

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman

For Immediate Release
2005/1099

November 22, 2005

MEDIA NOTE

Dolphin Conservation Agreement Wins Award at United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was awarded the biennial Margarita Lizárraga Medal by the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at the Thirty-third Session of the FAO Conference in Rome, Italy on November 19, 2005. Dr. Robin Allen, AIDCP Secretariat and Executive Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, accepted the award on behalf of the Parties to the AIDCP, including the United States. The Department of State, working closely with NOAA Fisheries, represents the United States in meetings under the AIDCP.

In considering the AIDCP for the award, the FAO considered that:

“The AIDCP is an international agreement with the objective of progressively reducing dolphin mortality in the tuna purse-seine fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), and to ensure the sustainability of tuna stocks and associated species in the EPO pelagic ecosystem. The Parties to the Agreement are Bolivia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, the European Union, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the United States, Vanuatu, and Venezuela. The AIDCP has been an unqualified success and has diligently applied the relevant principles set forth in the Code, in particular those aspects relating to the precautionary approach and to the utilization of fishing gear and techniques which minimize the catch of non-target species. The enormous reduction in dolphin mortality attributable to the Agreement, while maintaining sustainable fisheries, is a practical, hands-on contribution. The results are tangible and measurable. The process established by the Agreement is continuous and not a one-off phenomenon. And the success of the AIDCP has the potential to be catalytic.”

The FAO instituted the Margarita Lizárraga Medal in 1997 to be awarded biennially to a person or organization that serves with distinction in the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code), a non-binding set of guidelines for global fisheries conservation and management. The Medal pays tribute to the late Dr. Margarita Lizárraga for her decisive role in promoting the Code and for her productive work in the field of fisheries for almost forty years.

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