

(G.S.) Nº 516 /

VALPARAISO, 16 ABR 2010

Mr. Robin Allen
Executive Secretary
SPRFMO Interim Secretariat

Dear Mr. Allen,

As it is well known by the international community, on February 27th this year a devastating 8.8° Richter magnitude earthquake struck Chile, setting off a tsunami that destroyed more than 700 kilometers of coastal areas in the center - south of the country where 80% of the national population is concentrated. As a result hundreds of people died or disappeared, while thousands lost their homes and businesses. The fishing sector was hugely damaged. Fishery harbors and creeks; many jetties, docks and landing platforms were completely destroyed; hundreds of small and medium size artisanal fishing boats were also partially or totally destroyed; processing plants including 10 out of 14 fishmeal plants, 5 out of 6 canneries, 6 out of 9 freezing plants, the two breaded fish portions plants and the one surimi plant were heavily damaged, while the industrial fishing fleet including high seas vessels did not get significant damages but an important number of them will remain inoperative for several months as they are fishing boats supplying fresh fish and operating in close connection with processing facilities ashore actually damaged or destroyed.

Chile would like to state that it is foreseeable that in 2010 Chilean catches will be affected significantly and most probably will be lower than in previous years. Fishing activity this year may not therefore reflect the normal activity of the Chilean fleet and its usual catch level due to the effects of the earthquake and tsunami.

The natural disaster occurred in Chile is a clear case of *force majeure*, which is a recognised and well known principle of International Law. It was recently invoked by one of the participants in the SPRFMO negotiations and taken into consideration by all participants in the last Interim Measures for pelagic fisheries revision carried out in November 2009.

May I request that you please circulate this letter to the Head of Delegations and have it published in the SPRFMO website as well.

Yours sincerely,



PABLO GALILEA CARRILLO
Undersecretary For Fisheries
Government of Chile

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