

Report of the Eighth Meeting
of the Parties to the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
(SIOFA)

5-9 July 2021

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- Annex D MoP-08-INFO-07 Status of the Agreement
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- Annex G MoP-08-INFO-10 Report on intersessional decisions
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- Annex K MoP-08-09Rev2 Amendment to CMM 2019/02 on Data Standards
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- Annex O MoP-08-06 Rev8 SIOFA 2022 budget
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Agenda item 1 – Opening of the session

1. The Chair, Dr Chumnarn Pongsri, opened the correspondence process via SIOFA Circular n° 2021/MoP08-02 on 25 June 2021. The Chair's opening statement is available in Annex A. The videoconference was opened on 5 July 2021 at 06:00 UTC.
2. The list of participants is available in Annex B.

Agenda item 1.1 Opening statements

3. Delegations were invited to provide opening statements in writing. The opening statement provided by SIODFA is outlined in Annex C.

Agenda item 1.2 Admission of observers

4. The Meeting of the Parties **noted** paper MOP-08-05Rev2 (Annex B), which includes the list of observers participating in this meeting.
5. The Meeting of the Parties **welcomed** South Africa as a new Observer. The Meeting of the Parties also **welcomed** the following long-standing observers to SIOFA: Comoros, the United States of America, the Agreement on Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), the Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association (SIODFA), and the Environmental Justice Foundation.

Agenda item 1.3 Status of the Agreement

6. The FAO is the Depositary of the Agreement. The FAO has provided an update on the Status of the Agreement in MOP-08-INFO 07 (Annex D) which confirms that there are 15 signatories to the Agreement, consisting of 10 Contracting Parties, 1 Participating Fishing Entity and 5 signatories, including 1 Cooperating non-Contracting Party.
7. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the Status of the Agreement.**
8. **The Meeting of the Parties noted that there are 10 Contracting Parties, 1 Participating Fishing Entity and 5 signatories, including 1 Cooperating non-Contracting Party.**

Agenda item 1.4 Participation in decision-making

9. The Chair reminded the Meeting of the Parties that in accordance with Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure, a contributor to the budget of the Meeting of the Parties, who at the time of the meeting is in arrears for the preceding two full years or more, may not participate in the taking of decisions. The Chair proposed that if the Meeting of the Parties is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the contributor, it could nevertheless permit such a contributor to participate in the taking of decisions.
10. The Executive Secretary reported that China has paid its contribution for 2021, and that all the CCPs have paid their contribution for 2021 except one CCP who is in arrears.
11. **The Meeting of the Parties:**
 - a. **Recalled the incident of financial fraud concerning China's assessed contribution, which was discussed at the seventh Meeting of the Parties,**

whereby, although China has made payment of its 2019 and 2020 contributions, the SIOFA official account has not received it.

- b. Agreed to permit China to participate in the taking of decisions for this Meeting of the Parties, noting that the issue is ongoing, that the issues leading to the non-payment of contributions were outside China's control, and China's active efforts to cooperate with authorities to recover the funds.**
- 12. China thanked the other CCPs for their understanding and cooperation and expressed its commitment to continue to work with the Secretariat and the authorities to recover the funds and remit them to SIOFA.
- 13. The Meeting of the Parties discussed the issue of the financial fraud further under agenda item 11.2.

Agenda item 2 – Administrative arrangements

Agenda item 2.1 Adoption of the agenda

- 14. The Meeting of the Parties provided comments on the provisional agenda via correspondence and at the meeting. The Secretariat revised the provisional agenda based on the comments received. The final agenda, as outlined in MOP-08-03 Rev2, was **adopted** by the Meeting of the Parties (Annex E).

Agenda item 2.2 Confirmation of Meeting Documents

- 15. The Executive Secretary advised that all Meeting documents were available on the website and that the list of meeting documents is presented in MoP-08-04 Rev7 (Annex F).
- 16. The Meeting of the Parties agreed, for the sake of transparency, to make publicly available a number of documents related to financial and administrative matters that were initially restricted (MoP-08-INFO-01 – 04; MoP-08-06), as they do not contain any sensitive information. The Cook Islands noted that, although some financial and administrative matters might be discussed in a closed meeting, it does not necessarily require that the related documents be restricted.
- 17. China expressed concern about having the document related to the financial fraud (MoP-08-INFO-05) be publicly available and asked that it remain confidential.
- 18. The Cook Islands noted that information paper MoP-08-INFO-20 about FIRMS was submitted late to the meeting and that, in principle, the Meeting of the Parties should consider late documents after it has considered documents submitted by the requisite deadline and only if time allows it.

Agenda item 2.3 Appointment of rapporteurs

- 19. The Executive Secretary proposed Mr Alexander Meyer (Urban Connections, Tokyo), who served as rapporteur for this year's meetings of the Scientific Committee (SC6) and the Compliance Committee (CC5), as rapporteur for this meeting.
- 20. The Meeting of the Parties **agreed** to appoint Mr Alexander Meyer as rapporteur.

Agenda item 3 – Intersessional decision-making

21. The Chair noted that, in accordance with Rule 13(12) of the Rules of Procedure, if any decision is taken intersessionally, the Executive Secretary shall include an agenda item on decisions taken at the following Meeting of the Parties. The decisions that were taken intersessionally were outlined in MoP-08-INFO-10 (Annex G).
22. The European Union requested that the Secretariat develop a standardised template for the reporting of intersessional decisions, including information on how many CCPs took part in a decision, an aggregation of CCPs' replies, and the outcome of the decision. The Executive Secretary thanked the European Union for the suggestion and said that the Secretariat would prepare such a template for communicating the outcome of each intersessional decision.

Agenda item 3.1 Review of COVID-19 intersessional decisions

23. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SIOFA has made a series of intersessional decisions relating to the observer coverage provisions under paragraph 39(a) of CMM 2020/01.
24. The Cook Islands thanked the Meeting of the Parties for its continued consideration and support for the necessary derogation from CMM 2020/01, paragraph 39 as a result of the pandemic and its impact on the Cook Islands' ability to fulfil this obligation, noting that the health, safety and welfare of the Cook Islands' fisheries observers and vessel crews are of paramount importance. COVID-19 continues to present significant challenges for the Cook Islands, including impacts on its economy and safety and challenges deploying and disembarking observers, accessing ports, flights and repatriating observers home. While acknowledging that observers play a fundamental role in internationally-managed fishing operations, the Cook Islands considered that the derogation should remain in force until the prevention of the transmission of COVID-19 can be assured. The Cook Islands has two trawl vessels currently affected by this in the SIOFA area. Despite the derogation, the Cook Islands has made significant efforts to place observers on board its vessels where possible. It last reported on the implementation of this derogation to the seventh Meeting of the Parties in November 2020. The Cook Islands has undertaken two trips in 2021. No observer coverage was achieved on these two trips. However, data normally collected by observers is being collected by the vessel and reported to the Ministry of Marine Resources after each trip.
25. Japan expressed its appreciation to CCPs for the flexibility and understanding they extended in relation to Japan's request for derogation from the observer coverage provisions under paragraph 39(a) of CMM 2020/01 for humanitarian and safety reasons. Japan reported that, despite the pandemic situation, with the cooperation of industry, it has been able to have an observer on board its trawler vessel and will be able to submit its observer report as scheduled next year.
26. The Meeting of the Parties **noted** the information from the Cook Islands and Japan concerning the suspension of paragraph 39(a) of CMM 2020/01.

Agenda item 3.2 Review of all other intersessional decisions

27. The Meeting of the Parties worked, via intersessional decision, to officially adopt the report of the 7th Meeting of the Parties to SIOFA and formalise the transfer of the position of the new Meeting of the Parties Chairperson to Dr Chumnarn Pongsri.

28. The Meeting of the Parties also made intersessional decisions on the dates, modalities and arrangements of the 6th Scientific Committee, the 5th Compliance Committee, and the 8th Meeting of the Parties.
29. The Meeting of the Parties **noted** the summary of intersessional decisions contained in MoP-08-INFO-10.

