

**Japan's Opening Statement**

25<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of ICCAT  
Marrakech, Morocco  
14-22 November 2017

Japanese Delegation

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the Japanese Delegation, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Morocco for hosting this important meeting in this beautiful city, Marrakech, one of the UNESCO World Heritage. We also thank the ICCAT Secretariat staff for the excellent preparation and arrangement of the 25<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the Commission.

This year's Commission meeting will be probably one of the busiest ones in recent years. We must develop management measures for bluefin tuna, swordfish and shortfin mako as well as Northern albacore based on the results of the first ICCAT MSE process. Discussion of the Convention amendment and election of the Executive Secretary are also important. Japan would like to cooperate with the Chairman and other CPCs to produce good outcomes for these important items.

Among other things, Japan would like to touch upon a few issues. First, regarding Atlantic bluefin tuna, we commend the SCRS taking a different approach to avoid traditional argument on uncertainties involved in the biomass level and future recruitment. Thanks to this new approach, now the recommendation is much more clear than previous ones, allowing us to increase the TAC up to 36,000 mt with gradual increase for east and 2,500 mt for west, and Japan fully supports them. With such distinct scientific advice, we hope that the TAC levels can be agreed relatively easily. The real challenge for the Commission is allocation, particularly for east. While we recognize rights of coastal states and developing states, we would like to stress our contribution to scientific work, that is, Japanese fishing vessels have been providing a long-time CPUE series which greatly enhances the reliability of the stock assessment. It may not be possible to find a solution that makes everybody happy, but possible to find a solution that makes everybody equally unhappy, which we believe is the best solution.

While the story of bluefin tuna is considered one of the success stories of ICCAT, Japan is concerned about the stock status of north Atlantic shortfin mako. Japan is proposing management measures for this stock, taking into account the SCRS advice. This demonstrates our commitment to conservations of shark species. We consider that the Commission should spend time on this proposal rather than talking about "naturally attached fins" issue.

Another sign of our commitment on shark conservation is the Shark Implementation Check Sheet adopted last year based on Japan's proposal. Our delegation looks forward to reviewing the check sheets at the Compliance Committee.

Finally, I cannot believe that this is the last Commission meeting for us to work with Mr. Driss Meski. Our delegation really appreciates his enthusiasm and tireless work for matters of ICCAT for many years. It may not be easy for CPCs to choose the next Executive Secretary after his great era, but I have no doubt that the Commission would make a good decision at the end of the day.

Mr. Chairman, the Japanese Delegation is ready to work closely and cooperatively with other delegations to find good solutions and sincerely hopes that this regular meeting will be successfully and fruitfully concluded.

Thank you.