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Final meeting outcomes

SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME)

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9th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting, 6–12 March 2015, Noumea, New Caledonia
9^e Conférence des Directeurs des pêches de la CPS, 6–12 Mars 2015, Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie



FINAL MEETING OUTCOMES

The ninth Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting took place at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, from the 9th–11th March 2015. An additional half day focusing on the results of the Future of Coastal Fisheries Workshop (3rd–5th March 2015, Noumea) was held on the 6th March prior to the official opening of HoF 9.

HoF is a regional meeting of the heads of SPC member country and territory fisheries agencies, or their appointed deputies, covering the entire range of interests for which they have responsibility and on which the SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) provides advice and assistance. As such, the HoF meeting plays a unique role in providing strategic guidance to the Director's Office, the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of FAME.

The meeting was chaired by Joyce Ah-Leong, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa. The meeting was officially opened by Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, SPC. The agenda of the 9th HoF was adopted with no additional provisions.

The following outcomes constitute the main points of consensus agreement among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document, either to guide the management of the FAME work programme, to draw to the attention of other regional agencies and development partners, or to signal agreement on issues that require attention by members themselves, and to inform the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) and SPC CRGA.

Coastal fisheries

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Recognised and encouraged SPC CFP's effort in establishing standardised data collection programs and willingness and appropriateness of SPC to act as a repository for storing collected data.
2. Recognised and encouraged SPC CFP's ongoing efforts in bringing in-country coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation up to the level of oceanic legislation. Reaffirmed the importance of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and called for greater assistance with coastal MCS from SPC.
3. Noted new core funding from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to support four new positions within the CFP (two to be based in the Coastal Fisheries Science and Management section and two in Aquaculture). Supported SPC CFP's efforts in maintaining the Pacific Island Young Professional Program under DFAT funding.

4. Expressed concern over the growing number of ciguatera cases and called for greater assistance from SPC with harmful algal blooms and their impacts on fisheries and food security in the region. Suggested that some CFP activities could be conducted in greater collaboration among bi-lateral and regional partners (e.g. ciguatera monitoring and identification of harmful algal bloom species with the University of the South Pacific (USP) or laboratories in Samoa).
5. Noted advances made on creel and market surveys and biological sampling and expressed interest in furthering these activities. Suggested that SPC CFP surveys could target gaps in global data repositories (e.g. size at maturity information on FishBase).
6. Supported SPC CFP's efforts and assistance with training in standardised data collection, analysis and reporting. Indicated a need for greater training in these activities within the French Territories. Noted that the SciCOFish project was focused on P-ACP countries, and supported the idea for French speaking territories to develop a coordinated funding proposal for training through their EDF 11 funding proposal for Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).
7. Supported SPC CFP's work on climate change monitoring at the five baseline sites and expressed interest in expanding this to other countries noting this would require new funding.
8. Expressed support for SPC CFP's work in improving economies of scale of small-scale aquaculture farmers. Commended the proposal by CFP to review the impact of their aquaculture training.
9. Acknowledged the assistance provided by the SPC CFP in the areas of aquaculture, aquatic biosecurity, risk assessment protocols and aquatic animal health, particularly given the role of aquaculture in maintaining food security, reducing fishing pressure on reef environments and replenishing wild fisheries. Requested training on biosecurity issues. Expressed support for the new mariculture and biosecurity position.
10. Recognised the importance of involving the private sector and communities in aquaculture, and encouraged that aquaculture be placed on a more business-like footing. Particularly encouraged the involvement of the private sector in development of hatchery operations and other aquaculture services, and recognised the continued role of SPC CFP with assistance in improving aquaculture hatchery facilities.
11. Suggested a Code of Practice for aquaculture be adopted regionally. Suggested SPC CFP could play a lead role in assisting Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to adopt a harmonised Code of Practice.
12. Recognised the effort of SPC CFP in sports fishing development for tourism and training in safe vessel operations, fish handling and financial management, and called for greater training in these activities.
13. Called for further economic analysis of coastal fisheries, particularly, but not limited to, analysis of tourism-related fisheries activities especially the costs and value of sports fishing operations.

14. Reaffirmed SPC CFP's crucial involvement in FAD deployment and maintenance, including capacity building programs, and supported the planned workshop with WorldFish in June 2016 and related likely outputs such as a manual of new inshore FAD models. Called for simpler, more cost-effective designs for community-based FADs.
15. Supported SPC CFP's work in fisheries diversification projects (including those for small pelagics, diamond-back squid and flying fish) and encouraged further SPC assistance with these projects. Suggested a review into the profitability of bagan fishing platforms.
16. Called for greater prioritisation by the SPC CFP of coastal fisheries activities in member countries based on available resources and capacity, particularly given reductions in staff and operating funds forecast for 2015–2016. Noted that this would also need to be balanced against donor interests and objectives.