Agenda item 4 – Report of the Fifth Compliance Committee meeting

30. The Compliance Committee met virtually on 1-5 July 2021 and adopted its report on 5 July 2021. The Compliance Committee was chaired by Dr Chumnarn Pongsri as the Compliance Committee Chairperson in force, Mr Johnny Louys, was in quarantine after testing positive for Covid-19 and was not able to chair the meeting.
31. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed the CC5 meeting report.
32. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 21 of the CC5 meeting report and considered the provisional Compliance Report (pSCR) under agenda item 5.**
33. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraphs 25-30 of the CC5 meeting report regarding proposed amendments to CMMs and considered the proposals forwarded by the Compliance Committee under agenda item 9.**
34. Mauritius expressed concern over the Compliance Committee's decision to include Mariam 1 on the Provisional IUU Vessel List and provided further comments under agenda item 6.
35. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 35 of the CC5 meeting report regarding the Mariam 1, paragraphs 37-39 regarding the El Shaddai, and paragraph 41 regarding the current SIOFA IUU Vessel List, and held further discussions under agenda item 6.**
36. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 41 of the CC5 meeting report regarding the current IUU Vessel List and that the Compliance Committee had not made any recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties to remove any vessel from the current IUU Vessel List.**
37. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed paragraph 44 of the CC5 meeting report regarding the IUU cross-listing procedure.**
38. China stated that it lacked legal basis for China to take any action against the IUU vessels listed by the RFMOs to which China is not a member and China would consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China for the issue.
39. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 47 of the CC5 meeting report stating that no sightings of non-CCP-flagged vessels were reported to the Secretariat.**
40. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 48 of the CC5 meeting report regarding the port inspections summary.**
41. Regarding paragraph 50 of the CC5 meeting report, the Data Manager reported that he had followed up with Thailand and confirmed that all of Thailand's entry or exit notifications had been made within 24 hours. He explained that the initial calculations done by the Secretariat had been incorrect.
42. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 53 of the CC5 meeting report regarding entry/exit and transshipment reports.**

43. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 54 of the CC5 meeting report regarding Comoros' CNCP status and held further discussions under agenda item 13.**
44. **The Meeting of the Parties noted paragraph 58 of the CC5 meeting report regarding South Africa's CNCP status.**
45. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the Compliance Committee's decision to elect Mr Johnny Louys for another two-year term.**
46. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the report and recommendations of the CC5.**
47. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked Dr Chumnarn Pongsri for chairing the meeting.**

Agenda item 5 – SIOFA Compliance Report

48. The Chair noted that under paragraph 22 of CMM 2020-11 (Compliance Monitoring Scheme), the Meeting of the Parties is annually required to consider the pSCR and any comments from CCPs on their respective sections of the pSCR. The Meeting of the Parties shall adopt by consensus a Final Compliance Report (fSCR) at its ordinary meeting in accordance with Article 8 of the Agreement and Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure. The fSCR shall be based on the template at Annex III of CMM 2020/11 and shall include the elements listed in paragraphs 22(a)-(g) of CMM 2020/11.
49. The Secretariat presented the pSCR adopted by the Compliance Committee in CC5 Report Annex E outlining the decisions of the CC5 on the provisional compliance status for each CCP, for review by the Meeting of the Parties.
50. The European Union noted that it had been requested at CC5 to provide further information about its voluntary move-on rules in the event that its vessel encountered deep-water sharks. The European Union explained that in 2020, these rules were triggered 59 times. The move-on rules consist of three steps: 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Step A was triggered 26 times, step B was triggered 33 times, and step C was never triggered because the vessel did not return to the point of the original encounter.
51. Australia thanked the European Union for the information and requested further details, specifically how many times the move-on rules were triggered in Area 2; how many shots were undertaken in Area 2 and, of those, how many were taken in the interim protected area; and what additional steps are being considered in light of the high level of shark catch.
52. Australia noted that SC5 had provided advice on commonly caught deepwater shark at high or extreme risk from fishing from demersal methods and requested the Meeting of the Parties to urgently consider additional precautionary measures. Australia proposed that the Scientific Committee should provide further advice on the sustainability of deepwater shark catch over recent years and consider whether further measures to control deepwater shark catch are required.
53. The European Union explained that its scientific services were still considering the best approach to analysing how many times the move-on rules were triggered and that it would prefer to give accurate information to the Scientific Committee and the SERAWG rather than an inaccurate figure during the Meeting of the Parties. The European Union further explained that the relevant data concern the sole EU

vessel operating in the SIOFA Area and, to ensure the confidentiality of the data, cannot be made publicly available. The European Union will provide the data to the Scientific Committee and the SERAWG in support of the Ecological Risk Assessment on sharks, the review of the CMM 2019/12 and potentially the development of precautionary bycatch limits.

54. Thailand shared updated information regarding the revision of the requirements and regulations for Thai-flagged vessels operating in the SIOFA Area, based on which the Meeting of the Parties amended footnote 2.1 of Table 2 in the fSCR.
55. Regarding the assessment of the status of Chinese Taipei's compliance with the obligation stipulated in paragraph 15 and 16, CMM 2019/10 (Monitoring), Chinese Taipei explained that the first time it was assessed as non-compliant with this obligation was at the seventh Meeting of the Parties in November 2020 and subsequently, when evaluating its own fishing activities, which happened in 2020, it lacked the time to remedy the situation. Chinese Taipei further explained that its vessels are legally authorised and monitored and believed that the only reason it was found to be non-compliant was because of the incompatibility between the management measures of the IOTC and SIOFA. For those reasons, Chinese Taipei requested that its status be 'non-compliant', rather than 'critically non-compliant'.
56. Some CCPs expressed understanding for the special circumstances faced by Chinese Taipei and supported its request. Other CCPs noted that they would not block consensus on this issue and expressed concern over the approach taken, pointing out that a CCP should not disregard parts of the SIOFA Agreement and its CMMs merely because it is complying with the measures of other RFMOs, and suggesting that, if a CCP has issues with a CMM, it should propose ways the CMM can be improved, rather than simply not applying the measure.
57. Regarding the submission of the relevant compliance information and reports, Mauritius explained that the lockdowns implemented as a result of COVID-19 and the grounding of MV Wakashio and ensuing oil spill had hampered the activities of government departments and prevented many issues from being dealt with on time. Mauritius requested understanding and stated that it is working on finalising its reports and would submit them soon.
58. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the fSCR outlined in MoP-08-22 Rev2 (Annex H).**

Agenda item 6 – Listing of IUU fishing vessels

59. The Secretariat presented the Provisional IUU Vessel List in CC5 Report Annex K that was adopted by the Compliance Committee and noted there was one vessel on that list, the Mariam 1, for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties.
60. Mauritius explained that Mariam 1 was licenced to fish in the Saya De Malha Bank by the Mauritian authorities, that the activities of the boat were closely monitored by Mauritius' VMS, and that even when the vessel arrived at Port Louis, all necessary inspections and verifications were carried out in line with FAO Port State Measures. Mauritius stated that, as such, the boat had not carried out any IUU activities and the inclusion of this boat in any IUU Vessel List is not justified.
61. Australia expressed that it supported the inclusion of the Mariam 1 on the final IUU Vessel List, noting that Australia does not acquiesce to Mauritius' claims of historical rights in the Saya de Malha Bank, that Mauritius has not provided any

