

## **Ocean Action Panel #5**

### **Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small scale fishers**

#### ***Tuvalu Statement***

- Chair, Tuvalu would like to make this brief statement in support of the intervention by Kiribati, one of our closest neighbours;
- Tuvalu is one of the most fisheries dependent countries in the world. More than half of our Government revenue is derived from fees paid by the industrial tuna fishery – both foreign and Tuvalu flag vessels. Our small scale fisheries provide the most important source of locally produced food by value, with a per capita consumption of more than 70 kg of fish per year.
- As we all know, our fisheries face many challenges – overfishing, IUU, and the various impacts of climate change. Tuvalu is committed to action to address these challenges.
- Management of the industrial purse seine fishery in our EEZ is through a strong system of effort control – the PNA vessel day scheme – which is combined with high access fees to limit the fleet to a relatively small number of efficient vessels. 100% observer coverage and a requirement for transshipment in port ensure that the fishery is well monitored. Tuvalu is committed to closing the last remaining loophole in this scheme, by capping fishing effort in the high seas.
- In contrast the longline fishery in our region is now mainly in the high seas, with low observer coverage and a high level of transshipment at sea. This fishery is associated with poor catch reporting and allegations of labour abuse. We urge the operators of these fleets to agree to phase out at-sea transshipment and ensure crew have regular visits to ports in the region.
- Efforts to eliminate IUU fishing are also a priority for Tuvalu, despite our large EEZ and limited resources. With the support of our regional agencies and development partners, we have developed a comprehensive system of monitoring control and surveillance. We are determined to strengthen these systems, particularly satellite-based detection of unlicensed vessels.
- Turning to small scale fisheries, we are committed to addressing the impacts of climate change which is already destroying coral reef habitats and is predicted to reduce the productivity of inshore stocks by 40% by the end of the century. All our island communities have developed adaptive management plans to conserve these fisheries resources.
- At the same time, we are supporting efforts by our small-scale fishers to increase their harvesting of sustainable tuna stocks, which already account for more than half of the local catch. Sea safety equipment is an important part of this – fishers should not have to risk loss of life in the event of an engine breakdown – and we have issued sea safety grab-bags to all regular fishing boat operators, We are currently testing fixed Vessel Monitoring transponders on small inshore boats.

- Other areas of support include providing market facilities which can store and process excess catches in times of plenty; and deploying inshore Fish Aggregation Devices to make oceanic fishing more efficient.
- I thank you for this opportunity to share our plans and commitments to ensuring our fisheries are managed sustainably and our small scale fishers are strongly supported.