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## COMM 12 - Report ANNEX 10i

### Statement of the Kingdom of Tonga to the 12<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting of SPRFMO

Chairlady of the Commission, distinguished delegates, Secretariat, Observers, ladies and gentlemen. This statement is delivered on behalf of the Government of Tonga, which is an Observer to this Commission Meeting.

First and foremost, we deeply appreciate the generous hospitality of the Republic of Ecuador to our delegation during the two weeks that we are here for this meeting. It provides an extremely fitting environment in which to build our relationship with member countries of this Commission. Thank you and this is appreciated.

It is a pleasure to thank you Chair and Co-Chairs, for your role as Chair and continue to lead members during your tenure as Chair of the Commission.

I also wish to express our gratitude to the distinguish delegates from members this Commission for your consideration and support in allowing Tonga to be an Observer in this year's Commission meeting.

Finally, I also thank the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat for your hard work, commitment and effort that have been a major factor in the successful of this Commission and it's work.

Chair, over the years, Tonga is a Small Islands States (SIDS) in the Pacific that have long history of commitment to cooperate with other countries in other Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) in the management of the marine resources at the national, regional and at the international level.

Chair, we do understand that we have a responsibility and a duty as coastal State for the conservation, management and development of the marine resources for the benefit of our people and other fishing communities in the world. The ocean is our heart, it serves as the foundation for our economy and the lifeline for other sectors from our tourism to fisheries to ocean transport international and others.

With that Tonga is committed to continue our participation and cooperation with members of this Commission in near future.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity for Tonga to be represented in this year's Commission meeting.

**MALO AUPITO**