

Original: French

LETTER FROM GABON TO THE CHAIR OF PANEL 1

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, HUSBANDRY,
FISHERIES AND FOOD

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

**GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

No. _____/MAEPA/SG/DGPA

Libreville

The Minister

**to
the Chair of ICCAT Panel 1
Abidjan**

SUBJECT: Allocation of bigeye tuna quota

Dear Chair,

With a coastline of some 800 km, an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that covers 213000 km² and a continental shelf of over 46000 km², Gabonese waters are relatively rich in resources, in particular offshore where pelagic fish are found.

The tuna fishery in the Cap Lopez region has been very active (baitboats, purse seiners and longliners) since the 1960s. Fishing is carried out by foreign purse seiners under agreements running from May to October each year. In addition, the catches taken by these purse seiners account for close to 20% of the catches taken in the East Atlantic between 2013 and 2016, making the Gabonese EEZ one of the most strategic areas.

Today, Gabon wishes to redirect this fishery by developing it at national level. This will enable Gabon, *inter alia*, to meet the need of the population in terms of animal proteins, as well as to create employment and to make a profit from this resource. To do so, a dedicated fisheries dock has been built, which encourages foreign tuna vessels to land in Libreville. In addition, we have a processing plant which will enhance the value of tuna in the future. In parallel, a purse seiner is currently engaged in the process for allocation of the Gabonese flag.

In light of the stock status of tropical tunas, in particular bigeye tuna, Gabon has implemented measures to ensure transparency and rational management of stocks, thereby limiting the negative impact of fishing under FADs in its EEZ.

In addition, in the hope of seeing this resource rebuilt as soon as possible in accordance with the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the principles of decision making for ICCAT conservation and management measures* (Rec. 11-13), Gabon supports the TAC reduction measure and the adoption of a reasonable rebuilding rate and other measures which will bring this stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix.

Consequently, it is our strong wish that the TAC that is adopted at the 26th ICCAT session be shared out among the CPCs in a spirit of equity and transparency.

In light of the above and pursuant to the guidelines of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which grants a privilege to coastal States in relation to access to fisheries resources and the *Resolution by ICCAT on criteria for the allocation of fishing possibilities* (Res. 15-13), Gabon wishes to obtain a quota for bigeye tuna.

Reassured that Gabon's request will be taken into account,

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Biendi MAGANGA-MOUSSAVOU