- further information that would allow CCPs to consider Mauritius' claims, and that without further information Australia continues to consider that SIOFA has the competence to regulate SIOFA fishery resources in the whole of the SIOFA Area.
62. Several CCPs indicated that they agreed with Australia and supported the inclusion of the Mariam 1 on the IUU Vessel List.
 63. Mauritius requested more time to provide the requested information and explained that the information is currently under serious consideration by its government.
 64. China expressed concern regarding the procedure by which the Mariam 1 was initially included on the Draft IUU Vessel List and expressed the view that including a vessel on the Draft IUU Vessel List based on information offered by a non-governmental organisation is not in line with the rules of procedure and CMM 2018/06 (IUU Vessel List). China also requested Mauritius to submit the evidence for its claim of historical fishing right over the Saya De Malha Bank.
 65. **The Meeting of the Parties was unable to reach consensus to include the Mariam 1 on the final IUU Vessel List.**
 66. Several CCPs noted that Mauritius has had two years to provide the requested information in relation to its claims of historical fishing rights and that the information has not been forthcoming, and suggested that, if Mauritius does not provide the information in the intersessional period, the next Meeting of the Parties would have no choice but to include the Mariam 1 on the final IUU Vessel List.
 67. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to include the Mariam 1 on the Draft IUU Vessel List for consideration by the Compliance Committee at its next meeting.**
 68. The Meeting of the Parties discussed the El Shaddai, which remained on the Draft IUU Vessel List following the discussions of the Compliance Committee.
 69. South Africa explained that during the Compliance Committee meeting, it received new information regarding the El Shaddai, specifically the information from the European Union that the El Shaddai operated for 67 days in the SIOFA Area and caught 66 tons of Patagonian toothfish. South Africa noted that several CCPs viewed the actions taken by South Africa in response to the IUU activity as being insufficient to fulfil the criteria in paragraph 14 of CMM 2018/06 (IUU Vessel List) to remove a vessel from the Draft IUU Vessel List. South Africa explained that its actions had been taken based on its correspondence with SIOFA, which led it to believe that the incident was limited to one instance on 14 June 2020. South Africa stated that it is currently requesting further details from the SIOFA Secretariat and considering further administrative action based on the new information it has received.
 70. Several CCPs supported the inclusion of the El Shaddai on the final IUU Vessel List. They noted that the information shared by the European Union were calculations that the European Union conducted based on the catch and VMS data that South Africa itself provided to SIOFA, and questioned why South Africa had not done the calculations itself as part of its own investigation. They suggested that South Africa should review the catch and VMS data of the vessel again, not only for 2020 but also previous years, investigate the activities of the vessel in more detail, and provide this information and the outcomes of any new investigations to SIOFA in 2022, including any effective action taken in response to the IUU fishing in question.
 71. While recognising the shortcomings of South Africa's monitoring and investigation of the El Shaddai, several other CCPs nevertheless welcomed the actions and goodwill demonstrated by South Africa to date. They further noted that in its letter

to the Secretariat, South Africa stated that it has never authorised its vessels to fish in the areas of RFMOs to which South Africa is not a party and believed that South Africa would not authorise the EI Shaddai to operate in the SIOFA Area until South Africa is able to obtain CNCP status to SIOFA and duly lists the EI Shaddai on the SIOFA authorised vessel list.

72. **The Meeting of the Parties noted that the EI Shaddai would remain on the Draft IUU Vessel List for consideration by the Compliance Committee at its next meeting.**
73. The Secretariat presented the current IUU Vessel List including the list of cross-listed vessels in part 2 of CC5 Report Annex K.
74. Regarding the request from the seventh Meeting of the Parties that the Secretariat further investigate with the Sri Lankan authorities regarding the flag State of Abishak Putha 3 (MoP7 report, paragraph 87), which is included on the current IUU Vessel List, the Executive Secretary reported that the Secretariat has sent 3 letters to Sri Lanka on the matter since MoP7, but has not received any new information from Sri Lanka. In earlier communications with the Secretariat, Sri Lanka had confirmed that the Abishak Putha 3 was not flagged to Sri Lanka.
75. The Meeting of the Parties requested that the Secretariat provide the letters it had sent, noting that such information should also have been shared with the Compliance Committee. The Secretariat compiled the letters into document MoP-08-INFO-21.
76. **The Meeting of the Parties NOTED that the Compliance Committee did not recommend that the Meeting of the Parties remove any vessel from the current IUU Vessel List, and ADOPTED the final IUU Vessel List outlined in Annex I.**

Agenda item 7 – Report of the Scientific Committee meeting

77. The Scientific Committee Chairperson, Mr Alistair Dunn, presented a summary of MoP-08-INFO-15, the report of the sixth Scientific Committee (SC6) meeting, which was held virtually on 22-26 March 2021.
78. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed the report and advice of the 6th meeting of the Scientific Committee.
79. The European Union noted that the Scientific Committee has made much progress in the intersessional period and that there is still work ongoing on substantial areas where the Meeting of the Parties needs to receive clear advice from SC, such as the spatial extent of bottom fishing, cumulative impact assessment, and different harvest strategies. The European Union also noted the need for more data, especially better catch and effort data, to ensure that the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee are robust and address the requests of the Meeting of the Parties.
80. Australia noted that paragraphs 24 and 25 of the SC6 report note areas of apparent toothfish fishing that are outside the Del Cano Rise and Williams Ridge management areas specified in CMM 2020/15 and recommend that the Meeting of the Parties take measures to effectively manage toothfish in these and similar areas. Australia considered this to be an important issue that the Meeting of the Parties should address at its next meeting.

81. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the Scientific Committee's deliberations about the catch of toothfish in two areas which are not included or regulated in CMM 2020/15.**
82. **Concerning paragraphs 61 and 62 of the SC6 report, the Meeting of the Parties requested the Compliance Committee to consider mechanisms to ensure that all required catch and effort data are collected and submitted by CCPs, including for previous years where the data submitted were incomplete, at its sixth meeting.**
83. Concerning paragraph 67 of the SC6 report, France Territories expressed its support for a clarification of the Secretariat's evaluation system through discussions with CCPs.
84. The Cook Islands expressed concern with the 'data provision' ratings being used by the Secretariat for data collection. The Cook Islands fully supported the Secretariat working with CCPs to resolve data gaps and improve data submission, but objected to the use of an arbitrary scoring system and to such scores being submitted to the Scientific Committee, the Compliance Committee or Meeting of the Parties given they are not incorporated into the compliance monitoring scheme process, create ambiguity and confusion, and do not provide the CCPs with sufficient opportunity to correct issues which is an important principle of the compliance monitoring process.
85. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendation in paragraph 68 of the SC6 report and held further discussions under agenda item 9.1.**
86. Concerning paragraph 70 of the SC6 report, France Territories welcomed the creation of an intersessional working group to discuss harmonisation of observer programmes by CCPs and the evaluation process to improve data quality.
87. The Cook Islands supported the establishment of an intersessional working group to discuss harmonisation of observer programmes but queried how it would operate and requested more details, such as the Terms of Reference, the Chair, timeframes, and whether it will be open to observers. No clarification on these points was received.
88. Several CCPs emphasised the importance of conducting an independent audit of SIOFA's data security systems and protocols in relation to the databases, as recommended in paragraph 71 of the SC6 report, not only for the Scientific Committee but the broader Meeting of the Parties, and suggested that a corresponding financial item should be included in the SIOFA budget.
89. The Cook Islands wished to see the data security audit commence as soon as possible. The Cook Islands also noted that it had not yet been included in the budget and queried why that was the case.
90. The Executive Secretary explained that it does not yet have a precise understanding of the requirements and Terms of Reference. Therefore, the budget item has not been developed yet. However, the Secretariat has identified a number of firms that could conduct the audit, and would do its best to prepare some preliminary figures for the Meeting of the Parties' consideration during the discussion of the SIOFA budget.
91. The Data Manager explained that there are two aspects surrounding data security and process. One is analysing the process around data coverage, data submission, data processing and data reporting, which can be covered by the EU Grant. The other is the security audit, which is not addressed under the EU Grant and would need to be covered by the SIOFA budget. The Data Manager reiterated his reserve in bringing security experts into the Headquarter premises in Reunion;

