

Not everyone joins in

Fishery management systems do not work when some nations avoid signing international fishery treaties, as in the case of the tuna fishery

Thank you for sending me SAMUDRA Report No. 20 (May 1998). I have read with much interest the comment under the title of 'Shades of Trade' and the document titled 'Does Trade Always Make the Grade?'.

I fully agree with the comment that trade is not good in itself unless a proper management system is put into effect. I felt that this comment focuses on the problem from the viewpoint of disadvantaged coastal communities. However, I should like to call your attention to the fact that, in the case of tuna resources, there is another aspect to the problem caused by trade.

Tunas are the main marine fish species for international trade and some of them are currently overfished. In fact, tunas are managed by regional management organizations like the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna, under international treaties. But the problem is that there are some nations which do not become party to such treaties. Tuna fishing boats of such nations catch tunas freely, ignoring the international management measures, and export to major markets, such as Japan.

There are also some nations which do not become party to the international fisheries management treaties, so that their boats may catch tunas without observing international management measures and export to major markets. Their fishing activities obviously nullify the international efforts to conserve and manage tuna resources.

The Japanese government introduced the law to control imports of such tuna in 1996, but the law can not be implemented automatically, and lengthy procedures are required to actually control trade on

tunas and provide strict management measures for the status of the fishery to recover.

In the meantime, the pressure on Japan to accept free trade is very strong, although it is necessary to control trade when trade obviously has an adverse impact on the sound management of resources and is harmful to the sustainability of resources. I fully support the statements in your articles that studies need to be done to show the impact of trade on renewable resources and that it would be quite meaningless to leave fish to the dynamics of trade. ¶

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