Written evidence submitted by BLOOM

Following the recent evidence the MSC send to the EAC as part of the sustainable seas inquiry and specially, the response they have given to the questions Mr Zac Goldsmith MP asked in the oral session with Rupert Howes (MSC’s Chief Executive).

As a reminder, during the session Mr Goldsmith asked a series of questions about the number of incidents of shark finning in the PNA fishery and the lack of recent data around this. Mr Goldsmith then requested that Mr Howes provide any kind of evidence of sanctions that have been taken against vessels that break the rules. Mr Howes sent a letter to the committee following the inquiry. The letter contains a few scans of newspaper reports from, for example, the Marshall Islands, which describe incidents where some kind of action has been taken against vessels engaged in finning.

I have read the evidence submitted by Mr Howes and it is totally inadequate at answering Mr Goldsmith’s questions for the following reasons:

- Mr Howes provides examples of only four/five shark finning incidents, yet there have been 429 incidents of finning recorded in the PNA from 2012 to 2015.
- Three of the incidents Mr Howes cites are reported in July 2012 but the MSC ban only came into effect in 2013.
- The two media reports from 2013 are about long-liners. These are not part of the MSC-certified fishery because the MSC-certified PNA tuna fishery is a purse seine fishery. The two reports appear to also relate to the same long-liner.
- All the reports convey of sanctions reported only in the Marshall Islands even though the PNA is formed of eight countries.
- The news reports from 2012 state that the sanction used was a fine, specifically a fine of $55,000 for each of the two vessels. However, the Marshall Islands Fisheries law memo confirms that fines can be up to $200,000, plus the amount equivalent to value of fins confiscated.
- Only one of the reports mentions a ban, but that is related to a long-lining vessel, which is not part of the PNA fishery.
- There is no evidence that links the drop in recorded shark finning to successful investigation, prosecution and enforcement.
- There is no evidence of any sanctions imposed in the period April 10th 2013 to present.
- There is no way to deduce whether there has been any proper enforcement of finning in the PNA. Regardless of this, the MSC/ the CAB (certifying body) seem to be relying entirely on examples from the public domain, such as these media reports.

I hope this summary is helpful and applies some context to what was submitted by Mr Howes. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any of this is not clear, including whether you require any additional explanation or information on any of these points.

December 2018