INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

ICCAT CICTA CICAA

COMISIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LA CONSERVACIÓN DEL ATÚN ATLÁNTICO

Madrid, 17 May 2018

Mr. Raymond Ryan
Chief Fisheries Officer
Fisheries Div. Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
Richmond Hill
Kingstown,
ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

ICCAT - SALIDA
Nº 3236 / 2018
17/05/2018

SUBJECT: LETTER REGARDING REPORTING DEFICIENCIES IN 2017

Dear Mr. Ryan,

On behalf of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), I am writing to inform you that, at the 25th Regular meeting of ICCAT (14-21 November 2017, Marrakech, Morocco), the Commission expressed its concerns once again about deficiencies in Saint Vincent & The Grenadines' fulfilment of a number of ICCAT Recommendation requirements that are legally binding on Saint Vincent & the Grenadines under international law.

During the 2017 Compliance Committee meeting, Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) were assessed for compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures and reporting requirements. Based on the review of the Secretariat Report on Statistics and Coordination of Research and the 2017 Secretariat's Report to the Compliance Committee and other available information, the Committee noted continuing reporting deficiencies for Saint Vincent & The Grenadines and other concerns, including:

- The Annual Report was received late. The COC Chair notes that this is a chronic issue for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: its Annual Report was not received until during the Annual Meeting in 2015 and 2016;
- No domestic scientific observer program in place, in contravention of ICCAT Rec. 16-14, and no information from such program indicated as submitted in summary table of part I of the Annual Report (reporting fields S-10/11). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has indicated that this program is still in process of being established. The COC Chair notes that this requirement has been in place for seven years, originally established in 2010 under Rec. 10-10, which was updated by 16-14, and encourages the necessary steps to implement this important ICCAT provision;
- No plan for improving shark data collection as required in Rec.11-08 submitted as part of Annual Report (reporting field S-32);
- No information measures taken to implement ICCAT shark requirements reported in Annual Report (reporting fields SHK 7001-7006);
- No information on interaction with turtles required under Rec. 11-08 was submitted (to be reported in the Annual Report summary table under field S-39) ;
- No information reported, as required under Rec. 11-10, para. 1(c), on mitigation of by-catch/discards was reported (Annual Report summary table field S-42);

- The Annual Report indicates implementation of ICCAT requirements on high seas but is unclear on implementation in SVG waters. The COC Chair reminds Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that generally, ICCAT requirements apply in all waters of the ICCAT Convention Area, including waters under national jurisdiction (e.g., territorial sea; EEZ) and to all fisheries that interact with ICCAT species (both as directed fisheries and as bycatch), including artisanal, recreational, sport, and commercial. The COC Chair encourages St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in its response to this letter, to include reference to its laws and regulations that shows implementation of ICCAT requirements in its national waters;
- The N-SWO management plan, required under par. 5 of Rec. 16-03, was submitted late;
- The shark measures implementation check sheet, required under Rec. 16-13, was submitted late. Please note that compliance with this reporting requirement and ICCAT shark measures will be specifically reviewed in 2018;
- Sailfish catches were reported in Task I, but no report on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Sailfish data collection program or its implementation of ICCAT Sailfish measures as required by Rec. 16-11, paragraph 4, was made in St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Annual Report (reporting field (BIL 5003). St. Vincent and the Grenadines replied "not applicable" in its Annual Report, which is not an appropriate response given the requirements of 16-11 and St. Vincent and the Grenadines fishery interactions with sailfish;
- No report on implementation of ICCAT blue marlin/white marlin/spearfish requirements under Rec. 15-05 (Annual Report reporting field BIL 5002). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines indicates in its Annual Report that it does not target these species. The COC Chair notes that this does not relieve ICCAT CPCs of their responsibilities under this and other ICCAT measure; Rec. 15-05 is not limited to targeted fisheries, and publicly available information on the internet, e.g., National Reports to FAO, have indicated interactions with billfish in St. Vincent and the Grenadines fisheries.
- The tropical tuna management plan required under Rec. 16-01 was submitted late;
- Transhipment report required under Rec. 12-06 was submitted late.

In addition, the Committee noted that in 2014, 2015 and 2016 Saint Vincent & The Grenadines did not reply to the Chair letter. In 2017, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines did reply but late, during the Commission meeting, when a response to the letter is due at least 30 days before the Commission meeting. As you know, a lack of response or a late response letter undermines the COC's work by making it difficult for COC to review actions taken by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to past compliance issues identified by the COC.

The Commission stressed the importance of these data and requested Saint Vincent & The Grenadines to make the necessary efforts to collect these data and provide them to the Commission. Late or incomplete reporting causes difficulties for the Secretariat in preparing documents for the Commission and its Panels and Committees, and reduces the effectiveness of the Compliance Committee.

The list of SCRS reporting requirements are available here and the list of Commission reporting requirements are available here.

The COC Chair wishes to note that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' chronic and significant failure to fulfill a wide variety of ICCAT reporting requirements for at least the last decade undermines ICCAT's work and gives Saint Vincent and the Grenadines an unfair advantage over those ICCAT Parties that submitted their reports in time to enable ICCAT's review of their compliance. Failure to meet reporting requirements or deadlines has been a primary basis for ICCAT's identification of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines under ICCAT's Trade Measures Recommendation (06-13) in the past. Continued failure in 2018 by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to fulfill these key ICCAT reporting and data requirements and be otherwise responsive to correspondence from the COC Chair will put Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at significant risk of being re-identified under Rec. 06-13, which can lead to more significant responsive actions by ICCAT in subsequent years, including reduction of quota and trade restrictive measures.

The Commission requests Saint Vincent & The Grenadines to reply to this letter before **10 October 2018**, i.e. at least 30 days before the COC special session that shall be held in accordance with the "*Resolution by ICCAT to facilitate an effective and efficient Compliance process*" [Res. 16-22] prior to the ICCAT Commission 21st Special meeting (scheduled to be held from 12-19 November 2018 in Croatia). The response should indicate all the progress and plans made by Saint Vincent & The Grenadines to address each of the issues raised in this letter. Saint Vincent & The Grenadines' response will be reviewed by the Compliance Committee at its 2018 meeting to determine if Saint Vincent & The Grenadines has taken sufficient and appropriate steps to address these issues.

If Saint Vincent & The Grenadines has any questions about the issues raised in this letter or about ICCAT requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat at info@iccat.int

In thanking you for your attention to these important matters, let me express to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

Derek Campbell
Compliance Committee Chair

cc: R. Delgado, *Commission Chairman*