Oceanic Fisheries

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Reaffirmed strong support for pelagic species stock assessment work and SPC OFP's role at regional, sub-regional and national levels. Reaffirmed SPC OFP's role as premier scientific advisory body for oceanic fisheries in the region.
2. Noted and appreciated results of recent stock assessment work on four key target species, and acknowledged suggestions by SPC OFP that:
 - there is no room for expansion of skipjack or yellowfin catches;
 - catches of bigeye should be reduced to rebuild the stock and;
 - catches of albacore be set at a level that allows profitable domestic longline fisheries.
3. Suggested stock assessment reports could include list of management options targeted towards higher-level decision-makers.
4. Noted results of recent risk assessment and stock assessment of silky and oceanic whitetip sharks and the rapid imposition of bans on the retention of these species and the use of shark lines on longline gear by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).
5. Noted and supported upcoming OFP work on range contraction of target species due to increasing catches in tropical areas and the potential effects on catches within Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of higher latitude PICTs.
6. Supported OFP's proposed plan for short- and long-term attachments and data analysis training workshops within OFP's stock assessment, data management and ecosystem monitoring sections.

7. Commended SPC OFP's effort in bioeconomic modelling of Pacific tuna fisheries, with encouragement for more economic indicators. Suggested that in addition to the tuna species, the economic value of principal bycatch (e.g. wahoo, mahi-mahi) and associated billfish should be quantified.
8. Noted SPC OFP's efforts in artisanal tuna data collection in some PICTs, and potential for continued assistance from SPC OFP in expanding this to other countries and territories with in-country assistance.
9. Commended SPC OFP's efforts in oceanic fisheries data management. Noted that many PICTs are now starting to analyse their own data and encouraged SPC to maintain capacity to intervene and to advise PICTs on data quality where required.
10. Supported the development of the tuna tissue bank and the potential for collected material to inform stock assessments and fisheries management, and for the potential of collected material to be used in student and capacity building projects.
11. Noted the suggestion by SPC OFP to transition from grab sampling to spill sampling on purse seine vessels and called for SPC OFP to push issue at national, regional and international fora.

Director's Office and Information Unit

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted and supported the ongoing work of the Director's Office and Information Unit into disseminating information to member countries to make informed management decisions, including the production of teacher information kits for the Cook Islands, the translation of information kits on Fisheries for Communities into Fijian, and the development of educational videos such as the newly produced "Pacific Black Gold".

FAME Strategic Plan

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the changes to the FAME Strategic Plan concerning key result areas and called for the continuation of scientific data collection within the CFP's key result areas and inclusion of disaster risk management in general within the Strategic Plan, Suggested the planned independent review be coordinated in manner compatible with the SPC Corporate Plan review.
2. Suggested that current strategic plan run its course and FAME use this time to develop the new business plan aligned to the new SPC Corporate Plan in the interim.

Apia Policy and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathway to Change

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Endorsed the new guiding document for coastal fisheries management (“The New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathways to Change”) to succeed the 2008 Apia Policy. Recommended the outcomes document from the Future of Coastal Fisheries workshop be presented to the FFC Official meeting as an endorsed document by HoF and encouraged SPC to seek higher level support for the outcomes document from regional meetings, including the FFC Ministerial meeting and the SPC CRGA. Suggested that the outcomes document be presented to sub-regional groups (e.g. Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), Te Vaka Moana) to assist with the holistic approach to implementation.
2. Noted increases in future fish requirements due to increasing human population within the region and supported call for greater collaboration among stakeholders at regional, national and sub-national levels to address future food security and livelihood needs.
3. HOF agreed that The New Song be called the Noumea Coastal Fisheries Strategy: Pathways to Change
4. Suggested to cross-check the Apia Policy and transfer outstanding elements into the new FAME business plan.
5. Suggested the outcomes document be used to develop elements of the FAME business plan.

Deepwater snapper: towards improved stock assessments and management

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Supported the work conducted under OFP’s deepwater snapper project, in particular its capacity building aspects, and encouraged further support from the OFP in capacity building initiatives.
2. Called for investigation of applicability of using age-based indicators in other fisheries, particularly for coastal species.
3. Noted that the deepwater snapper project will finish at the end of 2015 and called for SPC to continue deepwater snapper project and support to member countries and territories with deepwater snapper activities noting that this will require sourcing additional funds.
4. Called for ongoing assistance from SPC with the finalisation of country and territory deepwater snapper management plans underpinned by latest scientific findings.

