



PROPOSAL F

USE OF ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN LIEU OF A QUOTA ALLOCATION SYSTEM FOR THE MAIN TARGET SPECIES IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

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1. Background:

IOTC Resolution 10/01 identifies the adoption of a quota allocation system or any other relevant measures for the management of the stocks of three main target species, yellowfin, bigeye and swordfish, falling under the IOTC area of competence.

The need for such management measures grew with time. Indian Ocean region, which was historically fished by several coastal CPCs for millennia, opened for distant water fleet operations in two stages, first in the early 50s and 60s and again in the early 80s. Advent of the distant water fleets and the technology transfer which ensued resulted in broad-basing the fishery operations, with the use of more efficient gear and vessels. Mindful of the expanding fleet operations and the severe pressure this would have on resources, importance of taking suitable measures to arrest the situation was realised. Thus, Indo Pacific Tuna Project (IPTP) based in Colombo, the precursor of IOTC was set up in mid-80s to create a scientific base for eventual measures towards resource management in the Indian Ocean.

Indian Ocean has distinct social and geographic characteristics. Majority of the IOTC Member Countries are Indian Ocean coastal states. The total population of these coastal states amounts to over 2 billion, or nearly 30% of the global population. Meanwhile, if you consider the total IOTC Membership, including the Distant Water Fishing Nations, the population size of the IOTC CPCs stands at around 4.2 billion or over 60% of the total global population. On the other hand, Indian Ocean lands only little over 20% of the total global tuna production of nearly 4.5 million metric tons. Thus it is evident that urgent measures have to be taken to support IOTC efforts in tuna resource management in the Indian Ocean as we have to find a formula to share around 20% of the global tuna resource among

60% of the global population. Thus, it is justifiable to grant some exclusivity to coastal CPCs as against DWFNs which enjoy wide access to the global resource base in other ocean areas coming under other RFMOs.

On the other hand, such a mechanism will be very important for most of the Indian Ocean coastal states as they are totally and exclusively dependent on the IOTC areas of competence for their fish. This is mainly due to the lack of technology, capital, know-how, skill levels and market access, which prevents them from venturing in to distant water fishing. Thus, indigenous fisheries have remained essentially artisanal in nature with poor CPU. However, they play an important role in the nutrition of the populations in many coastal states, while also providing employment and livelihood to a large number. Only a fraction of the fish caught in these fisheries finds their way to export markets, while most being used for domestic consumption. This is in sharp contrast to industrial fisheries which cater for ocean-based or land-based processing sectors which supply the global market with a wide range of processed products.

2. The Concept

The present proposal, while recognising the inalienable rights and aspirations of coastal states and the legitimate rights of the distant water fishing nations that have fished in the area for varying periods of time over the last six decades, notes that:

- Any management measure should be science based, transparent and should consider emerging ocean regimes, fisheries dynamics, socio-economic and technical aspects of fisheries;
- Though the management system will, understandably, have some commonalities with systems in other RFMOs, it should adequately address issues specific to the region;
- Due to complexities involved, the system has to evolve through not only scientific, but also a political consultation process to avoid any negative economic and social ramifications, which can even challenge the safety and sustainability of fleet operations in the IOTC area of competence;
- The system should have mechanisms to encourage development of domestic industry of coastal states on a sustainable basis, where applicable. This could be achieved by setting up a separate fund dedicated for the purpose;
- a mechanism to address the rights of Distant water Fishing nations based on the duration of their engagement in fishing in the IOTC area of competence over the last five decades;

3. Alternatives to QAS

As an alternative to QAS, and in line with resolution 10/01, Sri Lanka wishes to propose implementation of appropriate alternative measures for conservation and management of tuna resources in the IOTC area of competence. Such a process should, inter alia, constitute modalities of easing pressure on the resources through a combination of appropriate measures, taking note of:

- The possible pressure a quota allocation system directed at the three targeted species could have on non-target species such as Skipjack, Albacore, Billfish and Sharks etc. possibly resulting in the depletion and even collapse of the stocks;
- An out-put control through allocation of quotas, which mostly suit temperate water fisheries targeting few selected species, may not suit multi-species multi-gear fisheries of the Indian Ocean, which involves trans boundary species such as tropical tunas.
- Application of QAS will also require a very strong Monitoring Control and Surveillance mechanism, which is yet another major challenge.
- As a direct consequence of setting catch limits through the allocation of quotas, the proportion of discards at sea could increase, creating a major obstacle for realising the anticipated management goals of establishing a QAS.
- On the other hand, poor availability of data and statistics, low institutional capacities, poor knowledge in fisheries dynamics, infrastructure constraints, noncompliance and poor enforcement of IOTC resolutions etc would pose a big challenge to successful implementation of a quota allocation system;
- the overcapacity of the industrial purse-seine fishery in the Indian Ocean which has had a negative impact on the resource base;
- intense IUU fishing contributing to overfishing, undermining efforts to conserve and manage tuna stocks, while also broad negative impact on the ecosystem;

As such, Sri Lanka views the use of alternative management measures as the most suitable alternative for managing the tuna and tuna like resources in the Indian Ocean. Thus, establishing an effective input control system may probably be a viable alternative for effective management or rebuilding the stocks. Going by similar measures being promoted and/or employed by other RFMOs, the following approaches could be considered in this regard;

1. Confining the carrying capacity of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. An eventual upper limit target of 1500 GRT may be a reasonable tonnage from a resource management angle.
2. To enforce regulatory measures on large-scale purse seine fishing vessel to alleviate negative impact on bigeye and yellowfin resources through landing of juveniles. It has been established that industrial purse seines put severe pressure on the resources as

compared to other gears such as gillnets, longline, pole and line, and mini purse seines etc.

3. Enforcing a limitation of fishing capacity of CPCs as per IOTC resolutions 03/01, 06/05 and 07/05;
4. Establishing and expanding closed seasons / areas;
5. Regulating gear types/specifications;
6. Taking effective measures to eliminate IUU fishing within the IOTC area of competence;

Due to the growing demand for marine fish, tuna and tuna like species in particular, issues related to resource sustainability, fisheries management, fishing rights, quotas, market access etc. are bound to figure prominently in the global fisheries scenario in the future. Hence it is important for all the CPCs to take an informed decision on a crucial matter such as quota allocation with full knowledge on the scientific base for such a decision, long-term socio-economic ramifications and food-security of their populations. Hence, Sri Lanka feels it is the bounden duty of IOTC to ensure that any process of resource management in its area of competence should be just and fare and in line with the aspirations of the Indian Ocean Coastal states.