

**AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

**34<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

**La Jolla, California, USA**

**10 October 2016**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

	Documents
1. Opening of the Meeting	
2. Election of the President	
3. Adoption of the agenda	
4. Approval of the minutes of the 33 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Parties	
5. Preliminary report of the Secretariat on the IDCP	
6. Budget of the AIDCP	MOP-34-06
7. Report of the 25 <sup>th</sup> Meeting 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. Date and place of next meeting	
11. Closing	

**ANNEX**

1. List of attendees
2. Report of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System
3. Report of the 60<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IRP

The 34<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 the 10 of October, 2016. Annex 1 contains the list of attendees.

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which provides the Secretariat for the AIDCP.

**2. Election of the President**

Mr. Alvin Delgado, from Venezuela, was elected Chair of the Meeting.

**3. Adoption of the agenda**

The provisional agenda was approved without modifications.

**4. Approval of the minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Parties**

The Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Parties was approved with one modification requested by Venezuela regarding the years to which the reports of AIDCP refer to on page 2, first paragraph.

## 5. Report of the Secretariat about IDCP

Dr. Martín Hall, of the Secretariat, presented the report of the IDCP operation during 2015. The recorded incidental mortality of dolphins in the fishery in 2015 was 765 animals, compared to 975 in 2014. The number of sets on dolphins made by Class 6 vessels was 11,020 in 2015, representing 41% of the total number of purse-seine sets made in the EPO during that year; whereas in 2014 11,382 dolphin sets were recorded, representing 48% of the total. The average mortality per set was 0.069 dolphins in 2015, compared with 0.086 dolphins per set in 2014. The average dolphin mortality per ton of yellowfin tuna was 0.0047, compared to 0.0056 in 2014.

The long-term reduction in mortality per set is a result of efforts by fishermen to better control the factors that cause incidental mortality of dolphins. Indicative of this effort are the number of sets without mortalities, which has increased from 38% in 1986 to 96.4% in 2015. Similarly, the number of dolphins remaining in the net after the backdown has also decreased from an average of 6.0 in 1986 to 0.1 or less since 2001.

A number of delegations emphasized the continued success of the AIDCP, which is reflected in the continuing reduction of incidental mortality of dolphins in EPO tuna fisheries, with levels close to zero.

The Parties noted that a technical workshop on possible methods for monitoring the status of dolphin stocks in the ETP would be held the following week on October 18-20, 2016. The Parties discussed the importance of collaborative funding efforts in the event that another dolphin population assessment survey is recommended in the resulting report.

## 6. Budget of the AIDCP

Ms. Nora Roa Wade, of the Secretariat, introduced [Document MOP-34-06](#) in which a procedure was presented for calculating a quota per vessel based on an approved budget amount. The proposed annual budget presented by the Secretariat to the Meeting of Parties would also specify an estimated vessel assessment rate required to finance that budget, while also taking into account any surplus or deficit transferred from the previous year. Then, following any adjustments made to the proposed budget by the Parties, a revised assessment rate corresponding to the new budget number could be produced quickly by the Secretariat. The Parties could then proceed to adopt in a single decision an AIDCP budget and the corresponding quota rate.

The United States thanked the Secretariat for the work and the presentation, and then expressed a strong preference that this type of proposed linkage between the budget and assessment rate be adopted. They noted that the Parties need to understand that there are many factors that can impact budget needs, and that they have a responsibility to adopt a revenue stream that is commensurate with any budget that is approved.

The European Union also expressed support for the establishment of such a linkage, but lamented that the document should have been circulated to the Parties at an earlier date so as to allow adequate time for review and consideration of its contents. They suggested that the Parties could consider it in further before the next Meeting of Parties in 2017. The Secretariat acknowledged the late publication, which resulted from delays in communications between the Secretariat and interested Parties. The European Union inquired if the salaries paid to staff for work performed on AIDCP matters was accounted for under the IATTC budget or was funded by AIDCP vessel assessments. Ms. Roa Wade explained the hybrid nature of accounting for staff salaries based on duties performed, referencing information provided in the previous budget document.

Several delegations noted that the example described in the document using the projected 2017 budget would result in a downward revision of the vessel assessment rate to US\$11.44 per cubic meter due to the current surplus of funds coming from various sources such as the payment of arrears from previous years and fees collected from vessels that do not utilize as many observer resources. The Secretariat highlighted

that the circumstances resulting in this spike in revenue were inconstant and variable, and would probably not persist. It also noted that if the Parties chose to set aside some of the surplus as a buffer against unforeseen, future deficits or to earmark such funds for special projects, the assessment rate would be adjusted upward. Additionally, in a future year where there was no surplus carried over, assessments would likely need to increase substantially in order to meet projected costs.

