

**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL
PACIFIC**

FIRST MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COORDINATING GROUP

29 – 31 July 2002, Honolulu, Hawaii

**ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL PREPARATORY
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS**

It will be recalled that, at its second session in Madang, in February 2002, the Preparatory Conference, acting on the recommendation of Working Group II, decided to establish a Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) to assist Working Group II in carrying out those parts of its terms of reference which require special scientific and technical considerations.

The SCG would be a sub-group of WG.II and would report to both WG.II and the Preparatory Conference. Its terms of reference, as adopted by the PrepCon, are in the Annex to this document.

As determined by the PrepCon, the inaugural meeting of the SCG will take place at the Hawaii Imin International Conference Center, at the East-West Center, Honolulu, from 29-31 July 2002, immediately following SCTB15 (22-27 July 2002). The meeting will be convened by the Chairman of WG.II, Mr John Kalish (Australia). An agenda, based on the agreed terms of reference, will be circulated in due course. As noted in the terms of reference adopted by the PrepCon, the SCG is open to participation by scientific and technical representatives of all PrepCon participants, as well as representatives of OFP, SCTB, IATTC and ISC.

The purpose of this announcement is to request participating governments and organizations to inform the interim secretariat as soon as possible of the names and contact addresses of their representatives in the SCG. It is possible, but cannot at this stage be guaranteed, that limited financial assistance may be available for the purpose of supporting the attendance of representatives of developing countries at the SCG meeting. For practical reasons, it should also be noted that the meeting venue cannot accommodate more than 60 persons.

Further information concerning SCTB15 is available at <http://imina.soest.hawaii.edu/PFRP/sctb15/sctb15.html> and at <http://www.spc.org.nc/oceanfish/Html/SCTB/index.htm>

Further information concerning PrepCon is available at www.ocean-affairs.com. The interim secretariat may be contacted at interimsec@isa.org.jm

Further information concerning the meeting venue is available at <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/about-cc.asp>

Annex

WORKING GROUP II: SCIENTIFIC COORDINATING GROUP (SCG)

Terms of reference

Resolution I of the WCPFC Convention sets forth various provisions for PrepCon to address in preparation for the Convention entering into force. For science needs, they include, inter alia: (1) provisional scientific advice on status of stocks (yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye and south Pacific albacore) and, if warranted, recommendations for conservation and management; and (2) recommendations for implementing the functions of the Scientific Committee and for scientific services, including procedures for data collection and reporting.

The Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) is established to assist Working Group II in carrying out those terms of reference which require special scientific and technical considerations. The SCG would be a sub-group of WG.II and would report to both WG.II and the PrepCon. The SCG would be open to participation by scientific and technical representation of all PrepCon participants, as well as representatives of OFF, SCTB, IATTC and ISC.

Funding to promote broad participation in the SCG, organize its meetings, and to facilitate its work (e.g., through consultancies or contracts) will be provided through voluntary contributions.

Meetings of the SCG will be held in conjunction with the meetings of the SCTB, taking into account the need for encouraging maximum participation of scientific and technical experts and cost-effectiveness.

The SCG would begin its work as soon as practicable. To facilitate its work prior to its first meeting, the WCPFC interim secretariat will work with the WG.II Chairman to establish points of contact among participating PrepCon members and relevant regional bodies.

The WG.II Chairman would act in the capacity of the SCG Chair or appoint a Chairperson in consultation with the PrepCon Chairman.

The tasks of the SCG include:

Provision of interim scientific advice

1. Providing advice to PrepCon on stock condition and, when requested by PrepCon, provisional conservation and management actions. Information and related conclusions on stock condition produced by existing bodies, including, but not limited to, the SPC, OFF, IATTC, SCTB and ISC, will be reviewed and assembled into a convenient format suitable for advising PrepCon on the status of the four primary tuna stocks; and

2. Prioritizing fisheries and scientific data needs in the interim period and providing recommendations to WG.II and the PrepCon on procedures to obtain such data.

Procedures for scientific functions

1. Providing recommendations to WG.II and the PrepCon on longer term data needs, requirements for data collection, verification, analysis and dissemination, and confidentiality;

2. Preparation of draft guidelines and a reporting format for WG.II and the PrepCon for determining and advising on the status of stocks and other key variables and eventually for providing advice to the Commission;

3. Undertaking a review of the available scientific and fishery management data that would include validating and analyzing these existing data in order to provide recommendations to WG.II and the PrepCon on the appropriateness and applicability of these data to the future work of the Commission; and

4. Performing other tasks that may be assigned by WG.II and the PrepCon.

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