- if databases are to be examined by the expert, the Data Manager shall ensure that confidential data are not jeopardized. The pandemic situation may also delay the development of in-house expertise, if experts are to come from elsewhere than Reunion.
92. Several CCPs pointed out that the data security audit should concern not only technical systems for protecting data, but also all the security protocols more broadly.
 93. Led by the Cook Islands, CCPs drafted a Terms of Reference for an independent audit of data security (MOP-08-24; Annex J).
 94. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 71 of the SC6 report to commission an independent audit of SIOFA's data security systems and protocols in relation to the databases, and agreed to include the audit as an item in the SIOFA budget (Annex O).**
 95. **The Meeting of the Parties adopted the Terms of Reference for the independent audit of data security (MOP-08-24; Annex J).**
 96. France Territories noted the potential conflict between paragraph 72 of the SC6 report, which tasks the Secretariat with developing a toothfish tagging protocol for the SIOFA Area and ensuring that the protocol is consistent with that of CCAMLR, and paragraph 162, which requests the MoP recommend that CCPs use CCAMLR tags and the CCAMLR tagging protocol when tagging toothfish in the SIOFA Area, and sought clarification on the intentions behind the two recommendations. The Scientific Committee Chair explained that the intention is for SIOFA to apply the CCAMLR tagging protocol until it has developed its own SIOFA tagging protocol, which should be consistent with that of CCAMLR.
 97. **Concerning paragraphs 72 and 162 of the SC6 report, the Meeting of the Parties requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the CCAMLR Secretariat, to develop a toothfish tagging protocol for the SIOFA Area that is consistent with that of CCAMLR, agreed to adopt the use of CCAMLR tags and tagging protocols in the interim, and requested the Secretariat to provide information on the SIOFA website regarding how CCPs can obtain CCAMLR tags and tagging equipment.**
 98. Australia noted that the SPRFMO working paper cited in paragraph 89 of the SC6 report was incorrectly labelled and that the current document name and number should be 'SPRFMO-SC6-DW09 (Methods for deriving thresholds for VME encounter protocols for SPRFMO bottom fisheries)'.
 99. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 89 of the SC6 report that the draft VME taxa list (PAEWG3 Report, Annex D) be distributed to the fishing authorities and on-board bottom fishing vessels for improving VME taxa identification, and requested that the Scientific Committee work with CCPs to update and revise the VME taxa list in CMM 2020/01 (interim management of bottom fishing) and submit the proposed amendments to the ninth Meeting of the Parties.**
 100. **The Meeting of the Parties noted that the PAEWG will work intersessionally to conduct a review of the thresholds, or the processes to agree thresholds, adopted by other RFMOs, such as those described in SPRFMO-SC6-DW09 (Methods for deriving thresholds for VME encounter protocols for SPRFMO bottom fisheries), noted the other ongoing VME-related work in the Scientific Committee workplan, and requested that the Scientific Committee submit a proposal to the ninth Meeting of the Parties on how to conduct a review on how to develop better thresholds for VMEs.**

101. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendations in paragraph 92 of the SC6 report regarding the ongoing trawl and longline cumulative bottom fishing impact assessment consultancy.**
102. Regarding the development of an appropriate SIOFA bottom fishing footprint, France Territories expressed support, regardless of the footprint's objective, for the use of the finest possible footprint in terms of resolution, and for the approach of the two methods specifying a fishing footprint with a scientific objective and a footprint with a management objective. France Territories stated that scientific work will have to take into account the spatial and temporal evolution of the fishing footprint, and that future management measures should be based on a fixed fishing footprint, in accordance with applicable conservation measures.
103. The Cook Islands noted the importance of providing set level data through the provision of the start and end point of a set as these data are most informative for defining fishery footprints.
104. Australia stated that it regards spatial management including footprints as an important component of the overall management for target stocks and impacts to VME.
105. The European Union noted that the footprints should be developed for both scientific and management purposes and that the spatial resolution, time period and frequency of updates should be adapted depending on the purpose.
106. Australia made the following statements regarding the SC request for specific guidance on the role of footprints within CMM 2020/01 (SC6 report paragraphs 96 and 97). Australia agrees that SIOFA bottom fishing footprints may be developed under Para 7 of CMM 2020/01 for scientific purposes and separately for management purposes and Australia agrees with the purpose specifications provided in the SC6 report paragraph 96. However, Australia notes that CMM 2020/01 does not provide specific direction on how a SIOFA-wide bottom fishing footprint developed for management purposes (to constrain overall SIOFA bottom fishing expansion) shall be used to control the activities of each CCP. Australia agrees that footprints developed by each CCP under Para 10 of CMM 2020/01 pertain to specific interim measures for that CCP and are for the purpose of constraining the spatial distribution of effort for each CCP separately. Australia agrees that such should represent the best available spatial resolution and be fixed to an historical period.
107. Regarding paragraph 96 of the SC6 report, Japan reiterated its view expressed at previous Meetings of the Parties that the SIOFA bottom fishing footprint is mainly intended to be used as a tool for management to curb and control expansion of bottom fishing. Japan said that it does not deny the footprint's utility for bottom fishing impact assessment, but believes that more priority should be given to the use of the footprint as a management tool to constrain overall SIOFA bottom fishing expansion. Japan also explained that, for data before 2018, the finest resolution of trawl footprints it can provide is 30-minute grids, but from 2019 onwards, it is able to provide 20-minute grids.
108. Regarding part of paragraph 97 of the SC6 report which states 'footprints developed by CCPs for the above (Para 10.1.a.ii) purpose are designed to constrain the spatial distribution of effort of each CCP separately', Japan expressed concern it might be interpreted as suggesting that, in future, such historical footprints might be used as a management option for allocating fishing grounds exclusively to specific CCPs with historical catch in these fishing grounds. Such an approach is not one employed by any other RFMOs, and would not be supported by Japan.

109. Regarding the resolution of the SIOFA fishing footprint, Japan suggested that the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat should prepare and evaluate the usefulness of a hybrid footprint map using 20-minute resolution and 30-minute resolution data, noting that the NPFC and SPRFMO use 30-minute resolution data and 20-minute resolution data, respectively, for their footprints, and that a resolution of 30 minutes would allow all trawl data from Australia, the Cook Islands and Japan to be used.
110. **The Meeting of the Parties requested that the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat prepares and evaluates the usefulness of a hybrid footprint map using set level information (start and end of haul); 20-minute resolution; and 30-minute resolution data for management purposes and in accordance with paragraph 7 of CMM 2020/01.**
111. Concerning paragraph 105 of the SC6 report regarding the assessment of alfonso stocks, France Territories considered that the work of the Scientific Committee should rely on peer-reviewed scientific articles.
112. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendation in paragraph 112 of the SC6 report and held further discussions under agenda item 9.1.**
113. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendation in paragraph 114 of the SC6 report about CMM 2020/15 and held further discussions under agenda item 9.2.**
114. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendations in paragraph 133 of the SC6 report concerning seabird data collection, bycatch mitigation measures, and ecological risk assessment.**
115. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendations in paragraphs 142-146 of the SC6 report and requested that the Scientific Committee develop a standard annual report (or reports) for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties, that gives an overview of SIOFA fisheries and can be made available publicly. The annual report(s) should be developed to provide a summary of SIOFA fisheries, a summary of associated catch and effort data, and outcomes of stock assessments.**
116. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendation in paragraph 151 of the SC6 report and held further discussions under agenda item 12.**
117. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendations in paragraphs 155 and 156 of the SC6 report and held further discussions under agenda item 12.**
118. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the recommendation in paragraph 171 of the SC6 report and held further discussions under agenda item 11.**
119. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 172 of the SC6 report concerning future meeting arrangements.**
120. The European Union welcomed the introduction of the Scientific Committee circulars, which are important for increasing transparency.
121. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked Dr Patrice Pruvost and Dr Tom Nishida for their contributions as Chairs of the SC working groups, and Mr Lee Georgeson for his contributions as the Co-Chair of the SERAWG in previous years.**
122. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked Mr Alistair Dunn for his contributions as the Chair of the Scientific Committee and agreed to appoint him for another one-year term.**