Standardising data collection and management for Pacific Island coastal fisheries and aquaculture

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted and encouraged database development projects planned for 2015–2016, including a database for aquaculture, database for FAD-related data, trials of mobile applications and a database for domestic shipments and exports of coastal resources to facilitate traceability of product.
2. Reaffirmed the importance of standardised data collection and called for a review of databases currently in place within PICT fisheries departments and other regional organisations.

Towards a data sharing policy for survey and monitoring data collected and/or stored by the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme on behalf of member countries

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Supported the standardisation of data collection, storage and sharing provided national policies and rules are protected, particularly those concerning sensitive data.
2. Called for a need for regionally-agreed rules and procedures that SPC could apply for coastal fisheries and aquaculture data collected in-country by SPC staff — or shared with SPC staff by government services.
3. Reaffirmed that in the absence of a data sharing policy, SPC should continue to assume that all data requests require country authorisation and redirect requestors to country government services for approval and terms of use.
4. Indicated SPC should publish the list and description of existing datasets for surveys conducted by SPC staff and country counterparts.
5. Reaffirmed SPC should publish the list and description of existing datasets for other types of surveys and long-term monitoring conducted independently by countries.
6. Recommended that SPC should provide a regional central data repository so that countries can publish their own lists and descriptions of datasets.
7. Agreed that SPC should provide an archival service for country datasets.
8. Recommended that SPC should provide an online system where government services can decide by themselves the level of “sharing” they feel comfortable with for each data type and aggregation level.
9. Agreed that validated raw data from resource surveys (e.g. in-water fisheries independent surveys) conducted by SPC staff with country counterparts can become open access 5 years after the survey.

10. Agreed that validated raw data from socio-economic surveys (e.g. household and fisher interviews) conducted by SPC staff with country counterparts can become open access 5 years after the survey as long as it is not possible to identify specific households and individuals from the data.

Long-term strategy for observer training and support to the region

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the lack of adequate funding support for observer training staff and activities and reaffirmed that SPC OFP should continue to provide regional support for observer programmes.
2. Reaffirmed that training of observers and debriefers and that further development of Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) standards are high priorities.
3. Reaffirmed that the PIRFO Certification Management Committee (CMC) is the recognised moderating body for PIRFO certification and training standards.
4. Endorsed in principle the call from SPC OFP that the CMC should comprise one representative from the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), one from SPC, one from WCPFC, one from the Parties of the Nauru Agreement (PNA) aligned countries and one from non-PNA aligned countries. Reaffirmed that SPC OFP provide secretariat services to and initially chairs the CMC; and coordinates the auditing and monitoring of standards under the CMC's direction. Reaffirmed that an independent consultant develops a recognised international governance framework under which the CMC can legitimately and transparently operate, including terms of reference for the CMC.
5. Endorsed in principle the call by SPC OFP that 3–4 institutions that have the potential to deliver best-practice PIRFO basic training be identified with the intention of providing support to establish full PIRFO training capacity.
6. Agreed that the PIRFO website is developed to meet professional requirements at all levels of the PIRFO career framework to be hosted and moderated by the OFP.
7. Agreed that SPC OFP continues to organise PIRFO trainers workshops and Regional Observer Coordinators' Workshops (ROCWs), and that SPC monitors developments in electronic recording and electronic monitoring and takes an active role in ensuring seamless incorporation of these new tools into observer information collection related activities.
8. Endorsed in principle the call by SPC OFP to adopt a regional cost-recovery mechanism to fund regional observer coordination and support activities, noting that this will need to be discussed at other fora.

National IMS and E-Reporting: current status and future plans

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Supported the workplan of SPC OFP to develop E-Reporting systems where requested and where infrastructure is suitable and resources are sufficient, and endorsed further collaboration among the SPC and third-party service providers used by member countries.
2. Reaffirmed SPC OFP as one of the main regional agencies to improve implementation of E-Reporting (in collaboration with FFA) and requested SPC OFP assistance with E-Reporting trials.

How FAME disseminates information?

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted high costs of distributing information in the Pacific and supported the identification of cost saving initiatives. Noted that requirements for hard copies differ among PICTs and encouraged the distribution of both hard and electronic material to deposit libraries.
2. Suggested that SPC continue to give open access to information documents to allow other countries to translate, print and distribute materials in a more cost-effective manner. Proposed that timing the dissemination of materials around meetings and trainings to “piggyback” on existing travel could help reduce distribution costs.
3. Encouraged the use of new technology, in particular social media, for disseminating material, noting that this may not reach the entire target audience.
4. Suggested a joint country strategy on the dissemination of material be developed.

