



American Samoa Statement on South Pacific Albacore Target Reference Point

Thank you Madam Chair we are again frustrated at the lack of progress on strengthening the conservation and management of South Pacific albacore in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

American Samoa's longline fishery is almost entirely dependent on the South Pacific albacore stock, and canned albacore is an extremely important product of the American Samoa tuna processing industry.

Our domestic longline fishery has gone through great changes in the last ten years, basically from feast to famine. Ten years ago, the fishery was in good shape. More recently, the economics of the fishery became so poor that operators had to tie up.

Over this same time period we have also lost our small scale albacore fishery. We know that our South Pacific neighbors have also experienced similar downturns in their fisheries and we are supportive of Commission measures that improve economic and resource conditions for the South Pacific longline fleets.

We also have significant concern on the potential impact of proposed Commission measures on the supply of albacore to our local canneries in American Samoa. Our tuna industry has preceded the Commission by many decades, and our economy is completely dependent on tuna processing.

Therefore, we are supportive of continued efforts to identify a Target Reference Point for South Pacific albacore through the harvest strategy process that leads to improved catch rates while minimizing impacts to the local processing facilities of Small Island Developing States and Participating Territories.

Statement made by Ruth S. Matagi-Tofiga.

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