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## Press Release – Outcomes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the WCPFC

The Chief Executive Officer of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office, Dr. Sangaa Clark, expressed satisfaction with the overall outcomes of the 18th meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. She noted the importance of the decision to adopt a revised Tropical Tuna measure that would be in place for two years. This is the Commission's flagship measure. The measure had performed well in the previous three years. It had contributed substantially to the current healthy status of WCPO tropical tuna stocks and fisheries, which were the only sustainable global fisheries for tropical tunas. PNA Members and Tokelau shared with other members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency the need to take a precautionary approach to changes in the major elements of the Tropical Tuna measure. The measure had gaps and weaknesses in it that would continue to need addressing, especially in the management of longline fishing in the high seas. However, there were limits to what could be achieved in a virtual session.

Dr Clark welcomed the progress on FAD management in the revised measure including requiring FADs to be made of materials that would not entangle sharks and turtles and progress towards requiring FADs to be made of biodegradable materials. Over 90 per cent of sets in the industrial FAD fishery were made in the waters of PNA and Tokelau, and the measures taken by the Commission would complement the measures being taken by the PNA. These PNA measures included strengthening the responsibility of vessel operators to provide a wider range of data on FADs, especially with respect to the use of non-entangling and bio-degradable FAD materials, and from 2022, a strengthened programme of registration and tracking of electronic FAD buoys.

Dr Clark also welcomed the decisions of the Commission to prioritise work on strengthening the Commission's compliance monitoring scheme and harvest strategies in 2022. These were important areas where there was a backlog of work.

Dr Clark acknowledged with appreciation the commitment of all delegations to make progress in the meeting and the outstanding effort of the Commission Chair, Jung-re Riley Kim.