

# Perspectives on Improving the Performance of WCPFC

By Andrew Wright

## Capacity Building of Contracting Parties of the WCPFC Commission

- Capacity building in Indonesia and Philippines (along similar lines that Pacific Island States benefit from through FFA and SPC);

These two countries are major tuna producers, with Philippines as full time member and Indonesia a cooperating non-member. These countries host a huge domestic tuna fleet, is a major producer of juvenile tunas. But more importantly, their tuna management systems are challenged arising from lack of capacity. With a combined tuna production of over half a million tons, their total tuna scientist would not even exceed 100 individuals. The Philippines has a management plan that needs to be strengthened while Indonesia does not have any. The system of data collection is highly inefficient contributing to high uncertainty in the estimates of stock levels. This is compounded by weak enforcement of obligatory requirements of the commission, particularly catch, effort and operational data on catch per effort, by catch, etc.

## Creating Incentives for improved management

- A “conservation” or “management” levy paid by industry, and related to value of catch, to support science
- Development of incentives for industry associated with minimising big-eye catch
- Support/encouragement for means to report effort and catch in almost real time from fishing vessels

## Reforming the Commission (WCPFC):

- Improved compliance with data reporting (including addressing constraints established by the “subject to national law” opt out provision currently provided in the WCPFC ‘Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission’). The provision “subject to national law” has been a deterrent to effective management and is used by member countries to shield the national fisheries from many of its obligations to the commission. One of these is with data reporting. As it is, there is so much opaqueness in level of catch and effort and failure to disclose increases in effort through bilateral arrangements.
- Improved transparency (better compliance by flag and coastal States) to report on all effort in WCPO tuna fisheries. There is much to be desired for improved reporting of tuna effort development and changes mainly arising from the provision of “subject to national law” which is used as shield to divulge increases in effort on territorial/ archipelagic waters.
- Policy decision supporting tiered management arrangements that apply firstly to the high seas, then to EEZs then to archipelagic waters. This would not threaten sovereign rights – it simply calls for transparency so that all effort in all fisheries is accommodated in management arrangements.
- Development of management strategies and agreed decision rules
- Support for some of the outcomes of the Bellagio workshop particularly in relation to participatory rights.
- Better examination of CMMs before they are promulgated – many past CMMs have serious flaws which could be addressed if more time was assigned to their development. Some have suggested a new subsidiary body dedicated to management matters – but others argue the Commission’s meeting schedule is already too full!