

Statement for UNOC3 – Global Tuna RFMOs
Distinguished delegates,

I speak on behalf of the five global tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations—ICCAT, IOTC, IATTC, CCSBT, and WCPFC— as a representative of the oldest tuna RFMO, the IATTC, which has been operating since 1950, 75 years ago, although being completely reconstructed through the 2003 Antigua Convention, which entered into force in 2010.

The five tuna RFMOs are united by a shared mandate: to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory tuna and tuna like species as well as the conservation of associated or dependent species and related ecosystems. In addition, despite operating in different oceanic regions, these RFMOs have developed a robust foundation and network and of cooperation, including through the establishment of joint working groups and schemes, science-based decision-making, and adaptive management to meet this common goal.

Over the past two decades, the collective efforts of the tuna RFMOs have led to significant improvements in the status of major tuna stocks worldwide. Stocks once at risk of depletion are increasingly being rebuilt or maintained at sustainable levels. This progress is the result of joint efforts of members and a wide range of partner entities and organizations, including environmental NGOs and the industry sector, and which allowed the development and adoption of science-driven harvest strategies, precautionary catch limits, and a deepening awareness of the need to accept or commit to ecosystem-based approaches.

The results of these efforts are reflected in the 2024 FAO Status of Fisheries Report, which stresses that 87% of global tuna stocks are sustainably fished, and 99% of total catch comes from healthy tuna stocks.

Central to these successes is the essential role of monitoring, control, and surveillance, at sea but also through the adoption of Port state measures, alongside comprehensive data collection and transparency. Through vessel monitoring systems, observer programs, electronic reporting, sampling in port, and data-sharing frameworks, the five tuna RFMOs have strengthened the reliability of the scientific advice on which

management measures are based. This science-policy interface and the organization of a dialogue between scientists and managers ensures that conservation and management decisions are not only inclusive and credible but also responsive to environmental, technological, and socio-economic change.

This reference to the main mandate of these five RFMOs should not minimize the considerable attention that they give to the other species that interact with the tuna fisheries: research is done, and measures are taken aimed at sharks, rays, turtles and seabirds, usually in contacts and coordination with other organizations or entities more directly responsible for these species. More recently, this attention has also shifted to issues that concern the whole ecosystem in which tuna and tuna-like species thrive, such as climate change and the potential consequences of deep-sea mining.

In conclusion, in this era of increasing pressure on oceanic resources, the tuna RFMOs experience underscores the value of regional cooperation, transparency, and adherence to international law in securing the sustainability of shared marine resources. As we advance toward 2030 and beyond, the work of these bodies offers important lessons and inspiration for global ocean governance.

Thank you.