



15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting
20–24 March 2023



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Background paper 7

Statement of outcomes from the Third Regional Fisheries
Ministers Meeting (RFMM3), Tarawa



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1. Ministers representing Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu met on 25 August 2022 at the 3rd annual Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting held in Tarawa, Kiribati.
2. Australia, FSM, Nauru, PNG, Samoa, Tokelau and Vanuatu were represented at senior official level. RMI, Samoa and Tokelau participated online
3. Ministers welcomed the participation and support of CROP partners FFA, PIFS, SPC and SPREP as well as the PNA Office.

Ministerial Chair

4. Ministers thanked the outgoing Ministerial Chair, Honourable Semi Koroilavesau of Fiji, for his outstanding work and commitment in chairing RFMM2 during 2021.
5. Ministers welcomed the Kiribati Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources Development, Honourable Ribanataake Tiwau, as Chair of the 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting.

Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

Outcomes of the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

6. Ministers highlighted the ongoing impact of climate change in the region and the added stress imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The combined effects on the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of Pacific people have re-emphasised the importance of coastal fisheries and aquaculture for food and nutrition security, cultural preservation and economic development.
7. Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meeting and supported the SPC work programmes addressing key issues affecting sustainable management of fisheries and its ecosystems, and aquaculture in the region.
8. Ministers identified the significant socio-economic value and economic potential of Aquaculture within the PICTs region, and that it remains largely under-developed as identified in the [Regional Aquaculture Assessment](#).
9. Ministers commended the progress on developing the process and timeline for a Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy with a focus of ensuring that some of this potential is realised. Ministers highlighted the need for the strategy to consider aquatic biosecurity, increasing resilience by decreasing dependence on imported goods and materials used in

the sector, learning from other regions with successful aquaculture, and the role of the private sector in accelerating progress.

10. Ministers endorsed the need for a regional approach to developing aquaculture, and noted that this work is important in implementing blue economy elements of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
11. Ministers commended the One CROP effort in climate change impacts on fisheries knowledge generation, and the provision of regional tools that convert current information into ready-made solutions for climate change adaptation in fisheries, and aquaculture policies, planning and management.
12. Ministers endorsed SPC work programmes across coastal fisheries and aquaculture in expanding climate change impact adaptation and mitigation support, including developing evidence-based planning, policy and management strategies, and climate smart initiatives for more resilient and sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture development; and expanding climate change impact adaptation and mitigation in oceanic fisheries that enhance evidence-based planning, harvest strategies, and climate smart initiatives for more economically resilient tuna fisheries

2022 Coastal Fisheries Report Card

13. Ministers welcomed the progress made towards the goals of the [Future of Fisheries Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries](#) as reported in the 2022 Coastal Fishery Report Card and noted the progress made on member level reporting.
14. Ministers acknowledged the actions endorsed by the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting to address issues of limited data to quantify progress around resource allocations in coastal fisheries management, equitable access to benefits within communities.
15. Ministers endorsed the development of improved indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Card, including aggregation of qualitative indicators to better inform progress at the national and regional levels.

Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling Up Community Based Fisheries Management

16. Ministers noted and supported the published Policy brief No 37 | 2021 - Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: A regional commitment supporting Pacific Island communities in sustaining coastal fisheries and the implementation of recommended priority actions at regional, national, and sub-national level
17. Ministers welcomed and noted progress made towards the implementation of the [Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021-2025](#) since its endorsement one year ago and key activities outlined for year two and supported the sharing of diverse experiences across the region.

18. Ministers agreed and tasked SPC to provide an annual update on the implementation of the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021-2025 through the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting.

The Ocean Climate Nexus - Learning from COP26 to engage effectively at COP27 and the Need for national and regional Climate Action

19. Ministers noted Pacific Islands Forum Leaders declared that the Pacific is facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems.
20. Ministers noted the progress gained by Pacific Political Climate Champions in ensuring that COP26 agreed to convene an annual dialogue on the ocean-climate nexus, and call for the outcome of the June 2022 UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technology Advice (SBSTA) dialogue on Ocean-based action to be a key priority at COP27.
21. Ministers requested the Pacific Community and FFA to coordinate with CROP agencies and other partners to develop a catalogue on climate change actions and climate finance opportunities that the fisheries sector can engage on.
22. Ministers requested CROP agencies work with partners to develop a strategy to investigate different approaches to address loss and damage to fisheries caused by climate change.
23. Ministers requested the Pacific Community and FFA to coordinate with the One CROP Team to prepare documentation on climate change impacts on the fisheries sector, including visualization, for presentation at COP27, and other relevant international fora.
24. Ministers noted the update on the initiative by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to develop a regional strategy to address the displacement of populations as a result of climate change impacts.

Recent Developments in Global and Regional Arrangements to Address Marine Litter and Pollution

25. Ministers noted the establishment by the United Nations of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to negotiate a new binding global agreement covering the whole life cycle of plastics by December 2024 and the status of regional preparations for the 1st INC Meeting.
26. Ministers called on CROP agencies to work closely together to strengthen monitoring, reporting and analysis of pollution violations by fishing vessels to facilitate enforcement by States and provide information to regional and global assessments and processes.

27. FFA and SPC to be tasked with reviewing and updating the 2018 observer data analysis, in consultation with SPREP and PNA Office. This report should be submitted to Officials to review before any recommendations are presented to Ministers.

2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Review of Regional Architecture.

28. Ministers **welcomed** the endorsement of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent by Forum Leaders. Ministers noted the linkages between the 2050 Strategy and existing oceanic and coastal fisheries management initiatives and related work, and **ensured** that these linkages are strengthened and appropriately aligned to the implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy.
29. Ministers **supported** the development of the implementation plan and the review of regional architecture and **tasked** the FFA Secretariat and SPC to continue to work closely with the Forum Secretariat to develop the implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy.
30. Ministers **emphasised** the importance of working together and **called** on CROP agencies for effective coordination to avoid duplication of efforts.
31. Ministers **tasked** the fisheries officials, to be supported by FFA and SPC, to review existing fisheries policies including the Fisheries Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries noting that these policies are approaching the end of their timeframes, to ensure close alignment with the implementation of the 2050 Strategy.