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*Dr. Fabio Hazin
Chairman
International Commission for the
Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
Corazón de María, 8, 28002 Madrid*

Subject: Request for clarification on the identity of two tuna purse seiners sighted in the Harbor of Valetta, Malta.

Dear Dr. Hazin,

The organizations Greenpeace and WWF would like to formally communicate the following information to ICCAT:

- On the 21st of April 2008 Greenpeace and WWF obtained information pointing to the presence of two tuna purse seiners in the harbor of Valletta, Malta, the **Cevahir** and the **Abdi Baba I**, both with Turkish names and plate numbers¹ and flying the flag of Bolivia (*See Picture 1*). WWF immediately warned the European Commission authorities about this irregular situation, as did Greenpeace one day later, on the 22nd of April. Greenpeace, in turn, duly alerted the ICCAT Secretariat about this situation.
- In subsequent communications to the EC Commission, WWF warned that the information received so far pointed to the strong possibility of such vessels being stateless, with the Bolivian flag being not supported by any legal register. Under these circumstances, WWF requested that the Flag State be contacted and the vessels be retained in the harbor until the situation is clarified.
- Both WWF and Greenpeace understand that after the warning given to the relevant ICCAT Port State (the EC), the Flag State must have been contacted to clarify the situation of these two vessels. This was especially relevant in this case as: (a) Bolivia is not a Contracting Party to ICCAT, and (b) both vessels seemed to be fully equipped and ready to engage in fishing for tuna (*See Picture 2*). We therefore urge the ICCAT Secretariat to clarify with Bolivia the identity of these two vessels.
- On the 2nd of May 2008, Greenpeace and WWF obtained evidence that the two vessels, Cevahir and Abdi Baba I, still in the harbor of Valletta, had changed their names to **Manara I** and **Manara II** and switched their Bolivian flags to Libyan ones overnight (*See Picture 3*). That same day WWF passed this information onto EC Commission authorities and warned them that the Libyan vessels Manara I and II already existed and, according to the ICCAT Record of fishing vessels they were duly registered in advance.² It is the view of both organizations that the sudden re-flagging operation may well have been a last stratagem by these two stateless

¹ Vessel 1: Name: Cevahir; Flag: Bolivia; plate number: 34.22T3067; vessel 2: Name: Abdi Baba I; Flag: Bolivia; plate number 34.22TG3117.

²Both the Manara 1, AT000LIB00039, and the Manara 2, AT000LIB00041, appear in the ICCAT Record as having been authorised to fish from 29 June 2007 to 31 December 2007.



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vessels to overcome controls, and given the uncertainties around the identity of both vessels they should have been retained in port until it could be certainly established that either (a) they were properly registered vessels and their identity, flag and ownership were duly recorded, or (b) they were not going to engage in fishing activities in the ICCAT Convention Area.

- According to the photographic evidences obtained by Greenpeace and WWF, these two vessels do not seem to be the same vessels on the ICCAT Register under the names of *Manara I* and *Manara II* (See Pictures 4 and 5).
- On the 3rd of May, both vessels left the EC harbor of Valletta with apparent destination to bluefin tuna fishing grounds, fully equipped with fishing gears.

Greenpeace and WWF kindly request you to ensure copies of this letter are circulated to the Heads of Delegation of all ICCAT Contracting Parties and to make all the efforts to cooperate with the Contracting and Non Contracting Parties involved so that this issue is clarified and any necessary actions to overcome potential IUU activities are adopted.

Barcelona and Madrid, May 3rd 2008.

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ANNEX – Photographic evidences

(All pictures courtesy by A.T.R.T.)



Picture 1.- The *Cevahir* and the *Abdi Baba I* in Valetta on the 21st of April 2008. Both vessels showing a Turkish registry number and La Paz (Bolivia) as their Port of Registry.



Picture 2.- Both vessels clearly seem to be fully equipped and ready to engage in fishing for tuna.



Picture 3.- The Cevahir and Abdi Baba I, on 2nd of May 2008 in the harbor of Valletta, after having changed their names to Manara I and Manara II. Both vessels were showing Tripoli as their Port of Registry.



Picture 4.- The *Manara I* sailing in the Mediterranean on the 23rd of October 2007.



Picture 5.- The *Manara II* in the harbor of Valetta on the 7th of May 2007.