



## **Intervention by the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization**

25 January 2016

Thank you Mr Chair and good morning delegates

This intervention is given on behalf of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), which represents over 70 NGOs. We firstly thank the Chilean government and delegation for its hospitality and it is always a pleasure to be back in Chile again. We have made our briefing available on the website but would like to briefly outline some recommendations. We also thank Jim Ianelli for his work as chair and DSCC enjoyed participating in SC3 in Vanuatu and looks forward to SC4 in the Hague in October.

Mr Chairman, firstly, we are concerned that the Scientific Committee did not carry out stock assessments of deep-sea fish stocks: both of target stocks and, to the extent possible, stocks of bycatch species, as it was asked to under CMM 2.03 paragraph 5(a.) We do understand the constraints on research, but it has been nearly 10 years now since the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution [61/105](#) and seven years since it adopted resolution [64/72](#). Given that the obligatory stock assessments have not been undertaken, the Commission is not able to “ensure the long-term sustainability of deep sea fish stocks and non-target species, and the rebuilding of depleted stocks” [64/72](#) paragraph 119(d). Therefore fishing should stop pending such assessments and States should not... authorize bottom fishing activities until such measures have been adopted and implemented” in order to ensure that the management of the bottom fisheries by SPRFMO is consistent with the UNGA resolutions.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, States that intend to continue authorizing bottom trawling should renew their now 5 year old impact assessments and in doing so ensure that the assessments are consistent with the 2008 International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas (UN FAO Guidelines) and managed to prevent significant adverse impacts on VMEs in areas where bottom fishing is permitted to occur.

Thirdly, any amendment of CMM 2.03 should implement and be consistent with UNGA resolution [64/72](#) (2009) particularly paragraphs 119 and 120, and [resolution 66/68](#) (2011), as

---

<sup>1</sup> UNGA resolution [64/72](#) paras 119(d); 120:

(d) Adopt conservation and management measures, including monitoring, control and surveillance measures, on the basis of stock assessments and the best available scientific information, to ensure the long-term sustainability of deep sea fish stocks and non-target species, and the rebuilding of depleted stocks, consistent with the Guidelines; and, where scientific information is uncertain, unreliable, or inadequate, ensure that conservation and management measures be established consistent with the precautionary approach, including measures to ensure that fishing effort, fishing capacity and catch limits, as appropriate, are at levels commensurate with the long-term sustainability of such stocks;

“120. Calls upon flag States, members of regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries and States participating in negotiations to establish such organizations or arrangements to adopt and implement measures in accordance with paragraphs 83, 85 and 86 of its resolution [61/105](#), paragraph 119 of the present resolution, and international law, and consistent with the Guidelines, and not to authorize bottom fishing activities until such measures have been adopted and implemented;”

well as [resolution 61/105](#) (2006) and the FAO [Guidelines](#). This includes ensuring the sustainability of deep-sea stocks and non-target species. In this respect, a few words on spatial management. Spatial management must not set aside current conservation measures and cannot supplant the measures laid out in the UNGA resolutions and FAO Guidelines, but must enhance and enable current measures to meet the objectives of the resolutions and [Guidelines](#). In particular, spatial management cannot be used as a reason to drop the move-on rule. The move-on rule is part of a suite of measures agreed in 2006 at the United Nations and refined since then, specifically in 2009 and 2011. SPRFMO, with other RFMOs, has been called on by the UNGA to implement those measures – or not to authorise bottom fishing.

This is particularly important as this year, the UNGA is due to conduct a review of the implementation of those resolutions with respect to bottom fishing. The decisions made by this Commission will therefore be under international scrutiny.

We were pleased to hear the EU recommends that further work should remain a priority. We also noted that the EU wished to be involved in the workshop, and we wish to emphasise that the working group must be open to participation by observers and independent scientists according to the requirements of the Convention.

Fourthly, the Commission should put into place a process to study ecologically or biologically sensitive areas (EBSAs) identified in the Commission area and to identify appropriate responses, including protected areas. This should include a specific request to the Scientific Committee to assess the EBSAs in the Commission Area and make recommendations.

We have brought Professor Les Watling, from the University of Hawaii, a very experienced deep sea scientist, to this meeting to give a side event at lunchtime on deep sea science and we hope that delegates will be able to attend.

Mr Chairman, we look forward to a productive meeting.

Thank you