123. **The Meeting of the Parties agreed to elect Dr Sebastián Rodríguez as the Scientific Committee Vice-Chair.**
124. DSCC commented that, as part of the review of VME encounter thresholds, the Scientific Committee should also consider seagrass, which is not currently a SIOFA VME taxon but meets the relevant criteria.
125. DSCC urged CCPs to be prepared to discuss paragraph 129 of the SC6 report, which states that ‘the SC recalled the discussion at SC5 on the merits and demerits of wire snoods versus nylon snoods (SC5 Report, paras 86-87) and noted the encouragement to CCPs to share any research that would provide further clarity on this matter’ at the next Scientific Committee meeting so as to avoid excessive shark bycatch.
126. SIODFA introduced paper MoP-08-INFO-06, which outlines SIODFA’s perspective on the setting of thresholds of sessile benthos bycatch from benthopelagic trawling: SIODFA noted that all food production affects the environment and fishing is no different: it may have less impact than much of agriculture. While demersal trawl foot ropes may damage emergent benthos, ecologically, this is similar to what happens in sustainable agriculture or by fisheries within EEZs. When trawling is undertaken on the same tow lanes year after year - the case in the SIO deepwater fishery - the cumulative impact reaches an asymptote – the situation now and which will continue in a sustained fishery. The amount of benthos bycatch will depend on several stochastic processes – the spatial ecology of the animals, the bouncing of the gear over the bottom, whether benthos caught by the trawl is retained or not, etc. If a threshold were exceeded, the first question would be “was a second observation taken?” as it is difficult to draw scientific deductions from a single observation. This is important if the bycatch was the result of unexpected current effects on the gear: though unusual, it happens. A sensible action is to take a second look. The Ministry of Marine Resources estimated that only 2.7% of the fishable area has been affected by trawling. Elsewhere there are either no commercially fish aggregations or the nature of the bottom will cause gear damage or fastenings. SIODFA asks if ‘bottom’ trawls impact around only 2.7% of the fishable area, what benthic ecosystems vulnerable? Is the wider benthic ecosystem across the fishable area endangered? This is unlikely. We recognize the importance of this issue and that our situation in the SIO may differ from elsewhere. We endorse the mandate of SIOFA to effectively and efficiently address this issue, which SIODFA has done through its 12 benthic protected areas: these have been adhered to since 2008. But, we believe there has been an overemphasis on tactical issues – what species should be on the VME list, etc. and insufficient attention to the strategic issue - does current fishing endanger the benthic communities, populations, habitats, ecosystems, etc. This question has not yet been answered for the SIOFA area.
127. DSCC commented that there is no doubt that SIOFA must apply the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Bottom Fishing starting with 61/105, which are important because the taxa are long-lived and vulnerable species with low rates of recovery. It is important for SIOFA to finalise the SIOFA-wide bottom fishing measure, develop a bottom fishing footprint, and develop an appropriate VME taxa list.

Agenda item 7.1 Scientific Committee Workplan

128. The European Union noted that the Scientific Committee workplan includes many research activities and that considerable financial support has been made available for those activities. The European Union noted that the success of that work will depend on the active engagement of the SIOFA scientific community and

the capability of the Secretariat to deal with scientific issues. The European Union noted that much of the Scientific Committee's scientific work is being conducted via external consultancies and stressed the importance of ensuring that such work makes steady progress and is done well.

129. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the Scientific Committee Workplan.**

Agenda item 7.2 Reference Points and Harvest Strategy

130. France Territories supported the continuation of the work on harvest strategies by implementing analyses to assess the effectiveness and risks associated with the three strategies proposed in the Scientific Committee report. In view of the little knowledge on the sustainability of harvesting levels for the main species, France Territories supported the implementation of the precautionary principle when choosing the reference points. Regarding toothfish, France Territories supported the adoption of management objectives and reference points as adopted by CCAMLR.
131. Australia welcomed the significant consultant report exploring the potential development of harvest strategies in SIOFA and stated that it continues to be a strong advocate of harvest strategies as a best practice in fisheries management in order to achieve SIOFA's objectives. Australia could support the proposed interim reference points on orange roughy, alfonsino, and toothfish, but recognised that further consideration may be needed within the Scientific Committee and amongst CCPs and so Australia did not advocate for a decision on reference points at this MoP. Australia supported the recommendation on further work to examine the applicability of the three proposed harvest strategy approaches, and work to develop objectives for these fisheries.
132. The Cook Islands expressed its support for the development of a harvest strategy process, noting that, while some of the issues need broader consideration, the work done so far by the Scientific Committee is a good step forward. The Cook Islands noted that, for all three stocks concerned, the scientific information available make the development of an efficient, well-balanced, and carefully thought out harvest strategy challenging, and suggested that it may be necessary to consider simpler approaches in the interim.
133. The European Union welcomed the work done to progress the harvest strategy approaches and suggested that a roadmap be developed and the work be progressed further in the intersessional period before the Scientific Committee meeting to enable it to make recommendations in time for the next Meeting of the Parties.
134. The European Union highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation between scientists and managers when developing harvest strategy approaches.
135. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Scientific Committee to develop a roadmap for developing harvest strategies at the seventh Scientific Committee meeting and, as recommended in paragraph 126 of the SC6 report, consider analyses to determine the applicability and trade-offs between the three proposed harvest approaches for orange roughy, alfonsino, and toothfish.**
136. **Following its review, the Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the report of the 6th meeting of the Scientific Committee at MoP-08-INFO-15.**

Agenda item 8 – Interim bottom fishing measures

137. DSCC introduced information papers MoP-08-INFO-08 and MoP-08-INFO-09, which outline the dangers posed by bottom trawl fishing on the ecology and marine biodiversity of the Saya de Malha Bank.
138. Mauritius stated that it noted the findings of the information papers with concern and urged CCPs to refrain from any bottom trawling in this area, as a precautionary measure, until a full assessment of resources in the region is completed. Mauritius also informed the Meeting of the Parties that, in collaboration with the Seychelles and Monaco Explorations, it is planning a research survey of the Saya de Malha Bank.
139. The Seychelles shared the concerns expressed by Mauritius. The Seychelles expressed the view that the trawling by Thai vessels is causing serious damage to the VME in the Saya de Malha Bank area and recommended that there be an immediate cessation of trawling to prevent further damage while the Scientific Committee conducts a thorough evaluation of the situation.
140. Thailand explained that currently, only three Thai-flagged vessels operate in the area and that Thailand has issued revised requirements and regulations to these vessels on 30 June 2021. Since the entry into force of CMM 2020/01 (interim management of bottom fishing), all Thai fishing vessels have implemented revised interim bottom fishing measures accordingly and are fully compliant with the measure. There is 100% observer coverage for these vessels, and they use electronic monitoring, with video for every trip from the electronic monitoring being reviewed by the Thai authorities. The trawling activities occur at depths between 50 and 100 meters, which is deeper than the depth of the habitat of seagrass of 30-40 meters. So far, neither seagrass nor large amounts of other VMEs have been encountered. The DSCC's report and proposal are welcome. However, prior to the taking of any decisions by the Meeting of the Parties, the information presented should be carefully reviewed by the SIOFA subsidiary bodies and more evidence provided. Further review of the technical details and the impact on the ecology on the Saya de Malha Bank is needed, since different fishing grounds have different characteristics and may require different mitigation measures. Thailand believed that it would be premature to take action now and designate the Saya de Malha Bank as a protected area.
141. France Territories suggested that the Scientific Committee should study potential measures that could be implemented in this area and review the current measures being implemented by the Thai vessels.
142. The European Union noted that the Scientific Committee workplan for 2022 and 2023 includes a study of Saya de Malha Bank fisheries and suggested that the concerns raised in MoP-08-INFO-08 and MoP-08-INFO-09 could be examined by the Scientific Committee as part of the aforementioned planned study.
143. Some CCPs suggested that precautionary measures could be voluntarily implemented pending the Scientific Committee providing more detailed advice.
144. The Executive Secretary confirmed that such work is indeed planned, explaining that the terms of reference are currently being drafted.
145. Japan expressed concern over the procedure by which information papers MoP-08-INFO-08 and MoP-08-INFO-09 submitted by a non-governmental organisation, not a CCP, were introduced and accepted as documents to be used for the purpose of the discussion under this agenda item. Japan pointed out that the subject matter in the information papers was not one that the Scientific Committee

had recommended that the Meeting of the Parties address, nor had the Scientific Committee reviewed the subject matter. Japan cautioned that when the Scientific Committee conducts its own review of the subject, it must do so from a broad and independent perspective, and make its own judgment without being unduly influenced by the aforementioned papers.