Ministerial for Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Supported the recommendation to present the outcomes of this and future Heads of Fisheries meetings to regional Fisheries Ministers for endorsement, such as the FFC Ministerial meeting and other Ministerial fora (including and in addition to CRGA).

The Integrated Approach to Programme Development

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the move by SPC towards an integrated approach to programme and project development. Called for greater dialogue among SPC and other CROP agencies and relevant institutes regarding the development of the Integrated Approach, given the complexities involved. Reaffirmed the value of Joint Country Strategies with the SPC and called for cross-cutting integrated approaches incorporating relevant agencies and Ministries (e.g. Environment) to the Joint Country Strategies to develop national rather than sectorial strategies and policies.

Ocean Acidification — An example of the Integrated Approach to Programme Development

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Consider ocean acidification to be a major long-term threat to the health of fisheries resources and ecosystems of the Pacific. Encouraged work that will assist the Pacific Community with implementation of monitoring and adaptations that will minimise the impact of ocean acidification, complements existing national activities (PICs and Donor Countries), and maximises consultation.
2. Supported the proposed Ocean Acidification (OA) project currently under consideration for funding with New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) presented as an example of SPC's Integrated Approach to Programme Development. Suggested that:
 - the implementation of effective adaptations requires a multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach in addition to a whole-of-ecosystem approach that complements existing OA initiatives in the region;
 - in-country consultation be made at the grass-roots level to encourage better national support, and
 - SPC circulate the documents from the recent Ocean Acidification project to PICTs.

Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines endorsed... What are the next steps?

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Welcomed the endorsement by the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) and recognised the high degree of concordance with The New Song for regional coastal fisheries management. Encouraged SPC-FAO members use of the FAO Technical Cooperation Program window for implementing the SSF and for the implementation of The New Song in an integrated and coordinated manner across the respective FAO and SPC mandates in the region.

2. Welcomed increase in technical support from the FAO through the tasking of two fisheries technical officers to the region and noted the commitment by the FAO to work with and through existing regional, sub-regional and civil society organisations and SPC/FAO member countries to achieve common objectives.

Status of maritime boundaries in Pacific Island countries

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the priority placed on the delimitation and declaration of maritime zones in the region and their importance for ocean management and securing national interests.
2. Noted that an increasing number of maritime boundaries in the Pacific have been negotiated and declared; and the technical and legal support that SPC and partners continue to provide to enable members to delimit, publicise and deposit the remaining maritime zones.
3. Recognised that some members still have significant technical and legal work to complete before they can declare their baselines and maritime zones, whilst others are in a position to move ahead with negotiations, and that the overall process under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is country-driven and that progress depends largely on high-level national engagement. Encouraged members to finalise the maritime boundaries in face of global change (e.g. climate change).
4. Supported SPC and particularly the work of the Maritime Boundaries Unit and partners as an appropriate and effective mechanism to facilitate national efforts to finalise maritime zones.

Ocean Issues and the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Were invited to note the progress made in implementation in framework of Pacific Oceanscape, note progress made in establishment in the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and the Pacific Ocean Alliance and encouraged SPC members, observers and key development partners to actively participate in the work of the Pacific Oceans Alliance and to support the Office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner.

Forum Fisheries Agency

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the endorsement of the FFA of efforts in coastal and oceanic fisheries by the SPC.

Institute of Marine Resources, University of the South Pacific

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the potential for development of short courses to address regional needs and potential for USP to collaborate with local partners to offer observer training.

2. Noted that the Institute of Marine Resources (IMR) plan to develop a Centre of Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture.
3. Noted the suggestion to develop a regional PNA-like body for beche-de-mer in the Pacific.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the endorsement of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) for the New Song on coastal fisheries management (Noumea Coastal Fisheries Strategy: Pathways to Change), and the willingness of SPREP to fully engage in the spirit of the New Song for integrated approaches to coastal fisheries management.
2. Noted the efforts of SPREP (in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional organisations) to assist sustainable coastal fisheries development - through ecosystem based management of coastal and marine areas resources, improvements in waste management and pollution control, ecosystem based adaptation to climate change and assisting member countries in environmental monitoring and governance.

Japan International Cooperation Agency

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted the appreciation of JICA delegate for the invitation and the continued interest of JICA to collaborate with regional, sub-regional, national and tertiary institutions in the region.

