

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

**33<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

La Jolla, California (USA)  
21 June 2016

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Election of Chairman	
3. Adoption of the agenda	
4. Approval of the minutes of the 32 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties	
5. Secretariat's preliminary report on the IDCP	
6. AIDCP budget	MOP-33-06
7. Report of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System	
8. Report of the International Review Panel	
9. Other business	
10. Place and date of next meeting	
11. Adjournment	

**APPENDICES**

1. List of attendees
2. Report of the Chairman of the Working Group for promoting and publicizing the AIDCP *dolphin safe certification system*
3. Report of the Coordinator of the 59<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IRP

The 33<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was held in La Jolla, California (USA), on 21 June 2016. The list of attendees is attached as Appendix 1.

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director of the IATTC, which provides the Secretariat for the AIDCP.

**2. Election of Chairman**

Mr. Alvin Delgado, of Venezuela, was elected Chairman of the meeting.

**3. Adoption of the agenda**

The provisional agenda was adopted without changes.

**4. Approval of the minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties**

The minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties were approved without changes.

## **5. Secretariat's report on the IDCP**

Dr. Martín Hall, of the Secretariat, presented a preliminary report of the IDCP operation in 2015. For May 2015, observers have recorded 4,356 sets on dolphins and a mortality of 246 dolphins, for an average mortality per set of 0.06, which is less than the one registered in 2014. 100% of trips by large purse-seine vessels were sampled, in accordance with the requirements of the AIDCP. Dolphin Mortality Limits (DMLs) of 50 dolphins per vessel were allocated to 98 vessels.

The Parties noted that the average incidental mortality per set recorded so far in 2016 is the lowest in recent years, and that success is a merit to all stakeholders (vessel owners, governments, fishermen) and should be publicize as achievements as well as the considerable reduction in infractions.

## **6. AIDCP budget**

Ms. Nora Roa Wade, of the Secretariat, presented Document MOP-33-06 noting that this year the program had a surplus, and it is not necessary to increase vessel quotas. However, the current situation is extraordinary and unlikely to be repeated as overdue vessel payments for considerable amounts were received, so an increase might be needed in the near future.

It was emphasized that is difficult to project future AIDCP budgetary needs and take into account the unpaid contributions. The Secretariat depends of the financial results of the previous year to forecast future needs, and the direct costs of observers on board can fluctuate depending on the number of trips made, the cost of travel, the availability of local observers, etc. Similarly, income can vary according to how much capacity is active in a given year, payment of outstanding balances of previous years, vessels paying surcharges for delay, and the full payment of all vessels contributions in a timely manner.

Some delegations congratulated the Secretariat for the surplus reached this year, noting that reflects better management efforts. Others suggested that the surplus was due to the irregular circumstance of the activation and payment of assessments by vessels that were added to the register, but which utilized few services, and emphasized the importance of approving a budget amount and then adjusting the assessment rate accordingly. Guatemala highlighted the efforts of the owners to honor their outstanding contributions, especially on the case of Vicente vessel that made its outstanding payments despite it was reflagged. Several Parties highlighted the difficulties to plan the budget as a result of the changing nature of the fishery, the mobility of vessel in the regional register and payment arrears in some cases.

The European Union noted that the Parties were approving to maintain an assessment rate and collect and spend the money that would result, and that what was missing was the approval of a budget amount based on projected needs. In response, the secretariat presented the expenses of the first months of 2016 along with a projection for costs for the remainder of the year.

The United States and the EU supported further exploration of a mechanism to directly link the vessel assessment rates to the amount of the approved budget, which would help provide greater stability and predictability to the AIDCP budget process and alleviate the need for exhaustive reviews each year.

Following a suggestion by the United States, the Parties agreed to ask the secretariat to prepare an example of a formula, linking budget number and vessel assessment, and explaining the choices/assumptions made and their impacts on the results, perhaps even highlighting the policy decisions that are made within the formula. The United States agreed to submit further guidance for the paper in writing.

