



## **American Samoa Statement on United States High Seas Purse Seine Limits**

Thank you Madam Chair, as we have articulated on several occasions the American Samoa economy is highly dependent on the tuna fishery, which includes two high volume canneries that employ over half of the local private sector work force. In addition, we have 20 locally-based large-scale purse seiners, about 20 local longliners, and a great number of support businesses including the shipyard, net yards, fuel suppliers, maintenance and repair service providers and stevedoring companies.

As a US Territory, American Samoa has the benefit of the U.S. regulatory and enforcement resources to make sure that our tuna fishery is fully compliant with Commission decisions and national laws.

For American Samoa-based purse seine vessels, the high seas areas close to Pago Pago represent our historical fishing grounds. When they were closed in June of this year we saw an immediate negative impact on our economy. There was a 45% reduction in purse seine port calls compared to the previous year. For these reasons, there have been likely severe negative impacts to American Samoa from the implementation of the US high seas purse seine limits in CMM 2014-01.

We bring this to the attention of the Commission in recognition of Article 30 of the Special Requirement of Developing States and Territories.

We humbly seek the understanding of our island neighbors, as well as non-SIDs, the importance of avoiding the adverse impacts of any high seas effort limits on our developing Territory.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Statement made by Ruth S. Matagi-Tofiga.

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