

**Statement of the Blue Water Fishermen's Association On Panel 1**

On behalf of the Blue Water Fishermen's Association - the US pelagic longline fishery - which is perhaps the most intensively managed and monitored longline fishery in the world - and which only harvests mature bigeye tuna that have had the opportunity to reproduce and contribute to annual recruitment -- I must express our profound disappointment in the failure of ICCAT once again to take meaningful steps to conserve and manage those fisheries which are responsible for the ongoing decline on this valuable stock which the SCRS has clearly identified as overfished and subject to overfishing.

Ironically, despite our firm commitment to science-based conservation and management, it is our small and sustainable fishery that is being held accountable in the marketplace by sustainability certification organizations and the public that are mindful of the declining status of this Atlantic-wide stock for which we are not responsible. Following this meeting, our fishermen will continue to pay that price for the failure to correctly and equitably assign accountability for this situation.

I am also sorry to say, this is nothing new. In my personal experience and observation, ICCAT's inability to effectively manage the juvenile fish fisheries in the Gulf of Guinea has transpired more than 20 years. In the global RFMO context, this is truly an embarrassing 'black eye' for ICCAT, which we had held great hope would be remedied at this meeting.

We deeply appreciate the efforts of those Parties that worked so very hard and long at this meeting to develop a meaningful plan to end overfishing, rebuild the stock, and reduce the harvest of juvenile fish. We especially appreciated South Africa's exceptional efforts in that respect and hope they will not give up.

And, we strongly endorse the crucial suggestion made by the US that the Parties not lose any momentum gained at this meeting by continuing their informal discussions during the coming year. This situation is unacceptable on so many levels; the Parties simply must sustain their efforts to reach a successful conclusion at the November 2019 meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Glenn Delaney,

ICCAT Observer on behalf of the Blue Water Fishermen's Association