

RECALLING that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 target 1 calls for States to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) constitute a significant part of marine pollution;

RECOGNIZING that ghost fishing conducted by ALDFG constitutes an unmanaged and unsustainable exploitation of marine resources that leads to undesirable mortality of marine life;

AWARE that retrieving ALDFG will contribute to reducing marine pollution;

CONVINCED that the fishing industry can contribute significantly to reducing the amount of ALDFG;

NOTING ICCAT Recommendation 03-12 which requires CPCs to mark their fishing gears;

FURTHER NOTING that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations' Committee on Fisheries endorsed Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear at its thirty-third session and further work to address ALDFG including the development of a comprehensive global strategy to tackle issues relating to ALDFG;

ALSO AWARE of the need for an obligation for fishermen not only to mark the fishing gear, but also to report it when abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded, as well as to try to retrieve the gear where possible;

ACKNOWLEDGING that retrieving ALDFG without knowing the position of the gear will be challenging;

ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING that to prevent ghost fishing, efforts should be undertaken to retrieve ALDFG;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Each CPC shall ensure that its fishing vessels authorized to fish species managed by ICCAT in the Convention area are prohibited from abandoning and discarding fishing gear except for safety reasons, and taking into account the special requirements of developing CPCs in relation to conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and development of fisheries for such stocks, and, in particular, with respect to artisanal and small-scale fisheries.
2. For the purpose of this Recommendation, fishing gear is understood to mean fishing gear that poses a significant risk of ghost fishing when abandoned, lost or discarded in the ICCAT Convention area¹.
3. Each CPC shall ensure that:
 - a) vessels 12 metres and above fishing for ICCAT species in the ICCAT Convention area, entitled to fly its flag, have equipment² on board to retrieve lost fishing gear; and
 - b) the master of a vessel that has lost fishing gear or part of it shall, to the extent possible, make every reasonable attempt to retrieve it as soon as possible.

¹ The provisions in this Recommendation do not apply to longline gear.

² Equipment used to retrieve ALDFG could be a simple anchor attached to a strong rope or wire, or otherwise as defined in the CPCs' domestic law.

4. If the lost fishing gear cannot be retrieved, the master of the vessel shall notify the flag CPC within 24 hours, or within 24 hours of returning to port when at-sea reporting is not possible, of the following:
 - a) the name and call sign of the vessel;
 - b) the type of lost fishing gear;
 - c) the quantity of fishing gear lost;
 - d) the date and time when the fishing gear was lost;
 - e) the position where the fishing gear was lost; and
 - f) the measures taken by the vessel to retrieve the lost fishing gear.
5. Following retrieval of lost fishing gear, the master of the vessel shall notify the flag CPC within 24 hours, or within 24 hours of returning to port when at-sea reporting is not possible, of the following:
 - a) the name and call sign of the vessel that has retrieved the fishing gear;
 - b) the name and call sign of the vessel that lost the fishing gear (if known);
 - c) the type of fishing gear retrieved;
 - d) the quantity of fishing gear retrieved;
 - e) the date and time when the fishing gear was retrieved; and
 - f) the position where the fishing gear was retrieved.
6. The flag CPC shall, without delay, notify the Executive Secretary of the information referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5. A summary of this information shall also be included in the CPCs' Annual Report to ICCAT.
7. The Executive Secretary shall, without delay, post the information provided by CPCs on the ICCAT secure website.