

T/T May/June 2003
Submission No: 18

8th July 2003

RECEIVED
14 JUL 2003

BY:.....

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Australia's position in relation to the above Convention adopted September 2000.

Greenpeace supports Australia's ratification to the Convention. The Convention provides a more comprehensive overarching conservation and management regime for fish stocks compared to the existing arrangements at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels. It extends the provisions of the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement and the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention in regard to the management of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific.

The Government of Australia has played an important role in the development of the Convention and was a strong driver of many of the important management precedents that exist within the Convention. Greenpeace believes that Australia should send a strong signal of support by ratifying the Convention prior to September 2003 when the default mechanisms for ratification come into force.

The depletion of fish stocks around the world has seen an exponential growth in distant water fishing activities within the Pacific over the last ten years. An absence of surveillance capacity and resources of Pacific island States continues to be an impediment in the policing of EEZs and adjacent waters. The Convention offers important mechanisms through which both coastal states and distant water fishing states can work together to protect regional

fisheries and the marine environment from these threats and develop necessary monitoring, surveillance and compliance systems.

The heavy reliance by island nations on fisheries income and aid has led some donors (who are also distant water fishers) to coerce nations to support a flawed interpretation of resource management that would encourage the culling of top order predators such as whales. This is a critical development that needs to be corrected.

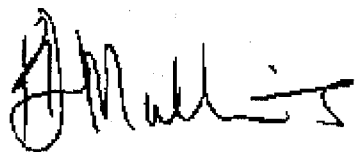
The Government of Japan has heavily lobbied Pacific island nations to support the culling of top predators (and potentially any other component of the ecosystem) for human consumption and ignore the complex relationships between species in the ecosystem. This manipulative approach effectively demands that humans play "God" with the marine ecosystem. The use of the "whales eat fish" argument over the last decade by Japan is an example of this interpretation, which is gaining credibility among fisheries officials in the Pacific.

The Convention offers useful guidance on these issues and supports a Ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management that counters much of the pressure to cull species such as whales.

Importantly, the Convention offers Pacific Island States the opportunity to develop economic independence and security through their tuna fisheries and become less reliant on donor States such as Japan. The Convention explicitly recognises the importance of supporting the economic development of island developing States and recognises their ecological and geographical vulnerability.

Greenpeace strongly supports the proposal for the Government of Australia to ratify the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Mullins', written in a cursive style.

Peter Mullins
Chief Executive Officer
Greenpeace Australia Pacific