MCT Rare Program for Island Resilience in Micronesia

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted that MCT-Rare specialize in robust community-based awareness campaigns (“social marketing”) coordinated closely with local partners that lead towards specific conservation actions; an approach which can successfully contribute to coastal fisheries management by building effective multi-tiered and multi-sectoral partnerships at local, national and regional levels when underpinned by sound implementation of technical work on the ground.

ACIAR

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Acknowledged with appreciation funding assistance from ACIAR for Pacific Fisheries. Noted the excellent work program and case studies of ACIAR and partners regarding seaweed production.

New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noted member training opportunities available through the NZ Ministry of Primary Industries.

ANNEX 1 — COUNTRY STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

American Samoa

1. Expressed gratitude to SPC CFP for training in FAD deployment and maintenance.
2. Informed the meeting of the creel survey program established in American Samoa under support from NOAA and recommended other countries establish these programs. Called for greater assistance from SPC to support these activities in other countries.
3. Called for the need to adopt a South Pacific Albacore measure (e.g. catch rate limits proposed by FFA) that covers the entire range of the stock.
4. Requested support from SPC in aquaculture development, particularly of clams and seaweed.
5. Explained that sea cucumber fishery exploitation continues to be an issue. Requested assistance from SPC with sea cucumber aquaculture and management.
6. Highlighted importance of standardised monitoring across the region and called for greater assistance from SPC to support standardised data collection.
7. Expressed concern over climate change effects on coastal fisheries and informed the meeting that American Samoa is facing extensive coral bleaching. Advised that outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish are another major threat to the reefs of American Samoa.
8. Thanked SPC for fishery publications and opportunities to build local capacity and the expressed need for continued collaboration.

Australia

1. Noted the enhanced support it was providing to Pacific regional fisheries organisations directed at both offshore and coastal fisheries. Australia also noted its new Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Strategy which would guide future Australian aid investments in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia congratulated SPC FAME on its sustained high quality support to members.

Cook Islands

1. Thanked SPC for technical support for proposed quota management system for albacore and bigeye tuna longline fishery to establish zone based limits and for observer training.
2. Informed the meeting that the Cook Islands are working towards Marine Stewardship Council certification of the albacore fishery.
3. Informed the meeting that export of pearls continues to decline due to decreasing global prices and increases in disease incidence.

4. Requested assistance with database development for water quality data and website development to support lagoon monitoring.
5. Expressed interest in a FAD tagging survey to assess movement and localisation of yellowfin around the island/FADs.
6. Expressed concern over interactions with sharks and artisanal fishermen and potential loss of catch.
7. Expressed interest in sea cucumber aquaculture.
8. In light of the Maritime Transport (Small Motorised Vessels) Regulation 2014, requested further assistance in sea safety training.

Fiji

1. Supported the call from PICTs for a review of the status of albacore stocks in the South Pacific.
2. Thanked SPC/FFA for assistance with management plans for other offshore species (e.g. mahi-mahi).
3. Informed the meeting that Fiji is currently developing management plans for deepwater snapper and associated species, and thanked SPC and FFA for assistance with the development of these plans.
4. Called for greater collaboration among local and regional partners with the management of coastal fisheries, particularly in the face of growing population pressure.
5. Thanked SPC for hosting the recent “Future of Coastal Fisheries” workshop and for technical assistance with aquaculture development for freshwater prawns and tilapia.
6. Informed the meeting of the dire situation of accidents and deaths resulting for collection of sea cucumbers using underwater breathing apparatus. Thanked SPC for their assistance with the development of the Fiji sea cucumber management plan.

Federated States of Micronesia

Informed the meeting that:

1. In addition to the State and National Government Fisheries and Marine Resource Agencies, various other organizations are involved with coastal resource management, including environmental agencies, fisheries and economic development authorities, and non-government organizations. Coordination of activities and harmonization of goals and objectives is an ongoing challenge.

