

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
FIRST MEETING

Veracruz, Mexico
5 June 2013

MEETING REPORT
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1. Opening of the meeting

The Chairman of the IATTC, Mr. Alvin Delgado, opened the meeting.

2. Election of the chair

Mr. Lillo Maniscalchi, of Venezuela, was elected Chair of the Committee, and Dr. Luis Fleischer, of Mexico, was elected rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted without changes.

4. Review of the financial audit report

Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director of the Commission, reported that on 31 May the auditors' report (Document CAF-01-04) was sent to the Commissioners and Heads of Delegation by e-mail, and copies were distributed at the meeting. He also indicated that this report had not been delivered by the specified deadline because the auditors delivered it late, despite being urged by the Secretariat to accelerate the process.

There were no comments on the auditors' report.

5. Review of the budgets for 2013, 2014, and 2015

Ms. Nora Wade, of the IATTC staff, reported that the requested budget for 2014 was US\$ 6,527,781, and the projected budget for 2015 was US\$ 6,663,836, the increase of 2%, which covers only the effects of inflation.

She mentioned the arrears in payment of the contributions of various Members (France, Guatemala, Kiribati, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Venezuela and Vanuatu), which added up to a total of US\$ 2,571,000, of which a balance of US\$ 1,216,000 was still outstanding for 2013 and US\$ 1,355,000 for previous years.

It was noted that, in accordance with the Commission's decision, the budget for 2013 does not include costs related to meetings of the Commission during that year. However, it was necessary to include costs related to meetings that were not programmed, such as the meeting of the Permanent Working Group on fleet capacity.

In response to a question by Colombia, a deficit current costs at the end of 2012 of US\$ 713,421 was confirmed.

In response to a question by Japan, it was explained that the salaries of the Commission staff had been frozen for two years, and that the increase seen in the tables reflects an increase in the cost of benefits such as medical insurance and the pension plan.

The European Union commented that, apparently, if the pending contributions had been paid, the accumulated deficit would have been eliminated, and asked whether the Secretariat had made efforts to collect those contributions. The Director clarified that, if the balances outstanding for 2012 had been paid, the financial statement would not reflect a deficit. The Director indicated that the outstanding contributions for 2013 currently added up to US\$ 1,216,000, which represents almost a third of the total annual budget.

In response to a question by Colombia, it was confirmed that any increase in the contribution of the IATTC to the AIDCP observer program beyond the current 30% would increase the deficit, and would make it necessary to take those resources from other budget items or programs.

In response to questions and comments by Colombia and the European Union, the Director recalled that, in accordance with the provisions of Article XV of the Antigua Convention, a Member of the Commission that is in arrears in the payment of its contributions by an amount equal to or greater than the total of the contributions due from it for the preceding 24 months shall not have the right to participate in decision-making in the Commission until it has fulfilled its obligations. The Director also referred to the initiatives undertaken during the intersessional period with the Members with payments in arrears, and pointed out in particular the efforts made by Panama to reduce the amount of its pending debt to the Commission. With regard to those initiatives, the Committee accepted the proposal by the United States that it recommend to the Commission that a stronger message be sent to those Members with payments in arrears.

El Salvador, Venezuela and Nicaragua explain the actions they had undertaken to pay their overdue contributions, as well as the circumstances that led to their being in arrears. Panama indicated that its government had held conversations with the Director, and stated that its overdue payments represented accumulated debts for several years, so it is difficult to pay off the total amount. It reiterated that its government will attempt to pay the quantity equivalent to the calculation of its contribution and will in addition attempt to obtain the additional funds necessary to pay the total outstanding balance.

Returning to the matter of the budget as a whole, the European Union stated that, in order to justify even a minimal increase (such as the 2% adjustment for inflation), it would be very helpful to have an objective external evaluation, above and beyond the information supplied in the current financial audit report, it is not what is needed in this context. It emphasized the need for an evaluation of the administrative and operational performance of the Commission and its staff, more limited in its reach than the evaluation of its overall performance which it had not yet managed to agree on. France and Japan supported this proposal.

With the support of various delegations, Mexico stated that it was necessary to define precisely and

clearly the terms of reference of the evaluation proposed by the European Union. It also asked whether the work carried out within the framework of the AIDCP would be taken into account, and asked the delegations making the proposal to present a proposal in writing for such terms of reference. The Chair of the Committee asked the delegations of the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Mexico to consult among themselves to draft those terms of reference and present them to the Commission. Belize expressed its concern regarding the costs of an evaluation of this nature.

Regarding the budget, Mexico also stressed that it should not be forgotten that, under the Antigua Convention, the Commission is being given new mandates and responsibilities, so it is very difficult to understand that at the same time a reduction in the budget is being requested.

Without going into the subject of the evaluation of the performance of the IATTC in general, the Committee agreed that ways of setting the differences regarding this matter, specifically whether the AIDCP should be included in the evaluation, as well as matters related to proceed.

The Members of the Committee also noted the advisability of making efforts to set priorities and reduce costs, but not forgetting the need to duly include costs that are necessary, for holding meetings and for carrying out the proposed evaluation.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Commission a budget for 2014 of US\$ 6,715,585, including US\$ 100,000 for the proposed performance evaluation (indicating that its terms of reference be clearly defined), as well as US\$ 87,804 for holding the next annual meeting in La Jolla.

The members of the Committee agreed on the advisability that the delegations consult during the week to attempt to reach agreements that would allow a solution to be reached during the meeting of the IATTC.

6. Financial contributions by Members to the Commission:

a. Regular contributions

An example calculation was presented of the amount of the contributions by Members to a budget of US\$ 6,715,585 for 2014, bearing in mind that this would be reviewed by the Commission during its 85th meeting.

b. Contributions to the special fund established under Resolution C-11-11

The Director indicated that no contributions to the Fund had yet been received, despite the conditional offer by the European Union to contribute €100,000 provided that contributions adding up to 20% of this amount were received from others. Japan thanked the European Union for its offer, and announced its intention of making a contribution of €20,000 in addition to its regular contribution, but for this year only.

The United States stated that it would explore the possibility of making contributions to the fund, and suggested other possible sources of funding, such as the Global Environmental Fund and the World Bank.

Numerous members expressed gratitude for these offers and requested that, as a priority, the fund be used to facilitate the participation of developing countries in the Scientific Advisory Committee, which has not managed to reach a quorum at its meetings.

The Director noted that Document CAF-01-06b also describes the actions taken by the Commission and its staff to support capacity building. He thanked Japan and its Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation for their support, particularly with regard to sampling of artisanal and coastal shark fisheries, net alignments in the observer program, and standardization of database management.

c. Contributions to the program to monitor transshipments at sea (Resolution C-12-07)

Mr. Ricardo Belmontes, of the Commission staff, described the current situation of the program, noting that there had been a surplus in 2012 and that a surplus was expected for 2013 as well. A reduced budget of US\$ 850,000 was therefore proposed for 2014, which meant that the total contributions for that year by the Members participating in the program would thus be US\$ 500,000.

In response to comments and questions about the similarities and differences between this program and the IATTC observer program, as well as the potential costs incurred for the commission, the Director indicated that this program is carried out through a company that takes care of all the logistics, and the role of the IATTC staff is limited to monitoring its reports and administering the fund.

Japan express its interest in exploring the possibility of hiring other companies that might perhaps take over the program at a lower cost.

7. Other business

No other business was discussed.

8. Recommendations to the Commission

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Commission a budget of US\$ 6,715,585 for 2014, which includes the funds necessary for the proposed administrative and operational performance evaluation and for holding planned meetings.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. on 5 June 2013.

Appendix 1.

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