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Memo

To **Serguei Tarassenko**
Director, DOALOS, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations

From **John Tanzer**
Director Marine Programme, WWF International

Date **23 April 2012**

Subject **WWF submission on UN GA Fisheries Resolution 66/68**

Large-scale drift-net fishing still a serious environmental and social problem in EEZs

Dear Mr Tarassenko,

Thank you for your letter requesting information on the implementation of resolution 66/68 on Sustainable fisheries (ref LOS/FISHERIES/NGOs/2012). Upon the request of the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations general assembly, I am pleased to submit WWF's contribution to the Secretary General's report to the sixty-seventh session of the general assembly in 2012.

Further to a number of issues of concern to WWF that have been raised through various networks and alliances that WWF is a member of or associated with, there is one outstanding issue that I would like to raise – that of ongoing problems with drift-netting, especially large-scale pelagic drift-netting in salmon fisheries both on the high seas and in EEZs.

Environmentally damaging fishing practices, including large-scale driftnet fishing, which lead to a decrease in the sustainability of marine living resources and cause serious harm to marine ecosystems, have been a matter of strong concern for WWF for many years. WWF is therefore strongly supportive of UN Resolution 46/215 and the efforts of States to fully and effectively implement it. We are concerned, however, that the so-called 'moratorium' only applies to the high seas when, to be effective, it should apply 'in all seas and oceans'. We have suggested two additional paragraphs (79 (bis) & 79 (ter) and amendments to paragraph 80 with such universal application in mind.

WWF is further concerned that ongoing industrial-scale use of pelagic drift-nets, regardless of net size, continues to pose a serious threat not only to target stocks, not-target species and associated ecosystems but also to some small-scale local fishing communities.

We would thus also like to see the UNGA urge States acting individually or through agreements such as the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean to introduce substantial restrictions on the use of driftnet fishing gear so as to reduce their negative impact on salmon populations and ecosystems and on local communities substantially dependent on such fisheries.

WWF's suggestions for new text for the 2012 UNGA Sustainable Fisheries Resolution are set out below (underlined and bold).

2012 UNGA Sustainable Fisheries Resolution (67/....)

VII

Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing

78. *Expresses concern* that, despite the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/215 of 20 December 1991, the practice of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing still exists and remains a threat to marine living resources;

79. *Urges* States, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, to adopt effective measures, or strengthen existing measures, to implement and enforce the provisions of resolution 46/215 and subsequent resolutions on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in order to eliminate the use of large-scale pelagic drift nets in all seas and oceans, which means that efforts to implement resolution 46/215 should not result in the transfer to other parts of the world of drift nets that contravene the resolution;

79 (bis) Further urges coastal States, mindful that the provisions of resolution 46/215 only apply to the high seas and mindful of the impacts of large-scale fisheries on small-scale local fisheries and non-target species and associated ecosystems, to cease authorising large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in areas within their jurisdiction and so give effect to paragraph 79 in seeking to eliminate their use in all seas and oceans.

79 (ter) Calls upon States, further to paragraph 46, not to permit vessels flying their flag to engage in large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing on the high seas or in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States and to ensure that any drift-netting legitimately carried out pursuant to relevant multilateral agreements is subject to appropriate conditions to effectively mitigate negative impacts on target species and on non-target species and their conservation status.

80. *Also urges* States, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, to adopt effective measures, or strengthen existing measures, to implement and enforce the present global moratorium on the use of large-scale pelagic drift nets on the high seas, and calls upon States to ensure that vessels flying their flag that are duly authorized to use large-scale drift nets in waters under their national jurisdiction do not use such gear for fishing while on the high seas **or in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States, unless duly authorized by the authorities of the States concerned and in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorization;**

81. *Reaffirms* the request in paragraph 6 of resolution 46/215 for the submission of information to the Secretary-General and requests the Secretary-General to include this information in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session;

46. *Calls upon* States not to permit vessels flying their flag to engage in fishing on the high seas or in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States, unless duly authorized by the authorities of the States concerned and in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorization, and to take specific measures, including deterring the reflagging of vessels by their nationals, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, the Agreement and the Compliance Agreement, to control fishing operations by vessels flying their flag;

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Thank you for your consideration of WWF's contribution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Tanzer', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

John Tanzer
Director Marine Programme
WWF International