2. The objectives of fisheries management in FSM vary considerably depending on the level of government. The Plan for Management of Tuna in FSM (adopted December 2001) gives specific objectives for the management of the tuna resources, the only fishery resource managed on a national basis. The objectives of fisheries management at lower levels of government are not as well articulated and, in most of the states, the common objectives appear to be prevention of destructive fishing, deterring of over-harvesting, and protection of endangered species. The objectives of management at the village level mainly revolve around assuring the sustainability of local marine foods.
3. Traditionally, coastal marine resources are central to subsistence livelihoods, providing food and important nutrients for island diets and a central role in island culture.
4. The main challenges in the offshore fisheries of FSM, for which bilateral and regional support will help to strengthen, include:
 - Observer/debriefer training;
 - (IMS) information management system development;
 - Country specific reports on various specific issues of interests;
 - Scientific analysis;
 - Training in data analysis/stock assessment;
 - Need update on FSM's annual report.
5. Even with all the existing and upcoming collaborations in resource management, the FSM is faced with daily challenges in coastal fisheries, including:
 - Overexploitation of coastal fisheries;
 - Use of overly-efficient and destructive fishing gear/practices;
 - Land-based activities affecting the marine environment;
 - Adapting to impacts of climate change;
 - Creating alternative livelihoods for community wellbeing;
 - Strengthening and advancing of coral reef monitoring capacity to resource management practitioners from the government to community level;
 - Enforcement and compliance have proven among the most challenging aspect of coral reef resource management;
 - Enforcement and compliance measures have proven most successful to date, yet have received very minimum financial and technical assistance;
 - Lack of understanding and knowledge on community-based management approaches that need more awareness raisings.

Guam

1. Informed the meeting that Guam has a FAD program and that the cost of FAD components and deployments were very high compared to the other U.S. jurisdictions and Hawaii. Requested support from SPC to assist with a sustainable and cost effective FAD design.
2. Stated that Guam is in the same situation as American Samoa regarding creel survey programs. Guam has a database with over 20 years of boat-based and near-shore creel survey data. However, Guam does not have a database for fisheries independent data.
3. Supported data sharing as long as confidentiality is taken into account.

Kiribati

1. Acknowledged the work of SPC OFP and other regional bodies (FFA, PNA, WCPFC) in efforts made in regulation of region's tuna fisheries.
2. Thanked SPC CFP for recent assistance and training in assessments of coastal resources, including climate change, invertebrate, creel and biological surveys.
3. Informed the meeting that Kiribati is drafting new fisheries regulations, based on the results of the above surveys.
4. Requested further assistance from SPC CFP in data entry, management, analysis and reporting for coastal resource surveys.
5. Thanked the Australian Government and ACIAR for funding assistance to employ two Research Officers for sea cucumber and seaweed aquaculture initiatives.
6. Requested further training from SPC in aquaculture.
7. Thanked the EU for funding of outboard maintenance awareness program to outer islands.
8. Informed the meeting of the joint community-based fisheries management project run in Kiribati by SPC and the University of Wollongong with support from the Fisheries Division.

Nauru

1. Thanked SPC for recent assistance, particularly in assessment of coastal fisheries resources, and requested SPC assistance in conducting a sea cucumber assessment.
2. Requested SPC assistance in diamond-back squid fishing trials.
3. Expressed concern of influx of refugees into local population and the resulting pressure on local fisheries.

New Caledonia

1. Described challenges faced with in data collection in coastal fisheries, looking for SPC assistance with standardised data collection programs.
2. Informed the meeting that all commercial fishing vessels that want to operate in New Caledonian waters must have a fishing permit, called a "fishing licence" when the authorisation applies to the EEZ.
3. Announced that the Coral Sea natural marine park had been set up in 2014.
4. Advised of difficulties in training and retention of staff and crew in oceanic fisheries.
5. Explained the continued importance of shrimp farming in the aquaculture sector.

New Zealand

1. Recognised SPC's assistance to PICTs and commended SPC on a work plan that meets the needs of member countries. Offered assistance in working with both SPC and directly with member countries with fisheries management issues.
2. Reminded members of the ongoing support available under New Zealand's Pacific Economic Development, Pacific Fisheries Management and Development initiative to support Pacific island Fisheries Administrations in both Fisheries Management and MCS (contact Silver Bishop MPI).
3. Drew member's attention to additional training opportunities funded by New Zealand; specifically to FFA and SPC to deliver training in the region for the private sector and officials, as well as training available to participants to complete the Nelson Pacific Islands Fisheries Officer course and training for internationally recognised tickets/qualifications as marine engineers, masters and mates (contact points Hugh Walton [FFA], Michel Blanc [SPC] or Paul Wallis [NZ MFAT]).

Niue

1. Advised of recent structural changes within Niue Fisheries, whereby Fisheries is now considered a Ministry (rather than a department as previous).
2. Acknowledged SPC for recent assistance with Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan and recent coconut crab survey. Requested further assistance with the implementation of the Plan once finalised, particularly with MCS.
3. Informed the meeting that Niue is looking into a review of its domestic fisheries legislation, and would like assistance from SPC with this in the future.
4. Requested review of stock status of albacore, and encouraged members to adopt management approaches towards management of the South Pacific Albacore, and to see it through forums such as the WCPFC.

