

Explanatory Note of Taiwan's Measures on "Shark's Fins naturally attached"

1. Wide distribution of sharks is found in all oceans throughout the world. It is one of the top predators in marine ecosystem. It plays a crucial role in maintaining a natural balance in the marine food chain and provides one of the important sources of animal protein for the coastal communities. With the development of technology and the exploitation of commercial fisheries, the survival of sharks is under immense pressure. Awareness has been drawn by the international community of the seriousness of the matter. In the mid-1990s, FAO called upon the cooperation of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to strengthen the collection of catch data of sharks. In 1999, the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) was adopted to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their sustainable use. In line with this development, Taiwan promulgated NPOA-Sharks in 2006 as the basic guideline for our promotion of shark conservation and management. In accordance with the NPOA-Sharks, catch limit for those shark stocks which are known to be endangered or under the threat of extinction has been set, and the prohibition of fishing on such sharks was promulgated in 2008.
2. The measures on conservation and management of sharks adopted by RFMOs are also based on the principle of FAO IPOA-Sharks which include: collection of statistical data on shark catches, requirement of retention of shark fin onboard that total no more than 5% of that the weight of shark, requirement of fins and carcass to be transhipped together, and the releases of live sharks. In recent years, we have taken measures based on precautionary principle for those shark stocks which are known to be endangered to ban the fishing on such sharks for their conservation. Currently, shark species banned in all Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Eastern Pacific Ocean can be summarized in the

table as follows:

Region	Atlantic Ocean	Indian Ocean	Eastern Pacific Ocean
t-RFMOs	ICCAT	IOTC	IATTC
Ban on shark species	Thresher Shark, Hammerhead Shark, Whitetip Shark, and Silky Shark	Thresher Shark	Whitetip Shark

As a major fishing nation participating in t-RFMOs, we will comply with management measures of t-RFMOs and establish domestic regulations for implementation to maintain sustainable resource.

3. Shark consuming is one of the unique dietary culture among the Chinese and Asian societies. There has been a long history of shark fisheries in Taiwan and sharks have become a traditional food species for our fishermen and nationals. Currently, our annual catch of shark (including deep seas and coastal fisheries) is approximately 40,000 tons. Full utilization of sharks has been developed in Taiwan, as a unique culture of shark utilization, including the use of meat, fin, skin, teeth and viscera. As one of the shark using countries, Taiwan has been paying close attention to the measures on shark management adopted internationally. Therefore, in addition to active participation in RFMOs meetings, we have transformed RFMOs conservation measures into domestic legislation so as to ensure the compliance of our vessels.
4. In addition, as one of the most important high seas fisheries countries, we have devoted to the work of resources conservation and management. Considering that the measure of 5% fin rate adopted by t-RFMOs has its deficiency in enforcement, we think there are still concerns and unsolved management gaps, such as:
 - (1) Shark species that require conservation are hard to be identified after finning, head-off and gilled; hence, there is still risk for

continued catching of these shark species.

- (2) The measure of 5% fin rate may not be suitable to be applied to all shark species and discard of shark carcasses could still happen, and it is also time-consuming and wasting of manpower to implement when all shark fins and carcasses have to be weighed individually.

In addition to difficulty in enforcement, the above-mentioned measure may provoke voices on complete banning of shark fishing. In order to ensure sustainability of shark resources and to preserve the traditional dietary culture among the Chinese and Asian societies, we believe there is a need to apply stricter measure in managing and conserving sharks. The government has undergone a number of consultations with fishing industry, and despite voices of doubtfulness and objection voice, we, as a high sea fisheries country, are taking up such a responsibility for the sake of sustainability of the fishery and have overcome such impediments for the promulgation of *Directions on the Disposal of the Fins of the Shark Catches of Fishing Vessels*. Taking into account of the operation patterns of our fishing vessels it is intended that the measures on “Shark’s Fins naturally attached” will be implemented step by step, in accordance with the following schedule:

Type of fishing vessel	Schedule of implementation
Fishing vessels employing ice chilling method to preserve their catches of shark.	The shark they have caught and retained shall be disposed in such a way that fins are naturally attached.
Fishing vessels over 100 tons employing freezing method to preserve their catches of shark.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before June 30, 2012, the ratio between the weight of the fins and the weight of the carcass shall not be over 5%. 2. From July 1 to December 31, 2012, the fins shall be tied to the carcass (hereinafter referred to as “tying of fins”). 3. After January 1, 2013, the fins shall be naturally attached.
Fishing vessels under 100 tons	1. Before December 31, 2012, the

<p>which employ freezing method to preserve their catches of shark.</p>	<p>ratio of fins shall not be over 5%.</p> <p>2. From January 1 to June 30, 2013, the fins shall be tied to the carcass.</p> <p>3. As from July 1, 2013, the fins shall be naturally attached.</p>
<p>Sharks caught by fishing vessels within the area of competence of international fisheries organizations and unloaded at foreign ports.</p>	<p>The disposal of shark fins shall apply to the measures adopted by the competent international fisheries management organizations and the measures of the port states concerned.</p>

5. In conclusion, it should be noted that fisheries resources have the characteristic of renewal, due to their life circle, it would eventually lead to natural death if the resources are not used. In other words, proper use will not have adverse impact on the stock. Taiwan, as an important fisheries country in the world, certainly we do not wish to see the collapse of fish stocks without doing anything, while watching the withering of the industries. We will strengthen cooperation with international organizations and make our contributions to the work of research and collection of statistical data and participate in the discussions for the development of measures on conservation and management, with the goal of sustainable use on shark stocks.