

**AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM**  
**47<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

La Jolla, California (USA)  
10-11 October 2023

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Adoption of the agenda	
3. AIDCP budget	<a href="#">AIDCP-47-01</a>
4. Secretariat's report on the IDCP	<a href="#">AIDCP-47-02</a>
5. Report of the 37 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System	
6. Report of the 72 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)	
7. Other business	
8. Place and date of next meeting	
9. Adjournment	

**APPENDICES**

1. List of attendees
2. Statement by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AIDCP
3. 1977 Resolution on the IATTC and the on-board observer program
4. Guidelines of the Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP
5. Report of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP
6. Report of the 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)

The 47<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was held in La Jolla, California, on 10-11 October 2023.

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP, Mr. Alvin Delgado, of Venezuela.

The United States, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela participated in person and Bolivia, Ecuador and El Salvador participated virtually, thus achieving the required quorum.

The Chair made a statement before the start of the meeting on behalf of himself and the Vice-Chair (Appendix 2).

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**3. AIDCP budget**

Dr. Arnulfo Franco, Director of the IATTC, again presented a budget proposal for 2024, which could not

be adopted by consensus at the previous Meeting of the Parties in Victoria, B.C., Canada, in July 2023. He referred to the new, revised and updated document (AIDCP-47-01) which contains, in addition to this proposal, more detailed information on the financial activities in 2022 as well as on the expected expenditures for 2023. He emphasized the way in which the costs of staff work were allocated prior to 2022. These costs were allocated in a simplified manner that did not take into account a time allocation that more accurately reflects the time spent by headquarters and regional office staff on the AIDCP, without charging the AIDCP budget for this work. Correcting for this situation resulted in a deficit for 2022, 2023, and also in the 2024 projection.

In view of this situation, the Director mentioned four possible solutions:

- Review of projected expenditures for 2024;
- Increase contributions to the AIDCP budget;
- Increase the percentage of the IATTC's contribution to the AIDCP budget;
- Use the surplus accumulated through 2021 to avoid a deficit in 2024 and to offset the previous ones.

The Director also recalled the need to increase the remuneration of observers, as this had not been done for many years, despite a significant increase in the cost of living, which makes it more difficult to recruit new, qualified observers.

The delegation of Guatemala stressed that two issues needed to be resolved: the approval of the 2024 budget and the correction of the way the budget was being executed. It expressed reservations about the possibility of covering deficits with surpluses and recalled that some delegations had already objected to the use of surpluses for current expenditure.

The Mexican delegation stressed the need not to approve a budget that was known to be in deficit and requested that the Secretariat systematically review expenditures to identify all possible savings. Guatemala, for its part, requested that this exercise be supplemented by projections of what the expenses would be if different percentages of the funds budgeted for the IATTC's contribution to the AIDCP were used (for example, 50%/50% instead of the current 30%/70%).

In response to the Secretariat's comment that it had already conducted this exercise and that the amount of potential savings identified was insignificant, the Meeting of the Parties identified the following possibilities:

- Hold the October AIDCP meetings in a virtual format;
- Have the industry pay for the costs associated with conducting AIDCP captain training seminars;
- Cancel the planned purchase of a vehicle for one of the field offices.

After an intense discussion, the Meeting of the Parties exceptionally approved the use of the surplus to avoid the deficit that would result from the proposed budget for 2024. All other uses of the surplus, including in relation to the deficits observed in 2022 and 2023, will be subject to the financial rules and procedures to be developed and recommended by the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP, as established in Resolution A-23-01.

In conclusion, the Meeting of the Parties decided:

- To approve a US\$ 3,583,993 budget for 2024.
- To establish an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP, through the adoption of Resolution A-23-01.
- To commission an audit of the AIDCP budget and to allocate US\$ 30,000 for this purpose in the 2024 budget.

- Request the Secretariat to:
  - Provide the Parties with monthly reports on the expenditure exercise in 2024, beginning with the first report on 15 February 2024.
  - Report by mid-November 2023 on the monthly projection of expected expenditures.