5. Acknowledged SPC assistance with sport fishery development, and expressed interest in conducting an economic analysis of this fishery and its contribution to GDP.
6. Requested assistance with sea safety training.
7. Expressed interest in increasing capacity in aquaculture, particularly for the replenishment of wild populations.

Palau

1. Recognised and thanked SPC for its continued support and assistance to the Bureau of Marine Resources.
2. Recognised and thanked SPC for the assistance with the recent installation of near-shore FADs.

Papua New Guinea

1. Informed the meeting of the numerous reforms undertaken to address and manage the European Union's Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported concerns resulting from the "yellow card" notification to PNG by the EU in June 2014, including the review of the National Fisheries Act, completion of the revised National Tuna Fisheries Management Plan, completion of a National Plan of Action for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, reflagging of vessels with the aim of offloading greater volumes of tuna caught in PNG's waters to supply PNG's commercial canneries, successful tendering of Vessel Day Scheme, new management regime for fishing in PNG's Archipelagic Waters, establishment of a Catch Documentation Scheme and the development of a Fish Aggregating Device tracking system with information fed into the Fisheries Information Management Scheme.
2. Informed the meeting of three new tuna processing investments in 2014 and that these investments are expected to create 20,000 direct jobs and 32,000 indirect jobs.
3. Informed the meeting that NFA has been implementing a number of new programs and projects to support coastal and inland fisheries development, including the establishment of Project Development Funds for small scale artisanal and commercial fisheries, Provincial Fisheries Grants, Fish Markets and Jetties with additional Japanese funding support, Restoration of Fisheries Facilities with additional Japanese funding support, Trials of the Trap Net Fishery, Inshore Fish Aggregating Device Program, and the seaweed farming project.
4. Informed the meeting of the major policy and institutional reforms for coastal fisheries, including a review of the National Beche-de-mer Fishery Management Plan, a review of the Live Reef Food Fish Trade Management Plan, the Development of a National Aquarium Fishery management Plan and a Draft Inshore Fish Aggregating Device Policy.

5. Informed the meeting that priority activities for the National Fisheries Authority in 2015 include the continued management of the European Union's Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported concerns, the construction of a new office complex to house all National Fisheries Authorities Units and Sections, the development of the Wagang Dedicated Fisheries Wharf, and a review and restructure of the Coastal Fisheries Development Program.
6. Outlined the many training and research opportunities offered by the NFA and National Fisheries College across the oceanic, deepwater and inshore fisheries sectors, in collaboration with many partners, including UPNG, James Cook University, CSIRO, and SPC).
7. Informed the meeting that PNG requires an updated estimation of annual production and value of the fisheries sector to national GDP. The last useful indicative benchmark information for Papua New Guinea was the Asian Development Bank and Secretariat of Pacific Community report entitled "Contributions by Fisheries to National GDP" in 2002. Whilst these estimates are useful guides to Papua New Guinea's government planning and budget allocation purposes, these baselines are now outdated.
8. Informed the meeting that NFA seeks to foster greater coordinated inputs and technical services by both the SPC and NGOs and aligning these inputs to assist with furthering PNG's national strategic development and sustainability objectives and priorities.
9. Informed the meeting that NFA plans to develop a National Coastal Fisheries Policy and requests SPC assistance with its development.
10. Supported the community-based ecosystem approach to fisheries management and advised that PNG is keen undertake a review of these approaches to assess their effectiveness, and to consider implementing a national strategy for assisting communities to manage their marine resources.
11. Called for an updated analysis of the effects and implications of the increased fishing effort of both improvements in FAD technology and human population increases, and a scientifically-focused analysis of the impacts of near-shore FADs on fish catchability.
12. Informed the meeting that the NFA is undergoing an internal self-assessment and corporate restructure. Requested assistance from SPC in the development of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation program and thus requests that this be considered into SPC's annual workplan.
13. Expressed interest in the possibility of establishing a Fisheries Unit within the MSG Secretariat. Requested that SPC provide an update on any progress done on this assessment, and if there has been no progress, called for SPC to have this FFC Ministerial resolution to be sanctioned by the 9th Heads of Fisheries Delegation so progress can begin.
14. Suggested that SPC publish a "State of Pacific Fisheries" report, perhaps every two years and based on the country statements provided by the HoF.

