



**Parties to the Nauru Agreement**  
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20 July 2020

**CIRCULAR NO. 2020-11**

**TO: ALL PURSE SEINE VESSEL OPERATORS and COMPANIES**

**CC: PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT and TOKELAU**

**SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF PNA REQUIREMENT FOR OBSERVER COVERAGE IN THE PURSE SEINE FISHERY IN PNA WATERS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CONDITIONS**

**REFERENCES: PNA CIRCULARS NO. 2020-2, 27 MARCH 2020 & NO. 2020-6, 1 JUNE 2020**

The purpose of this Circular is to advise that PNA Members have decided to further extend the temporary suspension of requirements for 100% observer coverage in the purse seine fishery in PNA waters in response to COVID-19 conditions, until 31 October 2020.

PNA Member Governments continue to attach the highest priority to protecting the health and safety of their communities. At the same time, PNA Members remain concerned with addressing the extraordinary threats arising from the COVID-19 pandemic to the welfare of observers, the operations of the purse seine fishery and the contribution of the regional tuna fishery to local and global food security, without undermining the effectiveness of efforts to conserve regional tuna resources and manage regional tuna fisheries.

PNA Members continue to be deeply concerned about the welfare of observers, so appreciate the efforts that have been made to repatriate them. For those observers who have still not been repatriated, vessel operators and the flag states are required to expedite their repatriation, in close consultation with the relevant observer programme.

Notwithstanding the difficulties arising from port closures and curtailed air travel, where necessary, vessel operators are required to work closely with the observer provider to ensure the observers' welfare and arrange repatriation as soon as this may be possible.

The observer's costs will continue to be met by the vessel operator until the observer has been repatriated as agreed. Foreign vessels that fail to repatriate an observer to the satisfaction of the observer provider, shall not be allowed to operate in PNA waters.

The conditions initially set out in Circular 2020-02 will continue to apply. When vessels are not carrying observers, they shall comply with the following additional conditions:

- a) If the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) fails, the vessel may continue to operate for up to 72 hours without VMS reporting, provided that the vessel:
  - (i) reports hourly position data manually;
  - (ii) maintains AIS reporting; and
  - (iii) maintains daily data electronically logsheet reporting.
- b) Any additional management measures that may be advised from time to time.

PNA Members continue to review the need for responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the development of protocols, standards and procedures to enable observers and others to operate safely, and possible alternative measures to address the loss of opportunity for SIDS observers.

Any further extension to the suspension of the observer coverage requirement will be advised.

Please do not hesitate to contact the PNA Office for any further information and/or clarification on the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Ludwig Kumoru  
Chief Executive Officer