

Original: English

ICCAT COMMISSION CHAIR'S LETTER
(Circular #6610/17 dated 13 September 2017)

13 September 2017

SUBJECT: PRIORITIES AND LOGISTICAL MATTERS FOR THE FORTHCOMING COMMISSION MEETING

Dear Colleagues,

The 25th Regular Meeting of the Commission scheduled for 14-22 November 2017 in Marrakech is expected to be a very busy one. To ensure the most efficient use of our time, and to assist with preparations by delegations and with a view to supporting a process to achieve successful outcomes, I wish to highlight the items below which require special attention by CPCs. I will ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the discussion of these issues.

1. Election of the Executive Secretary

As agreed during the 2016 Special Meeting, a new Executive Secretary will be elected at the 25th Regular Meeting. As you have been notified previously, five applicants have been shortlisted for an interview during the 25th Regular Meeting.

It is my intention to close the selection process within the first two days of the Meeting. Towards that objective, I intend to convene a Head Delegates meeting on 13 November at 16:00 to finalize arrangements and the modalities for the interviews. After the formal opening of the meeting on 14 November, I plan to proceed directly with the interviews with the objective of completing the election process early in the morning of 15 November. I count on your understanding and cooperation to go through this process in an expeditious manner.

2. Outcomes of the Second ICCAT Performance Review

The *Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Follow up of the Second ICCAT Performance Review* was held in June 2017 at the ICCAT Secretariat to discuss and prioritize the recommendations of the Performance Review. I plan to devote sufficient time for the Commission to discuss the report of the inter-sessional meeting and to consider how best to implement the second Performance Review recommendations.

3. Amendments to the ICCAT Convention

Significant progress has been made over the past three years through the Convention Amendment Working Group. Noting that unresolved issues remain, it is imperative that work be undertaken by CPCs on the outstanding matters, including but not limited to, dispute settlement, non-party participation and depositary issues. I intend to devote sufficient time to review and discuss the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment to enable me to gauge how close we are to finalizing an amended Convention text. If it becomes clear, after every possible effort, that we cannot reach consensus on an amended Convention text, during the 25th Regular Meeting, the Commission will need to decide the next steps to keep the Convention amendment process alive intersessionally.

4. Approval of Budget

The budget for the two forthcoming financial years is to be adopted this year. A draft budget containing a significant increase was circulated by the Secretariat in July 2017. The proposed increase reflects increasing requirements associated with supporting the activities of the Commission while decreasing the use of the Working Capital Fund.

I seek the support and understanding of all CPCs to facilitate adoption of the proposed budget. I request all CPCs to carefully consider needs for additional financial resources when submitting draft proposals. Any proposal which may have budgetary implications, such as scientific research or lead to significant increases in Secretariat workload or require the establishment of projects/programmes should be submitted early to STACFAD. In addition, CPCs need to consider alternative ways of financing the various capacity building activities that are currently financed from the Working Capital Fund.

5. Management of stocks/species

- i) This year, the Commission will consider the SCRS advice on the stocks that were assessed this year. Re-evaluating the rebuilding programs for the two bluefin tuna stocks in light of the new assessments is obviously of major importance. But, other stocks assessed this year, namely: Atlantic swordfish, Mediterranean albacore and shortfin mako sharks also require consideration. Species for which new assessments have been carried out would be assigned priority.
- ii) The Commission is devoting considerable attention to the development of modern management procedures/strategies. At the 25th Regular Meeting, the Commission needs to take stock of the work undertaken inter-sessionally by the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers and the SCRS, with a view to developing Harvest Strategies for various ICCAT species as expeditiously as possible.
- iii) I also propose that we spend time on the reports of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers and decide on responses to the recommendations of the Working Group. I will also assign priority to the report and recommendations of the Working Groups on Integrated Monitoring Measures and on FADs.

6. Compliance Issues

I intend to allow sufficient time for a thorough assessment of compliance by Contracting Parties. As you may recall, the Commission in 2016 adopted a number of new measures to improve its work processes and CPC reporting. Taking appropriate steps toward the full and effective implementation of these reforms will be among the priorities for the 25th Regular Meeting.

Notwithstanding the above issues which I have identified as “priority”, all CPCs may raise any issues and present proposals which they consider of importance for the upcoming meeting.

In preparation for the meeting, I wish to notify CPCs of the following:

1. 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. This will allow early translation and circulation to give time to all CPCs to prepare in advance. As in previous years, and to promote transparency, I intend to allow open access to the meeting documents. CPCs wishing to submit documents for restricted circulation should indicate this at the time of their submission. 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 2017**. 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 may not be considered at the 2017 meeting.**

Draft proposals dependent on SCRS advice should be submitted to the Secretariat by **7 November 2017**, where possible. The final deadline for receipt of proposals is 11:00 am on **17 November 2017**. Allocation of sufficient time for the discussion of proposals received after that date may not be possible.

Proposals which were deferred from the 2016 meeting or intersessional meetings will not be re-tabled unless resubmitted by the sponsors before the **14 October 2017** 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 2011 (Annex 7.1 of the Report for biennial period, 2010-2011 (II) Vol. 1) and to avoid duplication with existing measures as much as possible. In addition, if a proposed measure amends or supersedes previous measures, this should be clearly stated in the draft proposal.

All proposals and other meeting documents must be submitted through the ICCAT Secretariat (info@iccat.int). Documents submitted during the meeting, and changes to previously distributed documents, should be given to the ICCAT reception desk for registration or sent by e-mail to driss.meski@iccat.int and miguel.santos@iccat.int. Please make sure to use the most recent Word version when submitting changes to previously distributed documents. 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.

2. Compliance Tables

The final deadline for changes to Compliance Tables is 18:00 hours **on the day of the first session of the Compliance Committee**. This year, the deadline will be strictly enforced. 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. In addition, any figures for compliance tables which require the input of the Panels should be provided by the relevant Panel Chair to the Compliance Committee at its first session.

3. Meetings of Officers and Head Delegates

As is customary, I will be calling an ICCAT Officers meeting at 13:00 on Monday, 13 November 2017 at the meeting venue and a meeting of Head Delegates at 16:00 on the same date.

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

Yours sincerely,



Martin Tsamenyi
Commission Chair