Samoa

1. Expressed concern that fisheries department staff are heavily occupied with data collection, and suggested regional training and data collection programs must not detract from national interests.
2. Called for further review on status of albacore stocks and urged member countries to sign Tokelau arrangement in interests of the region.
3. Expressed concern over harvesting of sea cucumbers for overseas markets and requested advice from other member countries and the SPC with this issue.

Tonga

Asked the meeting to note that:

1. Fisheries are the most significant renewable resource that Tonga has for food security, livelihoods and economic growth. As Tonga's population grows, the future benefits that these resources can provide will depend on how well they can balance the increasing demands on fisheries with the capacity of the oceanic, coastal fish stocks to sustain those harvests.
2. Commercial fisheries are managed through a system of limited entry licensing which aims to prevent the over-harvesting of fish stocks through a range of input and /or output controls. These controls are set out in the management plans for each fishery. In recent years this approach has been extended to include not only the major commercial fisheries, but also the smaller, community fisheries. Total allowable catch are applied to deepwater snapper and sea cucumber fisheries. Integrated management through interaction with, and response to, the community, industry, other government agencies and other interested groups with an interest in the use of marine resources is an important part of the management process.
3. Fishery development in Tonga is in a stage of economic evolution. The necessary infrastructure is lacking or inadequate. There is no centralized fishery complex to cater to the needs of the local fishermen. The magnitude of the fishery resources are not known and are continually being exploited. The economic potentials and the biological conditions of the various commercial marine species are not defined, as needed for management and investment purposes. The local government lacks the capability for resources assessment and initiatives have been very minimal.
4. The most influential trends in Tongan fisheries and aquaculture include:
 - Lack of success in fulfilling the development promise of fisheries development (e.g. infrastructure);
 - Decline in numbers of foreign fishing vessels and locally based fishing vessels;
 - Increase in number of domestic tuna fishing vessels;
 - Decline in deepwater snapper;
 - Increasing relative cost of fishing operations;

- A decline in exports of fisheries products
 - Lack of major success in commercial aquaculture development effort (except pearl oyster culture).
5. The major underlying problem in Tonga fisheries is excess fishing capacity. This leads directly to over fishing and considerable less than maximum profitability in most fisheries. The majority of management arrangements are directed specifically at limiting fishing effort by one means or another. Initial efforts at fisheries management in Tonga were in the form of limited entry arrangement through licensing. Such arrangement had little impact on fishing effort. In addition, recent reports draws attention to a worrying trend whereby the number of stocks classified overfished or uncertain is increasing, highlighting the need for more conservative approaches to risk and uncertainty.
6. Opportunities in the fisheries sector include:
- Expansion of the community fisheries management approach (Special Management Area) to other island in Tonga;
 - Making the transition from Fisheries Division raising organisms to the creation of a viable aquaculture industry;
 - Creating incentives to promote private sector development;
 - Development of fisheries sector Plan;
 - Establishment of the Tonga National Fisheries Council (strengthen partnership with fisheries stakeholders);
 - Government assistance through subsidy schemes.
7. The challenges to be faced by Tonga, in conjunction with external development partners, include:
- Develop a comprehension fisheries policy to guide fisheries development, and offer a long-term vision for engagement with stakeholders and development partners;
 - Expansion of the community development program such as community-based fisheries management (Special Management Area) network;
 - Improve coastal and inshore fisheries research such as creel and bio-sampling survey, market survey;
 - Improve and strengthen national MCS programme (observer, debriefer and VMS);
 - Strengthen the economic development dimension of commercial fisheries such as tuna, deepwater snapper, and aquarium fish;
 - Revise fisheries management plans to include measurable targets in the plans and define the means to achieve the targets, monitoring progress and adapt to changes.
 - Formulate fisheries policies and regulations, such as an aquaculture investment policy and framework;

- Improve fisheries investment through fleet development for tuna longline fisheries and the deepwater snapper fishery;
- Strengthen and develop aquaculture through promotion of commercial farming for export and supporting coastal community development through stock enhancement;
- Increase employment opportunities through training and development of fisheries skills in the fisheries industry;
- Improve fisheries information and catch data on resources status through strengthening of existing data management framework and reporting process;
- Strengthen existing, and explore new fisheries markets;
- Increase production through research into new fisheries, and scientific monitoring of existing fisheries in order to better target fishing effort;
- Improve fisheries governance through increased participation of fisheries stakeholders in fisheries management and in the decision making process;
- Continue to support Community based management capacity building, enforcement capability, and expansion of SMA for sustainable food supply;
- Continue strengthening fisheries compliance through capacity building (observer, VMS, and surveillance activities);
- Strengthening fisheries research activities;
- Strengthening fisheries institutional capacity and capability including structure.