hopes Dr. Martin Tsamenyi, the Commission Chairman, will recover and come back to the ICCAT meetings as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.