

## IPNLF Statement to the Commission Plenary

Our organization supports selective coastal tuna fisheries that cause limited impacts upon marine ecosystems while supporting coastal communities. One of the many reasons we support one-by-one tuna fisheries is because they are characterized by virtually zero bycatch. Our mission is to empower responsible fisheries, which give back to the seas and the people that depend on them. As such, we cannot remain silent on the failed shortfin mako negotiation, which will allow overfishing to continue in 2021. This will further decrease the probability of successfully rebuilding this stock in the next 50 years, which was already a dreadful perspective.

Despite a bold – and needed - proposal tabled by Canada in line with scientific advice, also honourably supported by Senegal, the United Kingdom, Chinese Taipei, Gabon and Norway, we regret that the European Union and United States prevented an agreement from being reached. While protecting their individual commercial interests, scientific advice was distorted and ICCAT has not been able to live up to its own objectives.

Appreciating that a date for an additional meeting to continue discussions has been scheduled for July 2021, we would like to note that:

- This meeting will not address ongoing overfishing in 2021
- A virtual meeting should be planned in case in-person meetings remain unfeasible
- We request that all CPCs, especially the European Union and United States, pro-actively engage each other and observers between now and the next meeting to find common ground aligned with the best available science, also taking into account additional impacts from allowing yet another year of overfishing
- The 2021 meeting objectives should be agreed by all parties beforehand, e.g.:
  - Immediately end shortfin mako overfishing in the North Atlantic
  - Remove all economic incentives that may lead to increased mortality of these sharks
  - Agree on additional measures and incentives to further reduce mortality through avoidance strategies, temporal closures, gear modifications and/or other measures recommended by scientists, who should be effectively consulted and included in discussions prior to the meeting
  - Agree on continued support to further scientific research for mortality reduction programmes
  - Adopt a TAC for the South Atlantic that will immediately stop overfishing, to prevent a similar situation as in the North Atlantic

We respectfully urge all CPCs and interested parties to collaborate more effectively to ensure sustainable use of our common resources for current and future generations. It would not be acceptable to let short-term commercial interests of some fleets jeopardize the future of this endangered species – the fastest shark in the ocean and a top predator of importance to maintaining healthy marine ecosystems.

