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EFFORT OF ELIMINATION OF IUU LARGE-SCALE TUNA LONGLINE VESSELS

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EFFORT OF ELIMINATION OF IUU LARGE-SCALE TUNA LONGLINE VESSELS¹

1. Large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) produce mainly frozen tuna and landed at Japanese ports for sashimi use. Since Japanese market offers the highest price for sashimi tunas, almost all LSTLVs products come to Japan.

2. After Taiwan limited its number of LSTLVs in early 1990s, many Taiwanese vessel owners used flag of convenience (FOC) LSTLVs to circumvent the regulations. Global problem of IUU tuna longline fishing was caused solely by the Taiwanese residents. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) took a series of measures to eliminate the FOC/IUU LSTLVs during mid and late 1990s. However, since they are focusing on flag states and not focusing on people who actually conducted IUU business, their effectiveness is easily ruined by flag hopping.

3. Japan analyzed its trade and other data to identify the real operators of the IUU LSTLVs and started consultations with them. As a result of strenuous consultations between Japan and Taiwan including IUU vessel owners, as well as efforts by the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) such as an establishment of positive vessel listing scheme, the number of IUU LSTLVs reduced substantially.

4. However, Taiwanese fishermen changed the type of fishery from large-scale longline (over 24m) to small-scale longline (less than 23.9m) as well as large-scale purse seine fishery and continue catching tunas in the area where no management measures were introduced i.e. western and central Pacific. Flags of these vessels are developing states. In the past, developed states' fishing industries took advantage of the developing states' right for fishery development so as to evade capacity control measures. As far as the developed countries continue building new vessels and developing countries continue accepting these vessels under their registry, over-capacity problems continue and will expand. Tuna IUU fishing problem is a part of tuna over capacity problem.

5. Based on our past experiences, we concluded that;

1. Measures focused on flag states including trade measure had a limited effectiveness.
2. Trade tracking and its resulting accumulation of information by market countries are an enormous task but it provides the most important fundamentals for creation of effective measures to combat IUU fishing.
3. Direct consultations with IUU vessel owners played an important role toward termination of the problem.
4. Measures based on positive list are effective but there may still continue tuna laundering and use of forged documents.
5. FOC/IUU fishing is a part of overcapacity.

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6. All FOC flag states are developing states.

7. Even after elimination of IUU fishing, as far as developing states accept limitlessly registrations of foreign fishing vessels, overcapacity problem continues.

6. IUU measures should be specific to each fishery and based on trade and other data for identification of real operators. The following global actions are urgently required to take to solve IUU and overcapacity problem;

1. FAO should establish a global record of tuna fishing vessels, compiling the existing records of tuna fishing vessels of relevant RFMOs and RFMOs should cooperate with FAO in establishment of the record.

2. Developed states, parties and fishing entities should stop construction of new tuna fishing vessels except for those replacing the existing licensed vessels with equivalent fishing capacity whatever flag is used.

3. FAO should request RFMOs to establish, as a matter of priority, a system to transfer fishing capacity from developed states, parties and fishing entities to developing states smoothly.

4. A nation, party or fishing entity whose residents caused rapid expansion of fishing capacity in the recent years should cut at least that expanded portion of fishing capacity.

5. RFMOs should develop market oriented measures for purse seine caught tuna. Countries importing purse seine caught tuna must play a vital role.