
**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN
AND CENTRAL PACIFIC**

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**SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING INTERIM SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH
STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN**

Submitted by the United States

Introduction

1. Resolution I of the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC) sets forth various provisions for the PrepCon to address in preparation for the Convention's entry into force. Provisions related to science needs and that require PrepCon guidance include, inter alia, (1) interim status of stocks, (2) operating procedures for the Scientific Committee, including data and reporting standards, stock assessments and related research, and, if necessary, (3) procedures and process for transition from an Interim to permanent arrangement, including arrangements for services of scientific experts.

Elements

2. Provided below are a set of proposed elements that address the provisions for science needs of Resolution I, particularly those of sections 10 and 11. Procedures for the provision of interim scientific advice should, to the extent practicable:

- take into account the procedures envisioned in Articles 12 and 13 of the Convention, and
- be open to all participants in the PrepCon to ensure the broadest possible participation.

3. In order for the PrepCon to keep abreast of the status of an impact on the stocks of the relevant fisheries, it will require a process for receiving advice on stock conditions and when warranted, advice on conservation and management actions. In this regard, the PrepCon should seek to identify or to establish, on an interim basis, groups or organisations that can fulfil the functions of the two principal sources of scientific advice and recommendations: the scientific committee established in Article 12 and the staff of scientific experts provided for in Article 13.

Scientific Working Group

4. To anticipate the functions of the Scientific Committee, the PrepCon should establish a Scientific Working Group, consisting of scientists and fishery officers from all interested participants in the PrepCon. This group would be charged with three broad functions:

- (1) Reviewing information and related conclusions on stock conditions that are currently produced by existing bodies (eg SPC, SCTB and national agencies) and assessing the use of such information as a basis for recommendations to the PrepCon on possible conservation and management actions. This group would

- prepare a written report of its findings and submit that report to the PrepCon well in advance of deliberations on this topic.
- (2) Provide advice on research priorities for monitoring stock condition, improving existing stock status analyses and for supporting fishery management requirements of the Convention. In executing this charge of research priorities the Working Group would determine the resources required (eg the required financial support, or staffing resources) for a spectrum of research options of differing complexity that would in turn address issues such as the risks and/or uncertainty for various levels of stock sustainability.
 - (3) Developing standards and guidance on the following:
 - (a) timely data collection, compilation and submission/reporting;
 - (b) standards for data dissemination and access;
 - (c) guidelines for determining status of stocks and for providing management advice to the Commission;
 - (d) advice on cost and budget estimates for the Secretariat to support science requirements and operations of the Committee; and
 - (e) advice on utilising existing regional scientific organisations, their relationship to WCPFC and whether some of their activities (eg data collection and compilation performed by the SPC and stock assessment activities conducted by the Interim Scientific Committee for the North Pacific HMS) will be subsumed by the WCPFC, and if so, how will this be achieved.
5. This Working Group would also have the authority to invite or consult with officers of existing international science bodies to assist in providing advice as needed.

Scientific Experts and Services

6. In addition, the PrepCon should seek to identify an existing organisation or organisations that might be prepared to fulfil, at least in part, the functions of the staff of scientific experts specified in Article 13 of the Convention. Possible options could include those listed in the preceding section on the Scientific Working Group, or some combination of these that might include, in specific cases, national agencies of the participants to the PrepCon.
7. As the Preparatory Conference moves forward, participants to the PrepCon should consider identifying research needs and priorities that could be tasked to such organisations in order to ensure that an effective mechanism is in place to carry out the provisions of Article 13 when the Convention enters into force.

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