

8 February 2012

Econ. Ricardo Patiño Aroca
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio e Integración
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Avenida 10 de Agosto y Carrión
Quito
Ecuador

Dear Econ. Patiño Aroca

I have the honour to present my compliments and to refer to the third and final session of the Preparatory Conference for the Establishment of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Commission that was held from 30 January to 3 February in Santiago, Chile.

As you will be aware, after the adoption of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean in Auckland, New Zealand on 14 November 2009, the Participants in the negotiations of the Convention established the Preparatory Conference to make the necessary arrangements for the commencement of the functions of the Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation.

The Government of Ecuador has in the past had a strong engagement with South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), including hosting the Fifth meeting of the Convention negotiations in Guayaquil in 2008 and participating in the first two sessions of the Preparatory Conference. It is unfortunate that Ecuador was unable to be represented at the third, and final, session of the Preparatory Conference.

In addition to the finalisation of the institutional arrangements for the future Commission, the final session of the Preparatory Conference focused on the status of jack mackerel in the south eastern Pacific in light of the advice from the Tenth meeting of the Science Working Group (SWG). The SWG report confirmed that despite the significant actions that Participants took at the last session to revise the earlier interim measures for Pelagic Fisheries, and to reduce jack mackerel catches to 60% of their 2010 catches in the SPRFMO area, these measures have not been enough to halt the severe decline in jack mackerel abundance. The reason for this is that although the catches on the high seas were only 114,000 tonnes – a much greater percentage reduction than the 40% reduction required by the interim measures – the catches in the EEZs of Ecuador and Peru increased dramatically. The result was that the total catch of jack mackerel in 2011 amounted to 608,000 tonnes. This is substantially above the 390,000 tonnes suggested by the SWG as the maximum catch limit that offers some prospect of a rebuild of jack mackerel.

In response to the seriously depleted state of the jack mackerel, the third session of the Preparatory Conference adopted the attached 2012 interim measures for pelagic fisheries.

The Conference also requested that I communicate with your Government. It asked me to draw the attention of your Government to the 2011 report of the Interim Scientific Working Group¹ and the results of the revised stock assessment for jack mackerel it contains. The Conference asked me to urge your Government, in accordance with the objective of the Convention and in the light of the grave status of the jack mackerel, to exercise restraint with respect to catches of jack mackerel in waters under the jurisdiction of Ecuador.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Mansfield".

Bill Mansfield

Chair

Preparatory Conference for the Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

Cc: Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca, Ecuador

¹ <http://www.southpacificrfo.org/assets/PrepCon-3/Meeting-Report/PrepCon3-Annex-B-All-SPRFMO-SWG10-Report-incl-Annexes-SWG-01-02.pdf>