146. DSCC emphasised that the information was brought to DSCC's attention by highly credited scientists working in this area.
147. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Scientific Committee to conduct further studies of the ecology of the Saya de Malha Bank and the potential impact of bottom trawling fisheries on its ecosystem, as part of the planned study of the Saya de Malha Bank in the Scientific Committee workplan.**

Agenda item 8.1 States or fishing entities that became a CCP before the MOP in 2017 –revision to measures established under paragraph 10 of CMM 2019/01 and 2020/01

148. The European Union stated that it implemented revised interim bottom fishing measures on 28 January 2021 which were notified to the Secretariat on 26 February 2021. The key changes from the previously disclosed measures are updated references to the (annual) EU legislation fixing the catch and effort limits and the conditions applicable to EU vessels when bottom fishing in the Agreement Area, as well as an updated bottom fishing impact assessment. The latter elaborates on impacts on target and bycatch species and adds new sections addressing the "Monitoring, Management and Mitigation of impact of proposed activities in the bycatch" and the "Residual risk of Significant Adverse Impacts on deep-water stocks and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems".
149. The European Union noted that the Compliance Committee had discussed the implementation of paragraph 10(1)(a) of CMM 2020/01 and that Australia had explained that it applies a catch limit to a pool made up of different species, regardless of the share of any species in that pool, and that Australia considers that it can fish any species in that pool up to the catch limit. The European Union noted that Australia has not fished historically (1999-2016) for *Dissostichus* spp. and *Polyprion* spp. in the SIOFA Area and that it could therefore be expected that Australia would not increase its catches of those species based on the historical catches of other species. The European Union considered that Australia's interpretation and application of the catch limit was inconsistent with the CMM.
150. Australia noted that each CCP undertaking bottom fishing in the SIOFA Area has duties under CMM 2020/01 to establish and apply measures that limit the extent of bottom fishing by their vessels. Australia noted that no other CCP has measures that limit catch by species and that it was not clear why only Australia's approach was being questioned. Australia noted that paragraph 10 of the CMM requires CCPs to limit catch, effort or both, that Australia meets this requirement by implementing catch-based management controls, and that it has extensive experience in using such approaches to effectively constrain fishing activity. Australia further noted that these practices have been applied for many years, and have been shared with CCPs and on the SIOFA website. Australia explained that there has been no change to its 1100t catch limit, and pointed out that its catches in recent years are low compared to other CCPs' catches of target species and bycatch species. In terms of catches in 2020, one CCP had deep-sea shark catch of around 600t whereas Australia's total bottom fishing catch was 107t. Australia further noted that it has openly disclosed a change in fishing methods, reducing the use of trawl methods and increasing that of line methods, which has not resulted in an increase in catch. Australia stated that it will continue to monitor its

catches of target and bycatch species and ensure that these remain within sustainable bounds, and encouraged all CCPs to do the same.

Agenda item 8.2 States or fishing entities that became a CCP before the MOP in 2017 –approval of measures pursuant to paragraph 28 of CMM 2019/01 and 2020/01

151. No interim bottom fishing measures were submitted under this agenda item.

Agenda item 9 – Review and amendment of CMMs currently in force

Agenda item 9.1 Revision of CMM 2019/02 on data standards and protocol to document interaction with marine mammals

152. The SC Chair presented MoP-08-09, a proposal to amend CMM 2019/02 (Data Standards). The proposed amendments include those received from the Scientific Committee on the consideration of pelagic longline fishing and handline fishing, improvements to the consistency and relevance of the CMM, and the updating of the information in a number of paragraphs, as well as proposed amendments from France Territories to include provisions for a protocol to document marine mammal interactions with long liner vessels operating in the SIOFA Area. The SC Chair noted that the proposal was extensively discussed in the Compliance Committee meeting, and forwarded to the Meeting of the Parties for further consideration.
153. The Meeting of the Parties discussed the new provisions that would charge the crew to collect information on species cut-off and on benthos bycatch, when there are no observers to do this. Some CCPs expressed their concerns that such information collection, including incidental bycatch of marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern which is currently in force, is an extra burden for the crew and that this information should be collected “to the extent possible”. The Meeting of the Parties was unable to reach consensus on including the new provisions regarding collection of information on species cut-off and on benthos bycatch by crew members, and revised the proposal accordingly.
154. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the revisions to the CMM outlined in MoP-08-09Rev2 (Annex K).**
155. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Scientific Committee to hold further discussions on the effectiveness of the data collection provisions in the CMM and present any additional advice to the ninth Meeting of the Parties.**

Agenda item 9.2 Proposal to amend CMM 2020/15 management of demersal stocks

156. Australia and the European Union presented MoP-08-10Rev1, a proposal to amend CMM 2020/15 (Management of Demersal Stocks). The proposed amendments aim to incorporate existing reporting templates that are currently available on the SIOFA website and the informal working arrangements and templates established during the 2020/21 toothfish fishing season, by Australia and the European Union with input from the Secretariat, to ensure that the Williams Ridge fishery could be implemented smoothly, in particular as regards the treatment of fishing notifications, while respecting the effort limitation agreed for that fishery. In addition, references to ‘*D. eleginoides*’ were replaced by ‘*Dissostichus* spp.’ throughout the CMM, as recommended by the Scientific Committee (SC6 report, para 114).
157. Australia noted that the proposal had been discussed extensively in the Compliance Committee meeting, that a number of CCPs had provided feedback

which was addressed with minor revisions in the Compliance Committee meeting, and that the proposal was now presented to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration and adoption.

158. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the revisions to the CMM outlined in MoP-08-10Rev1 (Annex L).**

Agenda item 9.3 Proposal to amend paragraph 22 of CMM 2019/14 HSBI and inspection procedure

159. France Territories presented MoP-08-13Rev1, its proposal to amend paragraph 22 of CMM 2019/14 (HSBI) to refer to the questionnaire outlined in MoP-08-14Rev1. France Territories noted that the proposal was discussed in the Compliance Committee meeting and forwarded to the Meeting of the Parties for further consideration.
160. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the revisions to the CMM outlined in MoP-08-13Rev2 (Annex M).**

Agenda item 9.4 Draft HSBI questionnaire (CMM 2019/14)

161. France Territories presented MoP-08-14Rev1, the draft HSBI questionnaire which is required by paragraph 22 of CMM 2019/14 (HSBI) and was developed through an intersessional consultation led by France Territories, via correspondence. France Territories noted that the proposal was discussed in the Compliance Committee meeting, and forwarded to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration and adoption.
162. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the HSBI questionnaire outlined in MoP-08-14Rev1 (Annex N).**
163. **The Meeting of the Parties requested CCPs to translate the questionnaire into their respective languages and provide them to the Secretariat within 90 days, and requested the Secretariat to make the translated questionnaires available to all CCPs.**

Agenda item 9.5 Revision of CMM 2020/08 on port inspections

164. China presented MoP-08-15Rev1, its proposal to amend paragraph 6 of the preamble of CMM 2020/08 (Port Inspections) to reflect the current situation of SIOFA. China noted that the proposal was discussed and agreed in the Compliance Committee meeting, and forwarded to the Meeting of the Parties for adoption.
165. Several CCPs noted that the amended terms proposed by China are not based on, and differ from, those stipulated in SIOFA which constituted negotiated and agreed terms. The terms used in SIOFA follow the standard terminology used in other international agreements, including the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures, as well as other RFMOs. These CCPs therefore disagreed with the proposed amendments. China clarified that since SIOFA came into effect, the composition of the MoP had changed: it was currently composed of CPs, a CNCP and a PFE, and as such the proposal was in line with the current composition of the MoP.
166. **The Meeting of the Parties could not reach consensus on the proposal to amend the CMM as outlined in MOP-08-15Rev1.**

Agenda item 10 – New CMMs

Agenda item 10.1 Proposal to establish a SIOFA VMS CMM

167. The European Union presented its proposal in MoP-08-16Rev1 for a Conservation and Management Measure for the establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System in the SIOFA Area. The European Union noted that this was a revised proposal based on comments received following MoP7 and that it had been partially discussed in the Compliance Committee meeting. The European Union explained that CCPs had provided additional comments during the Compliance Committee, including some that would require substantive redrafting work. Therefore, instead of continuing the drafting work at this meeting, the European Union proposed to hold a general discussion of some key aspects of the proposed approaches for the development of a SIOFA VMS, then hold an intersessional working group for further discussions of the technical details.
168. Australia requested deferral of any decision to have the Secretariat administer a SIOFA VMS and proposed further consideration of outsourcing the administration of the SIOFA VMS. Australia noted the issues raised about costs and the capacity of the Secretariat and stated that Australia would consider a proposal for a project officer to implement a SIOFA VMS.
169. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked the European Union for the proposal and welcomed the continued progress towards the establishment of a SIOFA VMS and a CMM for the Establishment of the VMS in the SIOFA Area.**
170. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the hybrid approach provided in paragraph 6 of MoP-08-16Rev1.**
171. **Following the discussions of the budget under agenda item 13, the Meeting of the Parties noted that it would not be able to recruit a VMS manager in 2021 but noted that provision was made in the 2023 forecast budget for compliance expertise which could work on VMS, if it is decided. The Meeting of the Parties also noted that it was not able to implement the first step of the roadmap proposed by the European Union for 2021 presented in MoP-08-16Rev1.**
172. **The Meeting of the Parties agreed to hold an intersessional working process among interested CCPs for further discussions of the technical details of the proposal.**
173. The European Union said that it intended to submit an updated proposal, reflecting the further technical discussions and including an updated roadmap, to the sixth Compliance Committee meeting and the ninth Meeting of the Parties.

