

**Mr. Alexandre Rodriguez**  
**LDAC Executive Secretary**

Dear Mr. Rodrigues,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017 with information on the LDAC, and of the participation of the LDAC at the Indian Ocean Commission's (IOCs) consultative meeting of stakeholders held in Seychelles on the 16 March 2017. I apologise for not being in the position to answer in the normal SWIOFC letter form at the moment, from my location in Antananarivo.

The inclusion of important specific comments by the LDAC in relation to the MTC is noted, as well as the information that the LDAC is supportive of the general recommendations agreed at the IOC consultative meeting. I have already received a letter from the Officer in Charge of the IOC/Smartfish and IOC/SWIOFish1 project on the matter to which I have responded informing him of how the results of the meeting could be provided to the SWIOFC 8<sup>th</sup> Session.

The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the 8th Session will be considering providing the opportunity for the IOC to make a brief PowerPoint presentation of the outcomes of the IOC consultative meeting of industry when the agenda item on the review of the MTC protocol is raised. All observers are encouraged to actively participate in discussions and interventions of the session of the Commission with few restrictions except that their interventions are taken after the members. They are naturally not entitled to vote in the case that decisions are called for. The Commission does not take statements by observers.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the attached consolidated Working Paper (previously circulated as working papers 4a and 4b) noting that SWIOFC members have some important decisions to make in relation to how they wish to proceed with this instrument, either as a voluntary one within FAO, or as a mandatory one outside of the FAO.

In either case, it can be seen that the comments that IOC received from the consultative meeting, as indeed those that you have provided, may be valuable in the progress of this instrument.

If further progress on this instrument is to be within an FAO voluntary framework, it will be possible, for the IOC to bring the detailed document of comments that it received from industry either in the MTC Task Force (in English only as it was presented) or at the next WPCCTF (but in English and in French).

In response to your request to attend the SWIOFC as an observer, I may advise that the LDAC may be able to sit within the delegation of the European Union as observer. As to the possibility for the LDAC to be an observer in its own right, I am seeking further advice on the matter and will inform you as soon as possible. It would assist if you could inform me of some of the instances that the LDAC attended COFI, IOTC or other FAO regional fisheries bodies as an observer in its own right.

Finally the Bureau of the Commission are in copy and have been sent your letter and attachment so that they are aware of your good wishes in relation to the work of upcoming session, and possible future collaboration. On my part I hope I have addressed your questions and will be happy to provide any further information or clarification, if needed.

Kind regards  
Aubrey Harris, Secretary SWIOFC