Venezuela and Ecuador remarked that the mechanism being discussed was quite new, and noted that the document failed to discuss or consider potential impacts to national programs that might result from any reduction in the assessment rate in the presence of a surplus. They noted that the revenue streams resulting in the current surpluses are not shared with the national programs. Thus any reduction in the vessel assessment below the current rate of US\$14.95 could result in undue financial distress for national programs that may in some instances already be underfunded. They stated that this aspect requires further consideration.

The Parties noted that the 2017 budget and revenue numbers were used primarily as a means of providing a concrete illustration of how an assessment rate could be generated from a given budget number, and that since the 2017 budget projections had already been approved, adopting this process for 2017 was not realistic. It was further noted that the Parties could still choose to avoid any result that they deemed unacceptable. For example, if reducing the assessment rate would have an unacceptable impact to national programs, they could decide against adjusting the projected budget using all or any of the surplus; noting that the primary goal in adopting a process for linking the budget and the assessment rate was to guard against underfunding of a budget approved by the Parties, which was the scenario for a number of the years since the assessment rate was last increased in 2006.

Ecuador expressed concern about making such a decision in haste and stated that they could not join a decision to adopt the suggested link between budget and contribution rate at this time.

The United States recommended that this matter be considered further at the next Meeting of the Parties so that perhaps it could be considered in the context of the 2018 AIDCP budget process.

Accordingly, the Parties decided to continue to work on this method for contributions calculation in the future. Meanwhile, as agreed during June meeting, contributions should be made on the basis of the approved budget and the contribution quota of US\$14.95 per cubic meter stated in Resolution [A-13-01](#), considering that the current surplus would be maintained as a reserve fund to ensure the continuity of the program against any increase in expenses.

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

Mr. Carlos Marín from Guatemala, Chairman of the Working Group, presented his report (Annex 2), noting that Mexico presented the results of a survey of the perceptions of consumers in the United States regarding the meaning of “dolphin safe tuna,” the AIDCP and tuna labelling. A corresponding document ([MOP-34 INF A](#)) was posted as information on the Commission's website.

He reported that the recommendation from the Working Group was to request the Parties of the AIDCP to cooperate in submitting remarks and comments on the strategic plan to promote the AIDCP and its label, presented by the Mexican delegation during the previous meeting.

The EU requested that the [WORD-MS Word](#) version of the document be circulated again in order to facilitate the generation of comments and set a deadline for submission to the Secretariat.

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

Mr. Bill Jacobson, Chairman of the 60<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Review Panel presented his report (Annex 3), noting that the Panel decided to issue the following six recommendations:

1. The list of DML requests for 2017 should be approved, taking into consideration that two of the requests should be approved provisionally, pending confirmation of prerequisite qualifications.
2. The proposed procedures for observer placement that were circulated by the Secretariat should be circulated electronically, and Parties should send any comments or suggested edits to the Secretariat by November 30, 2016.
3. A list of active observers with their photographs should be posted on the secure portion of the IATTC website, and the corresponding password shared with national authorities.
4. The Secretariat should contact Parties with special cases still pending within the framework of the Working Group on Tuna Tracking and Verification System in order to obtain more information on the progress made towards their conclusion.
5. The Secretariat should explore the possibility of utilizing electronic monitoring systems taking into consideration the budget implications and including vessels under class 6.
6. Regarding fishing in the IATTC-WCPFC overlap area, a mechanism to regulate these activities in the area in the legal framework of the AIDCP, similar to the one in force within IATTC, should be developed

The European Union suggested that, regarding recommendation 6, the Secretariat should prepare a document for consideration in advance of the next Meeting of the Parties. The United States said that it could work with the Secretariat to produce that document.

The Parties approved these recommendations.

## **9. Other business**

The United States noted that due to lack of time at this meeting, it would submit the proposal [MOP-34 PROP A-1 USA Safety of Observers at Sea](#) during the 2017 meetings of the IATTC and AIDCP.

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

The next Meeting of the Parties will be held in 2017 in conjunction with the 92<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the IATTC in July 2017.

## **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 19:18 on 10 October 2016.

## Appendix 1.

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