

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

93RD MEETING

San Diego, California (USA)
24, 27 – 30 August 2018

RESOLUTION C-18-07

RESOLUTION ON IMPROVING OBSERVER SAFETY AT SEA: EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) gathered in San Diego, California, on the occasion of its 93rd Meeting:

Taking into account that observers collect data that is essential to the functions of the Commission and that the safety of observers is critical to their ability to perform their duties;

Recognizing that certain IATTC resolutions require longline, purse-seine, and carrier vessels to carry observers, and that consistent safety requirements should apply to all observers operating within the legal and institutional framework of the IATTC;

Concerned that the Commission needs a plan to respond to emergency situations to ensure the safety of observers operating within the legal and institutional framework of the IATTC; and

Noting the commitments in international law, including the provisions of the [International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue](#), with regard to the development of an international maritime search and rescue plan for the rescue of persons in distress at sea;

Agrees that:

1. This Resolution applies to all IATTC observer programs, including the Regional Observer Program for transshipment, the national observer programs for longline vessels that implement IATTC observer requirements, and any future observer program established by the IATTC.
2. Nothing in this Resolution shall prejudice the rights of CPCs to enforce their laws or implement additional measures with respect to the safety of observers or crew members consistent with international law.
3. In the event that an observer dies, is missing or presumed fallen overboard, the CPCs to which the fishing vessel is flagged shall ensure that the fishing vessel:
 - a. immediately ceases all fishing operations;
 - b. immediately commences search and rescue if the observer is missing or presumed fallen overboard, and searches for at least 72 hours, unless the observer is found sooner, or unless instructed by the flag CPC to continue searching;¹
 - c. immediately notifies the flag CPC and the observer provider;
 - d. immediately alerts other vessels in the vicinity by using all available means of communication;
 - e. cooperates fully in any search and rescue operation whether or not the search is successful and after such search and rescue operation has been terminated, orders the vessel to the nearest port for further investigation, as agreed by the flag CPC and the observer provider;
 - f. provides the report to the observer provider and appropriate authorities on the incident; and

¹ In the event of *force majeure*, flag CPCs may allow their vessels to cease search and rescue operations before 72 hours have elapsed.

- g. cooperates fully in any and all official investigations, and preserves any potential evidence and the personal effects and quarters of the deceased or missing observer.
- 4. In the event that an observer dies, the flag CPC shall require that the fishing vessel ensure that, to the extent practicable, the body is well-preserved for the purposes of an autopsy and investigation.
- 5. In the event that an observer suffers from a serious illness or injury that threatens his or her life and/or long-term health or safety, the CPC to which the fishing vessel is flagged shall ensure that the fishing vessel:
 - a. immediately ceases fishing operations;
 - b. immediately notifies the flag CPC and the observer provider;
 - c. takes all reasonable actions to care for the observer and provide any medical treatment available and possible on board the vessel, and where appropriate seek external medical advice;
 - d. where directed by the observer provider, if not already directed by the flag CPC, facilitates the disembarkation and transport of the observer to a medical facility equipped to provide the required care, as soon as practicable; and
 - e. cooperates fully in any and all official investigations into the cause of the illness or injury.
- 6. For the purposes of paragraphs 3 through 5, the flag CPC shall ensure that the appropriate Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (<http://sarcontacts.info>), observer provider, and Director are immediately notified and provided a report on actions undertaken.
- 7. In the event that there are reasonable grounds to believe an observer has been assaulted, intimidated, threatened, or harassed such that their health or safety is endangered and the observer or the observer provider indicates to the CPC to which the fishing vessel is flagged that they wish for the observer to be removed from the fishing vessel, the CPC to which the fishing vessel is flagged shall ensure that the fishing vessel:
 - a. immediately takes action to preserve the safety of the observer and mitigate and resolve the situation on board;
 - b. notifies the flag CPC and the observer provider of the situation, including the status and location of the observer, as soon as possible;
 - c. facilitates the safe disembarkation of the observer in a manner and place, as agreed by the flag CPC and the observer provider, that facilitates access to any needed medical treatment; and
 - d. cooperates fully in any and all official investigations into the incident.
- 8. In the event that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an observer has been assaulted, intimidated, threatened, or harassed but neither the observer nor the observer provider requests that the observer be removed from the fishing vessel, the CPC to which the fishing vessel is flagged shall ensure that the fishing vessel:
 - a. takes action to preserve the safety of the observer and mitigate and resolve the situation on board as soon as possible;
 - b. notifies the flag CPC and the observer provider of the situation as soon as possible; and
 - c. cooperates fully in all official investigations into the incident.
- 9. If any of the events in paragraphs 3 through 7 occur, port CPCs shall facilitate entry of the fishing vessel to allow disembarkation of the observer and, to the extent possible, assist in any investigations if so requested by the flag CPC.
- 10. In the event that, after disembarkation from a fishing vessel of an observer, an observer provider identifies—such as during the course of debriefing the observer—a possible violation involving assault or harassment of the observer while on board the fishing vessel, the observer provider shall notify, in writing, the flag CPC and the Director, and the flag CPC shall:
 - a. investigate the event based on the information provided by the observer provider and take any appropriate action in response to the results of the investigation;

- b. cooperate fully in any investigation conducted by the observer provider, including providing the report to the observer provider and appropriate authorities of the incident; and
 - c. notify the observer provider and the Director of the results of its investigation and any actions taken.
11. CPCs shall ensure that their national observer providers:
- a. immediately notify the flag CPC in the event that an observer dies, is missing or presumed fallen overboard in the course of observer duties;
 - b. cooperate fully in any search and rescue operation;
 - c. cooperate fully in any and all official investigations into any incident involving an observer;
 - d. facilitate the disembarkation and replacement of an observer in a situation involving the serious illness or injury of that observer as soon as possible;
 - e. facilitate the disembarkation of an observer in any situation involving the assault, intimidation, threats to, or harassment of that observer to such an extent that the observer wishes to be removed from the vessel, as soon as possible; and
 - f. provide the flag CPC with a copy of the observer report on alleged violations involving that provider's observer upon request.
12. Where requested, relevant observer providers and CPCs shall cooperate in each other's investigations, including providing their incident reports for any incidents indicated in paragraphs 3 through 8 to facilitate any investigations as appropriate.
13. This Resolution shall enter into force on 1 January 2020.