

STATEMENT BY THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO ON BLUEFIN TUNA

We welcome the very positive development in the stock status and the SCRS recommendations which come within the framework of a precautionary approach. This approach is not a luxury but a necessity. There continue to be numerous uncertainties and it is crucial that we are very cautious. It is within this context, that we will carefully consider transition to a management plan, which still seems premature.

The Kingdom of Morocco is a coastal State, with two coastlines, Atlantic and Mediterranean (3,500 km), an extensive fishing area and is a strategic position for the passage of vessels.

The Kingdom of Morocco has an underutilised fishing capacity of up to 33% (high harvest-release of more than 5,000 individuals by traps during the last three years). The majority of our fishing techniques use selective gear (Moroccan traps have existed for over 50 years). Our trap data are essential and constitute a source of relevant data for assessment of this stock, as reflected by the SCRS in the report presented. This activity is the basis of a fully-fledged social-economic dynamic that must be encouraged.

The allocation key is a particularly sensitive issue and if all Contracting Parties agree, it should not be applied at the expense of the developing countries like Morocco.

It is also in this context that transition to a management plan would seem premature and the recovery plan should be maintained over a longer period to confirm achievement of our management objectives for this fishery.