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

The Secretariat's staff referred to Document [AIDCP-47-02](#), "Report on International Dolphin Conservation Program". Due to time constraints, this document could not be presented and discussed, and it was agreed that Parties could submit comments by e-mail.

#### **5. Report of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System**

The report of the Working Group was presented by its Chair, Mr. Bernal Chavarría (Guatemala). He said that due to the short time that had passed since the last meeting in Victoria, Canada, he only wished to report that, in accordance with what had been agreed at that meeting, the information material would be soon sent to the Museum of Natural History in New York City to review and update the contents of the exhibit on the tuna-dolphin relationship and to report on the work and results of the AIDCP.

The Secretariat was reminded of the recommendations of the Working Group that had been approved by the previous Meeting of the Parties, in particular the one on the development of a document on the strategy for the use of social media within the AIDCP.

#### **6. Report of the 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)**

Mr. Alvin Delgado chaired the meeting of the IRP in light of the resignation of its Presider, Mr. Enrique de la Vega of Colombia. He noted to the Meeting of the Parties that the only matter for approval was the allocation of DMLs for 119 qualified vessels. The Meeting approved this recommendation.

In view of the need to appoint a new Presider, the Meeting of the Parties elected Mr. Enrique Espinosa, of Panama, to replace Mr. de la Vega.

#### **7. Other business**

##### **a) Amendment to Annex VIII, paragraph 2e, of the AIDCP**

The Meeting of the Parties considered the proposal of the Chair to amend Annex VIII, paragraph 2e, of the AIDCP by adding the following words "*, or an LED lamp of at least 500 watts*", in order to take due account of technological advances since the entry into force of the AIDCP. Due to the recent submission of this proposal and in order to allow Parties to better evaluate and analyze this amendment, it was agreed to postpone its consideration.

##### **b) Maintenance of the list of qualified captains**

The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the proposed amendments to the "Procedures for Maintaining the AIDCP List of Qualified Captains". After taking note of some drafting suggestions from some delegations, it was agreed to postpone discussion and adoption of the amendments to allow more time for the Parties to review the text.

##### **c) Transit waiver rules**

Due to time constraints, consideration of the Chair's proposal, which was posted on the IATTC website as a [Draft Resolution on Transit Waiver Rules](#), was postponed to the next meeting.

##### **d) Chair of the Working Group on Tuna Tracking**

The Parties took note of the need to elect a new Chair of this Working Group at their next meeting, in view of the announcement by Mr. Julio Guevara, of Nicaragua, that he would be unable to continue in that position due to other unavoidable commitments.

**8. Place and date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in August 2023 in Panama, together with the IATTC meetings.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned on 11 October 2023 at 18:00 hours.

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## Appendix 1. List of attendees

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**Appendix 2.** Statement by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AIDCP

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### Appendix 3. Resolution C-77-01

#### The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

#### RESOLUTION

Recalling that at the 33rd meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the member nations agreed that the IATTC should concern itself with problems arising from the tuna-porpoise relationship in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and requested the Director of Investigations to prepare a review of existing information on such problems and to submit proposals for a possible Commission role, and

Having received that report and discussed its contents at the 34th meeting of the IATTC held in San Diego, June 27-29, 1977, and

Having concluded that the IATTC should undertake activities to evaluate the populations of porpoise in the eastern Pacific Ocean and implement programs designed to reduce to the maximum extent feasible the incidental mortality of porpoise by vessels involved in the fishery for yellowfin tuna in accordance with the Commission's objectives,

Therefore recommends to the high contracting parties that they take joint action to empower the IATTC staff to:

- a) Prepare a detailed program and itemized budget to carry out the activities listed below for distribution to member nations as soon as practicable for their review;
- b) Recruit and/or select and train scientific technicians from member or non-member nations to collect data from vessels at sea on the stocks of porpoise in the eastern Pacific Ocean which can be used to estimate porpoise mortality induced by fishing and to evaluate the effect of this mortality and other factors on porpoise abundance. When requested by any nation, the scientific technician will be of the same nationality as the flag of the vessel;
- c) As appropriate, convene meetings of scientists and other experts to confer with the Commission staff in its porpoise-related studies;
- d) Plan, coordinate, and conduct workshops and seminars to evaluate and disseminate porpoise-saving techniques and gear technology;
- e) Hire the Commission staff necessary to carry out the above activities and any related analyses, to participate in porpoise population research and, as appropriate, to prepare recommendations designed to reduce porpoise mortality;

and further, calls upon the high contracting parties to take action necessary to make it possible for the Commission to undertake these responsibilities.

#### **Appendix 4.**

### **CREATION OF AN *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCIAL STRENGTHENING OF THE AIDCP**

*The Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP):*

**Taking into account** the obligations established in the AIDCP;

**Reaffirming** the conviction to ensure the functioning and operational strengthening of the AIDCP;

**Bearing** in mind that the AIDCP currently reports a surplus of over two million dollars;

**Concerned** about the increase the execution of budget which has caused deficit in recent years;

**Recognizing** the need to modernize and, where appropriate, develop the necessary instruments for financial management associated with best practices in information and financial risk management;

**Resolved** to develop an analytical exercise that will provide the Meeting of the Parties with inputs for adopting modern management instruments adapted to the needs of the AIDCP;

**Recalling** that the IATTC provides the Secretariat to the AIDCP in accordance with Article XIV of the Agreement and Article VII(1)(t) of the Antigua Convention;

*Agree:*

1. To create the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP.
2. The Working Group shall have the following functions:
  - a) To review and analyze in detail the existing budgetary and financial rules, tools and practices observed under the AIDCP;
  - b) To review the application of these rules, tools and practices from their adoption to the present;
  - c) To review the existing budget structure and mechanisms to ensure the reasonableness of the AIDCP's income and expenditures;
  - c) To identify the existence and effective application in the AIDCP of financial management methodologies in accordance with the recommended standards for intergovernmental organizations as well as any possible gaps;
  - d) To identify, with the support of the Secretariat, the areas of financial management that need to be modernized through, among others, the implementation of technological tools, manuals, policies, strategies and procedures for efficient financial management;
  - e) When making recommendations, to review whether the Parties are adequately kept informed in a sufficient and timely manner regarding budget execution especially when a decision of the Parties is required or when there are substantive changes in the quantitative and qualitative execution of the budget;
  - f) At all times observe the applicable rules of confidentiality established in the instruments in force under the AIDCP and IATTC;
  - g) The Working Group shall determine the steps and actions required to execute a performance review of the processes related to the finance, accounting and budgetary execution, which shall provide technical recommendations for the efficient management of the AIDCP. The cost of this review will be charged against the 2024 AIDCP budget.

- h) Recommendations identified by the Group as matters for immediate implementation shall be submitted to the Parties for consideration consistent with the Rules of Procedure for inter-sessional decision-making.
  - i) The Working Group shall issue a final report to the Meeting of the Parties in 2024 with recommendations on the potential improvements or actions, such as, inter alia, the elaboration or amendment of manuals, procedures and financial and budgetary management practices and policies, as well as the implementation of technological tools that ensure timely and efficient access to financial information and financial risk management.
3. The Working Group shall have access to all information, especially but not limited to financial information, either through documentary analysis or through interviews with such persons as the group deems relevant for the purposes of this Resolution. The Secretariat shall provide the Group with all information and evidence that it may require.
4. The Parties may appoint their representative(s) to the Working Group, endeavoring to ensure that the Group includes representatives with the relevant technical and specialized skills or experience appropriate to the objective of the Group. The representatives may be accompanied by such experts as they deem appropriate in an advisory capacity.
5. The Working Group shall be chaired by the Chair of the AIDCP. He may be replaced by the Vice-Chairman in case of temporary absences.
6. The Meeting of the Parties shall decide, at its meeting in August 2024, whether or not to extend and/or expand the mandate of this Group.