



JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE on TREATIES

Treaties tabled on 25 November 2009, 4 and 24 February 2010
and 9, 10, 15, 16 and 29 March 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 22 June 2010

*Chair: Mr Kelvin Thomson MP
Deputy Chair: Senator Julian McGauran*

Treaties Committee supports Australian membership of the International Renewable Energy Agency

The Australian Parliament's Treaties Committee released Reports 111 and 112 yesterday, recommending that the Australian Government join the International Renewable Energy Agency. IRENA, a treaty level intergovernmental organisation, has been established to promote greater adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy technologies.

'With IRENA's Statute entering into force on 8 July 2010, Australia has the opportunity to be involved in the establishment of the Agency and to contribute to the development of its workplan' Committee Chair, Mr Kelvin Thomson, said.

'In addition, as IRENA will facilitate international engagement on renewable energy issues, membership of the Agency will allow Australia to strengthen its cooperative ties with countries both in and outside our region. In particular, membership of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region is likely to bring further international attention to the energy challenges faced by this region' Mr Thomson said.

In Report 111, the Committee also reports on amendments to Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, which will improve conservation outcomes for a number of species, including three sharks that range in Australian waters: the porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako.

An agreement with France intended to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the French and Australian waters surrounding the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, Heard Island and McDonald Island has also received Committee support.

'Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a serious threat to the marine environment and the sustainability of valuable fish stocks. This agreement will formalise previous ad hoc enforcement activities undertaken with France and greatly improve efforts to address such fishing in the Southern Ocean' Mr Thomson said. Activities that are authorised by the agreement include boarding, inspection, hot pursuit, apprehension, seizure and investigation of fishing vessels believed to be acting illegally.

In Report 112, the Committee endorsed amendments to improve the efficiency of the Joint Food Standards System, a cooperative arrangement between the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and the Australian States and Territories.

The Committee also supported a health care agreement with Slovenia, taxation agreements with the Cook Islands, Gibraltar and the States of Guernsey, and two social security agreements with the Czech Republic and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Reports 111 and 112 are available on the Committee's website:
www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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