

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSIONELEVENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-10 December 1979)

COUNTRY STATEMENT - KINGDOM OF TONGA

1. The Government of Tonga is currently preparing Development Plan IV for 1981/85. Within the objectives of Development Plan IV the Fisheries Division development programme activities will be aimed at regularizing the shortfall in national fish requirements and developing a commercially viable fish export industry. It is anticipated that during the plan period the shortfall in local fish requirements will be met (1) mainly by increased catches from an upgraded artisanal fishery and, (2) in part from the unexportable portion of catches from an enlarged deep sea fishery.
2. The Tonga Government/FAO/UNDP Project TON/77/002 Vessel Construction and Fishing Demonstration became operational in April 1979. Project activities to date include:-
  - I. Completion of one 28-ft. fishing craft (FAO Design Western Samoa "Boatcraft" project) now commissioned for development/extension activities by Fisheries Field Station at Ha'apai.
  - II. Ongoing construction of 25-ft. "Kapai" Class craft for ice/fish transportation/fishing activities in Vava'u group of islands.
  - III. Ongoing construction of 47-ft. fishing craft for development of the deep water bottom fishery.
3. Cold storage and block ice making facilities are operational or being installed in Vava'u and Ha'apai as part of the artisanal fishery development programme.
4. Fisheries Development/Extension units in Vava'u and Ha'apai are following-up the SPC Deep Sea Fisheries Development Project results, which have identified the opportunity for developing a handline fishery in outer reef areas with 28-35 ft. vessels.
5. Aquaculture trials for culture of Mytilus viridis and Crassostrea belcheri have provided no meaningful results. This is also the case with attempts to cultivate mollies for tuna live bait. Milkfish culture trials have also been inconclusive.
6. The tuna long-liner Tavake continues to land fish for local consumption, whilst the Ekiaki has been sold. The Tongan Government is considering ways and means of setting up a commercially viable tuna long-line fisheries enterprise.

7. The new fisheries Headquarter cum Mariculture Research Centre in Nuku'alofa is now complete. However a mariculture programme for the centre has yet to be decided upon.

8. No positive or negative conclusions have been reached regarding the availability level of live bait supply for developing a skipjack pole-and-line fishery.

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