Many Parties raised the urgent need to offer fair, competitive salaries to observers in order to have an observer pool large enough to meet demand, retain experienced observers, and to reduce incentives for possible corruption.

## **7. Report of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System**

Ing. Carlos Marín, of Guatemala, who chaired the meeting of the Working Group, presented his report (Appendix 2), noting that a proposal by Mexico was presented in order to create an strategic plan for the AIDCP promotion which includes a voluntary fund to support the actions to publicize the AIDCP and its label. He mentioned that there was a very clear position of one Party noting that the fund should be voluntary. The plan would be revised, attempting to account for the comments of the Parties, and the result reviewed further at the October 2016 MOP/.

The Parties took note of the report and agreed that the work will continue as recommended by the working group.

## **8. Report of the International Review Panel**

Mr. Bill Jacobson, Coordinator of the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IRP, presented his report (Appendix 3), indicating that the Panel had decided to make the following recommendations:

1. The four requests for *force majeure* exemptions for 2016 should be granted on an exceptional basis, but in the future no such exemptions would be granted for any requests that did not meet the requirements established in Annex IV of the AIDCP, notably those related to the deadlines. Any future requests for such exemptions that did not meet these requirements, particularly those submitted after the established deadlines, would be circulated to the Parties, at the request of the interested Party, for their information only but would not be considered.
2. To press the governments involved in cases of fraudulent TTFs from 2010-2011 to give final results of their investigations to the IRP, and consider the development of an additional mechanism for promoting the conclusion of long-pending cases..

The Parties approved these recommendations.

## **9. Other business**

### **a) Frequency of meetings**

The European Union proposed reducing the frequency the meetings the AIDCP from two per year, in June and October, to one per year, in conjunction with the IATTC annual meeting. It presented Document [MOP-33-INF-A REV. 1 EUR Rationalization of AIDCP meetings](#) in which mechanisms are identified for resolving the two major challenges presented by their proposal: the allocation of DMLs in October, and the increase in the periods for reviewing possible infractions resulting from the reduction to a single annual meeting of the IRP. The proposal includes the necessary amendments should be made to the Annexes of the AIDCP

Several delegations expressed the preference that, if the parties decide to make this change, should be provisionally and as trial of two years that would expire automatically and require another consensus decision to continue the change indefinitely. That way, if the reduction in meetings proves unacceptable to one or more Parties, the arrangement would automatically return to the system of two sets of meetings per year. It was recalled that there are subsidiary bodies (AIDCP promotion and Tuna Tracking and verification working groups) that also would be limited to one meeting per year, which should be considered because the most important thing is to ensure compliance with the AIDCP. It was stressed that priority should be given to a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis, so the discussion should continue at the October meeting. It was stressed that in case of adopting the trial period, if there is a special meeting of the IATTC in the second half of the year, then second meetings of the MOP and the AIDCP subsidiary bodies would be held, despite the planned reduction.

### **b) Improving the safety of observers at sea.**

Mr. Dave Hogan of the US delegation presented the document [MOP-33 PROP A-1 USA Observer security at sea](#) noting that uniform measures for the safety of observers at sea do not exist in the various components of the Onboard Observer Program. The proposal would address this deficiency through the use of independent two-way communication satellite devices to be carried at all the time by observers and to establish a centralized system for monitoring and receiving signals from this system. He recalled that the urgent need for such a was highlighted by the disappearance of an observer in the transshipment program while at sea.

The Director reported that the transshipment observer program at sea is already utilizing a system of the type being proposed, and the staff then described the equipment, how the system operates, its costs.

Many Parties supported the proposal, while others requested the exploration of alternate safety measures that could be implemented with lower costs. The MOP agreed to continue this work at future meetings, including consideration of how to fund purchase of the equipment and monthly monitoring costs.

A question was made about the results and experiences of this equipment in the bluefin tuna fishery. The Director reported that they had intended to use them, but it was not possible due to lack of financial resources.

#### **10. Date and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Parties will be held in October 2016 in conjunction with the 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IATTC.

#### **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 18:30 on 21 June 2016.