

STATEMENT BY MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES COOPERATION AMONG AFRICAN STATES BORDERING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN (ATLAFCO)

(Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Senegal)

WE, ATLAFCO Member States gathered in Tangier on the occasion of the virtual 27th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT),

RECOGNIZING the need for adherence to safety protocols against the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from the first quarter of 2020, leading to the use of virtual meetings within ICCAT;

RECALLING the interest of developing States in active participation in ICCAT meetings;

CONCERNED by the low participation of developing States in the various virtual meetings organized over the past two years;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the technological challenges encountered by the majority of developing States in accessing online meetings;

CONSIDERING the containment measures that have resulted in the improved health situation observed in recent months throughout the world;

NOTING the resumption of international face-to-face meetings;

EXHORT

The ICCAT Commission to resume gradually face-to-face meetings for sessions where important decisions need to be made.