

From: Seafood Industry Supply Chain stakeholders

January 22, 2024

To: Heads of Delegation of Members (and CNCs¹) to the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization

Dear Commissioners and Delegates,

This letter is submitted on behalf of the undersigned companies, all of which recognize that illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is the greatest threat to the health of marine species and ecosystems and the fishing sector. Along with IUU fishing, there is evidence of serious human and labor rights violations that threaten fishers and workers in the fishing industry.

We recognize the efforts of the SPRFMO in recent years to manage the jumbo flying squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) stock, and are aware of the progress that the SPRFMO has made on ensuring the sustainability of this fishery. Building on this progress, it is essential to increase efforts to curb IUU fishing in the Convention area.

We wish to see the Commission accelerate the fight against the IUU fishing in the Convention area by implementing appropriate procedures and measures to identify infringements and violations by vessels on the high seas. The current Conservation Management Measures (CMMs) in place are not strong enough to monitor fishing activity and prevent illegal activities by fishing fleets.

We note that, to date, the SPRFMO has not included any fishing vessels on the IUU list. More transparent information must be made available to ensure full traceability of the products sold in final markets. After more than a decade of regulation, the jumbo flying squid fishery – the largest fishery by volume managed by the SPRFMO – still needs appropriate monitoring of transshipments, observer coverage, and ratification by member states and CNCs of Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA).

Seafood companies share responsibility for ensuring that human rights are respected in the value chains they participate in, as declared by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and in new human rights due diligence regulations proposed by various countries. Therefore, we consider it fundamental to include a solid program in the SPRFMO agenda to address labor issues and guarantee decent conditions for fishers and workers in squid fleets.

To this end, we strongly request State Members and CNCs to take the following actions at the forthcoming 12th Annual meeting, which will be held in Manta, Ecuador, in January 2024:

- Fully support the introduction of labor issues to the SPRFMO agenda by creating a specialized working group and establishing the first CMM on establishing basic guidelines for the RFMO members and the CNC on the safety and equitable treatment of crew members who work in the Convention area, in alignment with proposals by Australia, Ecuador, New Zealand, and the US.

¹ Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties

- Amend the Jumbo Flying Squid CMM to progressively increase onboard observer coverage to 20%, as Australia and New Zealand have suggested. This topic has been discussed extensively in SPRFMO Commission meetings for years, but decisions have been postponed several times. It is urgent that the SPRFMO adopt a final decision.

- Fully discuss the five proposals on increasing monitoring, control, and surveillance to fight against IUU fishing in the jumbo flying squid fishery. For example, one of the proposals calls for an increase in data requirements for monitoring transshipments at sea; this is highly relevant for squid markets that urgently need more available and transparent information to allow companies to make informed decisions to avoid sourcing from fishing companies involved in IUU fishing.

The undersigned companies represent major seafood buyers in international markets, sourcing seafood products from a diverse supply network.

Sincerely,



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