Agenda item 11 – Secretariat administration

Agenda item 11.1 Report on Staff Resources and Secretariat activities

174. The Secretariat presented a report (MoP-08-INFO-01) on staff resources and Secretariat activities prepared in accordance with Rule 8(1)(f) and 8(1)(g). CCPs expressed concerns and requested clarification on some of the points outlined in the report and offered comments to the Secretariat. The Secretariat incorporated the comments received into MoP-08-INFO-01Rev5.
175. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the report on staff resources and Secretariat activities in MoP-08-INFO-01Rev5.**

11.1.1 Update on the 2020 fraud

176. The Secretariat was requested by the seventh Meeting of the Parties (MoP7 Report, paragraph 15c) to provide regular updates regarding the financial fraud that has occurred with China's contribution. The Secretariat provided an update on the situation as outlined in MoP-08-INFO-05Rev2.
177. **The Meeting of the Parties noted MoP-08-INFO-05Rev2.**
178. China reiterated its appreciation to the other CCPs for their understanding, as well as its commitment to continue to work with the Secretariat and the authorities to recover the funds and remit them to SIOFA as soon as possible.

Agenda item 11.2 Report on Financial Resources

179. The Chair noted that Regulation 9.1 of the Financial Regulations and Rule 8(1)(f) requires the Executive Secretary to provide a report on financial resources (outlined in MoP-08-INFO-03) to the Meeting of the Parties with an overview of the budget position, annual financial statements and any funds held in reserve (outlined in MoP-08-INFO-04).
180. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the annual financial statements and the Auditor's report presented in MoP-08-INFO-04.**
181. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the Report on Financial Resources provided by the Secretariat in MoP-08-INFO-03.**
182. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked the European Union for its contribution to SIOFA scientific work through EU grant funding processes.**
183. **The Meeting of the Parties thanked Australia for its contribution to the scientific work of SIOFA, directed towards the assessment of the impact of bottom fishing, the finalised study of which will be presented to SC7.**

Agenda item 11.3 SIOFA Budget

11.3.1 2022 provisional budget, Secretariat staffing needs and SC activities

184. As requested by the seventh Meeting of the Parties (MoP7 Report, paragraphs 135-138), the Secretariat prepared a document on the roles of the Secretariat staff, the needs of the Secretariat, and a proposed staffing strategy for the coming years (MoP-08-INFO-02).
185. The Secretariat presented the Draft SIOFA 2022 budget in MoP-08-INFO-06Rev1. CCPs requested clarifications and modifications to the draft budget and the Secretariat incorporated those changes into MoP-08-06Rev8.
186. The Scientific Committee Chair presented the SC6 update on research activities and the proposed budget for 2022 and 2023 research activities outlined in Annex G of the SC Report (MoP-08-INFO-15).
187. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to include the proposed budget for Scientific Committee 2022-2023 research activities in the SIOFA 2022 budget.**

11.3.2 2023 forecast budget

188. The Cook Islands noted that the budget provisionally estimated for 2023 is a significant increase on the 2021 budget. The Cook Islands recognised that some of the 2021 actual costs were lower as physical meetings had not taken place. Nevertheless, given many economies are recovering from COVID, a range of other factors need to be considered and the Cook Islands expected the Meeting of the Parties to take a modest and carefully considered approach to the budget for 2023.

11.3.3 Adoption of the budget

189. Several CCPs pointed out that discussing a single-year budget each year was not conducive to a strategic and structured consideration of the development of the Secretariat's capabilities.
190. Although the importance of strengthening the SIOFA Secretariat was duly shared, several CCPs expressed concern about the considerable increase in the 2022 budget and substantially more increase in the 2023 forecast budget.
191. The Cook Islands expressed concern about the budget formulation process, some of which could have been avoided with better version control, accurate figures, and better explanations, and expressed its expectation that the process would be smoother at the ninth Meeting of the Parties.
192. **The Meeting of the Parties noted the possibility that it may need to recruit two new staff for the Secretariat in 2022 rather than the one that has been budgeted. In such a case, the Meeting of the Parties requested that the Secretariat promptly inform the Meeting of the Parties and provide information that very clearly outlines the costs to be spent. The Meeting of the Parties agreed that any non-budgeted cost for the second staff member would come from the reserve fund, and requested that the Secretariat provide the balance of the reserve fund.**
193. **The Meeting of the Parties requested that the Secretariat present a mid-year budget tracking paper with the actual expenditure at future Meetings of the Parties.**
194. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare a long-term plan for the structured development of the Secretariat's capabilities, which would cover the subsequent two to five years and would be updated each year, for the annual discussions of the budget by the Meeting of the Parties. The plan should also include additional resourcing options from potential funding partners such as FAO.**
195. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to start working with the host country to identify new premises for the SIOFA Secretariat and provide information in that regard to the ninth Meeting of the Parties.**
196. **The Meeting of the Parties ADOPTED the 2022 budget and assessed contributions outlined in MoP-08-06 Rev8 (Annex O) in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.7.**

Agenda item 12 – Cooperation with other RFMOs, international bodies and other relevant matters

Agenda item 12.1 Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC)

197. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting of the Parties that the Secretariat attended the 10th Scientific Commission of the SWIOFC, the details of which are included in MoP-08-INFO-01Rev5, the report on staff resources and Secretariat activities.

Agenda item 12.2 Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

198. The Executive Secretary presented information paper MoP-08-INFO-19 on cooperation facts between CCAMLR and SIOFA.
199. **The Meeting of the Parties noted information paper MoP-08-INFO-19.**
200. Australia presented information paper MoP-08-INFO-17 with proposed arrangements for holding a joint SIOFA-CCAMLR workshop on toothfish data exchange, which was recommended by the sixth Scientific Committee meeting.
201. **The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the information paper (MoP-08-INFO-17) provided by Australia on arrangements for holding a joint SIOFA-CCAMLR workshop on toothfish data exchange.**
202. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Scientific Committee Chair and the Secretariat to write to the CCAMLR Scientific Committee Chair to invite CCAMLR Members to hold a joint workshop on the data exchange of toothfish data between SIOFA and CCAMLR, preferably in the week beginning on 29 November 2021, and to invite the CCAMLR Scientific Committee Chair to co-Chair the meeting with the SIOFA Scientific Committee Chair.**
203. **The Meeting of the Parties invited the CCPs interested in this workshop to work with the SIOFA Scientific Committee Chair and Secretariat to develop a workshop agenda and participate. Further, the Meeting of the Parties recommended that the workshop be co-chaired by the respective SC chairs of SIOFA and CCAMLR and be held in the week beginning on 29 November 2021.**

Agenda item 12.3 Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

204. The Secretariat presented MoP-08-18, the letter of intent between the IOTC and SIOFA prepared by the IOTC and adopted during its 25th Session in June 2021. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed the document and made a number of revisions, as outlined in MoP-08-18Rev2 (Annex P).
205. **The Meeting of the Parties requested the Secretariat to send the amended letter of intent, as outlined in MoP-08-18Rev2 (Annex P), back to the IOTC for its consideration.**
206. **The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the continued progress towards the development of a bilateral cooperative arrangement between the IOTC and SIOFA.**
207. As Japan stated at CC5, it was concerned about potential confusion which may stem from the duplication of governance of SIOFA and the IOTC, not only for data reporting but also for all management issues, for example, where SIOFA species are caught as bycatch by tuna longliners authorised in the IOTC. Japan thought the subject would be discussed under an arrangement between SIOFA and the IOTC. However, the arrangement requires more time to be agreed. As an interim solution, Japan stated that one way to address the matter is to make a common understanding that SIOFA members confirmed that fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the area of competence of IOTC are governed by the IOTC. Chinese Taipei echoed the statement made by Japan.
208. The European Union recognised that having vessels operating in an area where two legal frameworks are applicable could create challenges for some CCPs. However, it reiterated its view that, if a CCP is a party to both the IOTC and SIOFA, it cannot opt to comply only with the obligations under the IOTC

Agreement; it must also comply with the obligations under the SIOF Agreement and the CMMs adopted pursuant to the latter. Furthermore, if a CCP encounters challenges with implementing the SIOFA CMMs, it should propose amendments to improve them, rather than not apply them.

