

## **MITSUBISHI CORPORATION**

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN BLUEFIN TUNA**

**16 September 2009**

Mitsubishi Corporation (MC) is committed to sustainability in all aspects of its business activities which includes its role as an importer to Japan of Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna (BFT). However, MC believes that current conditions in the Mediterranean are not conducive to the long-term sustainability of the industry and has sought to play a part in rectifying this in a number of ways. MC has long advocated that the fishery in the Mediterranean must be managed in accordance with scientific recommendations and has voiced its concern over the issue of overfishing, as well as ICCAT's (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) insistence on setting the total allowable catch (TAC) of BFT at levels which are at odds with the recommendations of its own scientific advisors, the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS).

MC has had on-going dialogue with various stakeholders for more than two years in search of ways we can help in achieving a sustainable industry and the long-term conservation of this important species. Building on these efforts, the company is confirming a number of new voluntary actions and commitments, outlined below. One company alone will not be able to solve this issue, however, and we urge other members of industry to consider these and similar actions.

#### **1. Calling for Quota Reductions**

In attempts to achieve both a sustainable BFT resource and industry, MC has worked with the Japan Fisheries Agency (JFA) to urge ICCAT to adopt quotas and other conservation management measures that were consistent with those recommended by the SCRS. While the next meeting of ICCAT in November 2009 is not a meeting at which quotas are normally reviewed, MC believes that these are exceptional circumstances. MC will appeal for new recommendations to be prepared by the SCRS based on the most current scientific data, including even lower quota reductions or a moratorium if this is necessary, and for ICCAT to respond in accordance with these recommendations in time for the 2010 season.

Should ICCAT fail to follow the recommendations of the SCRS at the next meeting in November, MC will pledge its support for control measures or frameworks outside of ICCAT, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in order to provide the basis for sound management and to realize a truly sustainable BFT industry.

#### **2. Voluntarily Following SCRS Quota Recommendations**

Despite the SCRS recommending a BFT quota of 15,000MT for 2009, the quota set by ICCAT for the period was 22,000MT. MC will voluntarily reduce the volume of BFT it buys starting this year in accordance with the recommendation by SCRS.

### **3. Endorsing Bluefin Tuna Spawning Sanctuaries**

MC endorses calls for the establishment of a bluefin tuna spawning sanctuary around the Balearic Islands and an immediate ban on BFT fishing around the Islands as another control measure to reduce the catch quantity of BFT and protect important spawning ground ecosystems. In support of this commitment, MC has ceased purchasing BFT caught in this region starting this year and is committed to taking similar steps as scientific evidence validates the creation of other sanctuaries in the Mediterranean.

### **4. Commitment to Scientific Research**

MC is committed to supporting research to improve scientific understanding of BFT and assist in the development of more effective long-term conservation measures. MC encourages scientific collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including NGOs, which will provide data and give rise to measures which all can accept so that action to conserve this important species can be taken.

### **5. Support for Port State Measures**

MC is endorsing the global call for the earliest conclusion, signing and ratification of the binding agreement on Port State Measures, proposed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The actions and commitments outlined above build on measures already taken by MC in response to this issue. These include measures to better ensure that all BFT sourced by MC for the Japanese market is IUU free. For example, due to the absence of an independent observer scheme, MC has implemented its own traceability system which tracks tuna from the time it is caught until the time it is sold. The company is also trialing a new fish weighing technology that will help establish more accurate measurement systems for determining actual catch levels of BFT while the fish are swimming in the farming cages.

These actions reflect MC's deep concern about the current state of the Mediterranean BFT fishery, as well as the company's long-term commitment to achieving a sustainable footing for the business. MC believes that it is imperative for ICCAT and its member states do everything in their capacity to implement measures that reflect the critical nature of this issue. In particular, we call on the governments of the member states to include the protection of the livelihoods of those who depend on the BFT fishery as a key component of a truly effective conservation management program.