

8TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 14 to 18 February 2020

COMM 8 – Doc 07

Progress of Cooperation with other RFMOs

Secretariat

1. Background

At the 7th Commission meeting in 2019, the Commission decided to “prioritise enhancing cooperation with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)” ([SPRFMO COMM7-Report](#) Para 184).

Following this Commission decision, the Secretariat made initial approaches to the Secretariats of NPFC (DC-58-2019), WCPFC (DC59-2019) and IATTC (DC60-2019) in April 2019 and drafted MoUs with these RFMOs addressing specific cooperation areas that the Commission identified as priority areas for each RFMO in accordance with Annex 1 of “Priorities regarding MoUs with other RFMOs” ([COMM7-Doc11 Rev1](#)).

The SPRFMO Secretariat circulated the draft MoUs (R06-2019, 28 May 2019) to Heads of Delegation, and the Chairperson of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies and finalised the First Draft MoUs with the following contributions:

- Australia, EU and the USA provided contributions to remove ambiguities, clarify the provisions and provided a provision pertinent to data security.
- Australia particularly noticed the practical implications on the data/information sharing provisions given that the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) manages the WCPFC data and expressed their interest about what sort of research might benefit from collaboration.

The SPRFMO Secretariat presents the current progress on these three MoUs with NPFC, WCPFC and IATTC as well as anticipated future plans to complete these MoUs.

2. Developments on the MoUs

2.1 The North Pacific Fisheries Commission

The SPRFMO Secretariat sent the first draft of the MoU between SPRFMO and NPFC to the NPFC Secretariat (DC70-2019, 14 June 2019). It was considered by NPFC Members at the 5th NPFC Annual Meeting which was held in Tokyo, Japan from 11 to 18 July 2019.

After its Commission meeting, the NPFC Executive Secretary sent the NPFC Commission’s response to the Secretariat (Annex I). It responded that “the Commission determined that it requires more information about potential areas of cooperation between SPRFMO and NPFC before it can make a decision on the MOU” and “the Commission requested to Members who also participate in SPRFMO meetings to represent NPFC as an observer and provide a report to the next Commission meeting”.

2.2 The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

The SPRFMO Secretariat sent the first draft of an MoU between SPRFMO and WCPFC to the WCPFC Secretariat (DC71-2019, 14 June 2019). The Executive Director of WCPFC responded “The MoU once finalised needs to be presented to the annual meeting of the WCPFC for consideration and adoption. Our next annual



meeting is from 5 to 11 December 2019 and if the draft MOU is to be presented to that meeting it must be ready for circulation to our members by the first week of November 2019”.

The SPRFMO Secretariat suggested a timeframe (DC127-2019, 12 September 2019) to develop the final MoU to the WCPFC Secretariat considering both SPRFMO and WCPFC calendar needs. According to the proposed timeframe, both Secretariats considered and agreed on the Draft MoU in October 2019. The WCPFC Secretariat circulated and presented it to the 16th Regular Session of WCPFC which was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 5 to 11 December 2019.

After the 16th Regular Session of WCPFC, the Executive Director of WCPFC informed the SPRFMO Secretariat (17/12/2019) that “*The WCPFC Commission endorsed the conclusion of an MOU between WCPFC and SPRFMO*” and attached a track changed version which includes the amendments made at their meeting. This version is presented as [COMM8-Prop21](#) for Commission consideration.

2.3 The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

The SPRFMO Secretariat sent the first draft of an MoU between SPRFMO and IATTC to the IATTC Secretariat (DC72-2019, 14 June 2019).

The MoU was regarded as a general memorandum of understanding, so it was considered by the IATTC Secretariat on their own¹. After communication between the SPRFMO and IATTC Secretariats, the Secretariats agreed on the final Draft MoU ([COMM8-Prop20](#)) in October 2019 which is presented for Commission consideration.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The North Pacific Fisheries Commission

The NPFC Commission will designate a Member who is a Member of both Organisations to represent NPFC as an Observer at the 8th SPRFMO Commission Meeting.

At the 8th SPRFMO Commission Meeting, the SPRFMO Secretariat will consult with the representative of NPFC to facilitate any further information needed based on the NPFC Commission request. The representative of NPFC will report back to the NPFC Commission supporting the decision making at the 6th NPFC Annual meeting in June 2020.

In this regard the Commission is invited to consider whether it would like to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and NPFC ([COMM8-Prop 22](#)) reinforcing the message to the NPFC as a priority RFMO to engage on areas of mutual interest.

3.2 The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

The Commission is invited to consider whether it would like to approve the final text of the Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and WCPFC ([COMM8-Prop21](#)).

3.3 The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

The Commission is invited to consider whether it would like to approve the final text of the Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and IATTC ([COMM8-Prop20](#)).

¹ The IATTC Secretariat may develop and adopt a general MoU pursuant to the relevant articles of the Antigua Convention.



Response from the Secretariat of NPFC



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

26 July 2019

Dr. Sebastián Rodríguez Alfaro
Executive Secretary
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
PO Box 3797, Wellington 6140,
New Zealand

Dear Dr. Alfaro:

I wish to respond to your letter dated 14 June 2019 regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and NPFC. This proposal was considered by NPFC Members at the Commission meeting held last week in Tokyo. The Commission recognized that SPRFMO has a similar mandate to that of the NPFC and, as a relatively new RFMO, may share similar issues and challenges, but determined that it requires more information about potential areas of cooperation between SPRFMO and NPFC before it can make a decision on the MOU. This is in line with the Commission current priorities to cooperate with RFMOs that have Convention Areas that are similar to or overlap with that of the NPFC.

In light of this, the Commission requested to Members who also participate in SPRFMO meetings to represent NPFC as an observer and provide a report to the next Commission meeting.

We look forward to future opportunity to cooperate in areas of mutual interest and we thank you for your interest in cooperation with NPFC.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dae-Yeon Moon
Executive Secretary
North Pacific Fisheries Commission

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