Agenda item 12.4 FAO ABNJ Deep-seas Project

209. FAO presented information paper MoP-08-INFO-18 on the proposed workplan and activities of the ABNJ Deep-sea Project.
210. In response to a request for further clarification of the co-financing requirements, the FAO explained that 5 million USD in funding will be provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and that GEF projects require co-financing in a 7:1 ratio between partners and GEF. This would require a total of 35 million USD from the project partners, which could be provided in cash or through in-kind contribution. FAO suggested a contribution of 1.5 million USD by SIOFA and has identified, in MoP-08-INFO-18, activities that are already planned by SIOFA that could be considered in-kind contribution.
211. **The Meeting of the Parties noted information paper MoP-08-INFO-18.**

Agenda item 12.5 FAO Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS)

212. FAO introduced information paper MoP-08-INFO-20 on the draft SIOFA-FIRMS stocks and fisheries inventory.
213. **The Meeting of the Parties noted information paper MoP-08-INFO-20.**

Agenda item 12.6 FAO Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN)

214. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting of the Parties that the Secretariat attended the eighth RSN meeting, which was held on 24-25 February 2021 following COFI-34 (1-5 February 2021). At the meeting, the RSN focused on COFI-34 outcomes of significance for RFBs, issues of major importance to the RFBs including information on global and regional processes relevant to RFBs, the current state and outcomes made for the RSN's financial needs and donors, as well as the process of revision of the RSN Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

Agenda item 12.7 Other matters of interest

215. DSCC stated that, while the progress made by SIOFA is laudable given the size of the organisation, it remains concerned about some basic gaps, such as an annual report on catch and effort, completion of stock assessments, 300 kg sponge limit and the lack of a SIOFA-wide bottom fishing measure. An annual report on catch and effort data is not only best practice but essential for an RFMO, and the other matters are necessary to comply with the UNGA resolutions. DSCC noted that there will be a United Nations General Assembly review of the bottom fishing resolutions in 2022. That review was rescheduled due to COVID-19. DSCC values the opportunity to be an observer at SIOFA and believes that the inclusion of scientifically-based non-governmental organisations such as DSCC is imperative to ensure the transparency and accountability of SIOFA.
216. The Secretariat reminded DSCC that the Scientific Committee provides an annual report of catch and effort data for the main fisheries in an annex of its annual report entitled "overview of SIOFA fisheries", which is publicly available.

Agenda item 13 – Status of Cooperating non-Contracting Parties

217. The Meeting of the Parties annually considers applications for the status of cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNCP), consistent with Rule 17 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedure, including to determine whether existing CNCPs qualify to retain their status. The Compliance Committee also ordinarily reviews these applications.
218. In 2021, consistent with Rule 17(1), the Executive Secretary wrote to the following non-Contracting Parties who undertake fishing activities in the Agreement Area to invite them to cooperate with the Meeting of the Parties by acceding to the Agreement or applying to the Meeting of the Parties for the status of a CNCP: Tanzania, Somalia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Kenya, Maldives, and South Africa.
219. The Meeting of the Parties noted that Comoros had written to the Secretariat on 2 May 2021 to apply to retain its CNCP status (CC-05-07 and MoP-08-07). The Compliance Committee recommended that the Meeting of the Parties determine that Comoros qualifies to retain its CNCP status.
220. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED that Comoros qualifies to retain its CNCP status in 2021. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed Comoros' ongoing efforts to fulfil its obligations under the Agreement and the SIOFA CMMs and encouraged Comoros to continue them.**
221. Comoros thanked the Meeting of the Parties for renewing its CNCP status and expressed its appreciation for the Secretariat's support in preparing its various compliance documents. Comoros reiterated its commitment to cooperate with SIOFA and comply with the Agreement and the CMMs.
222. The Meeting of the Parties noted that South Africa had expressed interest on 5 June 2021 in applying for CNCP status (MoP-08-INFO-12Rev1). At the Compliance Committee, CCPs were unable to reach consensus on South Africa's application for CNCP status and the Compliance Committee invited South Africa to provide further details addressing the concerns raised by CCPs.
223. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to invite South Africa to submit a revised application with the written statement of commitments required under rule 17(5) of the Rules of Procedure and further details addressing the concerns raised by CCPs.**
224. South Africa stated that it would submit a revised application in 2022.

Agenda item 14 – Future Chairing arrangements

225. The Chair noted that, in accordance with Rule 5.3 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedure, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be from different Contracting Parties and the Chairperson of subsidiary bodies of the Meeting of the Parties shall be from a different Contracting Party to the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.
226. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to elect Mr Roy Clarisse to serve as its Chairperson from the conclusion of the eighth Meeting of the Parties to the conclusion of the ninth Meeting of the Parties.**
227. The Chairperson invited Mauritius to speak as it is next to take the role of vice-chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties. Mauritius stated that as it is non-

compliant in many issues due to its claim of historical rights on the Saya de Malha banks, it is not in a position at this point in time to take the vice-chairpersonship and requested the next contracting party on the list to take this responsibility. Mauritius also stated that it may accept being vice-chairperson at a later stage.

228. **The Meeting of the Parties noted that Mauritius was not in a position at this point in time to fulfil the role of Vice-Chairperson according to the Rules of Procedure and in the absence of an alternative candidate the position was left vacant.**
229. **The Meeting of the Parties noted that the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee remained vacant and AGREED to appoint the Cook Islands as Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee and noted that the Cook Islands would provide advice on the name of the Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee as soon as practical.**
230. The Meeting of the Parties thanked the Seychelles for its generosity in offering to chair both the Compliance Committee and the Meeting of the Parties, as well as the Cook Islands for its generosity in offering to serve as the Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee.
231. Several CCPs expressed concern over the issues SIOFA has continued to experience in appointing Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, reminding the Meeting of the Parties that it had held extensive discussions on the subject at its previous meeting and adopted amendments to Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure to avoid such issues. They encouraged all Contracting Parties to fulfil the agreements reached at the previous Meeting of the Parties.

Agenda item 15 – Future meeting arrangements (2022)

232. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED that the sixth meeting of the Compliance Committee will take place from 29 June to 1 July 2022 and the ninth Meeting of the Parties will take place from 4 to 8 July 2022.**
233. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to hold virtual meetings of the SERAWG from 28 February to 4 March 2022, the PAEWG from 7 to 11 March 2022, and the Scientific Committee from 21 to 25 March 2022.**
234. **Subject to the agreement of CCAMLR, the Meeting of the Parties AGREED to hold the proposed SIOFA-CCAMLR workshop on toothfish data exchange in the week beginning 29 November 2021.**
235. The European Union informed the Meeting of the Parties that the Government of Spain has offered to host the 2023 meeting of the Scientific Committee in the Canary Islands.
236. **The Meeting of the Parties accepted the European Union’s offer.**

Agenda item 16 – Adoption of the report

237. **The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to adopt the report of its 8th ordinary meeting by correspondence, consistent with Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure.**

238. The report of the 8th Meeting of the Parties to SIOFA was adopted by intersessional decision 2021-V on 26 July 2021.

Agenda item 17 – Meeting closure

239. The Meeting of the Parties recognised the exemplary work of the rapporteur, Alex Meyer, and the interpreters for their contribution to the success of this meeting.
240. The Meeting of the Parties thanked the Chairperson for his excellent chairing of the meeting.
241. The meeting was closed at 4:40 p.m. UTC, 9 July 2021.

