

(Preliminary translation)

Statement
by Minister Akamatsu
on direction of future fishery management
(March 25, 2010)

At the 15th Conference of Parties of CITES (COP 15), the proposal to list Atlantic bluefin tuna in Appendix I of CITES, and the proposal to list Precious Coral in CITES Appendix II, were not adopted. Japan worked hard to convince other countries that fishery resources should be conserved and managed for sustainable use by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), based on scientific stock assessments, rather than by CITES. I believe that such Japanese position was widely shared by Parties and led to the results of COP15.

However, it is also true that a number of countries supported the listing of Atlantic bluefin tuna in Appendix I of CITES. Those countries seem to have been concerned over insufficient conservation and management effort by RFMO.

If this situation remains unchanged, not only Atlantic bluefin tuna, but also other fish species, might well be proposed for a CITES listing in future. I am convinced, therefore, it is essential to ensure that conservation and management measures adopted by each RFMO, as well as those agreed by each country, are effective enough to wipe out such a concern.

Given this background, Japan will continue to play its leading role at ICCAT and other RFMOs in preventing over-fishing by adopting effective conservation and management measures, based on scientific stock assessments, and by establishing reliable monitoring systems to ensure compliance by RFMO member countries with the adopted measures. Japan will also continue its efforts to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with developing countries toward this end.

Japan is in a position not to import any fishery products from fish not caught in compliance with RFMO rules.

Further, it is also essential for Japan to strengthen its fishery management for its domestic fisheries, in order to give more credibility to an effective leadership role at international fora. In this regard, Japan will expeditiously consider the introduction of its Income Assurance System for domestic fishermen who actively participate in proper fishery management.

Further, Japan will work on the development and dissemination of a complete culturing technique to raise bluefin tuna so as not to affect wild fish resources.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will make its best effort to ensure the sustainable use of fish stocks, and to secure a stable supply of fishery products. I hope the COP15 meeting of CITES will help raise the awareness of Japanese nationals regarding the importance of eating fish from sustainable sources and a consideration of how finite fishery resources should be utilized.