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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

Australia, Canada, Fiji, Mauritania, New Zealand, Papua New
Guinea, Solomon Islands, United States of America, Vanuatu,
Zaire: draft resolution

Large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and its impact on the
living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas

The General Assembly,

Disturbed by the dramatic increase in the use of large-scale pelagic driftnets, which can exceed 30 miles (48 kilometres) in length, to catch living marine resources on the high seas of the world's oceans,

Mindful that large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing is an indiscriminate fishing method which threatens the effective conservation of living marine resources such as highly migratory and anadromous species of fish, birds and marine mammals,

Expressing serious concern that, in addition to targeted species of fish, non-targeted species, marine mammals, seabirds and other living marine resources of the world's oceans, including endangered species, become entangled and die in large-scale pelagic driftnets, either in those in active use or in those that are lost or discarded,

Recognizing that several thousand fishing vessels use large-scale pelagic driftnets in the high-seas areas of the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and in other waters beyond the exclusive economic zone of any country,

Affirming that all members of the international community have a duty to co-operate globally and regionally in the conservation and management of living

resources on the high seas, and a duty to take, or to co-operate with others in taking, such measures for their nationals as may be necessary for the conservation of the living resources of the high seas,

Noting that the countries of the South Pacific Forum and the South Pacific Commission, in recognition of the existing scientific data indicating that large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing is having an unacceptable impact on the marine life of that region, have called for a cessation of such fishing in the South Pacific and the implementation of effective management programmes,

Also noting the Declaration adopted by the heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum at Tarawa on 11 July 1989 which, inter alia, called for a ban on such driftnet fishing methods in that region and noting that some members of the international community have entered into negotiations on a convention that would establish the cessation of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing in their exclusive economic zones or by their nationals,

Further noting that some members of the international community have entered into co-operative enforcement and monitoring arrangements to evaluate and mitigate the adverse impact of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing,

Recognizing that some members of the international community have taken steps to reduce their driftnet operations in some regions in response to regional concerns,

1. Calls upon all those involved in large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing to co-operate fully with the international community in the continued and enhanced collection of scientific data on the impact of such fishing methods and the conservation of the world's living marine resources;

2. Recommends that all members of the international community review by 30 June 1991 or earlier, reflecting the emergence of an international or regional consensus, the existing data on the effects of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing, and agree to co-operative regulation and monitoring, as needed, to mitigate the adverse effects of the practice;

3. Further recommends that all members of the international community agree to:

(a) An immediate ban on the practice of driftnet fishing in the South Pacific region to prevent severely adverse - perhaps irremediable - effects on South Pacific fisheries and to allow time for the development of comprehensive fisheries management programmes;

(b) A moratorium on all high-seas driftnet fishing by 30 June 1992 unless or until it is agreed that the unacceptable impact of such a practice can be prevented and that the conservation of the world's living marine resources can be ensured;

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4. Asks the appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to consider this question as part of their regular programmes of activities;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and well-established scientific institutions with expertise in relation to living marine resources;

6. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

7. Decides to include the question of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session.
